

FIND THE BEST FARMERS MARKET IN AMERICA ON PAGE 106

# Spirit

SOUTHWEST AIRLINES

APRIL 2008

## Hang Time

63 ways to get  
wild with a kid  
(see page 116)



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April

# A Royal Bon Voyage

Don't miss your last chance to say goodbye to an 82-year-old queen. Not that one. On April 18, the historic *Delta Queen* steamboat will begin her final cruising season on some of America's great rivers.

The *Queen's* reign will end not because of old age or disrepair, but because Congress blocked a bill to exempt her wooden superstructure from Coast Guard safety regulations. Without this exemption—given to the ship multiple times since the 1960s—the *Queen's* decades of overnight voyages must come to an end on Oct. 31. But passengers seeking one last chance to come aboard can meet her this year at stops in Louisiana, Tennessee, Ohio, Missouri, and Pennsylvania as her red stern wheel churns up the waters of the Mississippi, Ohio, and Cumberland rivers.

Designed as a luxury riverboat, the 285-foot-long National Historic Land-

mark has a 19th-century grace that would make Mark Twain feel at home, offering antique trimmings and original Tiffany-style stained-glass windows. But some things have changed since Twain's time, such as the plush linens, air conditioning, and spa-quality bath amenities in each of the 88 staterooms.

Still, the remaining old-fashioned touches create a restful atmosphere, says Nori Muster, webmaster of steamboats.com and veteran of seven *Delta Queen* trips. "You can make up your own schedule: relax on the deck, attend a lecture, or listen to music at the Texas Lounge." The limited number of passengers also promotes a friendly mood. "By the end of a cruise, everyone on the boat knows each other," Muster adds. Recline in one of the ship's deck chairs with a glass of ice-cold lemonade, and you'll cruise down the river like royalty.

[www.hancockobservatory.com](http://www.hancockobservatory.com)

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### Keep on Turning

The *Queen's* big wheel takes one last roll on the river.

