

# The Boston Globe

## The music lover's ultimate guide to visiting Nashville

Don't miss out on the hot chicken.



Country musician Kalie Shorr, a native of Portland, Maine, now calls Nashville home.

By Sarah Rodman MARCH 15, 2018

The music begins the minute you touch down.

No matter where you're coming from, the Nashville International Airport wants to set the mood for your visit to Music City. Six separate stages scattered throughout the terminal — including an airport outpost of the famed Tootsie's Orchid Lounge — offer jazz, gospel, and, of course, country, making the walk to baggage claim a memorable one.

Nashville's popularity has grown exponentially in recent years. US census data shows the metro area gained an average of 100 people a day between 2015 and 2016. It's easy to understand why: The city is culturally vibrant, yet laid back. It is at once countryopolitan and cosmopolitan, a place for cowboy hats and black ties, with dive bars and highfalutin' locales in equal supply.

While the rapid expansion has come with its share of growing pains — increased traffic, a skyline populated by cranes, an insidious invasion of bachelor and bachelorette parties as part of a surge in tourism — it has also yielded plenty of upside for both locals and visitors when it comes to culinary, musical, and cultural choices.

Decades after my first visit at age 9, when I jumped rope with my cousins on the sidewalk in front of my Aunt Joan's house, I found myself returning to Nashville many times to visit family and during a stint as a pop music critic for *The Boston Globe*.

### WHERE TO STAY

I've stayed in lodgings all over this town, and it is hard to go wrong on location, as nearly every neighborhood offers solid options. If you like to be where the action is, you can't beat the affordable Home2 Suites by **Hilton Nashville Vanderbilt** (615-254-2170, [home2suites3.hilton.com](http://home2suites3.hilton.com)). This all-suite hotel is conveniently close to Music Row and several great dining spots — including Hattie B's Hot Chicken and Peg Leg Porker — and a short walk or rideshare to downtown.

The boutique **Hutton Hotel** (615-340-9333, [huttonhotel.com](http://huttonhotel.com)) in the West End is a favorite of hipsters and industry folks. Recently redesigned, it boasts a terrific restaurant and newly opened intimate music venue Analog.

For a quieter experience, check out historic Germantown, the funkier Nations neighborhood, or hipster East Nashville. Most major attractions are within a 15-minute car ride of all three. Uber and Lyft are readily available, and parking, though increasingly expensive, is plentiful.