



Huntsville/Madison County Convention & Visitors Bureau

Between the Mountains & the Lakes

Huntsville and North Alabama

Hub-n-Spoke Tour

Sample Itinerary

There's no better place to begin a trip to north Alabama than Huntsville, but that doesn't mean it should end there. Huntsville's an ideal destination for a hub-n-spoke tour of the area: Start your trip enjoying the highlights of what Huntsville has to offer, and then use the city as your base for exploring the surrounding region, complete with well-known history, natural beauty, and a unique shopping experience that's earned national press.

DAY 1

On the first day, plan to arrive in Huntsville as early as you can, because you've got a very full day ahead of you.

A LIVING HISTORY MUSEUM—BURRITT ON THE MOUNTAIN

Burritt on the Mountain provides a great place to kick off the tour, providing an amazing overview of the city, both literally and figuratively. The vista from atop the mountain is unmatched, and Burritt offers a primer in the city's story. Start with Dr. William Henry Burritt's eclectic mansion, add a historic park with restored 19th century houses including barnyard and animals, and finally throw in the artistic side with concerts, plays and exhibits, and you have a delightful mixture of old and new! In 1955, Dr. Burritt willed his mansion and surrounding 167 acres of land to the city of Huntsville (making it Huntsville's first museum). Since that time, original log homes from the area have been moved to Burritt. Interpreters are always busy demonstrating activities as one would see on a 19th century farm. Visit online at www.burrittonthemountain.com

WHAT'S GROWING ON?

The beautiful setting of Burritt will likely leave you with a desire to enjoy more of Huntsville's great outdoors, so after you leave there, head over to the Huntsville Botanical Gardens. Enjoy the NEW visitor welcome center whose design is reminiscent of a historic Southern mansion and the serene Nature Center, the largest seasonal butterfly house in the nation. The eclectic Gift Shoppe is always filled with decorative and useful garden items. Galaxy of Lights, one of ABA's Top Events, is open nightly from Thanksgiving through New Year's. Several major festivals such as Huntsville Blooms, Green U, Scarecrow Trail plus many more, prove that at the **Huntsville Botanical Garden** – there's always something growing on! Golf cart tours are available upon request.

While you're there, enjoy the setting a bit longer by having lunch in the all new Table restaurant or pick up one of the picnic lunches that are available and enjoy in the garden. (But hold off on dessert, you'll get that at the next stop.) Visit online at www.hsvbg.org

LOWE MILL ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

You'll start your sojourn at **Lowe Mill ARTS & Entertainment** with that promised dessert; conveniently before you even go inside, you can hit Pizzelle's Confections or Piper & Leaf for some tasty chocolates or tea. (Make note: the opposite corner is home to Suzy's Pops and Alchemy Lounge, so you can re-fortify mid-visit.) Lowe Mill is the largest privately owned arts facility in the United States. With approximately 200 working artists, small businesses, restaurants, and live performance venues, this huge historic textile mill is now a rising home for music, art, and culture. Visitors are encouraged to enter the studios and speak with artists to learn about their work processes, inspirations, and to purchase work. Groups can also participate in a wide range of art inspired activities taught by the artists themselves including chocolate making, screen printing, and painting. www.lowemill.net

OUR NATION'S MILITARY HERITAGE

For the final visit of the first day, head over to the **U.S. Veterans Memorial Museum** where every day is Veterans Day. A sometimes overlooked local treasure, this is one the premier military museums in the country. The exhibits of memorabilia, artifacts, and military equipment range from the American Revolutionary War to present day. Included in the collection are many rare and important artifacts including the oldest surviving jeep: the Ford Pygmy, serial #1. The U. S. Veterans Memorial Museum houses more military history per square foot than any other museum in the country. Veteran volunteers present fascinating first-hand accounts of America's most significant historic moments. Visit online at www.memorialmuseum.org

When you've finished there, you've earned a moment off your feet. Check into your hotel and enjoy some rest and relaxation before enjoying dinner at one of Huntsville's unique dining establishments. (Need suggestions? Check out our dining guide at <http://www.huntsville.org/restaurants-breweries/>)

DAY 2

Start the day with breakfast at the hotel. Just like the day before, you're going to want to get on your way quickly.

“SPIES, LIES AND ALIBIS”

Today is going to be steeped in Old Huntsville, so how better to start than getting a feel for the atmosphere by meandering the oldest streets in town. Enjoy intriguing stories told about the early merchants, bankers and attorneys who built the fashionable brick homes in the **Twickenham Historic District**, Alabama's largest district of antebellum homes. Many of the homes were seized by the Union Army during the Civil War from 1862-1865. Stop by the **Huntsville Veterans Memorial Park**, which honors the men and women who currently serve or have served in the United States

Armed Forces. It also stands to instill a sense of pride and respect for all veterans and their loved ones. (Step-on guide or themed walking tours)

THE LIFE OF HOWARD WEEDEN

Built in 1819, the **Weeden House** is your next stop for two reasons – it was the home of one of the city’s early notable daughters, and still captures what life here was like a century and a half ago. This was the home of 19th century poet and artist, Maria Howard Weeden. This white, two-story brick house, located in the Twickenham Historic District, is distinguished by a remarkable leaded glass fanlight over the front door. Learn how Maria Howard Weeden used literature, architecture, language, tradition and values to contribute to the development and transmission of culture. View Weeden’s exquisite portraits and learn how she captured the spirit of her models. Visit online at www.weedenhousemuseum.com

ALABAMA’S BIRTHPLACE

Step even further back in time by visiting Alabama Constitution Village. Here, you’ll hear the whir of the spinning wheel...learn from the blacksmith...turn the great wheel lathe in the cabinetmaker’s shop...and visit with villagers busy with their daily tasks, seemingly unaware that nearly two centuries have come and gone. **Alabama Constitution Village** dates back to 1819 and is the actual site where forty-four delegates gathered to forge the way for Alabama's Statehood. Become a part of Alabama’s history as villagers dressed in period clothing take you through eight reconstructed Federal style buildings. At this point, you’ll be an expert on life in the 1800s, able to contrast the 1800s urban life of the Village with the 1800s rural life you experienced the day before at Burritt on the Mountain. There are plenty of excellent lunch options within walking distance. Visit online at www.earlyworks.com

HARRISON BROTHERS HARDWARE SHOP

Just around the corner, you’ll find another unique Huntsville history experience. Founded in 1879 by brothers James and Daniel Harrison, **Harrison Brothers** is the oldest continuously operating hardware store in Alabama. Harrison Brothers is more than a glimpse of old Huntsville. It is a shopper's delight. Cotton throws, cast iron cookware, and oak rocking chairs share space with garden gadgets, bird feeders, and local art and books. Goods nestled up high are reached from tall rolling ladders, the rope elevator is hand operated, and a pot-bellied stove helps warm the store in the winter. Nearby, a tall desk displays an untidy mound of old invoices, catalogs and calendars, just as the last Harrison brother left it. When you are searching for a souvenir to take home or just plain looking, Harrison Brothers is the place to visit. Visit online at www.harrisonbrothershardware.com

A LESSON IN ART

While you’re downtown, it’s a great time to explore the Huntsville Museum of Art. Named as one of the state’s “Top 10” destinations by the Alabama Tourism Department, the nationally accredited museum fills its 16 galleries with a variety of exhibitions throughout the year, including prestigious traveling exhibits and the work of nationally and regionally acclaimed artists. The museum’s own permanent collection of more than 3,000 pieces including the Sellers Collection of Art by American Women and the world’s largest public display of Buccellati silver creations forms the basis for several

exhibitions each year. In addition to its exhibitions, the Museum offers art classes along with special programs, lectures, and musical presentations that add extra dimensions to the art work on display. Docent lead tours are available to enhance your group's experience. Outside and surrounding the museum, are pieces of public art that are part of our city-wide **SPACES**, Sculpture Trail. The Trail consists of 37 pieces, some permanent and others that will change biannually.

Visit online at www.hsvmuseum.org

PHANTOMS OF THE DEPOT

Wrap up your day at the creaking steps and down the shadowy halls of the Huntsville Historic Depot museum, where you'll learn about the history of this original 1860s building, its role in the Civil War and the townsfolk who walked the Depot floors. The Depot is one of Huntsville's historic treasures, with preserved graffiti attributed to soldiers held prisoner here during the Civil War. It's also the state's official transportation museum, with not only trains and railroad memorabilia, but also a collection of unusual automobiles. If you're the sort who enjoys the spooky side of things, ask about sightings and actual readings taken by trained paranormal experts. Perhaps you too will see evidence of the supernatural as you experience one of the nation's oldest remaining railroad structures, the **Historic Huntsville Depot**.

Visit online at www.earlyworks.com

DAY 3

By now, you know the drill – grab a bite quickly and hit the road; you begin Day Three at Alabama's #1 attraction, and then begin the “spoke” part of this tour with its first day trip.

T-MINUS 10, 9, 8 . . .

They don't call us the Rocket City for nothing! Find out how Huntsville earned that name at the world's largest space attraction, which features interactive exhibits that highlight the history of spaceflight as well as its future. The **U.S. Space & Rocket Center** is the only place in the world where you can stand under a “full-stack” – the shuttle orbiter, external tank and two solid rocket boosters – and the mighty Saturn V moon rocket. Guests can view artifacts such as the Apollo 16 capsule and Apollo 12 quarantine facility and experience breath-taking films on the 67-foot curved Spacedome IMAX Theater or in the National Geographic Digital Theater. The U.S. Space & Rocket Center is also home to Space Camp® and Aviation Challenge® which are not just for kids. Take a bus tour out to NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center and see where the U.S. program began! Visit online at www.rocketcenter.com.

And now, it's time to hit the road! First stop, Cullman, Alabama!

MINIATURE JERUSALEM

So what is there to see in Cullman? For starters, there's the Roman Coliseum, the Alamo, and the Tower of Babel! Start your Cullman adventure at the **Ave Maria Grotto**, known throughout the world as "Jerusalem in Miniature." Here you'll find a beautifully landscaped, four-acre park designed to provide a natural setting for the 125 miniature reproductions of some of the most famous historic buildings and shrines of the world. The masterpieces of stone and concrete are the lifetime work of Brother Joseph Zoetl, a Benedictine monk of St. Bernard Abbey. Begun as a hobby with

various materials, infinite patience and a remarkable sense of symmetry and proportion, Brother Joseph re-created some of the greatest edifices of all time. Visit online at www.avemariagrotto.com

BITTER SWEET: Bert's Brittle

Next, reward your sweet tooth with a visit to Bert's Brittle. This family business is based on a candy recipe named for the owners' mother, Bert. Their unique Peanut and Pecan Brittle is made in small batches and stretched paper thin for your group. Enjoy learning about the products and see first-hand demonstrations of this outstanding candy maker by taking a tour of **Seven Winds Kitchen**. Visit online at www.sevenwindskitchen.com.

THE SHRINE OF THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT

Built by Mother Angelica and located in the City of Hanceville, it is the home of the Poor Clare nuns of the Perpetual Adoration. It is modeled after European 13th century monasteries with both Spanish and Italian influences. The monastery features stained glass windows from Germany, building stone from Canada, marble pillars and inlaid marble designs from Italy, roofing tiles from South America, carved stonework decorations from artisans in Spain, and the main altar area is made of carved cedar covered in gold leaf. Visit online at www.olamshrine.com

Before returning to Huntsville, have dinner in Cullman at one of several great local restaurants, like Busy Bee, which has been selling its distinctive hamburgers for almost a century; All Steak, where the orange rolls are one of the state's culinary highlights; or Johnny's, a classic stop on the Alabama BBQ Trail.

DAY 4

Grab a bite for breakfast and you're on your way, this time heading west toward Tuscumbia.

“W-A-T-E-R”

At a plain, black well-pump in the small southern town of Tuscumbia, Alabama, one of the world's great miracles took place. Helen Keller became one of history's most remarkable women. She dedicated her life to improving the conditions of the blind and deaf-blind around the world, lecturing to individuals and organization in more than 25 countries. Wherever she appeared, she brought new courage to millions of blind people. Her teacher, Anne Sullivan is remembered as "the Miracle Worker" for her lifetime dedication, patience and love to a half-wild southern child trapped in a world of darkness. Learn more about the life of Helen Keller at Ivy Green, Birthplace of Helen Keller. Visit online at www.helenkellerbirthplace.org

AN OLD WEST SALOON IN A CAVE?

Next, you'll head to **Rattlesnake Saloon**, the watering hole under the rock. Come fill your belly and listen to live local music. After 5pm, grab a cold brew. Their staff strives to deliver an extraordinary experience to every customer, every time! So come on down, and bring your friends! Visit online at www.rattlesnakesaloon.net.

MUSIC TO MY EARS

The **Alabama Music Hall of Fame** tour includes a 12 foot jukebox playing pop, classical and opera tunes by Alabamians. The museum showcases recording equipment used in Sam Phillip's Memphis Music Service and the contract between Sam Phillips and RCA when the Alabamian sold his rights to the soon-to-be superstar Elvis Presley. Tommy Shaw of Styx fame has his shirt and guitar on display, along with Ransom Wilson's flute, Jim Nabors' Gomer Pyle outfit and stage outfits, Emmylou Harris, Donna Godchaux, Bobby Goldsboro, Lionel Richie, The Commodores and others. You too can live out your dream of becoming a star in the recording studio or a group effort singing of Tammy Wynette's "*Stand by Your Man.*" Don't miss this opportunity to learn more about world famous musicians.

Visit online at www.alamhof.org

WALKING TOUR

Next, you'll travel to **Mooreville, Alabama**, which is like stepping back in time to a peaceful, less hectic way of living. Mooreville is older than the State of Alabama. Incorporated in 1819, the entire 12 blocks of the oak-lined village is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. President Andrew Johnson worked here while he was a tailor's apprentice.

1818 FARMS

Before heading back to Huntsville, enjoy dinner at 1818 Farms and an evening guaranteed to be relaxing, full of laughter, fun and mouth-watering southern cuisine! Visit online at www.1818farms.com

DAY 5

After breakfast at the hotel, it's on to Grant, Alabama, for an unforgettable underground experience.

WORLD'S LARGEST STALAGMITE

Cathedral Caverns features the world's largest stalagmite, the world's largest stalagmite forest and the world's largest frozen waterfall. Evidence of human habitation in these limestone rock caves can be traced back 8,000 years.

Hopefully you've saved some money, because you may need it in Scottsboro, Alabama.

A SHOPPERS PARADISE

If searching for bargains is your passion and the thrill of discovering a one-of-a-kind treasure makes your heart race, come on a shopping adventure like none other on Earth! Scottsboro's Unclaimed Baggage is home of lost treasures from around the world! This unique facility has been featured on Oprah, Good Morning America and the Today Show. And don't worry if your eyes are bigger than your luggage, **Unclaimed Baggage** will ship your items home for you. Visit online at www.unclaimedbaggage.com

Enjoy lunch in Scottsboro, and then head back for one last afternoon in Huntsville.

AFTERNOON OPTIONS:

For an afternoon of shopping and being pampered, head over to **Bridge Street Town Centre**. This dining, shopping, entertainment district is an

outdoor lifestyle center with a European design situated on a lake, featuring over 70 upscale shops, many fabulous restaurants, from food court casual to fine dining, and the unique 14-screen Monaco Pictures. Bridge Street is also home to Westin Huntsville, Element and BLUE Medspa. Visit online at www.bridgestreethuntsville.com .

Alternately, you can tee it up on the Robert Trent Jones Trail. At the northern terminus of the RTJ Trail is Huntsville's very own **Robert Trent Jones Hampton Cove Golf Course**, which features a 54-hole facility with terrain that drastically changes from one side of the property to the other. The Highlands Course, which emulates a Scottish Links, is one of the gems of the Trail. Completely opposite is the River Course, the only Robert Trent Jones layout without a single bunker. The third course is the Short Course which is very open with water in play on 11 holes and a large double green accommodating the 10th and 17th greens. Visit online at www.rtigolf.com/courses/hampton_cove

Enjoy a farm tour at **Tate Farms** or **J. Sparks Hydroponic Farm** or experience the nationally and internationally awarded **Belle Chevre Creamery**.

Enjoy a final meal at one of Huntsville's best local eateries (if you visit Bridge Street, you'll definitely want to have dinner before you leave there!), and you're one your way, with a week's worth of experiences and a lifetime of stories.

Book your **Between the Mountains & the Lakes** tour today!



Contact Pam Williams, Tourism Sales Manager
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