



SUMMER ESCAPADES

WHAT'S UP IN NASHVILLE

I had never given much thought to Nashville, just a medium-sized city in a southern state about 10 hours from here. But it seemed I began to hear about it more and more in a wide variety of random conversations. I think what added it to my Bucket List was watching the start of an NHL playoff game that began with a sweeping shot of an active rooftop bar with a packed street below. I've already seen Broadway in New York City, now it was time to see the neon lights in another city with a fun street called Broadway.

The lure of flying directly to Nashville—rather than through Atlanta or Charlotte—caused me to do something I'd never done before: Fly from St. Petersburg! Shorter commute than Tampa International Airport, better prices than Sarasota Bradenton International Airport. Worked out great.



You may be surprised how long the line was outside the Nashville airport for people waiting for Uber and Lyft rides. Hundreds of people lined the curb, all waiting for their respective blind-dates. Our suitor didn't speak any English which was a bit of a buzz kill; it would have been nice to be able to ask questions about this new city in which we were arriving.

When we visit new cities, I like to find a trolley-tour to get a broad-brush overview of an area—and there were two from which to choose in Nashville. We wound up sampling both, and found the Old Town Trolley Tours were slightly better, partly because they had television screens that augmented some of the people, places and things the driver was describing.

The tour took us by the beautiful state capitol—"one of only five in the country without a dome." Bicentennial Capitol Mall State Park which was a beautiful and historic area to mark the state's two hundred year birthday in 1996.

Other highlights included the Marathon Motors Creative Village, The Parthenon, Vanderbilt University, The Gulch—and Music Row. (We were able to see the recording studios of everyone from Elvis Presley, to Garth Brooks to Taylor Swift - and the guide pointed out Taylor's nearby condo on the top floor of a nearby high-rise. She is often seeing driving around town in her yellow Ferrari.)

After the 90 minute informational and entertaining tour, we went to find lunch around Broadway—the epicenter of downtown. Lower Broadway is nicknamed "Nashville's Honky Tonk Highway." There is an incredible amount of multi-level bars, all full of people, both day and night. No cover charge, from 10am to 3am! Some of the more popular spots are owned by current country singers like Blake Shelton and Jason Aldean.



MUSIC CITY

While out in the country, we visited the Arrington Vineyards—which wound up being the most magical part of our trip. We sat on a hillside drinking wine and eating cheese and crackers while listening to live music in a very cool atmosphere under idea weather conditions. We just looked at each other and soaked in the moment, knowing it was ideal.

We wound up having two very different experiences within our four day stay in the Tennessee Valley—half in Music City, and half out in the country. A perfect combination.

Bottom line—Nashville is a fun place to visit. The city is laid out nicely and is a huge draw for tourists. Some call it “Nash Vegas,” which isn't too far from the truth.

Actually, I'd prefer Nashville to Las Vegas.

It's also the new unofficial destination for bridal parties—and we saw dozens of those.

Lots of people. Lots of bars and restaurants-- and lots of fun.

