

TRACING OUR TRAIL

After several days of intense visiting in Tennessee, we started out in a Southward direction. We decided to leave Nashville via the Natchez Trace Parkway. The road is a National Park project and extends 500 miles through 3 states. The Natchez Trace is an old trail that was developed by the Indian tribes and the early settlers. Farmers, who barged their crops down the rivers to New Orleans, also sold their barges there for the wood and then they trudged back home via the Natchez Trace. With the advent of the steamboat, the travel on the Trace diminished and eventually was discontinued.

The present day parkway follows the Trace for the full 500 miles. Portions of the old trail are visible and you can even drive cars on a small stretch. Many places remain for hiking the original Trace.

There was not much traffic during our journey. The road is two lanes, with no shoulders, and has a speed limit enforced at 45 and 50 mph. That in itself, discourages most modern drivers who won't travel it.

That said, the route is absolutely gorgeous. The banks and off road sections are manicured by dozens of tractors, mowing daily. The forests, flanking the road, are so dense you cannot see into it at all. There are lots of picnic pull offs, and restrooms. The drive is relaxing and serene.

We of course, encountered the afternoon thunderstorms. By now it is understood that Hell hath no fury as an afternoon deluge in the South. We rounded one turn and we saw a large tree fall completely across the highway! I stopped and set the hazard blinkers working and was figuring out how to get around the tree if I could get some help.



An oncoming truck, towing a tractor, stopped, and I couldn't believe that it was a Park worker who got out his chainsaw and went to work! As other cars stopped, men got out and started throwing the cut branches to the side and soon we went through! It must be an everyday occurrence.

Ending the day in Mississippi, we found a pretty State Park with electricity, (very necessary for the air conditioners to fight the humidity). The park encompasses a small lake and we parked right beside it. We succumbed to the picturesque ness of it and decided to stay another day! Such is the advantage of not having a schedule.

Dave & Bonnie
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