



IPA US REGION 57 2013 Travel Event



JOIN US!

Aboard the American Queen

“9 Day Dixie Fest” Mississippi River Cruise

Be enchanted by Dixie culture, cuisine, and music!



Join the IPA June 15th, 2013 aboard the American Queen as it cruises from Memphis to New Orleans on this 9 day all-inclusive cruise and land vacation!



When we say all-inclusive, we mean it (even beer and wine with lunch and dinner)

Itinerary Highlights:

- *1 night Pre-Cruise hotel in Memphis
- * Helena Arkansas: visit Delta Gypsy Caravan, Bubba’s Blues Corral, and more. For the Civil War history buffs: Moore-Hornor House and Union’s Fort Curtis
- *Vicksburg, MS: “Red Carpet City of the South,” Vicksburg Battlefield Visitor’s Center, Old Courthouse Museum and Levee St. Museum, and more.
- *Natchez, MS: center of Antebellum South; tours of Longwood (1861) & Stanton Hall (1857)
- *St. Francisville, LA: Day for shopping and boutiques!
- *Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State Capitol building; LSU Museum of Art; tour the USS Kidd (WWII Fletcher-class destroyer); Veterans Memorial museum, and more!
- *Houmas House Plantation and Gardens, LA: Enjoy a mint julep at the Turtle Bar in the garden – after all, the mint julep was first concocted at the Houmas House – the “Sugar Palace”!
- *Disembark in New Orleans

Dixie Fest
Departure: June 15th, 2013
Regular Cabin Prices Start at:
\$2145 pp/do

USA River Cruises
800-578-1479
www.usarivercruises.com



USA River Cruises strongly recommends the purchase of travel insurance.

New Bookings Only. Restrictions May Apply.

*pp/do = prices are per person, based on double occupancy.

Single Supplement may apply.

American Queen “9 Day Dixie Fest”

Embark in our homeport, Memphis, TN for your 9 Day journey on the Lower Mississippi River. Enjoy historic ports of call along the way, including Vicksburg, MS and Baton Rouge, LA. Finish your voyage in the city famous for its good food and good times, New Orleans, LA.

Fares will include:

- Complimentary shore excursions in every port
- Complimentary overnight stay in a select luxury hotel before your voyage – includes breakfast, taxes, portage and transfers to the American Queen
- Complimentary wine and beer with dinner
- Complimentary cappuccino, espresso, specialty coffees, bottled water and soft drinks throughout your voyage
- The family recipes of acclaimed Southern chef Regina Charboneau
- The only steamboat with multiple specialty dining options, all at no additional charge
- Gracious service from a friendly all-American staff
- Casual elegance abounds, no formal wear required
- Daily lectures by the Riverlorian, our onboard historian
- Professional showboat-style entertainment and dancing nightly
- Our own dedicated fleet of Steamcoaches
- The only authentic steam-powered overnight paddlewheel riverboat in America
- The greatest vacation value in America

Day 1: Hotel Overnight – Memphis, TN

For this itinerary, we will reserve a room for you at one of these properties: The Westin Memphis Beale Street or Memphis Marriott Downtown. The following day, you will board the American Queen.

Day 2: Memphis, TN Departure: 9:00 p.m.

Enjoy the sights and sounds of Memphis today. This afternoon, you will board the American Queen to begin your voyage.

Day 3: Helena, AR Arrival: 8:00 a.m. — Departure: 1:00 p.m.

Let gospel voices lift your heart, hear soulful Delta blues, and sample King biscuits and sausage during an eventful day.

Hop-On Hop-Off Tour: Hop aboard your deluxe Steamcoach and begin an adventure by visiting the Cherry Street Historic District. Many of the exteriors were used in the 2005 Johnny Cash biopic Walk the Line. Along the way you'll find a number of treasures including the famous theatre from the movie Walk the Line, the Malco Theater; boutiques such as the Delta Gypsy Caravan; the Cotton and Kudzu Mall; the Handworks

Boutique which was featured on “ABC World News Tonight”; and the Gist Music Company whose rare collectibles will transport you back in time.

Discover historic downtown Helena with two museum sites that preserve and present the heritage of the 27-county region of eastern Arkansas at the Delta Cultural Center. If you are into the Blues, Bubba’s Blues Corner offers the best selection of hard-to-find Blues music in the nation. Next is Biscuit Row, a future development project trying to rehabilitate several buildings at this gritty intersection that was once the home of the Blues in Helena. Our next stop is the Helena Museum and its eclectic collection of artifacts from prehistoric times through the Civil War and on to the present. Then, connect to two pieces of Civil War History at the magnificently restored Moore-Hornor House and the nearly full-size replica of the Union’s Fort Curtis rebuilt just a short distance from where it originally stood. Our final stop highlights some of the most beautiful historic architecture in the region, the Pillow Thompson House, a late 19th century mansion that serves as the location for many weddings, parties, and other special events.

Premium Choice Tour #1 – GOSPEL, BLUES and a TASTE OF SOUL- Exploring the Delta Roots

When you arrive in Helena, just as Mark Twain did, you will immediately encounter the passion and paradox that characterizes life in the most fertile place on earth.

You will stop at Greater First Baptist Church where you will enjoy a stirring performance of traditional Black Gospel Music that will give you an authentic glimpse into the culture from which it emerged.

After a drive through historic Helena, site of the Civil War’s Battle of Helena, you will arrive at the Helena Museum, home to an eclectic collection of artifacts. Next, you will visit Granny Dee’s, where Granny herself will be preparing a welcoming soul food and cornbread lunch that will make you feel like kin.

Afterwards, explore Helena’s historic downtown, including the Malco Theatre, several boutiques and gift shops, as well as the Delta Cultural Center, which houses exhibits chronicling the sights, sounds and history of the Delta, including “King Biscuit Time,” the longest-running daily radio program in the country.

Your adventures conclude with a live performance from local blues legend, Super Chicken, who creates his own guitars from gas cans, skilletts and whatever else he can find. You will return home having savored the full flavor of a region that influenced more of 20th-century American culture than any other, taking with you insight into the rise, fall, and hopeful revitalization of small-town America.

Premium Choice Tour #2 – Mississippi ECO Wildlife “Safari”- By Private Canoe

Explore Buck Island on this nature tour. Enjoy the wilds of the Lower Mississippi River in the beauty and elegance of a hand-crafted Voyageur-Style canoe. No previous paddling experience necessary, the 30-foot-long Louisiana bald cypress strip Voyageur canoes are paddled for you so that you have time to take in every portion of this wildlife-friendly reserve.

Enjoy exceptional birding, animal viewing, racking, fossil hunting and beach combing along the giant sandbars and back channels of Buck Island, a 1,500-acre island one mile upstream of the Helena Harbor. Common bird sightings are the White Pelican, Least Tern, Pleated Woodpecker, and Kingfisher. Sixty percent of migrating songbirds use the Mississippi Flyway including the Prothonotary Warbler and Indigo Bunting and can be spotted in April and May.

Beavers and river otter abound, but you may not see more of the coyote than his tracks. The rich bottomland hardwood forests boast the richest habitat for white-tailed deer in North America. Fragrant willows in the lowlands give way to cottonwoods and sycamores higher up, finally yielding to oaks, sweet gums, locusts, elms and cypresses in which fruits and flowers like persimmon, paw-paws and wild grapes are commonly found.

The Mississippi River supports more than 200 species of fish and 50 species of amphibians like the Mississippi Map Turtle.

Day 4: Vicksburg, MS Arrival: 12:00 p.m. — Departure: 5:00 p.m.

Discover a unique blend of old and new in Vicksburg, Mississippi. Take in the diversity from Vicksburg National Military Park to the Waterways Experiment Station. Billed as the “Red Carpet City of the South,” Southern hospitality is alive and well and awaiting your arrival.

Hop-On Hop-Off Tour: Board your hop-on hop-off Steamcoach for a narrated tour experience of Vicksburg, Mississippi, a city bursting at the seams with local culture, character, art, entertainment and outdoor adventure. The Red Carpet City of the South, Vicksburg perfectly blends Southern culture and heritage with exciting modern-day attractions. Your deluxe teamcoach will first take you through Vicksburg’s shopping district. You will stop at The Church of the Holy Trinity, a place of spiritual refreshment to Vicksburg for more than 125 years. Two blocks from the church you will find the Southern Cultural Heritage Center. Your next stop is the Vicksburg Battlefield Visitor’s Center. As you return to the downtown area, continue to the Old Courthouse Museum, which showcases thousands of artifacts from pre-Columbian times to Civil War implements, and visit the Levee St. Museum. Finally, stop at Washington Street for more shopping, or discover other interesting museums including the Biedenharn Coca-Cola Museum and Yesterday’s Children Antique Doll and Toy Museum.

Premium Choice Tour #1 – The Battle of Vicksburg – The “Up-Close” Tour

This Premium Choice tour is a two-hour guided exploration of the historic Vicksburg battlefield and downtown area, describing the city's role in the Civil War. You will have the opportunity to board the deluxe Steamcoaches at the dock and then enjoy a narrated tour of the city of Vicksburg on your way to Vicksburg National Military Park with a licensed Battlefield guide. The park commemorates the campaign, siege, and defense of Vicksburg in 1863 and includes more than 1,340 monuments and markers, a 16-mile tour road, the USS Cairo – a restored city-class Union gunboat, and a National Cemetery. Life-sized exhibits and authentic artifacts from the Siege of Vicksburg are also on display. The tour includes the Vicksburg Battlefield Visitors Center and its orientation video.

Day 5: Natchez, MS Arrival: 8:00 a.m. — Departure: 9:00 p.m.

Step into the plantation lifestyle of the antebellum south in Natchez, site of numerous restored mansions. Visit historic Jefferson College, or just amble down the Natchez Trace.

Hop-On Hop-Off Tour: Natchez is the center of the Antebellum South. From Spring Pilgrimage to Christmas, there's no shortage of excitement in this small town as you tour the antebellum mansions, drink in the history and enjoy the evening entertainment. Stop at the Natchez Visitors Center to peruse the gift shop and bookstore, or view exhibits and films illustrating the rich history of Natchez. Take a narrated tour of Longwood and Stanton Hall. Stanton Hall was built in 1857 and is considered the grandest of the Natchez mansions. Longwood, built in 1861, is the largest octagonal house in the United States, standing six stories high and topped with a 25-foot finial. Also on our route is Twin Oaks, the antebellum mansion of Regina Charboneau, the Chef de Cuisine of the American Queen.

Premium Choice Tour #1 – Entertaining Southern Style with Regina Charboneau

Enjoy an intimate afternoon in the personal home of chef and cookbook author Regina Charboneau, culinary director of the American Queen and a celebrated American chef.

Come spend a true Natchez afternoon with Chef Regina at her circa-1832 home, Twin Oaks. You'll not only be entertained in grand Southern style with a personal tour of her home, but also will enjoy Champagne cocktails and a buffet of seasonal sweet and savory treats. Chef Regina will dish out the secrets of some of her favorite seasonal foods and will share tips for effortless entertaining.

Premium Choice Tour #2 – Music, Mistresses and Marriage

Cross the river to Louisiana and visit historic Frogmore Plantation, named a "Can't Miss" destinations in the Rand McNally Southeast Getaway Guide. Tour a computerized high-tech cotton gin and compare it to the historic gin that the Smithsonian Institute identifies as the rarest of its kind.

Take a seat on an original pew in a unique 1800s plantation church as the mistress of Frogmore narrates and two excellent vocalists sing the trials and triumphs of life on a plantation. Become the guest at a slave wedding, and tour authentic slave cabins as you learn about the daily life of a slave.

Become the guest at a slave wedding and tour the authentic slave quarters as you observe the daily life of a slave. Return to Natchez as your guide explains the progression of southern music through ragtime, blues and jazz. Before returning to the American Queen, take a few minutes to browse the costume museum, displaying attire of the elite 1850s Natchezians.

Day 6: St. Francisville, LA Arrival: 8:00 a.m. — Departure: 5:00 p.m.

This quaint town located on the bluffs of the Mississippi River is your window to the past. With over 140 buildings on the National Register, beautiful plantation homes nestled in the rolling countryside, and bustling Main Street shops, you'll find plenty to keep you on the go in St. Francisville.

Hop-On, Hop-Off Tour: As you board your deluxe hop-on hop-off Steamcoach, you will turn onto Royal Street where you may want to stop off at Grandmother's Buttons, a Victorian button museum and jewelry boutique, or the West Florida Republic Park. Visit the Old Market Hall, where you will see art, jewelry, handmade items and music albums. When you reach Commerce Street, there are several places for lunch, snacks, spirits, coffee and ice cream. Once you are refreshed, hop back on the Steamcoach which will take you up to the Spring Creek Shopping Center. Finally, you will visit the West Feliciana Historical Society Museum on Ferdinand Street and the Grace Episcopal Church.

Premium Choice Tour #1 – Mystery, Mansions and Mayhem

Your Steamcoach will take you to the Tunica Hills onto what was once Angola Plantation, now one of America's most well-known and visited maximum-security penitentiaries, infamously known as the Alcatraz of the South. Visit the 18,000-acre prison farm and the museum on this driving tour, and catch a glimpse of the industrial and agricultural operations, K-9 and horse facilities, offender housing units, the rodeo arena, prison cemeteries and historical points of interest like The Red Hat Cellblock, Angola's first cell block.

On the ride back into St. Francisville, you will visit The Myrtles Plantation, one of America's most haunted houses. Built in 1796 on a Spanish land grant of 650 acres by David Bradford, the 107-foot-long gallery is adorned with grape cluster iron work. The plaster frieze work in each room was added by Ruffin Gray Stirling in the 1850s. Learn firsthand about Chloe and why she haunts the Myrtles, and remember to make sure you have two earrings on when you leave; she likes to collect earrings from unsuspecting guests.

Day 7: Baton Rouge, LA Arrival: 8:00 a.m. — Departure: 9:00 p.m.

The capital of Louisiana, Baton Rouge is the center of all the great things the state has to offer—visitors delight in the seamless blend of past and present experiencing authentic Louisiana at every turn. With its semi-tropical climate, the outdoors is tempting and the attractions abound. No wonder this is one of the south’s fastest growing cities.

Hop-On Hop-Off Tour: In Louisiana’s capital city, you will see something unique at every turn! Begin your day with a tour for the military enthusiast at the USS Kidd, a WWII Fletcher-class destroyer. You will also visit historic exhibits in the adjoining Veterans Memorial Museum. Then, visit the Old Governor’s Mansion, built in 1930 by Governor Huey P. Long as “Louisiana’s White House.”

The next stop is the beautiful St. Joseph Cathedral, built in 1853. Next, walk through the Main Street Market where dining options include down-home Southern cooking, sandwiches, salads, Chinese, Greek and Lebanese. This is also a great opportunity to pick up Louisiana souvenirs. Then, the loop will take us around Capitol Lake through Arsenal Park for a beautiful view of the current Governor’s Mansion which was built in 1963, when Jimmie Davis was Governor. Also included is a stop by the Old Arsenal Museum, which was built in 1838 and used by the U.S. military during the Mexican and Civil Wars.

Tour the Louisiana State Capitol building, standing proud as the nation’s tallest capitol building. Get a bird’s-eye view of the city and mighty Mississippi River from the 27th floor observation deck. Next, stroll across the intricate Capitol Gardens and tour the Capitol Park Museum, a Louisiana State Museum. Here you can step onto a simulated Mardi Gras float, discover the difference between Cajun and Creole, and lose yourself in multimedia presentations. For the art lover, your next stop is the LSU Museum of Art, located inside the Shaw Center for the Arts and featuring a diverse art collection. The last stop on the loop is Louisiana’s Old State Capitol building, the 160-year-old statehouse that has withstood war, fire, scandal, bitter debate, abandonment and the occasional fistfight.

Premium Choice Tour #1 – History and Politics of Baton Rouge

Please note that in some cases, participation in these excursions may preclude you from joining the included shore excursion.

In the heart of Plantation Country, Baton Rouge is known for southern charm and grandeur, but there is another story to be told. This story does not involve big homes, hoop skirts and elaborate parties but does offer plenty of surprises along the way. On this tour, you will be immersed in Baton Rouge history and culture through dynamic tales told by famous – and infamous – Louisiana characters.

First, you will visit Boutin's Restaurant for lunch to enjoy live Cajun music and dancing along with traditional Southern Louisiana dishes such as fried seafood platter.

Next, explore Louisiana State University's Rural Life Museum and Wind Rush Gardens often referred to as "Louisiana's best kept secret!" The museum has the largest collection of cultural artifacts and tools from hardworking citizens of 19th-century Louisiana and includes 32 historic buildings spread over the 25-acre complex.

Finally, hear the legend of former Louisiana Governor Huey Long who was a strong supporter of Louisiana's working man, but quickly became Louisiana's "Kingfish," the most powerful man in the state. You will gain insight into just how powerful Long became when you see some of his creations, such as LSU's Tiger Stadium or the Louisiana State Capitol building, which he designed and was later assassinated in while walking out of a meeting.

In true Kingfish fashion, you will also participate in a Jazz funeral at Long's Burial Site. Get ready for all the fun and Louisiana characters that await you on this unforgettable tour!

Day 8: Houmas House, LA Arrival: 8:00 a.m. — Departure: 3:00 p.m.

Houmas House Plantation and Gardens is so much more than just a tour of a grand antebellum estate. Experience the southern splendor of "The Sugar Palace" when you step into 16 rooms filled with period antiques and Louisiana artwork.

Hop-On Hop-Off Tour: Disembark from the American Queen and experience the magic of time gone by when you enter the grounds of historic Houmas House Plantation & Gardens. Your 4-hour stay will take you on a journey through a time when Sugar Barons reigned supreme along the Great River Road.

As you begin your walking tour of the grounds, you will be greeted with the sights and scents of 16 acres of lush gardens, cool fountains and moss-draped live oaks that stand witness to the extraordinary lives spent in this beautiful setting.

Circle the mansion to find the Turtle Bar nestled beside a garden path. Here, you will find a cool respite and an opportunity to try a mint julep, the bourbon cocktail that was first concocted at Houmas House. Take your drink with you while continuing your stroll among the formal gardens, where you may happen upon the kitchen crops from which the sous chefs harvest each evening in preparation for meal service inside the mansion. You will enjoy full access to every room of the mansion and photography is permitted throughout.

Finally, you'll want to take a piece of Houmas House home with you. An 8,000-square-foot gift shop is filled with treasures to commemorate your visit.

Premium Choice Tour #1 – Laura: A Creole Plantation

Louisiana Creoles who inhabited and operated this historic site, lived apart from the American mainstream for more than 200 years. Surrounded by fields of sugarcane and hosting 12 buildings on the National Register, your 90-minute guided visit takes you through the newly restored Big House, the grounds, the formal French parterre, the vegetable and fruit gardens, the Banana Land grove, and the 170-year-old slave cabins where the West-African folktales of Compair Lapin, known in English as the legendary Br'er Rabbit, were recorded.

Laura's acclaimed tour, named the "Best History Tour in the US" by Lonely Planet Travel, is based upon personal, compelling accounts found in the French Archives Nationales, from Laura Locoul's own memoirs of the old plantation home, and of the plantation's Creole owners, women, slaves and children.

While you examine Laura's family furnishings, heirlooms, portraits, weapons, Mardi Gras and business artifacts, you will also marvel at the highly-skilled workmanship of slave artisans and treasures of Creole America's unique traditions and folklore.

The Laura Plantation Store carries a wide library on Creole history, culture, architecture, music and cooking. It is stocked with the hand-made wares from more than 40 local artists and craftsmen, including soaps, perfumes, holiday ornaments, sugar candles, wines, liquors, candies, pralines, dolls and jewelry.

Premium Choice Tour #2 – Life in the Bayou – A Swamp ECO Tour

Enjoy a true Cajun Experience as you explore the route that is known as Plantation Road. The local guide will enlighten you as to the affluency of this region of Louisiana was when cotton was king.

After your 45-minute narrated tour of the river, we will arrive in La Place, Louisiana home to the 250-acre ecosphere called Manchac Swamp. For the next 90 minutes you will be guided through this ecological wonder by your Cajun Captain. The customized boats are the only boats traveling these waterways. The swamp critters see our boats daily and recognize them as part of their environment. Responsive to the boat captain's call, they peak out from the underbrush and moss draped Cypress Trees.

This ecosphere harbor many American Alligators, nutria, ibis, turtle, herons, raccoons, egrets, and many more species native to Southern Louisiana. You will even have a chance to see a few baby alligators that the swamp is permitted to have on site and aboard the boats for all guests to see. When we return from our Swamp Tour we will have time in the large Cajun Pride gift shop before we return you to the American Queen.

Day 9: Disembark in New Orleans, LA Arrival: 8:00 a.m.

Tie up in New Orleans near historic Jackson Square and bid your ship adieu. But give in to the temptation to hang around and explore.