



## CRESCENT ROUTE GUIDE



NEW YORK • PHILADELPHIA • WASHINGTON, DC • ATLANTA • NEW ORLEANS

*We hope you enjoy reading this guide and learning about points of interest along our route. It is written starting from the northeastern terminus of the train in New York and proceeds to points southwest, ending in New Orleans. If you boarded in New Orleans, just read the guide in reverse, remembering to look in the opposite direction if referenced.*

**AMTRAK STATIONS** are shown in all capital letters, as opposed to upper and lower case for towns and geographical areas through which the train travels but does not stop. The Amtrak System Timetable or the Crescent panel card should be consulted for actual station times. While all service presented in this guide was accurate at the time of publication, routes and services are subject to change. Please contact Amtrak at 1-800-USA-RAIL, visit [Amtrak.com](http://Amtrak.com), or call your travel agent for the most current information.

*Between the front door of America's Eastern Seaboard, Amtrak's famous Northeast Corridor, and the equally well-known delights of America's Most Interesting City, New Orleans, lays the authentic gateway to the American South and its living history. From twinkling Northeast cityscapes to shining Blue Ridge foothills to "new South" cities like Charlotte, Atlanta and Birmingham to the Deep South and its shimmering, subtropical Louisiana swamp country – the Crescent shoots for its namesake moon and hits the stars as well. See the bombast of Broadway, the rich Civil War history of the South and the magic of the "Crescent City." The Crescent doesn't just promise the moon – it delivers!*

*[Today's Crescent is the lineal descendent of the Washington and Southwestern Vestibuled Limited inaugurated in 1891 by the Richmond and Danville Railroad. Advertised as providing "a service second to none," it carried drawing room and stateroom sleeping cars, dining cars, library and observation cars that were gas lighted and equipped with running water. Its unique (for the time) vestibuled platforms were considered a novelty, providing passengers the opportunity to travel between cars safely and cleanly for the first time. Southern Railway operated the train until 1979, when Amtrak officially took over the route. It was a standout operation until the very end.]*



# WELCOME ABOARD



Welcome aboard the the *Crescent*®! The *Crescent* takes you on a journey through the Northeast cityscapes, shining Blue Ridge foothills, historic Civil War battlefields, the heart of the American South and the shimmering Louisiana bayou country. On board, you will experience the comfort and relaxation of train travel while witnessing unique scenery. We are happy to have you aboard today and want to ensure your trip is everything you want it to be. If there is anything that can be done to make your trip more enjoyable, please do not hesitate to call on any Amtrak employee.

## THE TRAIN STAFF

The staff of the *Crescent* is here to make your trip a special and enjoyable experience.

**Conductor** is responsible for the entire On-Board Services staff as well as ticket collection, the safety of passengers and the safe operation of the train.

**Lead Service Attendant** is responsible for the operation of the Dining car and Dining car staff.

**Lounge Car Attendant** is responsible for the operation of the Lounge/Café car.

**Sleeping Car Attendant** is responsible for providing all service for passengers ticketed in Sleeping car accommodations, including room preparation, luggage service and any assistance necessary to ensure a comfortable journey. He/She can also assist with meal reservations or arrange for your meal to be served in the privacy and comfort of your accommodation.

**Coach Attendant** is responsible for providing service for passengers ticketed in coach. This includes seat assignment, pillow service, luggage service and assistance to ensure a comfortable journey.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

**Viewliner Sleeping** accommodations provide a range of private rooms with amenities for day and night use. From roomettes to bedrooms with lavatory and shower, Sleeping car accommodations will suit any need and can be described in more detail by any member of the crew. Please ask to speak to the Conductor regarding the availability of rooms. Amtrak Club Acela® is available in New York, Philadelphia and Washington stations, and the Magnolia Room, a private waiting area, is available in New Orleans for Sleeping car service passengers.

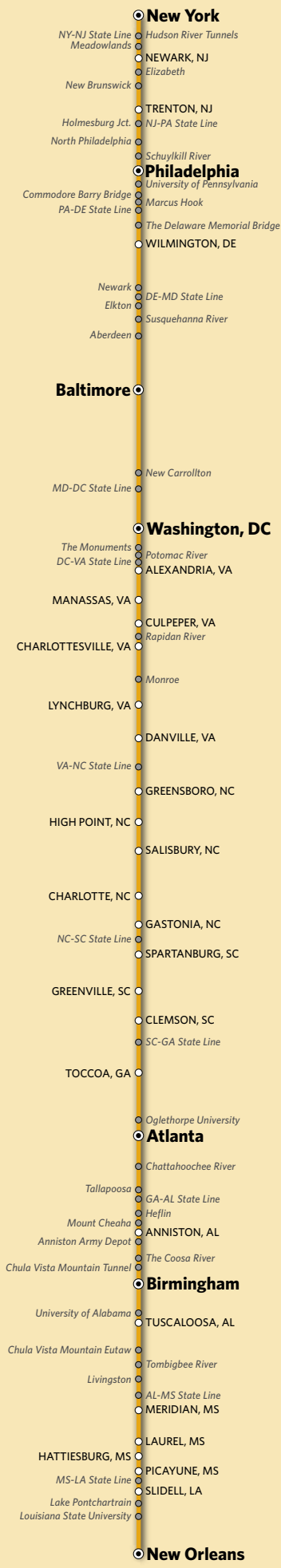
**Coach** seating provides a wide reclining seat with leg rest, folding tray table and overhead lights. Free pillow service is also available.

**Dining** service features a wide range of meals prepared by Amtrak chefs with regional specialties unique to the *Crescent*. The Dining car provides the perfect atmosphere to meet your fellow passengers and enjoy a delicious meal while the scenery glides by your window. Sleeping car accommodations include meals in the Dining car while passengers ticketed in Coach may purchase Dining car meals at reasonable prices. Unique scenery and a great staff make dining on the *Crescent* a memorable experience.

**Lounge/Café** is the perfect car for purchasing lighter fare such as sandwiches, snacks and beverages. This car provides the perfect atmosphere for sightseeing and making new friends.

**HOST RAILROADS** are the freight and commuter railroads that Amtrak contracts with to operate Amtrak passenger trains. The *Crescent* travels New York-Washington --- Amtrak; Washington-Alexandria --- CSX; Alexandria-New Orleans --- Norfolk Southern (NS).

*Information contained in this route guide as well as described amenities and features are subject to change without notice. While gratuities are not required for services provided, it is an appreciated way to convey to an employee that he or she has made your trip more enjoyable.*



**NEW YORK** is America's most populous city. So famous are its districts that Wall Street, Broadway and Madison Avenue are universally recognized shorthand for the industries located there. It is a global city, with worldwide influence over commerce, finance, culture and entertainment and the arts. It is also an important center for international affairs, hosting the United Nations headquarters. Unique among U.S. cities for its high use of mass transit and the density and diversity of its population, its reputation as a city that never sleeps is due to its 24-hour subways and the constant bustling of traffic and pedestrians. Birthplace of numerous cultural movements, its metropolitan population surpassed 10 million in the early 1930s, making it the first "megacity" in human history. Amtrak offers connections to its entire system through Chicago from New York.

### New York/New Jersey State Line

**Hudson River Tunnels** Departing Manhattan, we enter a 2.5 mile tunnel under the Hudson River connecting Weehawken, New Jersey with Pennsylvania Station. The tubes (one in each direction) were completed in 1910 by the Pennsylvania Railroad.

**New Jersey Meadowlands** now visible is a large ecosystem of wetlands known for being the site of large landfills and decades of environmental abuse. The Meadowlands Sports Complex here was built in 1976. Even today, the area contains many species of fish, crustaceans and mollusks, and is considered an important bird habitat.

**NEWARK** is the largest city in New Jersey and a major container shipping port. It is most recently known as Renaissance City for its efforts to revitalize its downtown. It is the third largest insurance center in the U.S. and home to Newark Museum with the best Tibetan arts collection in the world. Its New Jersey Devils hockey club came in 2007.

**Elizabeth** is the fourth largest city in the state. It was named one of "America's Greenest Cities" by *Popular Science* magazine in 2008. Its first major industry was the Singer Sewing Machine Company in 1872. Baseball great Yogi Berra hails from Elizabeth.

**New Brunswick** on the southern bank the Raritan River is known as "Healthcare City," reflecting its concentration of medical facilities as well as the corporate offices and production facilities of several large pharmaceutical companies. Settled in 1681, it became an important hub for Colonial travelers and traders. Home of Rutgers University, its list of notable natives includes former Washington Redskins quarterback Joe Theismann and actor Michael Douglas.

**TRENTON** is the capital of New Jersey and was the site in 1776 of George Washington's first military victory after crossing the Delaware River. It was briefly capital of the United States in November and December of 1784. Watch for the bridge slogan that reads "Trenton Makes, the World Takes" -- a relic of its era as a major manufacturing center from the late 1800s through the 1950s. It is home to New Jersey State Prison with two maximum security units. Innovative comedian Ernie Kovacs, influenced deeply by his Trenton Central High School drama teacher, in turn went on to influence American comedy for decades after his 1962 death in an automobile accident.

### New Jersey/Pennsylvania State Line

**North Philadelphia** is home to Temple University and birthplace of comedian Bill Cosby. Tastykake and Pep Boys are headquartered in its Allegheny West neighborhood.

**Schuylkill River** (pronounced SKOO-kull) is very popular with watersports enthusiasts and college rowing teams. Boat House Row is visible on the left after crossing the river, as is the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the steps of which were used by "Rocky" to train for his big fight in the film of the same name.

**PHILADELPHIA** Before we enter 30<sup>th</sup> Street Station, Center City can be seen on the left. City Hall Tower holds a statue of William Penn, founder of Pennsylvania, planner and developer of Philadelphia – the “City of Brotherly Love” -- and a devout pacifist and Quaker. Home of the Liberty Bell, the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, Philadelphia was the social and geographical center of the original 13 American colonies, giving birth to the American Revolution. It also served as the nation’s second capital in 1774. Today, its metropolitan area is the fourth largest in the U.S.

**University of Pennsylvania** is now visible behind the school stadium, Franklin Field. A member of the Ivy League, it serves 20,000 students with 4,500 professors as one of the most selective universities in the U.S. It offered the nation’s first modern liberal arts curriculum after a board of trustees was assembled by Benjamin Franklin in 1749.

**Commodore Barry Bridge** spans the Delaware River between Bridgeport, N.J. and Chester, Pa. At 1,644 ft., it is the fourth longest cantilever bridge in the world.

**Marcus Hook** calls itself the “Cornerstone of Pennsylvania.” Situated alongside the Delaware River, it provided the setting for the 2005 film *One Last Thing* about a teen with a rare, terminal form of cancer who wished only for a date with a supermodel.

**Delaware Memorial Bridge** is visible downriver and connects Delaware with New Jersey. Its eight lanes span the world’s longest twin suspension bridge.

**WILMINGTON** experienced high growth in jobs and office construction in the 1980s after passage of laws liberalizing bank governance within the state. Many international banks have operations in the city, especially credit card operations. The historic train station was built in 1908 by the former Pennsylvania Railroad. Notables from Wilmington include actress Valerie Bertinelli, musician Cab Calloway and commentator Bill Press.

**Newark** (pronounced NU-ARK) was founded in 1694. During the Revolutionary War, legend has it that the Stars and Stripes were first flown at the Battle of Cooch’s Bridge outside of Newark. Today, it is home to the University of Delaware, with world class programs in business, chemical engineering, chemistry and biochemistry. Its central area is compact, walkable and lively, due in large part to university students. Edgar Allan Poe is said to have written parts of “The Raven” while staying at an inn on Main Street.

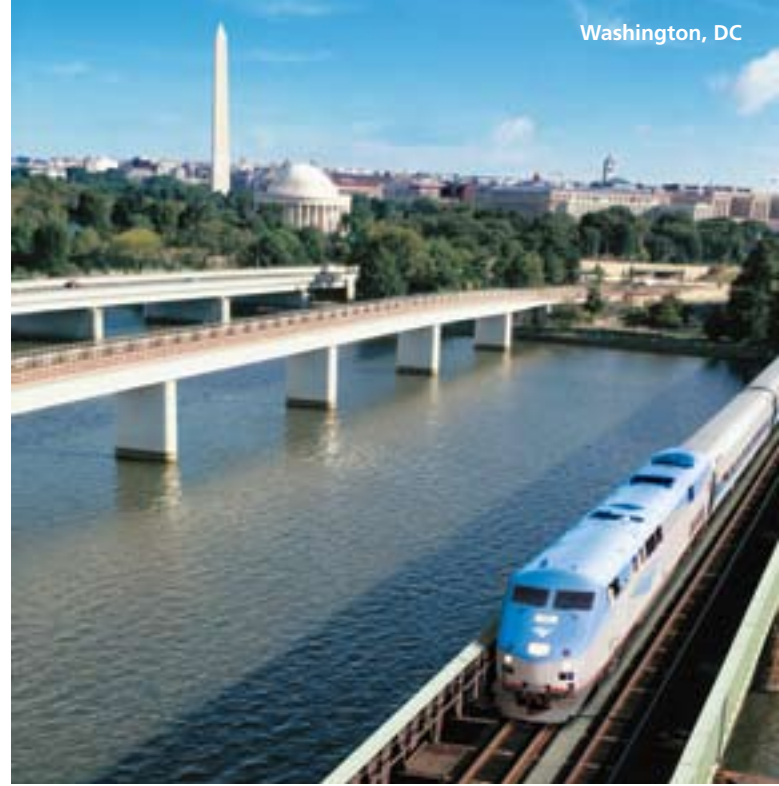
#### Delaware/Maryland State Line

**Elkton** marks the head of navigation on the Elk River, which flows into nearby Chesapeake Bay. The town was once famous as a place for eloping couples to marry.

**Susquehanna River** is the longest river on the east coast and provides half of the freshwater inflow for the Chesapeake. Geologically, it is regarded as extremely ancient. In 1979, it was the scene of the Three Mile Island nuclear power accident near Harrisburg, PA.

**Aberdeen** is home to the U.S. Army’s Aberdeen Proving Ground, established by Congress in 1918. Baltimore Orioles legend Cal Ripkin, Jr. hails from Aberdeen.

**BALTIMORE** is a major seaport founded in 1706 and the largest city in Maryland. Its Inner Harbor is a successful example of the city’s ambitious renewal effort. It is named after Lord Baltimore, founding proprietor of the Maryland Colony. Francis Scott Key, a Maryland lawyer, wrote the *Star Spangled Banner* here, a recounting of the British attack on the harbor during the War of 1812. Baltimore exhibits examples of architecture from periods ranging over two centuries. Oriole Park at Camden Yards is considered to be the most beautiful “retro” style baseball park in the



major leagues. One of Amtrak’s eight busiest stations, the city is home to author Tom Clancy and Olympian Michael Phelps.

**NEW CARROLLTON** is a suburban stop for Amtrak’s Northeast Corridor service, situated alongside the eastern terminus of the Washington Metrorail’s Orange Line. Lying just inside the famous Washington Capital Beltway, it is named for a delegate to the Continental Congress and signer of the Declaration of Independence, Charles Carroll.

#### Maryland/DC Border

**WASHINGTON, DC** is the nation’s capital, founded in 1790. In addition to all three branches of the federal government, it houses 172 foreign embassies and the headquarters of the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Organization of American States, Inter-American Development Bank, Pan American Health Organization, numerous trade unions, lobbying groups and professional associations. It is also home to a number of museums and monuments, and parks such as Rock Creek, Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, National Mall, Theodore Roosevelt Island and Anacostia. Washington Union Station was opened in 1907. Designed by Daniel Burnham, it was restored in 1988 and is today one of the biggest tourist attractions in the city, housing shops, restaurants, theaters, Washington Metro light rail and Amtrak. Washington is one of only 13 cities in the U.S. with teams representing all four major sports; its Washington Redskins have won three professional league championships. Several notable universities, including Georgetown, American, George Washington and Catholic are in Washington. We approach the city from a tunnel under the Capitol, affording us a sweeping view of “official” Washington. Visible soon is the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, where all currency and postage stamps are produced. The Washington Monument dominates the skyline, and the Jefferson Memorial – modeled after the third president’s home at Monticello – can be seen astride the Tidal Basin, ringed by Japanese cherry trees.

#### DC/Virginia Border

**Potomac River** As we cross, the Pentagon is visible on the Virginia side and Arlington National Cemetery is just beyond. We now pass Crystal City, an office and hotel complex. The river, 383 miles long, forms a part of the borders between Maryland, Washington, Virginia and

West Virginia. Known as “The Nation’s River,” it is rich in history and heritage. George Washington was born in, surveyed and spent most of his life within the Potomac Basin. Its watershed links coal miners in upstream West Virginia, urban residents in the District of Columbia and watermen in Virginia’s Northern Neck.

**ALEXANDRIA** and its historic center, Old Town, is a mostly high-income suburb of Washington, largely populated by professionals working in federal civil service, the military, or for one of the private companies contracting to provide service to the federal government. Established in 1695, it was ceded in 1791 to the U.S. Government to form the District of Columbia, and retro ceded to Virginia in 1846 when the District of Columbia was reduced in size to exclude that portion south of the Potomac River. Market Square in Old Town is the oldest continuously operating marketplace in the U.S.

**MANASSAS** began life as Manassas Junction, a strategic railroad crossing that was the focal point of two Civil War Battles of Bull Run. It is today a suburb of Washington, and is served by the commuter railroad Virginia Railway Express at the Manassas station. In 1993, it gained notoriety as the hometown of John and Lorena Bobbitt.

**CULPEPER** is a town of 9,600 that has grown rapidly into a “bedroom community” of Northern Virginia and its Washington suburbs. During the Civil War, it was an important crossroads for a number of armies marching through central Virginia, both Union and Confederate. In the heart of downtown stands the childhood home of Confederate General A.P. Hill, commander of “Hill’s Light Division” under Stonewall Jackson. During the Revolutionary War, the Culpeper Minutemen militia was formed here.

**Rapidan River**, one of America’s best trout fishing streams, is the largest tributary of the Rappahannock River in North-central Virginia.

**CHARLOTTESVILLE** has been named best place to live in the U.S. based on cost of living, climate and quality of life. It is home to three former presidents: Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and James Monroe. It is also home to the University of Virginia, and to Monticello, Jefferson’s renowned mountain-top home. The town was undamaged during the Civil War, surrendered by the mayor to spare it from burning. Nearby Shenandoah National Park and Skyline Drive offer recreational activities and beautiful scenery. Its Downtown Mall is one of the longest outdoor pedestrian malls in the country. Actress Sissy Spacek, actor Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson and novelist John Grisham have all called Charlottesville home.

**LYNCHBURG** is known as the “City of Seven Hills.” Located near the geographical center of the state, it served as a Confederate supply base during the Civil War. Nearby is Appomattox Courthouse, where Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered to Gen. Ulysses S. Grant to end the war. The first cigarette rolling machine was invented here and, thanks to the tobacco industry, the city is filled with remarkable architecture commissioned by wealthy Lynchburgers. Founder John Lynch’s brother, Charles, headed a court to punish Loyalist supporters of the British during the Revolutionary War. The sentences he handed down came to be known as “lynch laws” and are the source of the modern term “lynching.”

**DANVILLE** was established in 1792 as Wynne’s Falls. The following year, the “world’s best tobacco market” was established and the village was renamed Danville. It briefly became the last capital of the Confederacy, housed in the palatial estate of Major William Sutherland, which is now a museum of fine arts and history. One of the Confederacy’s leading generals, Danville native William Lewis Cabell, later became the mayor of Dallas, Texas, presiding over the considerable expansion and modernization of that city.

## Virginia/North Carolina State Line

**GREENSBORO** is the largest city in the “Piedmont Triad” metro region. It is named for Major General Nathanael Greene, whose forces inflicted heavy damage on the British Army of Lord Cornwallis during the Revolutionary War, ultimately leading to its surrender at Yorktown, Va. Although relatively undamaged by the Civil War, the city was the last meeting place of the entire Confederate government and the site where Confederate soldiers stacked their arms, received paroles and headed for home. Here was the first Woolworth’s lunch counter to be desegregated, which is now displayed at the Smithsonian in Washington. Prosperity was achieved through textiles, and the industry remains a strong presence today in this major textile headquarters city. Short story writer O. Henry and CBS news anchor Edward R. Murrow were born in Greensboro.

**HIGH POINT**, regarded as the “Furniture Capital of the World,” is also known for textiles. Its Thomas Built factory is one of only three large school bus manufacturers in the U.S. Here also resides one of the few Bentley dealerships in the southeast. The Angela Peterson Doll and Miniature Museum is one of the south’s largest, and its “World’s Largest Chest of Drawers” has been an iconic city symbol since 1926.

**SALISBURY** was the site of a noted prisoner of war camp. It is home to grocery store chain Food Lion and the hometown of the state’s former senior U.S. Senator, Elizabeth Dole.

**CHARLOTTE**, the Queen City, displays a striking skyline that only hints at its importance as a financial and information technology hub. Its other nickname, “Hornet’s Nest,” is attributed to British General Cornwallis who, during the American Revolution, was bedeviled by the hostility of the local populace to British rule. Settled in 1755 at the intersection of two Native American trading posts, today’s Charlotte is the second largest banking headquarters in the country after New York City and the 19<sup>th</sup> largest city in the U.S. Approximately 75% of NASCAR’s employees and drivers are based within two hours of downtown; Lowe’s Motor Speedway and the new state-of-the-art zMAX Drag Strip are located nearby in Concord. The NFL’s Carolina Panthers, founded in 1995, play home games at Bank of America Stadium. Charlotte’s 60-story, 871-ft. tall postmodern gothic tower that serves as the Bank of America’s Corporate Center is the tallest skyscraper between Philadelphia and Atlanta. Former Washington Redskins Hall of Fame Coach and NASCAR championship team owner Joe Gibbs hails from Charlotte.

**GASTONIA** is part of the Charlotte metropolitan area and home of Parkdale Mills, the number one manufacturer of spun yarn in the world. Within the city limits is Crowders Mountain State Park, a popular destination for outdoor enthusiasts.

## North Carolina/South Carolina State Line

**SPARTANBURG** was established as a village in the 1780s and incorporated as a city in 1831. The downtown’s primary hub, Morgan Square, was named for Gen. Daniel Morgan, who commanded victorious American forces at the Battle of Cowpens nearby. A pivotal skirmish, its winning was dependent upon a local young woman, Kate Barry, who forewarned American troops of a British advance. Today, Spartanburg is home to the world headquarters of Denny’s restaurants and to a BMW auto manufacturing plant. Notable residents include actress Andie MacDowell and the Marshall Tucker Band.

**GREENVILLE** was once known as the “Textile Capital of the World,” but low wages and favorable tax benefits have more recently lured foreign companies such as Michelin. The city is also a respected medical center. Greenville has a thriving arts community; the Bi-Lo Center brings in national tours of many popular bands. Its Museum of Art houses the Andrew Wyeth Collection, which attracts scholars nationwide. Notable

figures who were born in, lived in or worked in Greenville include Wayne Oates, the psychologist who coined the word “workaholic;” country music star Aaron Tippin; civil rights activist and two-time presidential candidate Jesse Jackson; and actress Joanne Woodward.

**CLEMSON** is in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains and home to Clemson University, which adds 17,000 additional residents to the town’s 12,000 normal population eight months out of the year. The cultural center of the city, it also houses Fort Hill, home of John C. Calhoun, one of only two men to serve as Vice President under two different Presidents, and only one of two men to have resigned the office.

### South Carolina/Georgia State Line

**TOCCOA** was the site of a paratrooper training base for the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division, whose Easy Company was the subject of the HBO miniseries *Band of Brothers*. The town is the birthplace of actor DeForest Kelley, Dr. Leonard “Bones” McCoy on TV’s *Star Trek*; and Olympic gold medalist Paul Anderson, “the world’s strongest man.”

**GAINESVILLE** is nestled in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. It is often called the chicken capital of the world because of its large number of poultry processing plants.

**Oglethorpe University** is visible on the right, a private liberal arts college in Atlanta chartered in 1835 and named after the state’s founder, James Oglethorpe. Many of its campus buildings display distinctive Gothic revival architecture. The school is home to the International Time Capsule Society, a repository of time capsule projects worldwide.

**ATLANTA**, financial and commercial capital of the New South, came into being as a rail terminus. Its Civil War importance as a military and railroad supply hub were portrayed in the 1939 film *Gone With the Wind*. The core was burned to the ground in 1864 by Union General Sherman as part of his March to the Sea. When it set about rebuilding, the railroad again played a vital role, shipping a local product known as Coca Cola. Today, Atlanta is a driving force of the South, undergoing a transition from a city of regional commerce to a city of international influence. Its Bank of America Plaza is the tallest building in the U.S. outside of Chicago and New York City. The city’s Georgia Dome, home of the Atlanta Falcons of the NFL, has hosted the Super Bowl twice. Atlanta features the world’s largest aquarium, Georgia Aquarium, opened in 2005. It is also a major cable programming center, being home to CNN and The Weather Channel. Among Gamma World Cities in the U.S., Atlanta ranks third in the number of Fortune 500 companies headquartered within city boundaries, behind New York City and Houston.

**Chattahoochee River** We cross the river as it passes through industrial sections of Atlanta. The name is believed to originate with the Creek Indian word for “painted rock” due to the colorful granite outcroppings along some segments. It displays much of the natural scenic beauty that runs through the city and is protected by watchdog groups.

### Georgia/Alabama State Line

**Time Change** at this point you may adjust your watch as we cross the Central/Eastern time zone. If you are traveling east (north), set your watch ahead one hour; if you are traveling west (south), set your watch back one hour.

**Cheaha Mountain**, visible on the left, is the highest point in Alabama. Bald Rock near the peak provides an impressive view from an overlook of the surrounding region. The mountain is part of the Talladega Mountains, the final segment of the Blue Ridge.

**ANNISTON** On the right side we can see the Lee Brass Foundry, one of the largest of its kind in the world, with a 423,000 sq. ft. facility on 14 acres. During the Civil War period, the Confederate States established an iron furnace near present-day downtown. Later, clay pipe for sewer systems became the focus of industrial output. In 1917, the Army established a training camp at Ft. McClellan. Today, a portion of it is used for Alabama National Guard training and a U.S. Homeland Security anti-terrorism training unit. The Anniston Army Depot on the right is a major Army facility with primary missions including the repair of heavy tracked vehicles – the only depot capable of such – and storage of chemical weaponry, much of which has been destroyed. Examples of the tanks are visible from the train.

**Coosa River** is one of the state’s most developed, with a total of seven dams maintained by Alabama Power. Hydroelectric power has proven valuable to the citizens of Alabama but costly to some species endemic to the main stem of the river.

**BIRMINGHAM** is the largest city in Alabama. Known as the “Pittsburgh of the South,” it was founded in 1871 as an industrial enterprise named after one of the U.K.’s major cities. Its industries centered around iron and steel production. The site of its original railroad crossing is the only place worldwide where significant amounts of iron ore, coal and limestone – the raw materials for steel – can be found in close proximity. Over the course of the last century, the economy diversified. Today, banking, insurance, medicine, publishing and biotechnology maintain a strong presence. Actress Courtney Cox, singer Taylor Hicks and bandleader Lionel Hampton all hail from Birmingham.

**Bryant-Denny Stadium** can be seen as we approach Tuscaloosa. Here the Alabama Crimson Tide football team competes. Known colloquially as “Bama,” the university is the flagship school of the University of Alabama System. The team has won 12 national championships, produced 18 hall-of-famers, including coach Paul “Bear” Bryant, and notched the most bowl appearances – and wins – of any team in college football.

**TUSCALOOSA** is named for the Choctaw chieftain Tuskaloosa, who was defeated by Hernando de Soto in 1540. Between 1826 and 1846, the town was the capital of Alabama. Fifth largest city in Alabama, it is home not only to the University of Alabama but is also a center of industry, commerce, and healthcare. Mercedes Benz announced its first North American assembly plant in the county of the same name in 1993; it now produces the GL-Class SUV. The Bama Theatre was one of the last of the traditional movie palaces built in the south, and was the only air conditioned building in town in 1938. The many references to the city in popular culture include a classic Groucho Marx line from the film *Animal Crackers*: Portraying Capt. Spaulding, the famous African explorer, he explains that he had trouble removing elephant tusks as they were so tightly wedged into place. “Of course,” added Groucho, “in Alabama, the tusks are looser.”

**Eutaw** has 27 antebellum homes on the National Register of Historic Places. The site of prime cotton land, plantations flourished here prior to the Civil War. Nearby Greenetrack features thoroughbred horseracing, greyhound racing, bingo and gaming machines.

**Tombigbee River** We now cross this tributary of the Mobile River, the watershed of which encompasses much of the rural coastal plain of western Alabama. It is a principal route of commercial navigation in the southern U.S., connected in its upper reaches to the Tennessee River via the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway since its completion in 1985.

**Livingston** was named for statesman and jurist Edward Livingston. Nearby is Mannington Floors, manufacturer of residential and commercial flooring materials.

## Alabama/Mississippi State Line

**MERIDIAN** was established in 1860 at a railroad intersection. Burned to the ground at the conclusion of the Civil War, it rebuilt and entered a Golden Age through 1930. Its nine historic districts illustrate its rich history. The renovated multimodal station in the historic district is the first historic reconstruction project to receive a grant from the state under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991, leveraging more than \$8 million in private investment. Today, the city boasts 178 healthcare and social assistance institutions, 378 retail establishments, and the headquarters of Sara Lee and the Peavey Electronics Corporation, manufacturers of guitars and sound equipment. Notable natives include actress Sela Ward and country music legend Jimmie Rodgers.

**LAUREL** has seen a significant population increase since Hurricane Katrina. Founded in 1882 as a lumber town, its principal employers include the Masonite Corporation, manufacturers of entry and interior doors. It also houses the oldest art museum in Mississippi. Washington Redskins quarterback Jason Campbell and running back Clinton Portis both hail from Laurel.

**HATTIESBURG** is known as “Hub City” due to its placement at crossing rail lines. It is home to the University of Southern Mississippi, William Carey University and Camp Shelby, the largest National Guard training base east of the Mississippi River. The restored station, dedicated in 2007, boasts extensive improvements worth \$10 million, including a wireless network zone, funded by a combination of federal allocations, grant funds from the Great American Stations Foundation, state and city contributions. Singer, songwriter, author and movie producer Jimmy Buffett played guitar during his college years at Southern. The local police department is serviced by its own training academy, one of the most difficult basic academies in the country with an over 50% attrition rate. Legend has it that the idea behind MCI/Worldcom telecommunications was sketched out by “Bernie” Ebbers and his investors on a napkin during a meeting in a Hattiesburg diner.

We now cut through the De Soto National Forest.

**PICAYUNE** Situated in a denser and more subtropical landscape, Picayune is the business and medical center of Pearl River County, approximately 45 miles from New Orleans. It was founded in 1904 by the then-owner and publisher of the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* newspaper. Since Hurricane Katrina, it has become the permanent home of many who relocated from the Mississippi Gulf Coast seeking a safe home site. The train station was rebuilt as an intermodal facility and opened in 2008, featuring a classic early 20th century design including a “port cochere” (portico) and waiting room.

## Mississippi/Louisiana State Line

**SLIDELL** was named for John Slidell, the one-time Confederate States of America commissioner to France, member of Congress and U.S. plenipotentiary (a diplomat entrusted with full power over a single issue) to Mexico, sent to offer \$30 million for California and to negotiate the border of Texas as the Rio Grande River by President James K. Polk. The town became a home to producers of bricks and creosote. With the opening of a NASA computer center, Slidell became a major suburb of New Orleans. It suffered extensive damage from Hurricane Katrina, experiencing a 23 ft. storm surge from Lake Pontchartrain. Native Tony Canzoneri is one member of an exclusive group of professional boxers who have won world titles in three separate weight divisions.

**Lake Pontchartrain** We now cross a 6.2 mile trestle spanning the 630-sq. mi. lake, the second largest saltwater lake in the U.S. and the largest lake in Louisiana. It connects to the Gulf of Mexico via The Rigolets strait. The Causeway was constructed for vehicle traffic in the late 1950s to connect New Orleans with Mandeville and, at 24 mi., is the longest bridge over a body of water in the world. Becoming visible soon will be Louisiana State University at New Orleans and its Dental School, and the above-ground cemeteries of Metairie, a New Orleans suburb.

**NEW ORLEANS'** skyline soon becomes visible on the left. “America’s Most Interesting City” is also known as the Crescent City, ‘Nawlins, and the City that Care Forgot. Whatever *you* call it, it won’t be boring: the city has an abundant and eclectic mix of jazz, nightlife, world-class restaurants, antebellum architecture and storied history – sufficient to satisfy varied tastes. The station is located next to the massive Louisiana Superdome, largest fixed dome structure in the world and home to the New Orleans Saints of the NFL. Famously used as a shelter during Hurricane Katrina, it was designed in 1967. Whether it’s a cruise on a grand Mississippi River paddle-wheeler, a trip on the famed streetcars through the Garden District or a stroll through the Riverwalk shopping center, there is much to see and do. By 1840, New Orleans had become the wealthiest and third most populous city in the U.S. Today, it is world famous for its abundance of unique architectural styles, with seventeen historic landmark districts. From the renowned French Quarter and Bourbon St. to famous St. Charles Avenue, home to Tulane and Loyola Universities, New Orleans is one of the top ten most visited cities in the U.S.

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