



Country Roads

A musical road trip through Tennessee in the Volkswagen ID.4

While the Volkswagen bus is synonymous with the musical road trip, for most of us it likely conjures images of tie-dyed hippies following the Grateful Dead around during the 1960s and '70s. Today, though, I'm driving the new Volkswagen ID.4, and in honor of the Tennessee factory where the electric SUV was built, I'll be stopping at a few Volunteer State musical landmarks.

I embark from Nashville, the capital city of both the state and the country music industry. First up is the cathedral—literally—of country music. The **Ryman Auditorium** was built as the Union Gospel Tabernacle in 1892, and it served as the home of the Grand Ole Opry from 1943 to 1974, hosting everyone from Bill Monroe to Elvis. I learn all about this and more on the tour, then walk down Rep. John Lewis Way to the **Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum**, where I see Hank Williams Sr.'s boots and Gram Parsons' Nudie Suit.



Hoping to hear the next great Opry star, I move the VW to Music City's trendy SoBro neighborhood, where I take in the Lunch Time Tunes set at **The Listening Room Cafe**. The music's great, but as Willie Nelson would say, I can't wait to get on the road again, so I head southeast on Interstate 24. An hour later I exit the highway and mosey into the small town of Bell Buckle, where I peruse the antiques stores and stop for coffee at the **Bell Buckle Cafe**, which not only hosts live performances by local



musicians but also has its own label, Bell Buckle Records.

About another hour on down the highway I decide to do a real deep dive. Grundy County is home to **The Caverns**, a subterranean venue and outdoor amphitheater that hosts contemporary bands such as the Avett Brothers. There's no show today, but I take a tour, walking through the Big Room Cave, which is the length of three football fields.

Clockwise from top: the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum; a concert at The Caverns; the Nashville skyline; the Kinley Chattanooga

My final destination is Chattanooga, where my ID.4 rolled off the line. Before spending the night at the **Kinley Chattanooga**, I stroll around downtown, stopping to admire the 1921 **Tivoli Theatre**, which is known as the Jewel of the South (and where Bob Dylan and Willie Nelson have both played). Over a plate of local mushroom pappardelle at the Southside's **Flying Squirrel** restaurant, I can't help but feel that today, as Johnny Cash sang, I've been everywhere.



THE CAR

2023 Volkswagen ID.4 Electric SUV

This is no slug bug: The base model of the Chattanooga-built ID.4 makes 201 horsepower, while the all-wheel-drive edition gets up to 295 hp. The 12-inch display's navigation system will keep any driver on track, and, best of all, the range of around 275 miles means you can easily make it from Nashville to Chattanooga without having to recharge. From \$37,495, [vw.com](https://www.vw.com)



Matthew Lejune/Unsplash (CMHF); Starboard & Port (Kinley); iStockphoto (Caverns); Getty Images (skyline); DV Photo Video (The Caverns)