



A MISSISSIPPI RIVER VOYAGE

Aboard the Classic-Style Paddle-Wheeler *American Splendor*

March 10–18, 2026

Join National Trust Tours on a special private charter of the 185-berth *American Splendor* – a vessel built in 2016 in the classic paddle-wheeler style, on a voyage up the Mississippi River from New Orleans to Memphis, just as spring is unfolding. Begin in New Orleans, exploring the distinctive architecture of the French Quarter, the gorgeous homes of the Garden District and the National WWII Museum. After boarding the *American Splendor*, cruise upriver, visiting the sugar plantations, Creole cottages, and lush landscapes of Bayou country; the city of Natchez whose architectural grandeur reflects the prosperous Steamboat era of the early 1800s; and Vicksburg, where a 47-day civil war battle ensued before control of the Mississippi River was taken by the north. Conclude in Memphis exploring historic Beale Street to the rhythm of the Blues. The *American Splendor* offers all modern amenities in a setting of 19th century riverboat opulence, including comfortable cabins in the style of a bygone era, fine cuisine, and lively performances by onboard musicians.

What makes this Mississippi River cruise stand apart from the rest is the incredibly rich educational program provided by sponsor lecturers, and beginning with a keynote address in New Orleans by eminent Pulitzer-winning historian **Doris Kearns Goodwin**. She will discuss her Lincoln Prize-winning book *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*. Throughout the program travelers will also enjoy panel discussions and opportunities for direct engagement with the outstanding team of lecturers.



Study Leader John Meffert, consultant on Heritage Conservation Services, has a long tradition with the National Trust. He has served as the Director for our Southern Office and was the director of the Preservation Society of Charleston, the oldest nonprofit organization in the United States, responsible for preserving the historic resources of Charleston, S.C. John has delighted many study tour groups with his lectures and insights on preservation, and receives rave reviews as study leader.



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ITINERARY OUTLINE

DAY	OVERNIGHT	HOTEL	ACTIVITIES
Tue Mar 10	New Orleans, Louisiana	Hotel Monteleone	Arrive New Orleans independently and check into the historic Hotel Monteleone . The 1886 property is a member of the National Trust Historic Hotels of America and is also designated a Literary Landmark by the Friends of Libraries USA, both for its appearance as a setting in American fiction and as the haunt of such authors as William Faulkner, Eudora Welty, and Truman Capote. This evening, meet fellow travelers at a festive welcome reception and dinner, featuring a keynote address by eminent Pulitzer-winning historian Doris Kearns Goodwin . RD
Wed Mar 11	New Orleans	<i>American Splendor</i>	This morning, after an opening lecture, explore New Orleans with optional tours to the extravagantly landscaped Garden District or the highly acclaimed National World War II Museum celebrating teamwork, courage and sacrifice of the men and women who fought in the war that changed the world. In the afternoon, board the <i>American Splendor</i> and begin the journey up the mighty Mississippi River. BLD
Thu Mar 12	Oak Alley & Laura Plantations	<i>American Splendor</i>	Disembark on the west bank of the Mississippi River to explore historic Oak Alley , a 150-year-old plantation home which continues as a working sugar plantation. Nearby Creole Laura Plantation is a fascinating contrast to Oak Alley, illuminating the personal stories and culture of this area's inhabitants and boasting 12 buildings on the National Historic Register, including slave quarters. BLD
Fri Mar 13	Baton Rouge	<i>American Splendor</i>	Today the <i>American Splendor</i> arrives at the busy seaport of Baton Rouge and Louisiana's state capital. Explore the many downtown neighborhoods marveling at the rich art and architecture along the route. For those that feel adventurous, embark on a swamp tour through the ecologically rich Louisiana Bayou and navigate through cypress and pine for an up-close look at the waterfowl and other Bayou creatures. BLD
Sat Mar 14	St Francisville	<i>American Splendor</i>	Spend the day in the cotton port of St Francisville to learn about the town's rich history. Exploring the Historic District , enjoy optional excursions to several magnificent mansions including the Greenwood Estate, Rosedown Estate and Garden; Myrtles Plantation , and the Oakley Plantation, the home of John James Audubon .

Sun Mar 15	Natchez, Mississippi	<i>American Splendor</i>	Natchez suffered little destruction during the Civil War, and as a result, is home to the largest concentrations of restored pre–Civil War properties in the United States. Today visit three of these historic homes: Longwood , with its unique octagonal design; Rosalie , which served as Union headquarters during the Civil War; and Stanton Hall , constructed in 1851, and regarded today as one of the most opulent historic mansions in the country. Also enjoy free time in Natchez including the option to have lunch ashore. BLD
Mon Mar 16	Vicksburg, Mississippi	<i>American Splendor</i>	Vicksburg was one of the keys to victory in the Civil War. General Grant’s successful 47-day siege in the summer of 1863 brought control of the Mississippi River into Union hands. Today visit the National Military Park , considered the best-preserved battlefield in the United States, the ironclad gunboat Cairo and the Lower Mississippi River Museum , with its exhibits on how Vicksburg’s ancestors lived and an aquarium featuring local fish species. There will also be time to explore Vicksburg’s historic downtown area independently. BLD
Tue Mar 17	Cruising on the Mississippi	<i>American Splendor</i>	During a full day of cruising , relax on deck and enjoy the passing scenery and the varied river traffic. Our day includes a robust lecture program. BLD
Wed Mar 18	Memphis, Tennessee /Home		Upon arrival in Memphis this morning, disembark and depart from the airport for afternoon flights home. B

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Pricing:

Standard Stateroom, Deck 1, per person, sharing	\$8,990
Private Balcony, Deck 2, per person, sharing	\$9,790
Private Balcony, Deck 3, per person, sharing	\$10,590
Private Balcony, Deck 4, per person, sharing	\$11,390
Private Balcony, Deck 5, per person, sharing	\$12,190
Owner's Suite, per person, sharing	\$13,690
 Private Balcony Suite, single.....	 \$10,290

Fees and services are based on exchange rates of October 2024 and are subject to change.

Program Length, Capacity:

9 days from New Orleans to Memphis.

Minimum capacity: 120; Maximum capacity: 170 (all sponsors)

Fees Include:

All accommodations, meals, and excursions as specified in the itinerary • Full program of briefings, lectures and presentations • Keynote address by Doris Kearns Goodwin in New Orleans • Departure transfer from the ship to the airport in Memphis • Baggage handling

• Gratuities to porters, waitstaff, guides and drivers • Gratuities to shipboard personnel • Port charges • Entrance fees • Welcome reception and dinner including all drinks • Daily cocktail hour and nightly entertainment while on board *American Splendor* • Filtered water on motorcoaches • Criterion Tour Managers

Fees Do Not Include:

U.S. domestic airfare • Medical expenses, immunizations, and Covid-19 testing if required at the time of travel • Private airport transfers or airport transfers outside of group arrival and departure dates • Travel and trip cancellation insurance • Excursions that deviate from the scheduled tour options • Airline baggage charges • Meals not specified in the itinerary; dishes and beverages not part of the included meals; liquor or soft drinks except as noted • Laundry or dry cleaning • Telephone, fax, Internet, and email charges • Room service • Other items of a personal nature