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## Visiting Nashville on the cheap

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There is no beach. No theme park. No casinos.

No Super Bowl. No Mardi Gras. No World Cup.

Nashville is the city that tore down its theme park to build a (gasp) shopping mall.

Yet this central-Tennessee city, famous worldwide for its records and rhinestones, is a worthy destination for tourists pinching pennies - recession or not.

There's plenty of free music, plus educational and cultural attractions, to fill up a few days without lightening the wallet. You can stay, eat and be entertained at less cost than in many comparable cities.

"We look at it as a value destination," said Butch Spyridon, president of the Nashville Convention & Visitors Bureau. "You can have an instant vacation at minimum expense."

### Music

Nashville has built much of its reputation on fiddles and fringe, marketing itself as "Music City USA." Check out the cluster of a dozen or so honky-tonks along a three-block stretch downtown near the Cumberland River. The beer is cold, the music is loud and the admission is free. The joints stand together like sturdy soldiers in formation, awaiting the jeans-clad, cowboy-hat wearing patrons with well-worn boots on their feet and anticipation in their throats.

The most upscale of the businesses is the Wild Horse Saloon, though its Web site doesn't describe it as a honky-tonk. It's referred to (sniff, sniff) as "a mecca of entertainment." It has three levels, 66,000 square feet and has sold around 10 million bottles of beer since opening in 1994. Three dance instructors give free lessons nightly except for Monday when the club is closed (\$4-\$8 cover, wildhorsesaloon.com).

Tickets for the Grand Ole Opry, Nashville's legendary country music show, are \$38 to \$53 for around 2 1/2 hours of performances (opry.com).

### 1 Flat Stomach Rule: Obey



I cut down 6 lbs of stomach fat per week by obeying this 1 old rule. [Click here to read my story](#)

For nightowls, the Ernest Tubb Midnite Jamboree is held every Saturday night (actually early Sunday mornings) at a theater near the Grand Ole Opry House. Entertainment is free with performers like Michael Martin Murphey, Charlie Louvin and Jack Greene ([ernesttubb.com](http://ernesttubb.com)).

### Cheap eats

A pork shoulder sandwich, baked beans, coleslaw and tea or a soft drink cost only \$8.66 at Jack's Bar-B-Que. A slice of chess (a custardy pie) or

chocolate fudge pie is \$2.50 ([jacksbarbque.com](http://jacksbarbque.com)).

Throat need a jolt? Prince's Hot Chicken Shack 15 minutes north of downtown has been burning mouths since 1945 with its 500,000-volt chicken fried in cast-iron skillets and served with white bread and pickles. Add a couple of sides, and you can still leave (likely steaming) for about \$10 (615-226-9442).

### History and culture

Feeling guilty about honky-tonkin' and want to get a little culture? The Hermitage, antebellum home of President Andrew Jackson, is open daily, 12 miles east of downtown (\$17 adults, \$7-\$11 kids, [thehermitage.com](http://thehermitage.com)).

In Nashville's midtown area, across from Vanderbilt University in Centennial Park, is The Parthenon, a replica of the original Parthenon in Athens. Inside is a re-creation of the 42-foot statue Athena and an art museum (\$6 adults, \$2.50 kids, [nashville.gov/parthenon](http://nashville.gov/parthenon)).

For those who like history, the city offers the civil rights room at the Nashville Public Library, a Grand Ole Opry museum, the Tennessee State Museum, the Tennessee Agricultural Museum and self-guided tours of the 150-year-old state Capitol - all free.

### Other attractions

Northeast of downtown is the Gaylord Opryland Resort Hotel & Convention Center - a little town all its own. It has about 2,900 rooms, nine acres of indoor gardens, cascading waterfalls, a free dancing waters show nightly and an indoor river with its own delta flatboat (\$9 per ride). You can spend half a day just walking around, but the cost to park is \$18 (\$25 for valet, [gaylord](http://gaylord)

[opryland.com](http://opryland.com)).

You'll find more than 200 places to shop next door at Opry Mills ([oprymills.com](http://oprymills.com)). For other shopping, there's a free flea market every weekend at the farmers' market near the state capitol.

The Jack Daniel Distillery is a 90-minute drive southeast of Nashville, in Lynchburg.

Tours are free and lively

([jackdaniels.com](#)).

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