

# MOBILE, AL



## ABOUT THE CITY

Mobile is probably best known for its white sandy beaches on the Gulf Coast, but it also has a rich history that goes beyond its seafood-and-sand reputation. Mobile was first settled by the French who were looking for a place to stake their claims in the New World. They built Fort Conde as their military headquarters as they explored the area. The area passed hands among the French, English and Spanish several times in those early days, until the United States acquired Mobile in 1813. "King Cotton" and the industries that accompanied it saw the economy boom in the 1850s. Later, railroads, shipbuilding and lumber became important industries. After World War II, shipbuilding, paper and chemical manufacturing and petroleum refining took over. Jobs in modern Mobile center around chemical production, cargo handling, and construction.

Maybe you weren't aware that Mobile has an elaborate Mardi Gras celebration! Complete with floats, beads and moon pies, their celebration comes in the two weeks before Lent. Parades, balls and other receptions are a big part of the event. A little tamer than the New Orleans Mardi Gras, Mobile's celebration is more family oriented.

Today Mobile is a city of beautiful oak lined streets, shading lovely old mansions. Museums display the diverse history of this part of our country. Mobile commemorates the past, but lives fully in the present.

## ATTRACTIONS

### Cathedral of Immaculate Conception:

Located in downtown Mobile, this cathedral was built between 1835-1849, and is listed as one of Mobile's oldest churches. It occupies the



site used by Mobile's first settlers as a burial ground. Beautiful stained-glass windows and polished marble designs decorate the basilica.

### Fort Conde:

Mobile's welcome center was built in the early 1700s as a French fort. Reconstructed and furnished as it appeared in 1702, the fort features fac-similes of 18th century artillery demonstrated by costumed tour guides. Museum rooms detail past Mardi Gras celebrations and the origins of the city.



### The Estuarium at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab:



This beautiful aquarium, with exciting visual displays and engaging interactive activities, will give you a first-hand view of the eco-systems of the Mobile Bay area. From the swamps of the Delta to the waters of Mobile Bay, from the

sands of the Barrier Islands to the reefs of the Gulf of Mexico, the Estuarium offers a lively educational experience for everybody. Other exhibits include the Living Marsh Boardwalk, the Miss May May, the Weather Station and much, much more.

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### Bragg-Mitchell Mansion:

This beautifully restored pre-Civil War mansion demonstrates both Greek Revival and Italianate influence. Fifteen-foot ceilings and a dramatic curved staircase contribute to the sense of splendor.



### Mobile Greyhound Park:

Alabama's oldest Greyhound park features both dog and horse racing. You can watch the races from the tracks or the grandstand.



### Bellingrath Gardens and Home:

Coca-Cola bottling founder Walter Bellingrath and his wife, Bessie opened their private garden estate in 1932 and the result has become one of the most popular tourist destinations in the South. The Gardens cover 65 acres and feature a year-round blooming schedule of tulips, azaleas, roses, mums, poinsettias and so much more. It has been chosen as one of the top three gardens by readers of *Southern Living* magazine. The Bellingrath Home is the first Alabama home to be featured on A&E's "American Castles".

In addition to the floral displays and the home, Bellingrath also features a Classic Car Show in April.



River Scene at Bellingrath Gardens

### River Cruise Aboard the Southern Belle:

The 150-passenger Southern Belle offers fun, scenic 45-minute cruises on Fowl River from Bellingrath Gardens landing.



### Battleship Memorial Park:



Voyage through time and revisit an era of adventure and bravery as you tour the many exhibits. Visit **USS ALABAMA**, the recipient of nine World War II Battle Stars. Her crew of 2,500 saw action in the Atlantic for a year before joining the Pacific Fleet in mid-1943. She fought at such key locations as Leyte, the Gilbert Islands, and Okinawa, and then led the American Fleet into Tokyo Bay in September 1945.

Also at the park is the submarine **USS DRUM**, "Calamity Jane", a B-52 Stratofortress that served with SAC and the A-12 "Blackbird" spyplane. In the Aircraft Pavilion you'll see a gull-winged Corsair and the P51-D Mustang Redtail, the plane flown by the valiant Tuskegee Airmen. Then inspect other aircraft from Korea, Vietnam and Desert Storm. The park also includes a rose garden, gift shop, flight simulator and much more.

