

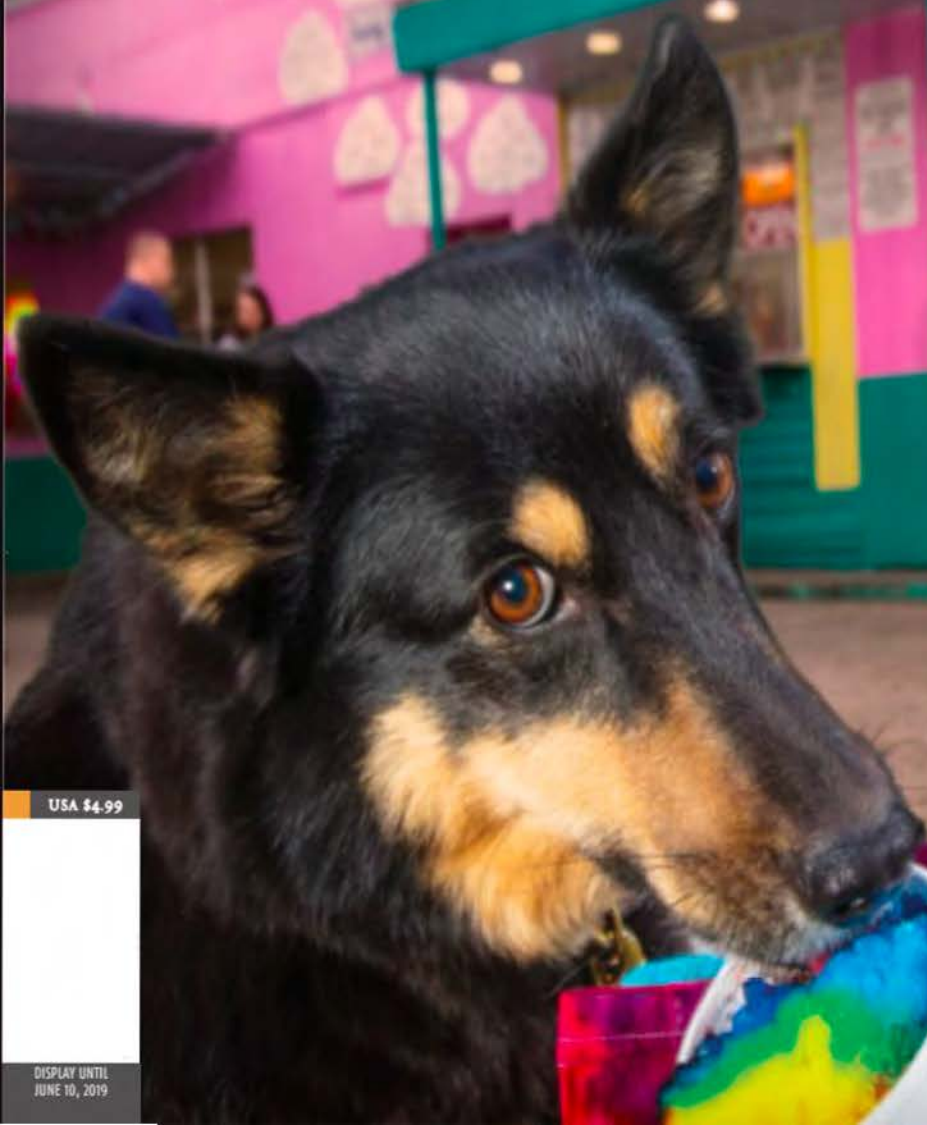
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Memphis

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2019 Staycation GUIDE



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2019 MEMPHIS Staycation «««GUIDE»»»

*Looking for a vacation spot?
It's closer than you think!*

YEARS AGO, TV COMMERCIALS URGED VIEWERS to “See the USA in your Chevrolet.” And that’s good advice, whether you’re a Chevy owner or not. But sometimes, it’s nice to stay close to home, and these days, there are plenty of good reasons to do that.

The Travel Channel has named Memphis “the hottest Southern destination of 2019.” Frommer’s has listed the Bluff City “one of the best places to go in 2019.” TripSavvy considers our city one of the “best overall destinations.” And Lonely Planet called Memphis “one of America’s best emerging destinations.”

On these pages, we offer just a few reminders why sometimes the best vacations can be staycations. What’s more, we chose attractions that cost only a few dollars — and some of them are even free. What’s not to like?

Get high at the Pyramid.

It may not tower over all other buildings in Memphis (it’s actually eighth, in terms of vertical height, at 322 feet), but there’s just no better view in town than the one you can enjoy if you hop on the elevator and glide up to The Lookout restaurant that perches atop what is now known as Big Cypress Lodge and the Bass Pro Shops Center. And while our Memphis Pyramid may be only half as tall as St. Louis’ Arch, our remarkable vista is unmatched by any other place in North America.

Hard to believe, but Bass Pro is now in its fifth year of operation here. Just as hard to understand is the fact that a ridiculous number of locals have never gone “up top.” If you’re one of those people, shame; there’s no better view to



The Bass Pro Shops Pyramid offers the best views in town.

be had of our city. Particularly since you can go almost to the Pyramid’s peak and actually go outside (weather permitting), greeting Mother Nature in person, taking in three very different views of the place we call home: south toward Downtown, north toward Harbor Town, and across to the west into the vast Arkansas Delta.

The custom-built elevator that takes visitors all the way from the bottom to the top is the tallest free-standing elevator in America, well worth the \$10 round-trip ticket. Looking down below,



you find yourself becoming a speck in the sky as you hurtle up the equivalent of 25 stories in less than a minute or two. Once you're at The Lookout restaurant, the world below truly becomes your oyster. The restaurant serves oysters, by the way, and has a full bar.

As far as I'm concerned, The Lookout is the perfect lunch spot in town, a place where you can leave all your day-to-day problems behind, or at least below. And getting that little bit closer to heaven will brighten your day, I promise. The restaurant is open to the public 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily, and until 7 p.m. on Sundays. Next time you have out-of-town visitors, trust me: You'll be doing them a great disservice if you don't take them straight to the top. — *Kenneth Neill*

The Lookout is the perfect lunch spot in town, where you can leave your day-to-day problems behind, and getting that little bit closer to heaven will brighten your day.



Dip a paddle into Old Man River.

The Mississippi River can be as imposing as it is beautiful. That is a lot of water rolling south, and at an uncomfortably strong pace. But the Wolf River Harbor is a different story, the smaller body of water that rests — literally — between Mud Island and the edge of Downtown Memphis. It happens to be an urban kayaker's delight.

Enter at the cobblestones (near Mud Island's south end) and paddle your way north, under the massive ramps to the Hernando DeSoto Bridge and past the Pyramid. (On that subject, Bass Pro will sell you a kayak, should you prefer to own your ride. If not, independent businesses rent them on an affordable, hourly basis.)

There's a tranquility to paddling in



gentle water that can't be found on the hiking paths or expansive fields of Memphis parks. Silence tends to surround you, even on a tourist-heavy, mid-summer Saturday. The last time I tried to match the shape of a cloud with an animal, I was kayaking in Wolf River Harbor. (It was a camel, though with a tiny head.)

There happens to be a small shop at the Harbor Town marina (west side of the water) where you can find snacks and cold beverages, depending on how much of the day you'd like to surrender to that distinctive silence. Gaze up at the Bluff City's version of skyscrapers and count the cars driving overhead, many of them leaving Memphis (feel for them). The bustle of life will return; it's never far away. But for now, it's just you, a kayak, and, shall we say, the Gentle Miss.

— *Frank Murtaugh*



There's a sort of magic that emanates from Beale Street and dances between the buildings. Above: the Beale Street Flippers.

Step back in time at A. Schwab.

A Memphis staycation wouldn't be complete without a stroll down historic Beale Street. There's a sort of magic that emanates from the brick road and dances between the buildings, striking your senses like the twang of a steel guitar or a crash of drums. The resonant energy seems to float on the wind, carrying history with it.

A day trip to Beale (arguably the best time to enjoy the strip) should include a stop at A. Schwab, which opened in 1876 and is the only remaining original business on the street. Peruse the "dry goods" emporium's selection of novelty items: tin toys and coin banks, vintage games (jacks, peg boards), oversized pencils, gag gifts, and more. Adult-humor-themed kitchen accessories (like decorative hand towels printed with funny phrases), flasks, and drinkware, and of course Memphis and Elvis memorabilia, are also well-stocked.

For the kids — or the kid-at-heart — choose from classic treats and candies, including salt-water taffy, Moon Pies, lemon drops, and jelly beans. A wall lined with jarred goods features Southern favorites: preserves, fruit butters, pickled okra, and chow chow.

Pull a stool up at the bar to enjoy a quick lunch; the menu is simple with a small selection of sandwiches. And do



ABOVE: The soda fountain is a fairly recent addition to the iconic Beale Street store whose slogan has been, "If you can't find it here, you're better off without it."

not skip out on an old-fashioned fountain soda, with your choice of house-made flavored syrup, and a hand-spun malt for dessert. While it's not quite an obligation, you may want to cool down your burnin' love with The Elvis shake, made with vanilla ice cream, banana, and peanut butter. — *Shara Clark*