

Selma to Montgomery March Byway

Journey through history along the trail that marks one of the major historic events in 20th-century American history, the 1965 Selma to Montgomery March, led by Martin Luther King, Jr. Wind through the streets of Selma; pass through countryside where marchers spent the night on their way to Montgomery.

Length: 54 miles / 86.4 km

Time Take one hour to drive or
to one day to experience the
Allow: byway.



Local Information

Alabama Bureau of Tourism & Travel

334-242-4494

1-800-ALABAMA

Selma-Dallas County Chamber of Commerce

334-875-7241

800-45-SELMA

Send E-mail

Selma to Montgomery March Byway

334-875-5894

Send E-mail

Visitor Services

Fees



Some museums along the route charge fees.



Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities

At either end of the byway, portions of the route wind through the city streets of Selma and Montgomery, Alabama. The remainder of the route consists of a four-lane highway between the two cities. Pedestrian and bicycle travel on this highway is limited.



Food

There are places to buy food along this byway.



Gasoline

Gasoline is available.



Information

Contact the Selma-Dallas County Chamber of Commerce for information.



Lodging

There is overnight lodging along this byway.



Phone

Public phones are available along this byway.



Restrooms

There are toilet facilities along this byway.



Retail

There are places to shop along this byway.

Special Considerations

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is an excellent time to visit the byway with all of its associated activities.

Seasons

Best Time to Drive

Year-round

High Season

Due to the nature of the byway, Martin Luther King Jr. Day tends to be the busiest.

Map and Directions



Legend:

- | | | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Point of Interest | Campground | Featured Byway | Water | State Border |
| Park | Picnic/Rest Area | America's Byways | Wildlife Refuge | Urban Area |
| Mountain | Interstate | Other Byway | Wilderness Area | Tribal Nation |
| City | U.S. Highway | Other Road | Other Federal Lands | Military Base |
| Capital | State Highway | Trail | Other State Lands | |

Driving Directions

From Selma to Montgomery (All-American Designation)

- Start in the city of Selma, AL at the junction of Jeff Davis Ave. and Martin Luther King St. GPS point (32.414868,-87.017804)
- Drive southeast on Martin Luther King St. to Alabama Ave.
- Drive southwest on Alabama Ave. to US Hwy. 80/Broad St.
- Cross Edmund Pettus Bridge at Broad St. and Water Avenue.
- Drive southeast on US Hwy. 80/Broad St. through Selmont, Benton, Lowndesboro, and Mt. Sinai to US Hwy 31/AL-42 north of Hope Hull, AL.
- Turn north on US Hwy 31/AL-42 toward Montgomery.
- Continue on US Hwy 31/AL-42 which changes to Mobile Hwy.
- Drive northeast on Mobile Hwy. to W. Fairview Ave.
- Drive east on W. Fairview Ave. to Oak St.
- Drive north on Oak St. to W. Jeff Davis Ave.
- Drive east on W. Jeff Davis Ave. to S. Holt St.
- Drive north on S. Holt St. to Day St.
- Drive east on Day St. to Mobile St.
- Drive northeast on Mobile St. to Goldthwaite St.
- Drive north on Goldthwaite St. to Montgomery St.
- Drive northeast on Montgomery St. to Court Square/S. Court St. Drive southwest on Court Square/S. Court St. to Dexter Ave.
- Drive east on Dexter Ave. to Alabama State Capitol. GPS Point (32.377698,-86.301272)

From Montgomery to Selma

- Begin at the State Capitol Building at the corner of Washington Avenue and McDonough Street in Montgomery.
- Bear left on Court Street.
- Turn right to take the ramp onto I-85 South.
- Take the MOBILE Left exit onto I-65 South.
- Take Exit 167/Selma onto US-80 West.
- Continue on US Highway 80 East.
- Continue on Broad Street(AL-22) to arrive in Selma.

Getting to the Byway

From Birmingham to Selma

- Take I-20/59 west.
- Merge onto I-65 south towards Montgomery.
- Turn onto CR-42 going west.
- Follow CR-42 as it merges with US-31.
- From US-31 north, turn onto AL-191 west.
- Follow AL-191 and merge onto AL-22.
- Stay on AL-22 until you reach Selma where the byway begins.

From Birmingham to Montgomery

- Take I-20 west/I-59 south.
- Merge onto I-65 south towards Montgomery.
- Stay on I-65 south until you reach the south end of Montgomery where the byway begins at the Selma Hwy.

Road Trip: Selma to Montgomery Driving Tour

Departure: First Baptist Church, Alabama

Destination: Alabama State Capitol, Alabama

Time to allow: 1 day

"Confrontation of good and evil compressed in the tiny community of Selma generated the massive power to turn the whole nation to a new course..." (Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., March 25, 1965)

Retrace marchers' steps in their fight for voter rights, from Selma to Montgomery. In Selma the march began, and understandably, in Selma the tour of the Selma to Montgomery Byway begins with the Martin Luther King, Jr. Street Historic Walking Tour, followed by a retracing of the march, which ends at the state capitol in Montgomery.

The tour encompasses the first section of the byway beginning on the corner of Martin Luther King, Jr., Street and Jeff Davis Avenue, passes the George Washington Carver Home, historic landmark Brown AME Church, and the Martin Luther King, Jr., monument. Through written word and vivid historic photographs, each of the 20 memorials along the route tell the story of the individuals, known and unknown, rich and poor, Black and white, who came together for a common cause.

Day 1

- **Start: First Baptist Church**



Suggested time at this stop:

20 minutes

This church played an important role in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 60s. Before then and since it has stood as a beacon of hope and unity to the community of Selma.

- **Stop 2: Brown Chapel**



From previous stop: 3 minutes / 0.2 mi (0.3 km)

Directions: The Brown Chapel is down the street from the First Baptist Church.

Suggested time at this stop: 30 minutes

Headquarters of the Voting Rights Movement, Martin Luther King, Jr., spoke here on a regular basis. The site became the starting point for the 1965 Selma to Montgomery March.

- **Stop 3: Cecil C. Jackson, Jr., Public Safety Building**

From previous stop: 2 minutes / 0.4 mi (0.6 km)

Directions: Head southeast on Martin Luther King St and turn right on Alabama Avenue.

Suggested time at this stop: 25 minutes

The Cecil C. Jackson, Jr. Public Safety Building was once the old Selma City Hall. This building served as the city and county jail in which Dr. King and other protesters were imprisoned in 1965.

- **Stop 4: Dallas County Court House**

From previous stop: 2 minutes / 0.2 mi (0.3 km)

Directions: Continue southwest on Alabama Ave.

Suggested time at this stop: 20 minutes

This was the destination of most protest marches in an effort to register people to vote.

- **Stop 5: Edmund Pettus Bridge**



From previous stop: 1 minute / 0.2 mi (0.3 km)

Directions: Drive northeast on Alabama Avenue and then turn right on Broad St, heading out of Selma.

Suggested time at this stop: 10 minutes

The fight for voting rights climaxed here on March 7, 1965, now commonly known as "Bloody Sunday." Marchers petitioning for equal voting rights were violently confronted and halted by law enforcement personnel on this bridge. Later, of course, a march was successfully made to Montgomery.

- **Stop 6: National Voting Rights Museum**



From previous stop: 1 minute / 0.3 mi (0.5 km)

Directions: Continue across the Edmund Pettus Bridge. The National Voting Rights Museum is on the right.

Suggested time at this stop: 1 hour

The museum commemorates the struggle of African Americans and white supporters to gain equal voting rights for all Americans, a struggle that lasted from the beginnings of the nation to the extension of the Voting Rights Act in 1982, signed by President Reagan.

- **Stop 7: Campsites**

From previous stop: 55 minutes / 47.8 mi (76.5 km)

Directions: Sites scattered along Highway 80 to St. Jude.

Suggested time at this stop: 55 minutes

Marchers walked 54 miles from Selma to Montgomery and spent the night at various campsites along the way. Marchers stayed at the Hall site March 21, 1965. Three-hundred people stayed at the Steele site on March 22. The Robert Gardner site is the third campsite. Marchers stayed here on March 23. The last site is the St. Jude campsite in the historic district of St. Jude, where marchers stayed on March 24.

- **Stop 8: Memorial to Viola Liuzzo**

- From previous stop:** same location
- Directions:** Continue along Highway 80.
- Suggested time at this stop:** 15 minutes

Between the cities of Petronia and Whitehall stands the memorial to Viola Liuzzo who was murdered while supporting the movement for civil rights.

- **Stop 9: City of St. Jude**

- From previous stop:** same location
- Directions:** Continue along Highway 80.
- Suggested time at this stop:** 25 minutes

Founded during the mid-1930s when segregation was the norm in the Southeast, the City of St. Jude Hospital pioneered nondiscriminatory health, education, and social services.

On March 24, 1965, voting rights marchers camped in the St. Jude Historic District, on the athletic field. It would be their last night on their path to the capital. That night the athletic field became a stage for a "Stars for Freedom" rally, with singers Harry Belafonte, Tony Bennett, Frankie Laine, Peter, Paul and Mary, and Sammy Davis Jr. all performing.

- **End: Alabama State Capitol**

Alabama
State Capitol
Building

From previous stop: 11 minutes / 4 mi (6.4 km)

Directions: Continue along Highway 80 to Montgomery. The capitol is located at 600 Dexter Avenue in Montgomery.

Suggested time at this stop: 30 minutes

The capitol was the destination of the march. The legion, that had swelled to 25,000, began its final six-mile walk from the City of St. Jude on March 25, to the Alabama Sate Capitol where Dr. King delivered the climatic speech "How Long, Not Long."

On the steps of the great building, Dr. Martin Luther King told marchers that the journey was through but that the struggle for civil rights was far from over. He assured them that it would be won, though, and that it wouldn't be long. *"How long? Not long, because no lie can live forever...How long? Not long. Because the arm of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice."*

A 20-member committee, appointed by King, presented a list of grievances to Governor George Wallace as the marchers began to disperse. Thus the historic march came to an end, and participants from all over the United States, Canada, and Europe began their trek home. Within five months of this third march, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Totals for Day 1

Total Distance Traveled: 53.1 miles / 85.0 km

Total Travel Time: 1 hour 15 minutes

Total Stopping Time: 4 hours 50 minutes