

The "Full" Tour

TOURS

Call for price Duration: 3-5 hours

ABA - American Bus Association · TMCA - Tennessee Motor Coach Association Jackson-Madison County Chamber of Commerce / Convention & Visitors Bureau Memphis Convention & Visitors Bureau Paris - Henry County Chamber of Commerce

Orientation - addresses the history of freshwater pearls of the world; the history of the only freshwater pearl-culturing operation in the North American continent's founder – John Latendresse (1925-2000); an overview of the pearlculturing process explains incidents participants will see throughout the tour.

Visit with a local diver - a local diver emerges from beneath the water in full wet suit hoisting his "catch of the day" onto the docks. Participants see the

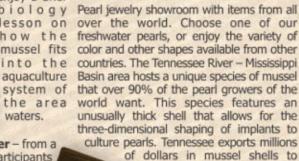


different species of mussels found in the Tennessee River, and enjoy a brief biology lesson on how the mussel fits aquaculture system of the area waters.

Meet the farm manager - from a lakeside covered pavilion, participants watch as the farm manager retrieves a nucleated basket of mussels via his work boat. Returning the basket for closer inspection, tourists witness the "shucking" of a mussel to reveal the State of Tennessee's Official Gem: the freshwater pearl. Learn in detail about technicians, the nucleation process, quality grading and more.

Southern-Style Catered BBQ Luncheon - Enjoy the catered luncheon at the lakeview community center with a "Southern-style" catered luncheon. Featured on the standard menu are: barbecue ribs, pulled pork barbecue, grilled chicken, potato salad, baked beans, slaw, corn fritters, dessert and drink. (Other menu selections available upon request).

Souvenir Shopping - Shop from our extensive freshwater



Even the renowned black Tahitian pearl - begins with a Tennessee River mussel shell. So whether the pearls were grown in our farm or not - rest assured that it most likely

foreign countries annually.



began... with a Tennessee River mussel shell.

Tennessee River Folk Life Museum (optional add on based on itinerary time allowance) Trek to Nathan Bedford Forrest State Park's Tennessee Folk Life Museum - home of the historical Pilot

The museum houses an antique brail boat (used for musseling prior to the invention of the electric motor), artifacts from the pearl button factories that once lined the river banks, pearling and diving industry exhibits, and many Civil War items of



At the beginning of the tour, each participant receives a disposable camera to capture the notable events throughout the day.

Tourists receive a "surprise" personalized 8"x10" group photo of the day's activities.

Staff Photographers make photos throughout the day so that tourists may recap their visit on the website a couple of days later.

Tennessee's Official Gem

The pearl, taken from mussels in the fresh water rivers of the state, is the official state gem, according to Public Chapter 192, enacted during the 91" General Assembly (1979).

During the years between 1882 and 1914, beautiful pearls were taken from many of the state's streams from the Pigeon and Holston in the east to the Forked Deer and Obion in the west. The Caney Fork in Middle Tennessee was noted for its pearl-bearing mussels, and 'pearling" was a favorite sport for young people on Sunday afternoons at the turn

Tennessee River pearls are of all colors and they are "natural" as the mussel made them, all pearl all the way through. They have been found in various shapes: spherical, pear-shaped and baroque, or irregular.

After World War I, dams were built on many of the rivers, and the mussels lost their swift and shallow shoals. Today, pearling exists as a byproduct of shell harvests which supply the cultivated pearl industry of

Tennessee River pearls are among the most beautiful and durable in the world. At Camden (Benton County), in West Tennessee, these freshwater pearls are collected and crafted into rings, necklaces, earrings, bracelets, and gem-quality jewelry. America's only freshwater pearl farm is located on Kentucky Lake in the Birdsong Creek embayment.





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