



NASHVILLE HONKY-TONK BARS / ISTOCK

# Nashville

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Nashville may be known as Music City, but it's also Party Town USA. While people come in droves to have a riotous good time, the home of country music has a long history and a vibrant cultural scene

**8AM** Getting an early start in a party town like Nashville may not seem like the best way to ensure you stay the course, but with just 24 hours it is the only way to take it all in. Nashville may be known for its honky-tonks and southern charm, but there are plenty of hip coffee shops and breakfast places where you can find everything from avocado toast to upscale shrimp and grits. And nowhere is more hip than the Gulch. A vibrant and dynamic mixed-use community, it's home to everything from LEED-certified office spaces, upmarket retail outlets and all kinds of dining options. Meander your way through the neighbourhood ending up at ZolliKoffee, a bicycle-friendly cafe that has a good selection of baked goods (in house) and breakfast paninis among other things.

**10AM** The most convenient way to see many of Nashville's major attractions is to hop aboard a trolley. Nashville Old Town Trolley Tours are informative and quicker given the guides know the city, both in terms of its history and where traffic builds up at certain times of the day. On the tour you will see the full-scale replica of the Parthenon in Athens in Centennial Park; you'll drive down Music Row where legends of country have recorded for decades; there is the Johnny Cash Museum; the Patsy Cline Museum; and the Country Music Hall of Fame.

**3PM** Lunch. Food is an essential component of any trip to the South. Meat lovers will love Nashville's numerous

barbecue restaurants. Peg Leg Porker in the Gulch is as authentic as they come. A cafeteria-style barbecue place, you simply walk in, join the queue, order, pay at the counter and find yourself a seat. The dry rub ribs are so good you will regret getting a half rack. The pulled pork was also good. Classic barbecue sides will fill you up, so be careful unless you are particularly hungry. If you aren't a big fan of barbecue, but want an authentic Nashville food experience, it has to be Hattie B's Hot Chicken. Various cuts come in one of six heat levels – from mild to Shut the Cluck Up. Try to leave some room for peach cobbler.

**5PM** If you're in party mode and don't need to go back to your hotel, you might want to consider another, but altogether different, kind of bus tour. Called Party Bikes or Pedal Taverns, they are equal parts bar, karaoke party and tour. You will, at all times of the year, see these pedal buses making their way around the city, with the dozen or so revellers singing and drinking as they go. There are also open-top bus tours where your bartender will serve you drinks while you take in the sights and sounds of Nashville.

**8PM** Nashville isn't all party. There are some excellent restaurants, many of which are located in its coolest neighbourhoods. More arts and culture than country and barbecue, Henley, which is inside the Kimpton Aertson in SoBro – South Broadway – is a relatively new addition to the area. Executive Chef Daniel Gorman uses ingredients from local farms to give a southern twist to modern dishes at this modern American brasserie. Everything we had was good, but the simple-sounding roasted beet and walnut salad was so much more than the sum of its parts, the tempura fried squash was excellent, and the local beef tartare truly delicious. Have the whiskey cart come to your table and see your drink being made, while getting a mini lesson on combining spirits to create different flavours.

**9.30PM** No trip to Nashville would be complete without a stroll down Broadway, home of the Nashville Honky Tonks, but a stop off at Primings Cigar Lounge & Bar for a smoked cocktail and a cigar isn't a bad idea. Welcoming for both cigar aficionados and newcomers, the lounge offers good cocktails and hundreds of cigars from around the world.



**10.30PM** It isn't that it takes a while for Broadway's honky-tonks to 'get going', quite the contrary, but you can have too much of a good thing. The honky-tonk drag is only a few blocks but the noise, crowds and sheer concentration of bars in such a small area, means you won't run out of places to go. Venues range from the down and dirty honky-tonks to more upscale places. There are several bars owned by country music stars such as Alan Jackson and Blake Shelton.

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- If you are celebrating a special occasion, consider serenading your significant other with a country love song at WannaB's Karaoke Bar. It's open until 3am seven days a week!
- Nashville never sleeps, if however you are ready to turn in for the night, there are a few great places to stay. The Hermitage is perhaps the grandest hotel in Nashville. The Beaux Arts style hotel has a blend of Old World classical Italian and French Renaissance features. Even more centrally located is the new Omni Hotel. Practically on top of the Country Music Hall of Fame, the Omni has nicely appointed rooms as well as a rooftop pool to cool off in.
- Even though Nashville is popular with those looking for a party, it is also a popular place for proposals and honeymoons. After a night on the town, couples can relax at Omni's Mokra Spa. The Harmony for Two treatment, a two-and-a-half-hour treatment that includes a 50-minute Mokra Couple's Massage followed by luxury pedicures with strawberries and champagne might be for you.



OPPOSITE PAGE: Head to Broadway for the city's famous honky-tonks. THIS PAGE: Explore the city with an Old Town Trolley Tour; Peg Leg Porker's dry rub ribs come highly recommended