

Celebrate Black History Month on the road

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KwaMuhle Museum, Durban, South Africa

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Get a glimpse of what life was like in Durban leading up to the apartheid era. The story is told through photographic prints of township life and reflect on the contributions of the folks who laid the foundation of Ethekewini's development as one of Africa's leading cities. The museum is in a building of note, the former headquarters of the Native Administrative Department and center of Durban's harsh system of labor control. Among the many things you'll want to see is the exhibit, "The Durban System," comprising well-researched texts, black and white photographs and a themed environment, which work together to detail this form of urban control. This system consisted of "influx control," a municipal monopoly on the production of Zulu beer, the creation of beer halls and the creation of segregated accommodations.

Reginald F. Lewis African-American Museum of Maryland History and Culture, National Great Blacks in Wax Museum, Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center, Baltimore, Md.

You get a threesome in Baltimore. The Lewis Museum gives props to African-Americans in Maryland. It has some 400 years of history in its permanent collection, with artifacts and displays on politics, sports, media, the arts, education and more.

The National Great Blacks in Wax Museum is the first in the U.S. to use life-sized wax figures to highlight historical and contemporary African-Americans. The walk-through replica of a slave ship complete with Middle Passage history will move you for sure.

Three years ago, the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center opened. You'll sense what life was like for Tubman during her early days on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Better still that the landscape remains much like it was in Tubman's time and sites where key events happened still exist and are open for you to check out. The visitor center is a joint project with the Maryland State Park System and the National Park Service.

Buffalo Soldiers Museum, Tacoma, Wash.

You know they say good things come in small packages. There's a small museum in Tacoma that is one of only two in the world to celebrate one of the most overlooked aspects of Black history in America: The Buffalo Soldiers. From the Civil War to the National Park Service, the Buffalo Soldiers influenced U.S. history from 1866 to 1944. Although they were at first cooks and laborers, they were key to the victory in the Spanish American War and they became the country's first National Park Service rangers.

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