



DAY TRIP TO CAHABA

From Selma · Dallas County, Alabama



Photo: RuralSWAlabama, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0

OPEN DAILY

A state historic site run by the Alabama Historical Commission. Grounds open daily, with a small admission fee.

Old Cahawba is an easy half day from Selma. Start at the visitor center for the museum and the self-guided brochures, then walk or bike the old streets to the columns, the church, the wells and the prison site on the bluff. Pack a picnic for the river. The Cahawba Advisory Committee, which supports the park, suggests spending an afternoon in nearby Selma.

A SAMPLE DAY

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| ☐ 9:30 a.m. | Leave Selma on Dallas Avenue (AL 22), then County Road 9 and Cahaba Road, about half an hour. |
| ☐ 10 a.m. | The visitor center opens (Thursday to Monday). See the museum and pick up the walking and Civil War brochures. |
| ☐ 10:30 a.m. | Borrow a bike or walk the downtown streets: the Crocheron columns, the slave quarters, St. Luke's and the Perine well. |
| ☐ Noon | Picnic above the Alabama River, then walk out to the prison site on the bluff. |
| ☐ 1:30 p.m. | Walk the Clear Creek nature trail through the old town commons, or visit the cemeteries. |
| ☐ Afternoon | Drive back to Selma. The grounds close at 5 p.m. |

Coming from Montgomery? Allow about an hour and a half each way.

WHAT TO PHOTOGRAPH

- **The Crocheron columns.** Brick columns standing alone in a clearing. Shoot from low down to put them against the sky.
- **St. Luke's Church.** The 1854 church, back on its townsite. Its front faces east, so come in the morning for light on the facade.
- **The street grid.** Straight, empty roads through the woods. A long lens stacks up the rows of trees along them.
- **The Alabama River.** The bluff and picnic area look out over the river where the prison stood.
- **Wildflowers.** The Cahawba Advisory Committee suggests spring for the old garden plants that still bloom here, from Cherokee roses to daffodils.
- **Drones and commercial shoots.** Ask at the visitor center (334-872-8058) before you fly a drone or set up a commercial shoot.



USGS topographic map, 1953 (public domain). The ring and pin mark the town.

DAY TRIP ESSENTIALS

DRIVE	14 mi, about 31 min each way from downtown Selma. From Montgomery: 64 mi, about 1 h 34 min.
WHERE	Old Cahawba Archaeological Park, run by the Alabama Historical Commission, 9518 Cahaba Road, Orrville, AL 36767. Visitor center 334-872-8058.
OPEN	Grounds every day, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Visitor center Thursday to Monday, 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (the Cahawba Advisory Committee's site says 5 p.m.). Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day.
ADMISSION	\$2 adults, \$1 children 6 to 18 with a parent. Annual passes are \$25 for one person and \$35 for a family. Active-duty military families get in free between Armed Forces Day and Labor Day.
GETTING AROUND	Five miles of level park roads. Free cruiser bikes with paid admission, first come, first served, against a driver's license.
TOURS	Self-guided brochures at the visitor center, including a walking tour, the Civil War sites and Cahawba's Black heritage. Guided tours are by appointment only, booked two weeks ahead.
RESTROOMS	At the visitor center, which is accessible. The Clear Creek nature trail is fully accessible, and there are accessible picnic tables.
FOOD AND WATER	Snacks are for sale at the visitor center. Bring a picnic: there's a picnic area overlooking the Alabama River.
BRING	Comfortable shoes, a hat, sunscreen and bug spray, as the commission advises.
RULES	Old Cahawba is an archaeological preserve: no metal detecting or digging. No visitors on the grounds at night except for special events. Pets on a leash.
WEBSITE	ahc.alabama.gov/properties/cahawba/cahawba.aspx

BEFORE YOU GO

- Check the status with the land manager before you go; conditions change.
- Keep out of unstable buildings and off fenced ruins.
- Leave artifacts where they lie. Removing them can be a crime.
- Carry water, a paper map and a charged phone; signal is often poor.

Coordinates 32.31694, -87.10139 · 32°19'01"N
87°06'05"W

Full guide abandonedtowns.com/alabama/cahaba/

Directions [Google Maps](#)

Details checked October 2026. Hours, prices and access change: confirm before you go.