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Black History of Oklahoma

5 Nights / 6 Days

Immerse yourself in the powerful and moving history found on the African American History Tour in Oklahoma. Featuring the Oklahoma National Memorial and Museum, Langston University, the Greenwood Rising History Center, Fort Gibson Historic Site, the Oklahoma Blues Hall of Fame, and the Honey Springs Battlefield & Visitors Center which forever changed our future and shaped the country we live in today.

Day 1 - Oklahoma City, OK

Arrive in **Oklahoma City** and begin your tour with a visit to the **National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum**. See art and exhibits celebrating the West and cowboys of all backgrounds. Hear how Bill Pickett, an African American cowboy, started the rodeo event: bulldogging at the **101 Ranch**; learn about legendary lawman, **Bass Reeves**, and see exhibits that feature the Buffalo Soldiers and their role in protecting the West. Depart and proceed to the **Oklahoma History Center** to meet **Bruce Fisher**, son of civil rights hero **Ada Sipuel Fisher**, who will guide you on the tour. His mother was a key figure in the **Civil Rights Movement** and she challenged the University of Oklahoma and the case made it to the United States Supreme Court. At the museum, see the African American exhibit delving into individual stories of important figures in Oklahoma's Civil Rights Movement. Learn about everyday life and people of the time and the more than 50 All-Black towns in Oklahoma. After the guided portion of your visit, enjoy lunch on own at the Farmstead Café on the 3rd floor of the museum or for a soul-food experience, consider the famous Mama E's. Stop at the **Black Liberated Arts Center of Oklahoma City** for a brief tour of the gallery. Meet your **local historian** who will join as a Step-on Guide through the **Deep Deuce** area, the African American business and cultural district of Oklahoma City. No visit to the area would be complete without experiencing the **Oklahoma National Memorial and Museum**. The Memorial is essential to fully appreciate the story of Oklahoma City. The Memorial Museum is an interactive experience that takes you on a chronological tour through the events of April 19, 1995. Depart and tour the **Oklahoma City Museum of Art** which recently purchased Kehinde Wiley's new portrait, "Jacob de Graeff" for a permanent display. Kehinde Wiley is a portrait painter based in New York City known for his 2017 commissioned portrait of President Barack Obama. Enjoy **dinner included** this evening at the famous **Cattlemen's Steakhouse** in historic Stockyards City. Cattlemen's opened its doors in 1910 in Stockyards City and has been serving up the best steaks around since and even being featured in multiple Food Net-

work shows, Southern Living and Bon Appetit Magazine. Check-in to your local area hotel for the evening. (Meals: D) *An optional activity rent out space at your hotel and enjoy a private performance by local jazz musicians.

Day 2 - Chickasha, Duncan, and Sulphur

Enjoy **breakfast** at the hotel this morning prior to departing for **Chickasha** and the **Verden Separate School**. The school was built in 1915 and served as a school for Verden's African American students under the separate but equal doctrine. Hear from a **local historian** and learn about the history of the school as well as what life was like in pre-Civil Rights Oklahoma. More than 25% of cowboys in the Old West were African Americans. Visit the **Chisholm Trail Heritage Center** in Duncan, Oklahoma to learn about the trail and the roles African Americans played in this historic cattle trail. Enjoy a movie in the **TH McCasland, Jr Experience Theater** where you'll feel the hoof beats, smell the prairie, and feel the wind and rain in this interactive theater experience. Enjoy **lunch on own while** exploring. On the way back to Oklahoma City make a stop in **Tatums**, one of the more than 50 original black towns in the state of Oklahoma, and enjoy a **Guided City Tour**. Tatums was founded in 1895 by **Lee Tatum** who was the first postmaster, ran a grocery store, and was a US Marshall. In the 1920's oil wells were drilled all over town and some of the town's residents profited greatly. Next, stop in **Davis** to enjoy **Bedré Fine Chocolates**. Bedré was founded more than 40 years ago, and in 2000 was purchased by the Chickasaw Nation. Bedré is the only fine chocolate company wholly owned by a Native American tribe. Enjoy touring the facility and sample some of their fine chocolates. Enjoy dinner on own this evening in downtown Oklahoma City before returning to the hotel for the evening. (B)

Day 3 - Langston and Tulsa

Enjoy **breakfast** at the hotel this morning before departing for **Langston University**. Founded in 1897 as a school for African Americans, Langston University is the only historically black university still in operation in OK.

Clara Luper is among the notable graduates of Langston University. Luper, a teacher, was a Civil Right leader who staged peaceful protests including a sit-in at the segregated Katz's Drug Store in Oklahoma City. Luper and her students arrived at the Katz's when the store opened, were refused service, and stayed until close. The police were called, they received threats, but they stayed and were not arrested. Two days later, from the direction of Katz corporate offices, all Katz locations were desegregated. Depart and arrive in **Tulsa** in time for **lunch and free time to explore and shop at Mother Road Market**. This food hall located on historic Route 66 offers more than 20 food and retail concepts. Next, visit the **Tulsa Historical Society** to see their **Tulsa Race Massacre Exhibit**. A guide will take you through the terrible events that destroyed hundreds of lives in such a short time. The Tulsa Historical Society is located inside the beautiful former home of Tulsa oil baron, Sam Travis. The last stop of the evening will be the **Woody Guthrie Center** located in the **Tulsa Arts District**. Guthrie is a legendary folk singer that was born in Okemah, Oklahoma. He spoke out, (through song) for those who didn't have a voice. Learn about Woody Guthrie's life, read the original, handwritten lyrics of "This Land is Your Land", and see many of his instruments at this one of a kind, Okie attraction. For **dinner on own this evening**, enjoy one of many great eateries in the Tulsa Arts District. Return to the hotel for the night. (B, L)

Day 4 - Tulsa Tour and Greenwood District

Enjoy **breakfast** at the hotel this morning. Start your day of touring with a **Guided City Tour of Tulsa**. Experience **Art Deco Architecture, Underground Tulsa**, and the **Tulsa Church Tour**. Enjoy **lunch on own** while exploring. Next stop is the **Greenwood District of Tulsa**, more commonly known as "**Black Wall Street**". Greenwood was the richest African American Neighborhood in North America. It was a bustling 35-block community on the outskirts of downtown Tulsa. In early 2021, the **Greenwood Rising History Center** will be completed and will walk you through the horrific events of the infamous massacre in the area on May 31, 1921. Next, tour the **Historic Vernon A.M.E. Church**. During the massacre, this church was burned to the ground, and only the basement remained. A staff member will guide your group through the property and tell of the church's history. Later, take a **Guided Tour** at the **Mabel B. Little Heritage House**, the 1920's era home belonging to Sam and Lucy Mackey. Sam and Lucy lived in a modest wood-framed structure that was burned down during the massacre of 1921. They vowed to rebuild, and in 1926 they built a two story, brick home. This home is one of the few buildings from the 1920's left standing in the Greenwood district. Afterwards, walk or ride to the **John Hope Franklin Center for Reconciliation** where your Guide will explain the symbolism and meaning in the art located there. End the day with **dinner and drinks on own** at one of the many fine eateries in the area before returning to the hotel for the evening. (B)

Day 5 - Fort Gibson and Muskogee

Enjoy **breakfast** at the hotel this morning before **checking out** and departing for **Fort Gibson**. On the way, visit multiple historic black towns such as: **Taft, Redbird, and Tullahassee**; all along the short drive from Tulsa to Fort Gibson. When you arrive at **Fort Gibson Historic Site**, a **Guide** will meet the bus dressed in military apparel used during the Fort's existence. Fort Gibson was once home to the well-known African American regiment, The First Kansas Infantry which helped clear Indian Territory of the Confederacy. This regiment of African American Soldiers was pivotal in the Union's victory at the battle of Honey Springs and many other victories. Fort Gibson has undergone a \$1.5 million renovation in recent years. Catered **boxed lunches** will be provided and enjoyed at the fort. Continue to the city of **Muskogee**. Visit the **Three Rivers Museum** and be greeted by the famous **Bass Reeves** himself. Learn about the life and career of the first US Marshall west of the Mississippi. The next stop will be the **Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame** where you'll enjoy some tunes and learn about some Okie music legends. Depart for an **included dinner** this evening at a local favorite restaurant before **checking-in** at your **Muskogee area hotel**. (B, L, D)

Day 6 - Rentiesville and Boley

Enjoy **breakfast** at the hotel this morning prior to **checking out**. Depart **Muskogee** and take a short drive down highway 69 to **Rentiesville**, one of the remaining 13 historic black towns in Oklahoma. Here, you'll meet **Selby Minner**, wife of the late Blues artist, **D.C. Minner**. Selby will guide your group through the **Oklahoma Blues Hall of Fame Museum** and, if you're lucky, you might catch some live Blues during your visit. Just across the street from the Oklahoma Blues Hall of Fame is the **Honey Springs Battlefield** and the newly built **Honey Springs Battlefield Visitors Center**. Take a guided tour through the exhibits and learn about the **First Kansas Volunteer Regiment**, the first African American regiment of the Union army, and of the Cherokee and Creek soldiers that fought on both sides of the battle. This was the largest conflict of the Civil War in Indian Territory and a major turning point in the removal of Confederate soldiers from the area. Stop for **lunch at the Hen House Café in Okemah** on the way to **Boley**. When you arrive in Boley you will meet Andre and Jessilyn Head of the **Coltrane Group**. They are working to preserve the history of the Oklahoma Black Towns. Recently, they purchased the old Farmers & Merchants Bank building for restoration. The Heads will tell about the history and significance of the bank and tell the story of the time "Pretty Boy" Floyd came to rob the bank. Next, your local **Boley Historian** will join the group to tell stories about Boley and how it was once a thriving all-black town in Oklahoma. Enjoy a **City Tour and Exploration** before departing for home. (B, L)

Contact Us for a Custom Version of this Tour

MARS & Companies

Email: Info@TakeAFunTrip.com or Call: 540-869-1864

Tour Includes: 5 nights' hotel accommodation; 5 breakfasts; 3 lunches; 2 dinners; admissions to events and guide service as stated in the itinerary.