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PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK



A look inside the new Residence Inn in downtown Montgomery on July 9.
JAKE CRANDALL/ADVERTISER

New hotels capitalize on AL’s tourism boom

Sarah Clifton
Montgomery Advertiser
USA TODAY NETWORK

Two new hotels are now open for business in Alabama’s capital as tourism drives hospitality companies to continue expanding into the River Region. The new Residence Inn by Marriott

and Home2Suites downtown, which are located right next door to each other, contain a total of 282 rooms put together. The spaces are both extended stay models, meaning they’re designed for longer occupancy times than a typical hotel. The Home2Suites has a variety of room options and specially crafted ac-

cessible rooms that “sleep plenty,” according to a spokesperson for both hotels. All rooms have full kitchenettes and hot plates available upon request and are pet friendly. The hotel also has boardrooms with a capacity for 100 people and an outdoor patio area with

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Bass jumping at surface fighting a minnow imitation lure. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

LINE DANCING WITH LUNKERS

Bassmaster ranks 3 AL lakes among 2026’s best for bass

Jennifer Lindahl
Montgomery Advertiser | USA TODAY NETWORK

Alabama’s reputation as a bass fishing paradise just got another boost. Three Alabama lakes have earned spots on Bassmaster Magazine’s 2026 list of the 100 Best Bass Lakes in the United States, ranking among the nation’s top destinations for largemouth, smallmouth and spotted bass fishing. The rankings highlight the country’s most celebrated bass fisheries and arrive during America’s 250th anniversary celebration, with Bassmaster spotlighting the public waters that have become part of the nation’s outdoor heritage.

Bassmaster celebrates America’s fishing treasures

This year’s list is a tribute to the lakes, rivers and reservoirs that belong to everyone, and the memo-

ries created there by generations of anglers. “From sea to shining sea, America is blessed with an incredible variety of bass fisheries,” said James Hall, editor-in-chief of Bassmaster Magazine. “Whether it’s the tidal rivers of the East Coast, legendary Southern reservoirs, crystal-clear Northern lakes or trophy fisheries in the West, these waters are part of our nation’s outdoor heritage.” Bassmaster’s rankings are based on factors including tournament results, angler reports and fishery data collected across the country.

Best Alabama lakes for bass fishing

Lake Guntersville
Landing at No. 4 in the Southeast Division, Lake Guntersville continues to be one of the most recognized bass fisheries in the country. Lake Guntersville is known for its largemouth bass and history of

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SOUTHERN LIVING

Jesse’s on the Bay named Restaurant of Month

Jennifer Lindahl
Montgomery Advertiser
USA TODAY NETWORK

Jesse’s on the Bay, a waterfront restaurant in the Gulf Shores-area community of Fort Morgan, has been named Southern Living’s Restaurant of the Month, a recognition that highlights the restaurant’s approach to Gulf Coast dining. The honor is part of the magazine’s yearlong series celebrating standout restaurants across the South, with one editor-selected establishment featured each month before a Restaurant of the Year is named in December.

Why Southern Living named Jesse’s on the Bay Restaurant of the Month

According to Southern Living, Jesse’s on the Bay stood out for blending upscale dining with the flavors and traditions of Alabama’s Gulf Coast.

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New 2026 middle class income range set for AL

Jennifer Lindahl and Miguel Legoa
Montgomery Advertiser
USA TODAY NETWORK

For many Americans, the middle class is less about a number on a pay-check and more about a lifestyle: owning a home, paying the bills without constant stress, saving for retirement and having enough left over for the occasional vacation or splurge. But what counts as “middle class” can change dramatically depending on where you live.

What it takes to be middle class in Alabama in 2026

In Alabama, households earning

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