

Episode #3: Natchez and Vidalia

Border hopping again, we stayed in Vidalia, Louisiana and visited Natchez, Mississippi across the river.



The River View RV Park in Vidalia was just great. Well managed and maintained, and in a great location, with a lovely path along the river.



By the way, in case you're wondering, this is ***not*** the Vidalia where the sweet onions come from. That's in Georgia. But speaking of sweet, the second morning we were there, a woman from the trailer next to us came over and offered us a bag full of Satsumas. I had no idea what they were. They turned out to be delicious mandarin oranges from her tree at home (near Baton Rouge). They were heading back and she hoped we'd take them because there were lots more still on the tree. We were happy to take them off her hands.



We've been enjoying them every morning since. How sweet is that?

The grounds were quite pretty and the people in the office were very helpful, and Natchez seemed interesting. It was so nice to see colour again! We decided to stay for three days.



One day I looked up and saw this flock of pelicans flying overhead.



The first morning
there, we were
greeted by
magical views of
the misty
Mississippi.





We didn't get a chance to explore much of Vidalia, but it was actually quite a small town and there wasn't much to explore. Although they did have a lovely Christmas tree and some fun, community sponsored Christmas displays along the river.



Natchez is a much bigger and more historically significant town than Vidalia. Although Jim had read novels by Greg Iles, a well-known author from Natchez, we didn't really know much about the town itself. But the more we read, the more interesting it sounded.

We were particularly impressed with the message on the town's website from its mayor, Dan Gibson, who stated: "For over 300 years this Jewel of the Mississippi, the oldest city, perched on the highest bluff on the Great River, has been welcoming visitors from all over the world. We pay tribute to all who have come before us – the native Natchez' from whom we derive our name, the French who settled here in 1716, the English, the Spanish, the American, and yes – the African. Truly all have helped shape the city we know and love." Sounds pretty progressive.

We'd also read that Natchez is known for its grand antebellum mansions. This sounded like a stark contrast to the many depressed and destroyed towns we'd passed through on our way south.

So we drove around Natchez, and I tried to capture as many as photos as I could. One of the most impressive is now the Monmouth Hotel.



Unfortunately I couldn't get a great shot of it because of all the gorgeous oak trees on the grounds. (We didn't feel right parking in the driveway so I could jump out and take photos.) But you get a sense of its grandeur.



It was a gloomy day when we drove around town to get some shots, but the downtown core of Natchez was full of life and elegance. We understood why they call it the Jewel of the Mississippi. (Most of the shots were taking from our moving van, so I apologize for some of the blurriness and window reflections.)





During one of our nights there, we ventured to the area known as Under-the-Hill, which is right down beside the Mississippi. Along with the oldest saloon, the Under-the-Hill Saloon (built in the 1700s), I'd read about a good restaurant there called the Magnolia Grill, and it really was great. Our server, Ed was from Detroit and knew Toronto quite well. I sopped up all of the meuniere sauce that came with my grilled fish. (And asked for another container of it to take home with our leftovers.) Mmmmm!



Natchez also had Christmas displays along the river, sponsored by local companies or community groups. Really glad we stopped in Natchez/Vidalia.

