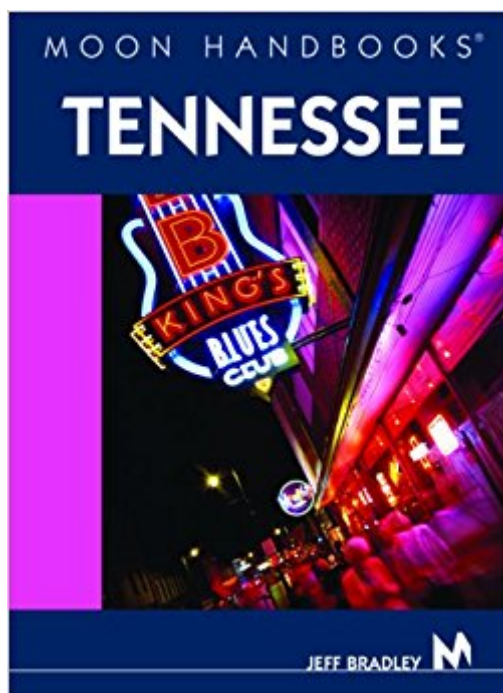


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# Moon Handbooks Tennessee



## Synopsis

From the live music in Nashville to Civil War Monuments and hiking in the Smoky Mountains, Moon Handbooks Tennessee is the guide to the best the state has to offer, both on and off the beaten path. Practical information includes suggested travel strategies and lists of must-see sights, plus essentials on dining, transportation, and accommodations for a range of budgets. Complete with details for binging on the best barbecue, paying tribute at Graceland, and a host of outdoor activities, Moon Handbooks Tennessee gives travelers the tools they need to create a more personal and memorable experience.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"The latest in the batch of Moon Handbooks releases proves again that Moon is one of the finest travel series around. What sets Moon apart from most guidebooks is the attention to detail, and more importantly, a respect for the topic."

Jeff Bradley went off to the University of Tennessee intent on becoming a broadcaster, but a few weeks convinced him to switch to journalism. He became a stringer for The New York Times, and this led to an offer to teach writing to Harvard freshmen. Bradley and wife decamped to Massachusetts. While privately decrying the attitudes that Harvardians held toward Southerners, Bradley and two other Tennesseans never passed up a chance to hijack dinner parties with an endless repertoire of snake stories, tales of weird relatives, and Baptist gospel disk jockeys. It finally

dawned on Bradley that, short of loading up outlanders in buses and giving them personal tours of Tennessee, the best way of explaining this remarkable state to infidels was to write a book about it.

My husband and I travel and normally he just lets me choose our location. This year he asked if he could make a suggestion....sure, I thought, what will it be, New York, Europe, some island? Nashville, he said....Hmmmmm. An interesting choice I thought, and I know NOTHING of Nashville. Each of our trips usually starts with me getting a couple good guides and completely pouring through them and also in doing a lot of internet research, then more guide reading. My favorite guide had nothing for Tennessee, and so we went with the Moon Handbook. Though there are not any color pictures, which usually are a nice touch, I found the guides really helped me to understand what was available to do, what was recommended and gave me more choices than I could possibly ever hope to see in a week. So, how did it go? Well, it went fantastic! We visited the Opry, The Country Music Hall of Fame, the Bluebird Cafe, where we also met the artists and cd's signed (a real treat!). We visited Franklin and learned about the 5 hour battle that was fought mostly at night and had casualties of approx. 10,000. We toured the Carter House, where you can still see bullet holes in the house and Carnton Plantation, where the home was featured in Robert Hick's best-selling novel "Widow of the South". This plantation home was used as a field hospital and now houses one of the largest privately owned Confederate Cemeteries. We went downtown and listened to music in little honky-tonk and even took in opening night for NHL's Nashville Predators. There truly is something for everyone here. The key is to have a great guide and give yourself plenty of time to get to know what is available. Couple this with a little internet research to find some of the local spots (We found a local brewery-Yazoo, that was incredibly fun, where we toured, and hung around outside listening to a little impromptu bongo/guitar music out at the picnic tables outside the taproom and talked to locals that gave us insights on their favorite spots.) We also enjoyed the JD Distillery, which is about 1.5 hours from Nashville in Lynchburg-worth the trip in my humble opinion. The people? As nice as people tell you they are. They have a certain charm about them. Be prepared to slow down, enjoy some of the stories and just have a good time. I know we did, and the preparation we did with this guide was the beginnings of our wonderful trip.

We recently completed a trip to Eastern Tennessee and brought along several guidebooks. After a few days, it became apparent that one guidebook was head and shoulders above the others: Moon Handbooks Tennessee by Jeff Bradley. It is both comprehensive and concise. It contains lots of local color without drowning in it. And it is spot on in its evaluation of sights. (We didn't have any

occasion to use it for lodging or food.) Full credit to Jeff Bradley for a writing style that is one of the best in the business. He keeps things lively without neglecting the basic facts that need to be conveyed. In almost every instance his entries were more interesting and more complete than other guidebooks, while being about the same total number of words. He seems to know just when to insert a clever turn of phrase or an offbeat tidbit while still writing in a very direct style. The book covers all of Tennessee. It starts with general information about the state's natural history, settlement history, and culture. It then covers each region of the state. He does a good job of conveying which sights are most worth seeing in each area without neglecting second tier sights. He weaves together a complete tapestry that puts everything in the larger context of the region and the state. Throughout, there is a pervasive sense of the joy of travel in this interesting state. This guidebook is the real McCoy!

All Moon books deserve 5 stars in my opinion. This one has just enough info. to make your trips interesting and perhaps a bit different from the norm.

You don't have to be planning a trip to Tennessee to appreciate Jeff Bradley's book. If you are, don't leave home without it. Bradley not only tells you what you must see if you have the time, but he frankly tells you what might not be worth a visit, or at least what to be prepared for that you might not expect, such as the bumper-to-bumper, big-city-like traffic in the Smokies, especially in the fall when the leaves begin to change. He also provides interesting facts and historical details you won't find in other travel books. I grew up about 50 miles from Bean Station in East Tennessee but didn't know until reading Bradley's book that a tavern there was the best place between Baltimore and New Orleans to get a bottle of wine back in the stagecoach days. Almost every page is enriched with little-known facts, insights and advice, and the book is organized in a way that takes the frustration out of trying to find what you're looking for. I once had a job that took me to every one of Tennessee's 95 counties, but I moved away several years ago and my children, unfortunately, know little about this beautiful state that is as geographically and culturally diverse as any in the union. I brought the fourth edition of Bradley's book when I began planning a cross-Tennessee-and-back trip my 22-year-old son and I decided to take this summer in a rented convertible. Taking Bradley's advice, we chose many roads now less traveled (since the interstates were built), visiting places like Jonesborough (Tennessee's oldest town, first capital and home of the National Storytelling Festival) in East Tennessee, Lynchburg (exactly like the Jack Daniels' ads portray it, except for the abundance of shops on the town square selling things Gentleman Jack would never have imagined,

as Bradley points out) in Middle Tennessee, and Grinders Switch between Nashville and Memphis, which I had always thought was a figment of Minnie Pearl's imagination. Our trip, thanks largely to Bradley's book, was as much one of discovery for me, a native, as it was for my son, who grew up in the Northeast. You will enjoy Bradley's book not just for its contents but also for his writing style. As the "About the Author" page notes, this Tennessee boy has been a stringer for The New York Times and taught writing at Harvard, so he knows a thing or two about stringing words together. He writes from personal knowledge of the place with respect but also with wit, honesty and a good measure of irreverence whenever he feels so moved, which is often. Buy the book or you'll never know how far in advance you need to make reservations for lunch at Miss Bobo's Boarding House in Lynchburg, how to get to the Lovelace Motel Cafe outside of Nashville for the best country ham and biscuits, where to find worldclass white water and bluegrass music in East Tennessee, or that the Talbot Heirs Guesthouse is one of the best and funkiest places to stay in the funkiest part of Memphis, a stone's throw from Beale Street, darn good barbecue and sweet potato pancakes you'll never forget.

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