

LOUISIANA[®]

Feed Your Soul.



YEAR OF OUTDOORS 2026

Official Travel Guide



NEW ORLEANS

WHERE TRADITION MEETS WHAT'S NEXT

Rediscover New Orleans and remember every reason you fell in love in the first place.

New Orleans is blooming, renewed, and ready to be her most remarkable self. Experience tradition and innovation, side by side. With the inaugural MICHELIN Guide to the American South spotlighting New Orleans with Stars, Bib Gourmands, and special honors, and UNESCO naming New Orleans a Creative City of Music, our city is getting global recognition for the culture we've always lived in and the future we're still creating.

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SYDNEY AND WALDA BESTHOFF SCULPTURE GARDEN

Greetings from Louisiana!

If you're looking to escape the ordinary, you've come to the right place! We're known as Sportsman's Paradise, because our picturesque landscapes and wealth of outdoor activities offer something for everyone.

If you're looking for adventure, we have trails for hiking, biking and paddling. You'll spot wildlife, from alligators to a variety of bird species. In fact, birders will find more than 400 species of birds that migrate through Louisiana along the Mississippi Flyway. Avid fishermen will find freshwater, saltwater and offshore opportunities to nab bass, redfish, tuna, catfish and more. Camping is available at parks all over the state, allowing travelers to get away from it all.

Or you can enjoy the outdoors from a courtyard or patio table as you dine on our world-famous Cajun and Creole cuisines. Dishes like gumbo, jambalaya, beignets

and etouffee were created in Louisiana. So was the original cocktail, the Sazerac.

You can take in live local music, too. You'll find jazz, the blues, Cajun and zydeco streaming out of nightclubs and dancehalls, as well as at outdoor festivals and concert series. Take a walking tour of one of the many distinct neighborhoods of New Orleans. You'll learn all about the unique culture that makes Louisiana so special.

No matter what adventure you're looking for, you'll *Feed Your Soul* in Louisiana. So come find your Louisiana!



Lt. Governor
Billy Nungesser

Billy Nungesser

WHAT'S INSIDE

Welcome

- 4 Welcome to Louisiana!
- 10 Connect & Explore

Year of Outdoors

- 12 My Louisiana Outdoors
- 16 Scenic Waterways
- 18 Fishing Louisiana's Waters
- 19 Floating Fish Camps
- 22 Hiking & Biking Trails
- 24 Swamp Tours & Wildlife
- 26 Nighttime in the Outdoors
- 27 Nature Escapes & Wildflowers
- 28 Unusual Nature Stays
- 29 Outdoors ... in the City

Features

- 32 Music Under the Sun & Stars
- 33 Dance Halls & Juke Joints
- 34 Culinary Hall of Fame
- 36 Small Towns, Big Flavor
- 37 Gas Station Eats
- 38 Louisiana Seafood
- 39 MICHELIN on the Menu
- 41 Traditions Like No Other
- 42 How to Speak Cajun
- 43 Meet the Makers
- 44 Historical Sites & Attractions
- 45 Louisiana's Charming Cities
- 46 Seasonal Celebrations
- 48 The Mardi Gras You Don't Know
- 49 Road Trips & Getaways

Regions

- 56 South Louisiana
- 84 Central Louisiana
- 94 North Louisiana
- 101 Coupons & Deals



ON THE COVER

Rip Van Winkle Gardens
in New Iberia, Louisiana

Photo: Tim Mueller Photography

Louisiana Official Travel Guide

The Honorable Billy Nungesser
Lieutenant Governor
Louisiana Department of Culture,
Recreation and Tourism

[ExploreLouisiana.com](https://www.exploreLouisiana.com)

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and event websites or call
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closings and postponements.**

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WELCOME TO
Louisiana

We invite you to come celebrate the Year of Outdoors by exploring the state's rivers and lakes, bayous and beaches, forests and parks, tracks and trails. Paradise awaits!

CADDO LAKE

4 #OnlyLouisiana @ExploreLouisiana

*Discover awe ...
and “aaaaah” on
scenic waterways.*

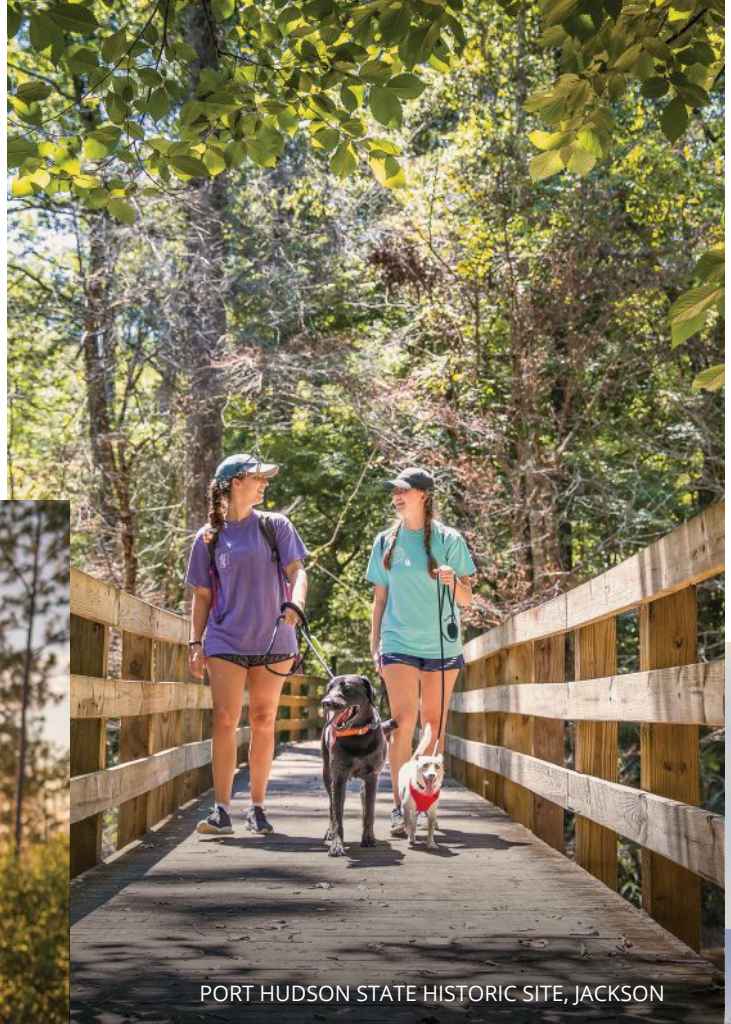
Left to right: Ben Pierce; Paul Kieu

LAKE BISTINEAU



THE BLUE CRAB RESTAURANT & OYSTER BAR, NEW ORLEANS

*Reconnect ...
or get away
from it all on a
peaceful trail.*



Left: Chris Granger

PORT HUDSON STATE HISTORIC SITE, JACKSON



KISATCHIE NATIONAL FOREST



MILFORD WAMPOLD MEMORIAL PARK, BATON ROUGE

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HOW TO GET HERE

Louisiana is conveniently located along the Gulf in the Southeast U.S. between Texas and Mississippi, directly south of Arkansas. Interstates 10, 12 and 20 run east to west through Louisiana, with Interstates 49 and 55 connecting the north and south. State routes connect them all, and Louisiana is serviced by primary commercial airports in Alexandria, Baton Rouge, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Monroe, Shreveport and New Orleans, which is also an international airport. There are dozens of secondary airports in all regions, too.

EXPLORE MORE ONLINE

ExploreLouisiana.com is your one-stop shop for great vacation ideas, dynamic visual stories, immersive videos, a full calendar of events and more.

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Check out our **@ExploreLouisiana** socials to see how others are enjoying the state, plus share your own adventures using **#OnlyLouisiana** and **#MyLouisiana**.

GET TRAVEL BROCHURES

No matter where you travel in the state, you'll find brochures, trail guides, maps and more – ready to download with just a click! Scan the code on the left to get started.

WHEN TO VISIT

Although you won't often find snow in Louisiana, the state does offer four unique seasons.



Spring (March-May) is warm and festive, with colorful flowers and events.



Summer (June-August) is full of sunshine, perfect for water-based adventures.

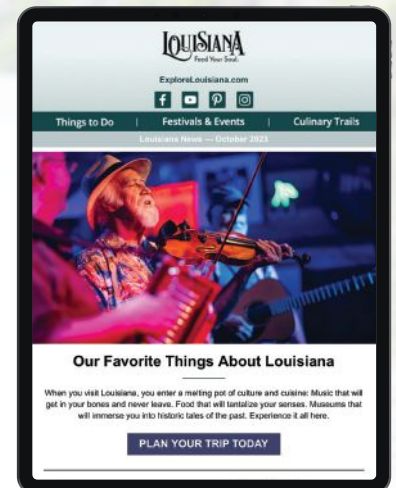


Fall (September-November) offers slightly cooler temperatures and lively festivals.



Winter (December-February) is pleasant and mild, perfect for reflection and fun.

For more seasonal events and activities, check out the map inserted in this guide!



My Louisiana Outdoors

EXPLORE THE STATE WITH THOSE WHO KNOW IT BEST!

Louisiana is a dream destination for outdoor lovers, whether you're a mountain biker attacking the trail, an angler casting a line or an amateur photographer looking for that next oh-so-perfect shot.

From lush parks and preserves to coastal wetlands and inland bayous, Louisiana's diverse landscapes provide endless opportunities to explore. We rounded up three outdoor enthusiasts to share their love of the state's natural wonders - and let you in on some of their favorite places to hike, bike, paddle, fish and even photograph.

Here are their stories ...

BOGUE CHITTO STATE PARK, FRANKLINTON



**NINA
ROGERS**
MOUNTAIN BIKER

An avid mountain biker, **Nina Rogers** had quite an adjustment when she moved to Louisiana eight years ago.

“When I came here, everything was flat,” she remembers. “Then I joined BRAMBA (Baton Rouge Area Mountain Bike Association) and discovered we have some very technical trails right here in Baton Rouge.”

She said the group was so welcoming that she started biking with them every week – and eventually joined their board. That led her to partner up with fellow biker Toby Cortez to offer bike training and lead group rides through some of their favorite places.

“I started doing so much training that I thought I should probably get certified,” she says with a laugh, which led her to create Send It Sisters, a mountain bike training program geared especially to women.

“Teaching female bikers requires special skills – it’s not the same as when I trained men – and I love helping these women gain confidence and feel more comfortable in their own skin.”

Nina has shared some of her favorite places to ride and explore throughout this year’s guide, but one of those spots is especially meaningful to her.

“Ruston has this beautiful bike hub up there that is attracting riders from all over the region and beyond.”

Leading to five state-of-the-art flow trails that take riders of all skill levels over different types of terrain – all with awesome views – it’s also the world’s first waterfall mountain-biking hub.

“It really is amazing and I helped design it. It’s something I can look at now and say, wow, I did that!”



NINA ROGERS

*Follow Nina's
adventures!*



KALON JOHNSON

KAYAK TOURNAMENT ANGLER

Looking back on **Kalon Johnson's** rise from a little kid with a fishing pole to the world-class kayak tournament angler he is today, you might say he never had another choice.

"My uncles introduced me to fishing at an early age and I just never looked back," he recalls. "I really enjoy the challenge of figuring out what the fish want. I enjoy the peace, joy and fulfillment that it gives me as well, and I love to share those experiences."

Being able to inspire and motivate others through his adventures is what led him to start teaching kids how to fish – so maybe they'll become hooked at a young age, just as he did, back in his hometown of Thibodaux.

Some of his favorite places to fish these days are Caddo Lake near Shreveport, an internationally protected wetland famous for having one of the largest flooded cypress forests in the U.S., and Bayou Lacombe in Lacombe, which offers a haven of other wildlife surrounding its fish-rich waters.

When in more southern points like Houma, he doesn't miss Pointe-aux-Chenes, a marsh peppered with ponds, bayous and canals, and Bay Cocodrie, home to a fishing, shrimping and crabbing village on waters opening into the Gulf.

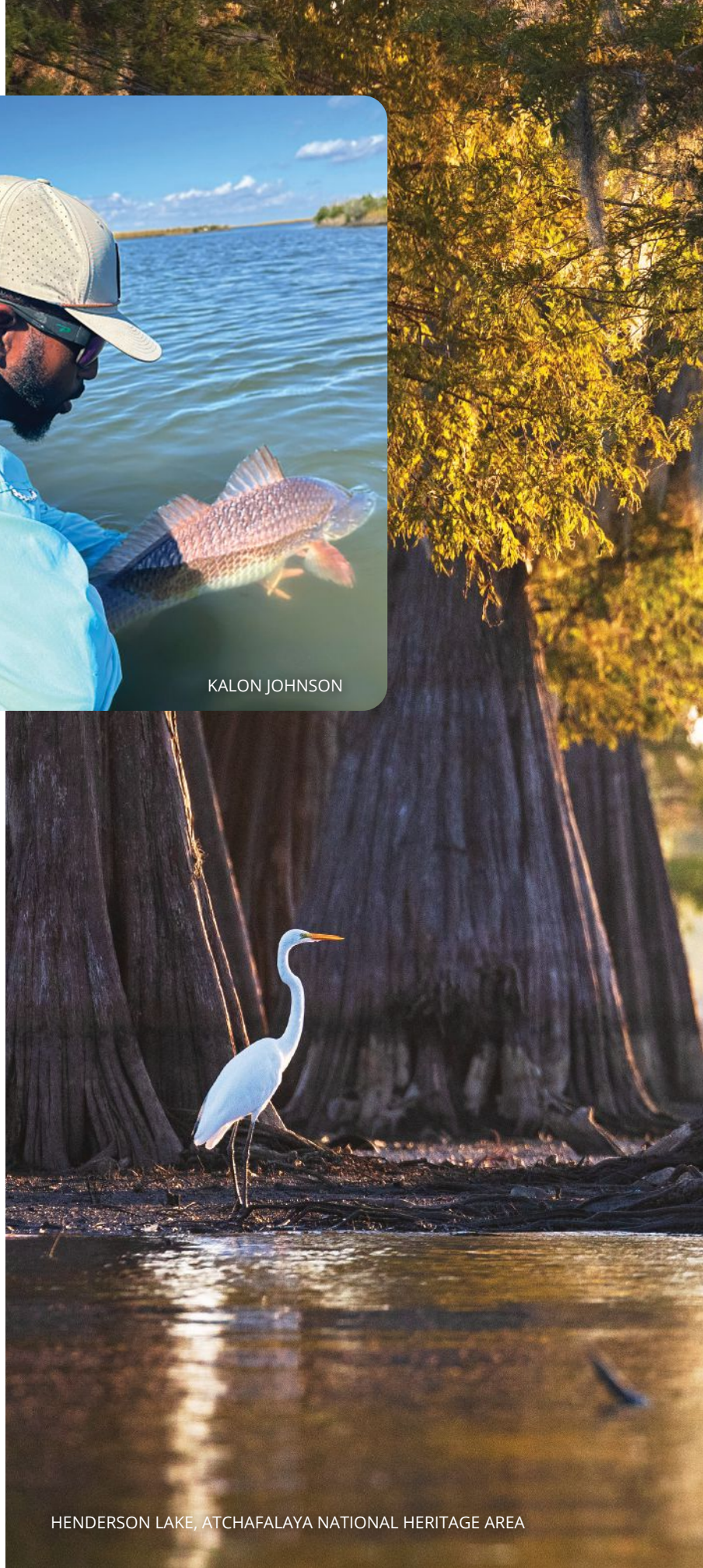
When he's not out fishing, Kalon says he loves to boil seafood (probably not a surprise) and smoke meats, along with planting and growing vegetables and fruit.

"Doing these things in the comfort of my backyard with family is an escape for me."

Follow Kalon's adventures!



KALON JOHNSON



BEN PIERCE

OUTDOOR PHOTOGRAPHER

As someone who grew up in Louisiana, outdoor photographer **Ben Pierce** makes it clear that “Louisiana is – and always will be – my home state. I moved here right before I started kindergarten and went through all my schooling here.”

That led him to a degree in landscape architecture from Louisiana State University, where he learned to connect people to the “built world” through the natural environment. After a brief stint in the mountains of North Carolina post-graduation, he was pulled back to Louisiana, where he uses his love of photography to shine a spotlight on the state’s outdoor beauty and valuable natural resources.

Although not a photographer by profession (he leads a Lafayette-based nonprofit called Louisiana Swamp Base that fosters appreciation of the state’s swamps through immersive and educational experiences) his skills behind the lens certainly help support his work.

“You could say that I use my photography for both eco-tourism promotion and to achieve my own personal mission of changing opinions and breaking the many myths about swamps.”

He considers himself one of the lucky few people who was able to find a career where the places he loves most dearly are also the ones he gets to call his “office.”

“Any day on the water is a good day, so I cherish every chance I get to explore our swamps and wetlands,” Pierce says.

“When I’m not on the water, which is rare, I enjoy going for a drive, taking the back roads and visiting the small communities of our state. There’s a special charm about these out-of-the-way locations.”



BEN PIERCE

Look for Nina, Kalon and Ben’s favorite places to play in the “*My Louisiana Outdoors*” best bets they share throughout this year’s guide!

*Follow Ben’s
adventures!*



Bayou

PADDLE THROUGH
LOUISIANA'S MOST
SCENIC WATERWAYS

Bliss

Louisiana is home to one of the most distinctive bayou ecosystems in the country, making it a true paddler's paradise. Whether you're gliding through cypress groves or creek tubing, here are some of the best places to kayak, canoe and cool off, with a few insider tips along the way!

Chicot State Park

With beautiful bayous to explore, a vibrant culinary scene, lively music and dancing, Acadiana delivers adventure at every turn. In Ville Platte, Chicot State Park gives kayakers 10 miles of paddling trails beneath towering cypress trees that cast cool shade and create shelter for birds on **Lake Chicot**. The lake has three access points and well-marked routes to help you navigate this scenic water trail. In the fall, pack some hiking shoes to explore the park's old-growth forest, then camp overnight for the full experience.

Ouisca Chitto Creek

Roughly 50 miles west, cool off in the spring-fed waters of Ouisca Chitto Creek. With a gentle current and clear flow, this scenic stream is ideal for kayaking, tubing or fishing. Drift through a mixed pine and bottomland hardwood forest, pull up on white sandbars for a picnic or wade along the creek's edge. Outfitters like **Ouisca Chitto Canoe Rental** in Mittie have everything you need for a carefree day on the water.



**EXPLORE
MORE PLACES
TO PADDLE!**



Ben Pierce

Outdoor
Photographer

My Louisiana Outdoors

“ I grew up in Acadiana so the Atchafalaya Basin, Lake Martin and Lake Fausse Pointe are my favorite places to visit. Though they seem similar on the surface, there are distinct characteristics that make each location special and enticing to photograph. ”

Cane River Lake

Combine your love of history and Southern charm with a paddle on Cane River Lake in Natchitoches. This historic waterway meanders past downtown's iconic red brick Front Street and the Creole architecture and cascading live oaks of **Cane River Creole National Historical Park**. Launch at **Shell Beach Ramp** near the park, or downtown with rentals from **Cane River Paddle & Pedal Sports**.

Bayou DeSiard Trail

In Monroe, the Bayou DeSiard Trail also offers an urban paddling experience, blending scenes of cypress trees with views of beautiful homes and local landmarks like the University of Louisiana Monroe campus. Known for its low current, this out-and-back trail is a good choice year-round. Rent a kayak from **Catahoula's** and launch right at the restaurant. When you return, reward yourself with an ice-cold beer and tender fried catfish bites.

Chemin-A-Haut State Park

Further north in Bastrop, Chemin-A-Haut State Park sits on **Bayou Bartholomew**, the longest bayou in the world. Here, you can rent a recreational kayak and launch from an easy access point to explore this designated Scenic and Natural Waterway. Once a steamboat route, today it's an undammed bayou rich with biodiversity – perfect for bass fishing or a relaxed paddle in a natural landscape.

A Guide to Fishing Louisiana's Waters

LEARN WHERE THE LOCALS GO TO REEL IN THE BIG ONE



Kalon Johnson

Kayak
Tournament
Angler

My Louisiana Outdoors

“I’ve been fishing since I was about 12 and I’ve been hooked ever since. There’s just something about being on the water with no worries. It is a place where you can dig deep into yourself, discover things you may have not yet discovered and find peace.”



**EXPLORE
MORE PLACES
TO FISH!**

Catch this insider’s guide to the best fishing experiences from coast to inland.

Grand Isle

With access to great saltwater fishing in the Gulf and inland bays and marshes, Grand Isle is a hotbed of diverse and abundant species. Hook up with **Southern Angler Fishing Charters** for the adventure and take your haul to **Hurricane Hole** for a classic catch-and-cook.

Toledo Bend Reservoir

Start your legendary fish tale on one of the best bass lakes in the nation by taking part in the Lunker Bass Program or a fishing tournament in Zwolle. Pop into the beloved **Toledo Town & Tackle** for gear and gab.

Venice

A guide is a must for navigating the passes, bayous and canals of Venice’s waters, both in and offshore. **Super Strike Charters** offers a variety of overnight fishing trips, or you can take it slow with **Kayak Venice**.

Lake D’Arbonne State Park

Make a fishing week of it in a deluxe cabin on one of the state’s largest and most scenic lakes in Farmerville. The knowledgeable folks at **Cooter’s Bait & Tackle** know what’s biting at any time of year.

Jean Lafitte

Just 30 minutes from New Orleans you can fish inland saltwater with ease. Drop a line off the pier without much fuss, or spend the day with **Reel Cajun Fishing**, whose Cajun-meal package will make sure your hunger is satisfied ‘round the clock.

Poverty Point Reservoir

Get of-the-minute bait recommendations and conditions at the marina, then grab your binoculars for the excellent birding ops that come with a trip to Poverty Point Reservoir in Delhi, thanks to its position along the **Mississippi Flyway**.

THE FLOATING FISH CAMPS OF LOUISIANA

LIVING YOUR BEST LIFE ON THE WATER

For generations, Louisiana's floating fish camps have embodied the state's connection with its waterways. Modest, weathered and utterly authentic, these raised or floating cabins drift with the tides, offering a front-row seat to Louisiana life.

In **Delacroix**, marshes stretch toward the horizon, camps lining the narrow bayous like weather-beaten pearls on a string. Here, mornings begin with the hum of boat motors and life moves to the rhythm of the water.

Farther inland, camps bob among towering cypress trees near **Lake Verret**. Rustic porches strung with hammocks and fishing poles offer peaceful views of glassy waters. At dusk the lake reflects fiery streaks of sunset as herons glide overhead.

At the edge of the Gulf, camps perched on stilts above the marsh in communities like **Cocodrie**, **Dulac** and **Chauvin**, their colorful exteriors faded by sun and salt. Shrimp boats and crab traps are common sights, and nights bring sea breezes through open windows.

Most of these are family properties where multiple generations gather to boil crawfish and watch football games, but rentals are available. Search Vrbo, Airbnb and even Facebook for an opportunity to experience this unique way of life.



SPONSORED CONTENT

Shreveport-Bossier

WHERE OUTDOOR ADVENTURE MEETS FLAVOR, STYLE AND SOUL!

Discover why Louisiana is called “Sportsman’s Paradise” in Shreveport-Bossier! The area is surrounded by diverse natural beauty where visitors can enjoy hiking, biking, fishing, birding and countless other outdoor activities among lakes and towering pine forests. Visit local gems like the American Rose Center — home to 20,000 rose bushes — or the scenic Boom or Bust Byway, where history awaits around every corner. Plan your adventure at visitshreveportbossier.org.



@VisitShreveportBossier



VisitShreveportBossier.org

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TAMMANY TRACE

22 #OnlyLouisiana @ExploreLouisiana

Chris Granger

Hiking & Biking

YEP, THERE'S A TRAIL FOR THAT!

Louisiana might be known for jazz and jambalaya, but nature lovers take note: The Pelican State is also a sleeper hit for outdoor exploration. (That's how we got the nickname Sportsman's Paradise!) From marsh boardwalk strolls to heart-pounding singletracks through rugged forests, there's a trail for every speed and style.



Nina Rogers
Mountain Biker

My Louisiana Outdoors

“Ruston made a major investment into a new mountain-biking hub, which has become really popular among riders from all over. They also have these nice new cabins on the lake, so you can go up and make a great little trip out of it. Some of my other favorite places to bike around the state are **Comite River Park** in Baton Rouge, **The Spillway Trails** in Norco and **Lake Kincaid** in Alexandria.”

HIKING HIGHLIGHTS

Wander into Louisiana's wilder side with a trek across **Joyce Wildlife Management Area's** “Swamp Walk” in Ponchatoula, where a half-mile elevated boardwalk winds through a cypress-tupelo swamp alive with osprey and bald eagles in spring, plus gators and other wildlife in summer.

Up north in Bienville Parish, climb the state's highest natural “peak” at **Driskill Mountain** on a short 1.7-mile hike that rises 535 feet – with forest views to match.

For an easy, breezy excursion filled with blooms and birdsong, the paved walking loop in the botanical gardens surrounding **R.W. Norton Art Gallery** in Shreveport is a serene milelong escape.

BIKING ADVENTURES

Whether you're into mellow greenways or technical terrain, Louisiana has you covered on two wheels. In Baton Rouge, **Perkins Road Community Park** is a cycling paradise, boasting a velodrome, BMX track and access to the **Dawson Creek Greenway**, a 1.75-mile ADA-compliant paved path connecting parks and neighborhoods.

Craving a challenge? **Bogue Chitto State Park** in Franklinton ups the adrenaline with 14 miles of trails, plus pump tracks, wall rides and even a bike-repair station. And along the popular **Tammany Trace** rail-trail, riders can cross 31 bridges built on original railroad trestles while spotting wildlife on a 31-mile paved path that connects the towns of Covington, Abita Springs, Mandeville, Lacombe and Slidell.

So lace up your boots or grab your helmet. In Louisiana, the trail is always calling!



EXPLORE MORE PLACES TO BIKE!



SWAMP TOURS & *Wildlife*

THE BEST ECO-TOURS FOR SEEING NATURE, GATORS AND MORE

Education and adventure meet at these family-friendly parks and attractions. From zipping over bayous to spotting black bears, we'll show you where to go for high-energy thrills, quiet moments in nature and everything in between.

Binoculars aren't just for birds. In North Louisiana, bring a pair to **Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge** in Tallulah and you might spot a Louisiana Black Bear. This subspecies of American black bear often makes an appearance near dusk in the fall, especially around deer feeders in the surrounding fields.

In Central Louisiana, head to **Briarwood: Caroline Dormon Nature Preserve** in Saline, the former home of trailblazing conservationist Caroline Dormon. Spread across 212 acres of protected longleaf pine forest, Briarwood is home to mammals like mink and river otters, more than 300 bird species and the world's largest collection of native Louisiana irises. For the best experience, book a guided tour to learn about Dormon's legacy as you walk her wild and storied land.

About 70 miles northeast in Monroe, **Black Bayou Lake National Wildlife Refuge** offers a hands-on approach to nature education. The Conservation Learning Center features native species like the rare Louisiana pine snake, and nearby trails and paddle routes let you explore their habitat, **Black Bayou**, up close.

In Cajun Country, spring migration brings songbirds streaming through the cypress-tupelo woods at **Cypress Island Preserve** in St. Martinville. For a closer look, hop on a Bike and Birding Mini Tour

with **Evangeline Expeditions**, led by local naturalists who know just where to look.

Why walk when you can fly across the swamp? **Zip NOLA** in LaPlace takes riders high above **Maurepas Swamp** for a treetop view of the wild. Or head to **Gators and Friends** in Greenwood, just outside Shreveport, for exotic animal encounters and the chance to zipline over live alligators.

Get an insider's perspective on a **Bayou Bienvenue Boat Eco Excursion** tour that explores wildlife, fisheries and coastal restoration efforts around New Orleans. For a deeper connection to nature, **Last Wilderness Swamp Tours** in Plaquemine offers eco-tours in English and Spanish through the **Atchafalaya Basin**, the nation's largest river swamp, where basin-keeper Dean Wilson and his family share the area's beauty and instill a stronger sense of stewardship and awe for this natural wonder.



**EXPLORE
BIRDING
HOT SPOTS!**

Nighttime in the Outdoors

MAGICAL EVENING ADVENTURES IN LOUISIANA

See Louisiana's wild side after dark! From moonlit paddles to stargazing on ancient mounds, nightfall is the perfect time to explore the state's untamed - yet enchanting - beauty.

At **Allen Acres Bed & Breakfast** in Pitkin, join botanist Dr. Charles Allen for "moth sheeting" (using light to attract moths) along the Miracle Moth Mile on the edge of **Kisatchie National Forest**. Dr. Allen counts moth species daily, making this magical experience available year-round.

Paddle a labyrinth of bayous and marshlands on **Cane Bayou** for a guided evening experience.

Book a private trip or join a monthly moonlight tour with **Canoe & Trail Adventures**, launching near Mandeville.

In Arnaudville, **Atelier de Nature** hosts **Fête de la Nature** each April, a community plant and wildlife

count that runs into the night. Part bioblitz and part festival, it blends live music, a crawfish boil and enlightening education.

At **Poverty Point UNESCO World Heritage Site** in Pioneer, join a ranger-led night hike each spring and fall, then wrap up with stories around a bonfire and stargazing atop a 72-foot mound, built around 1300 BC.

For a closer look at the night sky, visit Baton Rouge's free observatories. Peer through powerful telescopes at **Landolt Astronomical Observatory** or join weekly sky viewings and lectures at **Highland Road Park Observatory**.

NATURE TRAILS, ESCAPES & WILDFLOWERS

DISCOVER THE SECRET SPOTS LOCALS LOVE



Nina Rogers

Mountain Biker

My Louisiana Outdoors

“ Lots of folks from Baton Rouge and New Orleans drive up to Bogue Chitto State Park in Franklinton for the weekend. They have horseback riding, canoeing, kayaking, mountain biking and more all in one place, which is fantastic. That area is definitely getting on the map for outdoor lovers.”



KISATCHIE NATIONAL FOREST, PROVENCAL

Follow the locals to their favorite off-path nature retreats, oases, trails and falls that you may not find on a map.

WILD AZALEA TRAIL

There's no need to make a long-distance commitment to this 31-mile trail in Kisatchie National Forest in Alexandria to witness the natural splendor of azaleas in March and other flowers year-round. Six shorter segments lead through hardwood forests laced with creeks and delicate wildflowers in bright pink hues.

KISATCHIE FALLS

In Provençal, follow the sound of bubbling water that could be straight out of a meditation app. Wade through the gentle rapids and splash in shallow pools that form as water cascades off rocky terraces before it carries on downstream.

BLUE HOLE

The still waters of this pond in Pitkin don't run too deep, so pack a picnic and a kayak or stand-up paddleboard to spend a day between the grassy shores of Blue Hole. When the angle is just right, you'll catch an epic pic of surrounding trees and fluffy clouds reflected in its still waters.

WALKER BRANCH TRAIL

Take this less-traveled route within **Louisiana State Arboretum** wandering deep into wooded areas in Ville Platte. Along the way, you'll see wading birds and warblers, crane fly orchids, white-tailed deer and other natural residents of this footpath-dappled sanctuary.

CAT ISLAND NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Feel the majesty in St. Francisville as you walk amid epic bald cypress trees, including a **National Champion Bald Cypress**, estimated to be 1,500 years old. All it had to do for that honor was grow 96 feet tall and measure 52 feet around!



EXPLORE MORE LOUISIANA TRAILS!

GOATS, GATORS & GLAMPING

LOUISIANA'S MOST UNEXPECTED NATURE STAYS

From cypress swamps to farm fields, hidden lakes to treehouse hammocks, Louisiana offers unforgettable ways to stay immersed in nature.

At **Wildlife Gardens Bed & Breakfast** in Gibson, cabins are tucked so deep into the cypress swamp that the moss-draped trees seem to close in around you. Sit on the screened-in porch as twilight falls, listening to a symphony of frogs, crickets and owls hooting softly in the dark.

Mornings arrive gently during a stay at **Bonne Terre**, with the occasional rooster crowing as it struts around this farm outside Breaux Bridge. Gather eggs, harvest fruits and veggies, feed the friendly goats (all "chores" are optional) or simply relax on the porch, coffee in hand.

Trails meander through the pines at **The Cabins of Horseshoe Hills Ranch** in Natchitoches, leading from woody cabins along Bayou Pierre to porch swings and firepits. Gather 'round under the stars after a day of fishing from the floating dock.

For something completely different, **God's Country RV Resort** in Shreveport offers air-conditioned teepees and Conestoga wagons with king-size beds. From your camp, watch bald eagles soar over **Soda Lake Wildlife Management Area**. Nearby, paddle the quiet waters of **Twelve Mile Bayou**.

In Monroe, the houseboat at **Slip Away Marina** bobs on Moon Lake, its porch perfect for sipping sunset cocktails or afternoon chats. With kayaks ready to launch and the water just steps away, the line between indoors and outdoors blurs beautifully.

At **Poverty Point Reservoir** and **Bayou Segnette State Park**, floating cabins perch over the water, offering rustic-modern comfort with hiking trails, canoe launches and sometimes even an alligator floating by.

In Louisiana, the outdoors isn't only about where you play – but where you stay!



EXPLORE MORE OF THE OUTDOORS!



Ben Pierce

Outdoor Photographer

My Louisiana Outdoors

“I'm happiest with a camera in my hand and being on the water, whether that's in a kayak or canoe, surrounded by our stately bald cypress trees.”



OUTDOORS... *in the City!*

ENJOY ROOFTOP BARS,
COURTYARD DINING,
RIVERFRONT STROLLS
AND PEACEFUL PARKS,
RIGHT IN THE HEART
OF NEW ORLEANS

You don't have to venture outside city limits to explore the outdoors in Louisiana. **New Orleans** is known the world over for its world-class food and drinks, some of which you can enjoy al fresco while taking in the city's famous attractions.

Pop up to a rooftop bar or balcony to soak up the hustle and bustle of **Bourbon Street** from above – with a classic Louisiana cocktail in hand, of course – or tuck into a courtyard to enjoy an intimate dinner in a peaceful outdoor oasis.

In the city's famed **French Quarter**, balconies at **Tableau** and **Muriel's** pair elegant cocktails and fine dining with views of **Jackson Square**, while more casual joints like **Bourbon Pub**, **Bourbon Heat** and **Good Friends Bar** ramp up the energy so you can still be a part of the party on the street below. Or escape to **The Court of Two Sisters** on Royal Street, where a wisteria-blanketed courtyard with a trickling fountain provides the perfect backdrop for a more relaxing meal.

Elsewhere around town, you'll find great balcony views and delicious food at **Gris-Gris** on Magazine Street in the Lower Garden District and a lovely backyard for memorable wines and music at **Bacchanal** in the Bywater.

For a more expansive outdoor experience, head to **The Batture**. This former industrial yard on the banks of the Mississippi River has been transformed into a 10-acre stretch of public green space in Uptown New Orleans, making it a perfect spot to plan a picnic, enjoy local food trucks and soak up stunning sunsets.



THE COURT OF TWO SISTERS,
NEW ORLEANS



EXPLORE LOUISIANA'S
WATERFRONT VIEWS!



Poverty Point



Lake Bistineau



Lake Bruin



South Toledo Bend



Fontainebleau



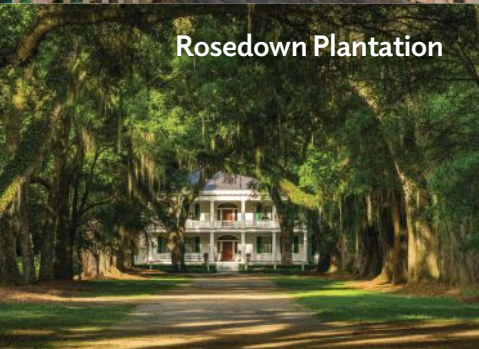
Lake Claiborne



Sam Houston Jones



Palmetto Island



Rosedown Plantation



Cypremort Point



Jimmie Davis



Louisiana is a place of extraordinary natural beauty, shaped by a rich blend of cultures and unforgettable experiences.

With a state park or state historic site always within reach, there's something for everyone to enjoy. Hit the trails, step into the past, cast a line, or simply take in the view - because the best adventures make us feel more alive and bring us closer together.

www.LAStateParks.com



Lake D'Arbonne



Bayou Segnette



Longfellow-Evangeline



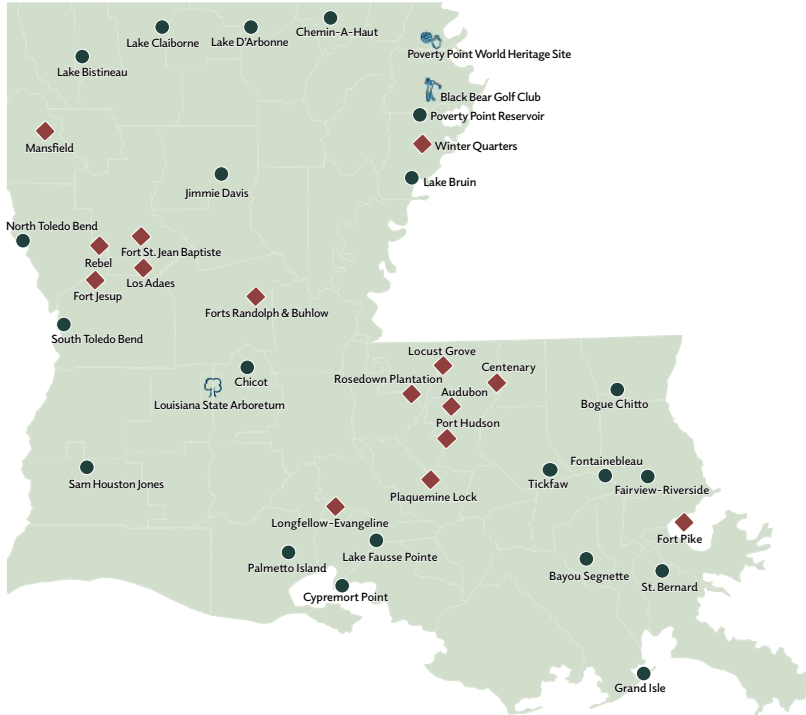
Chicot



Bogue Chitto



Chemin-A-Haut



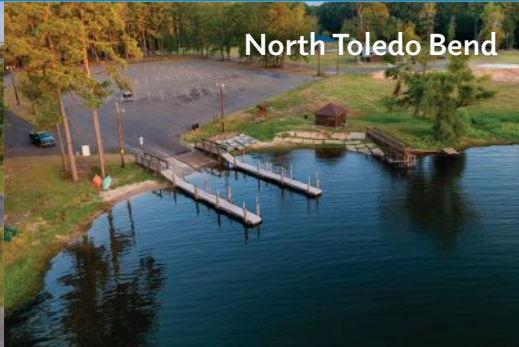
- State Parks
- ◆ State Historic Sites
- 🌳 State Preservation Area
- 🏌️ Golf Club



Fairview-Riverside



Grand Isle



North Toledo Bend



Fort St. Jean Baptiste

Music Under the Sun ... & Stars!

ENJOY THE SOUNDS OF LOUISIANA AT THESE SWEET OUTDOOR VENUES

Take in the view and listen to live music at scenic locales that serve up the perfect soundtrack to your Louisiana adventure.



EAST BANK DISTRICT, BOSSIER CITY

New Orleans Jazz Fest

This annual mega music and heritage festival takes over several outdoor stages and venues in **New Orleans** each spring, drawing some 400,000 visitors to celebrate the city's music, art, culture and more. National headliners share the spotlight with local and regional performers during this 11-day celebration.

Hurricane Alley Live

Rhythm meets revelry in the heart of the **East Bank District** in Bossier City. With live music three nights a week and a sip-and-stroll policy for adult libations, this entertainment hub turns casual evenings into unforgettable nights set to country, classic rock and zydeco.

Natchitoches Jazz R&B Festival

Right along the picturesque **Cane River**, this two-day musical celebration spreads across three lively stages. From jazz standards to soul-shaking R&B, the gathering brings a full spectrum of sound to one of Louisiana's most charming riverfronts.

Alexandria City Hall

Each spring, downtown Alexandria grooves to the beat of the **Downtown Rocks** series. With the steps of City Hall as the stage, these concerts draw in the community with high-energy performances.

Heritage Park

Slidell's **Bayou Jam** series is a Sunday evening tradition in spring and early summer. Bring a blanket or lawn chair to soak up live local music in **Heritage Park** next to the serene **Bayou Bonfouca**.

Charpentier Front Porch Series

Each fall, the stunning Charpentier Historic District in Lake Charles turns into a live-music stroll. Spanning over four consecutive Thursdays, this showcase plays out on the porches and lawns of the city's storied homes.



EXPLORE MORE LOUISIANA MUSIC!

Dance Halls & Juke Joints

A LIVELY LOOK AT LOUISIANA'S SOCIAL DANCE SCENE

Dance Etiquette

Steeped in history, Louisiana's dance halls have long been spirited hubs for Cajun and zydeco music. Before you join the fun, brush up on these tips and etiquette.

- Wear closed-toe shoes suitable for dancing.
- Stay in the center of the floor (an imaginary rectangle) for line dancing and leave the space around it for those who want to two-step. The outermost perimeter is for fast dancing, so watch out.
- The "line of dance" moves counterclockwise around the floor.
- Step away from the floor if you want to chat or stop dancing.
- It's customary to accept a first dance invitation from someone, but OK to say no to a second.
- Come ready to mingle and meet new people!

Best Bets

Pop into these spots to enjoy the music or show off your moves.

- **Blue Moon Saloon,**
Lafayette
- **La Pousiere Cajun Dancehall,**
Breaux Bridge
- **Fred's Lounge,**
Mamou
- **Mulate's,**
New Orleans
- **The Jolly Inn,**
Houma





EXPLORE
MORE FAMOUS
DISHES!

LOUISIANA'S

SAVOR THE STATE'S MOST
ICONIC DISHES AND NOTABLE
FOOD EXPERIENCES

Louisiana's culinary heritage is as rich and layered as a well-made roux. Influenced by French, Spanish, African and Caribbean flavors, the state's most popular dishes and drinks aren't just meals - they're cultural experiences passed down through generations and every bite tells a story.



SEAFOOD GUMBO

Gumbo

This hearty stew might just be the soul of Louisiana cuisine, blending seafood and/or meats with the "trinity" of bell pepper, onion and celery, then thickened with filé or okra. Visit **Dooky Chase's Restaurant** in New Orleans, where Creole culture simmers on every spoonful. In Leesville, **Toups' Cajun Kitchen** serves a shrimp-filled version that locals swear by.

Jambalaya

In this one-pot wonder, rice, sausage, chicken, vegetables and spices are cooked together for maximum flavor. In Shreveport, **Marilynn's Place** dishes out a generous, Andouille-and-chicken-laced portion, while **The Jambalaya Shoppe** in Baton Rouge cooks its Cajun recipe in a large cast-iron pot over open fire.

Crawfish Étouffée

Meaning "smothered," étouffée is a stew with crawfish tails in a rich, savory sauce over rice. In Houma, **Boudreau & Thibodeau's Cajun Cookin'** makes it spicy, while **Merci Beaucoup Restaurant** in Natchitoches puts a spin on the dish with its stuffed Cajun potato topped with crawfish étouffée.

CULINARY HALL OF FAME

Beignets

Louisiana's answer to doughnuts are pillowy, fried dough squares blanketed with powdered sugar. **Café Du Monde** in New Orleans is the iconic go-to for a beignet and café au lait. In West Monroe, **Caster and Chicory** has a truck offering beignets filled with extra goodies like blueberry cheesecake or savory ham and cheese.

Oysters

Whether chargrilled, raw or fried, oysters are a Gulf Coast staple. Follow the Louisiana Oyster Trail and stop at **Drago's Seafood Restaurant** in New Orleans for famous charbroiled oysters. In Bossier City, **Frozen Pirogue** slings them on the half shell with spicy Cajun flair.

Boudin

This sausage made of pork, rice and spices is best explored in Southwest Louisiana on the Cajun Boudin Trail. For a true pilgrimage, stop for fresh-out-of-the-fryer boudin balls at **Billy's Boudin & Cracklins** in Scott, a city named the "Boudin Capital of the World."

Po'boys

These sandwiches are stuffed with fried seafood, deli meats or hot roast beef on split French bread. **Ray's PeGe** in Monroe is a longtime gem known for its gravy-accompanied roast beef po'boy, while **Parkway Bakery & Tavern** in New Orleans has been serving them up since 1911.

King Cake

Mardi Gras season ushers in this colorful, cinnamon-laced specialty. **Manny Randazzo King Cakes** in Metairie is often considered the gold standard; while in Central Louisiana, **Atwood's Bakery** in Alexandria boasts a crowd-pleasing, cream cheese-filled variety.

Sazerac

Widely recognized as "America's First Cocktail," this boozy blend of rye whiskey, Herbsaint, Peychaud's bitters, sugar and lemon peel was invented in Louisiana. Try it at the aptly named **Sazerac Bar** at The Roosevelt Hotel in New Orleans, then swing by **The Sazerac House** to explore the drink's full history.



JAMBALAYA



THE SAZERAC HOUSE, NEW ORLEANS



EXPLORE
LOUISIANA
LIBATIONS!

Small Towns, BIG FLAVOR

DISCOVER THESE HIDDEN CULINARY GEMS JUST OFF THE BEATEN PATH

From big cities to small towns, world-class flavor can be found throughout the state, showcasing why Louisiana's culinary chops are top-notch. Don't miss out on some of the state's most delicious lesser-known spots.

Abbeville

RIVERFRONT LOUISIANA GRILL: RiverFront lives up to its name in both menu and location. Sip a cocktail featuring house-made amaretto and snack on satisfying crawfish étouffée nachos with a picturesque view of the Vermilion River.

DUPUY'S SEAFOOD & STEAK: In 1869, Joseph Dupuy sold oysters for 5 cents a dozen. Three generations later, Dupuy's still serves just-harvested Louisiana oysters on the half shell.

Arnaudville

THE LITTLE BIG CUP: Locals love this cozy spot for its Friday night Surf & Turf Buffet and a Saturday-Sunday Boucherie Brunch Buffet. The Little Big Bar mixes up your favorite cocktails, too.

BAYOU TECHE BREWING: This tap room and beer garden is known for seriously good craft brews and wood-fired pizzas. Chef Karlos Knott was also crowned 2025's Louisiana Seafood King.

Bastrop

GRANNY'S FAMILY RESTAURANT: This comfort-food kitchen feels like home with its walls adorned with timeless family photos! Enjoy boiled or fried shrimp, fish po'boys and BLT clubs, just like Granny used to make.

Bogalusa

BINO'S SEAFOOD RESTAURANT: Start with decadent fried crawfish beignets or perfectly spiced hot tamales, but save room for Bino's Famous Eggplant, a crispy fried eggplant stuffed with buttery shrimp and crab cream sauce.

Monroe

HEIRLOOM: Savor a seasonal menu featuring local ingredients and flavors at this elegant spot inside The Hotel Monroe, officially certified by the Gluten-Free Food Program as the first full-service hotel in the U.S. offering 100% gluten-free food in its bar, restaurant and catered events.

Opelousas

TOBY'S DOWNTOWN RESTAURANT & LOUNGE: This unassuming downtown venue once hid an illegal gambling hall, but today it's a beloved local hangout with a menu of home-cooked classics like Ribeye Pontchartrain or Catfish on the Bayou.

YAM COUNTRY PIES: The Hertzock family bakes hand-folded sweet-dough pies from scratch – a tradition so beloved it inspired an annual festival that ran for years each fall. Flavors include sweet potato, lemon, apple and custard.



EXPLORE MORE LOUISIANA RESTAURANTS!



THE LITTLE BIG CUP, ARNAUDVILLE

Neal Alfano/Larry Lynn

FUEL UP WITH GREAT GAS STATION GRUB

NO SERIOUSLY, IT'S A THING!

When you're cruising down Louisiana's byways and backroads, fill up your car's tank (and your own) with unexpectedly delicious gas station eats.

Chadeaux's Cajun Kitchen

Perfect for road-trippers traveling along US 165 or US 190, Chadeaux's Cajun Kitchen in Kinder serves fresh boudin, cracklins and local sausages. Don't miss the pepper jack boudin balls!

Stazione Deli

Now at several gas stations throughout the Cajun Coast, the original Stazione Deli in Patterson offers an impressive selection of fried seafood, plus po'boys stuffed with everything from oysters, shrimp and soft-shelled crab to smoked sausage, beef brisket and more.

Banks Meat Market

This New Orleans gas station/Western Union also houses Banks Meat Market, a butcher and sandwich shop. The 32-inch po'boys are legendary, but don't sleep on hearty dinner plates featuring pork chops and a variety of house-cut meats.

3 J's Fourway

This Exxon station in Natchitoches is home to Renee's famous fried ribs and other delightfully decadent fare, including smothered pork chops.

CHADEAUX'S CAJUN KITCHEN, KINDER



SHRIMP PO'BOY



The Freshest Catch

ENJOY THE BOUNTY FROM LOUISIANA'S LAKES, RIVERS, STREAMS AND GULF

With the state's bountiful waters producing more than 850 million pounds of fresh seafood each year, there's no better place to catch fresh flavors. And the best part is, there's always something in season.

Spring brings peak **crawfish** season, with classic seafood boils and celebratory festivals along with it, while **oysters** shine in the cooler months of late fall and winter. Depending on the type, succulent **shrimp** are abundant May through December, and sweet **blue crabs** are a treat from late spring through early fall.

A true Louisiana delicacy, **alligator** adds a wild twist to menus year-round. Anglers also catch **finfish** like catfish, redfish and black drum almost year-round. Whatever you choose, come ready to feast!



My Louisiana Outdoors

“I've met so many great people at fishing tournaments and it forms lifelong friendships. My love for fishing runs deep in my heart and soul. For me, it is not a hobby or something I do for fun. It is who I am and a way of life.”

Kalon Johnson

Kayak
Tournament
Angler



EXPLORE MORE LOUISIANA SEAFOOD!



BOILED CRAWFISH

MICHELIN

on the Menu!

**LOUISIANA
RESTAURANTS
HONORED IN
FIRST GUIDE
COVERING
THE SOUTH**

Hungry for award-winning eats? In its first American South edition, the famed culinary guide granted MICHELIN Stars to three restaurants in New Orleans – Saint-Germain, Zasu and Emeril's – the latter of which was the only restaurant in the American South to earn TWO stars.

But that's not all. The MICHELIN Guide also named 11 Louisiana restaurants to its Bib Gourmand list, honoring quality food at a good value, and selected 20 more for serving up consistently good cuisine. Ready to dig in?



**SNAP TO SAVOR
THE FULL
MICHELIN LIST!**



Don't accept imitations.

Demand Louisiana seafood.

Learn more at
LouisianaSeafood.com



LOUISIANA
SEAFOOD



LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
BILLY NUNGESSER

Traditions LIKE NO OTHER

**WHY JUST LEARN ABOUT
A CULTURE WHEN YOU
CAN COME LIVE IT?**

**From roux-making tips
to Sunday hymns, traditions
here are practiced, played
and passed down from
hand to hand.**

Holiday Gatherings

Warm up along the levee at Christmas Eve bonfires, flames flickering as children wait for Papa Noël, the Cajun Santa Claus. When Courir de Mardi Gras rolls around, head to Cajun country to see horseback riders gallop from door to door, gathering ingredients for a community-made gumbo.

Culinary Heritage

Look for gumbo, a long-honored tradition, once the first autumn breeze stirs. Come winter you can experience a boucherie, a communal pig feast and reunion-style gathering that features Cajun delights like boudin and andouille sausage. Tables spring up in front yards and courtyards covered in steaming seafood at crawfish boils in the spring.

Musical Celebrations

Hear music in any corner of the state, from a fiddler's swamp-pop tunes to the bright hum of an accordion in a Cajun café. Hear the smooth sound of jazz drift across a French Quarter courtyard, plates of shrimp and grits on deck, or a blues riff echo out of a local juke joint.



**EXPLORE
MORE LOCAL
TRADITIONS!**



CONGO SQUARE, NEW ORLEANS

How to Speak Cajun

**LEARN THESE LOUISIANA SAYINGS
TO SOUND LIKE A LOCAL IN NO TIME!**

Common Phrases

Step into Louisiana and you'll quickly notice that the way folks talk is as colorful as our culture. Whether you're dancing at a *fais do-do* or spotting *cocodril* in the swamp, these Cajun and Creole phrases offer a glimpse into the region's joyful spirit:

Ça c'est bon! That's good!

Cher: A term of endearment

Cocodril: Alligator

Fais do-do: A Cajun dance party

Filé: Ground sassafras leaves used to season and thicken gumbo

Gris-gris: A protective charm or amulet (used in Voodoo folk traditions)

Joie de vivre: Joy of living

Lagniappe: A little something extra, usually a gift

Laissez les bon temps rouler!

Let the good times roll!

Veiller: To spend the evening talking with friends

Regional Flavor

From bayou towns to bustling cities, the way Louisianans speak tells a story of culture, history and deep-rooted tradition. As you travel across the state, each region adds its own unique dialect to the state's distinctive soundscape.

In Acadiana, elders have helped keep Louisiana French dialects alive, preserving a vital part of the state's cultural heritage. These dialects blend African, French, Indigenous and Spanish influences, creating a linguistic tradition unique to Louisiana.

You can still hear these dialects in parts of Central and South Louisiana. Sip coffee at a French table, or *La Table Française*, where locals gather to brush-up on their French. Or visit a dancehall to catch musicians singing traditional Cajun and Creole songs passed down through generations. In North Louisiana, the local flavor shifts to a classic Southern dialect, where you'll hear phrases like "fixin' to" and "buggy" (shopping cart) in everyday conversation.



MORTON'S RESTAURANT, MADISONVILLE



**EXPLORE
MORE LOCAL
LINGO!**

MEET the Makers

DISCOVER LOUISIANA'S ARTISTS, CRAFTSPEOPLE & CULTURE-BEARERS

Find Louisiana's artistry threaded through the beads of a Mardi Gras Indian suit, woven into Chitimacha baskets and painted on weathered cypress roots known as "knees." To truly experience the state, meet the makers who carry its culture forward.



EXPLORE
MORE PLACES
TO SHOP!

South Louisiana

At **Backstreet Cultural Museum** in New Orleans, marvel at dazzling Mardi Gras Indian suits and learn about the craftspeople who honor the state's Black and Indigenous legacies. Love Cajun and Creole culture? Explore Lafayette's **Vermilionville**, a living-history museum where quilters, blacksmiths and musicians highlight heirloom practices. In Houma, experience mesmerizing basket-weaving and wood-carving demonstrations during **United Houma Nation's** cultural events.

Central Louisiana

See the home of self-taught folk artist Clementine Hunter — as well as her vibrant, larger-than-life paintings — at **Melrose on the Cane** in Natchitoches. At **Tunica-Biloxi Cultural and Educational Resources Center** in Marksville, explore contemporary Native American crafts alongside ancient traditions. Love contemporary art? Swing by **River Oaks Square Arts Center** in Alexandria, where artists share their creations and instruct workshops.

North Louisiana

Meet modern and heritage crafters in **Shreveport Common**, a historical, nine-block neighborhood where exhibits and installations explore themes like placemaking, community and sustainability. At **Masur Museum of Art**, housed inside a 1920s Tudor mansion in Monroe, gaze at works by brilliant Louisiana artists and international greats like Salvador Dalí.

VERMILIONVILLE, LAFAYETTE



EXPLORE PLACES THAT TELL LOUISIANA'S STORY

TOUCH, SEE, HEAR & FEEL THE PAST AT THESE HISTORICAL SITES

Louisiana's legacy lives in battlegrounds, preserved political halls, community museums and cultural sites that document the people and events that shaped the state. You can walk in those same steps to gain a better understanding of our rich history.

Whitney Plantation Museum in Edgard honors enslaved individuals whose names are etched in stone and echoed in recorded narratives as you wander the history-laden grounds. North in Natchitoches, **Magnolia Plantation** traces its former operations with preserved quarters of the enslaved, a blacksmith shop and interpretive signage.

Known as the "Castle on the River," the **Old State Capitol** in Baton Rouge charts two centuries of political power struggles inside a building brimming with artifacts and wrapped with kaleidoscopic stained glass. Outside, discover a Civil Rights Trail marker that commemorates the peak of the movement. In New Orleans at the **Louisiana Civil Rights Museum**, photos and archival footage document decades of grassroots organizing.

The Civil War's longest siege unfolded at **Port Hudson State Historic Site** near Zachary, where exhibits detail the regiments who fought there. In Hammond, the **Tangipahoa African American Heritage Museum** uses regional artwork and archival materials to tell stories of community, resistance and culture.

Discover the WWII training exercises that shaped U.S. combat strategy at the **Louisiana Maneuvers Military Museum** in Pineville, with maps, gear and barrack replicas. At Grambling State University, a Historically Black College and University (HBCU), the **Eddie G. Robinson Museum** celebrates one of college football's most influential coaches with re-created locker rooms, photography and trophies.

In DeSoto Parish, visit the first women's institute of higher learning west of the Mississippi River at **Mansfield Female College Museum**. The buildings served as a hospital for wounded soldiers during the Civil War, but today hold art, pottery and crafts made by its former students.



EXPLORE MORE
LOUISIANA
HISTORY!

DISCOVER LOUISIANA'S

Historic Charm

GET TO KNOW THE STATE'S HISTORY THROUGH ITS QUANT TOWNS

Immerse yourself in rich Colonial and Creole history on a walking tour in Natchitoches. Discover the capital of the original Republic of West Florida in St. Francisville. Stroll through one of the oldest settlements along the Mississippi in Donaldsonville.

Louisiana's oldest cities stand as living landmarks where cobblestone streets, Creole cottages and annual celebrations hold centuries of stories.



EXPLORE MORE
LOUISIANA
CITIES!

Left: Chris Granger



THE MYRTLES, ST. FRANCISVILLE

Natchitoches

Founded in 1714, Natchitoches holds the title of oldest permanent settlement within the original Louisiana Purchase. The 33-block historic district is dotted with Creole townhomes, including the film-famous **Steel Magnolias House**, now a popular B&B. Take a carriage tour to clip-clop past landmarks like **Fort St. Jean Baptiste Historic Site** and the long-running **Kaffie-Frederick General Mercantile**.

St. Francisville

In 1810, St. Francisville served as capital city of the short-lived Republic of West Florida – for just 74 days. Today, explore Civil War-era cemeteries at **Locust Grove State Historic Site**, roam rows of lush gardens at **Afton Villa Gardens** and **Rosedown Plantation State Historic Site**, take in ghost stories at **The Myrtles** or learn about local history at **West Feliciana Historical Society and Museum**.

Opelousas

Catching live music is a must in Louisiana's third-oldest city, Opelousas, host of the annual **Southwest Louisiana Zydeco Music Festival**. This former French garrison turned cultural hub is also home to the **Creole Heritage Folklife Center, Le Vieux Village Heritage Park & Museum**, plus a downtown brimming with antique shops, and both Cajun and Creole restaurants.

New Iberia

New Iberia traces its roots to 1779 Spanish settlers, and their influence is felt each spring during a **New Iberia Spanish Festival** highlighting that heritage with paella cook-offs and flamenco dance parties. While in town, learn local lore at **Bayou Teche Museum** or uncover Union soldier residences at **Shadows-on-the-Teche**.

Donaldsonville

Donaldsonville made national history in 1868 when Pierre Caliste Landry became the first Black mayor in the U.S. Stroll through town to spot 19th-century architecture and stop in the **River Road African American Museum**. Or walk along the self-guided **Historic Portal to the Past** in the historic district, then pop in for a tour and tasting at **NOËL Family Distillery**.

Seasonal Celebrations

**FOOD, DRINK, MUSIC, CULTURE:
THERE'S ALWAYS A REASON
TO CELEBRATE THE SEASON!**

Few states have fun like Louisiana, where festivals throughout the year celebrate everything under the sun. Here's a roundup of signature events you won't want to miss!



FESTIVAL OF THE BONFIRES, LUTCHER



FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DE LOUISIANE, LAFAYETTE

Winter

Don't miss the **Natchitoches Christmas Festival** (celebrating 100 years in 2026) where fireworks and 300,000 lights line the riverfront. In Lutcher, **Festival of the Bonfires** sets the levee aglow with massive wooden structures lit to guide Papa Noël. As Carnival season arrives experience **Mardi Gras** statewide, from the grand parades of New Orleans all the way up to Shreveport and to the horseback celebrations of **Courir de Mardi Gras** in the Acadiana region.

Spring

Warmer weather means music, food and outdoor fun! In Lafayette, **Festival International de Louisiane** turns downtown into a global village. **Breaux Bridge Crawfish Festival** boasts thousands of pounds of mudbugs, while **Amite Oyster Festival** showcases oysters galore. Ruston's **Railroad Festival** celebrates the town's roots with food, art and music and Alexandria comes to life with BBQ, music and more at **Alex River Fête** in May.

Left to right: Paul Kieu/Larry Lynn



LOUISIANA PEACH FESTIVAL, RUSTON



RED RIVER REVEL, SHREVEPORT-BOSSIER CITY

Summer

Also in Ruston, the **Louisiana Peach Festival** brings parades, crafts and a whole lot of sweetness, plus the **Beauregard Watermelon Festival** in DeRidder serves up slices, contests and small-town charm. Thibodaux throws a true Cajun party with its **Mud Bug Boil-Off**, and Bunkie keeps things savory with the **Louisiana Corn Festival**. In Morgan City, the **Shrimp & Petroleum Festival** honors two cornerstones of local life, and Shreveport's **Highland Jazz & Blues Festival** blends music and community pride.

Fall

Cooler temps bring a packed festival calendar come fall. **Zwolle Tamale Fiesta** celebrates that town's Native American and Spanish heritage with plenty of spicy, meat-filled tamales. Just across the river from New Orleans, **Gretna Fest** delivers an all-star music lineup. In New Iberia, the **Louisiana Sugar Cane Festival** features parades and sweet treats. Shreveport's **Red River Revel** turns the riverfront into an open-air arts fest, while Houma's **Rougarou Fest** blends Halloween fun with Cajun folklore.

Right: Tim Mueller Photography



**EXPLORE MORE
FESTIVALS
& EVENTS!**

No matter what time of year you visit, great celebrations await throughout the state!

Bourbon Street & BEYOND

CHICKENS, MASKS, MUSIC: EXPLORE LESSER-KNOWN MARDI GRAS TRADITIONS

New Orleans does Mardi Gras big with its epic parades and fun superkrewes ... like the king of all krewes (Rex) or the all-women Krewe of Muses. But all across Louisiana, Carnival season brings its own local flair.

Head to Eunice, Mamou or Church Point for **Courir de Mardi Gras**, a rural tradition where masked horseback riders chase chickens to go in the community gumbo pot. It's a wild, joyful nod to Cajun heritage.

Lake Charles hosts **Southwest Louisiana Mardi Gras**, featuring many family-friendly celebrations and a boat parade. In Baton Rouge, **Krewe of Southdowns** lights up the night with a family-friendly parade and playful themes that change each year.

Mandeville's **Krewe Du Pooch** invites costumed pups and their humans to strut lakeside, proving that even four-legged friends get in on the fun. In Alexandria, **Krewes Parade** offers more than 20 floats and festive royalty.

In North Louisiana, Shreveport's **Krewe of Centaur** is among the largest single parading krewes in the state, while **Krewe of Highland** is famous for quirky throws like hot dogs and Beanie Babies. Monroe's **Krewe of Janus** draws more than 200,000 attendees with dozens of floats rolling through downtown.

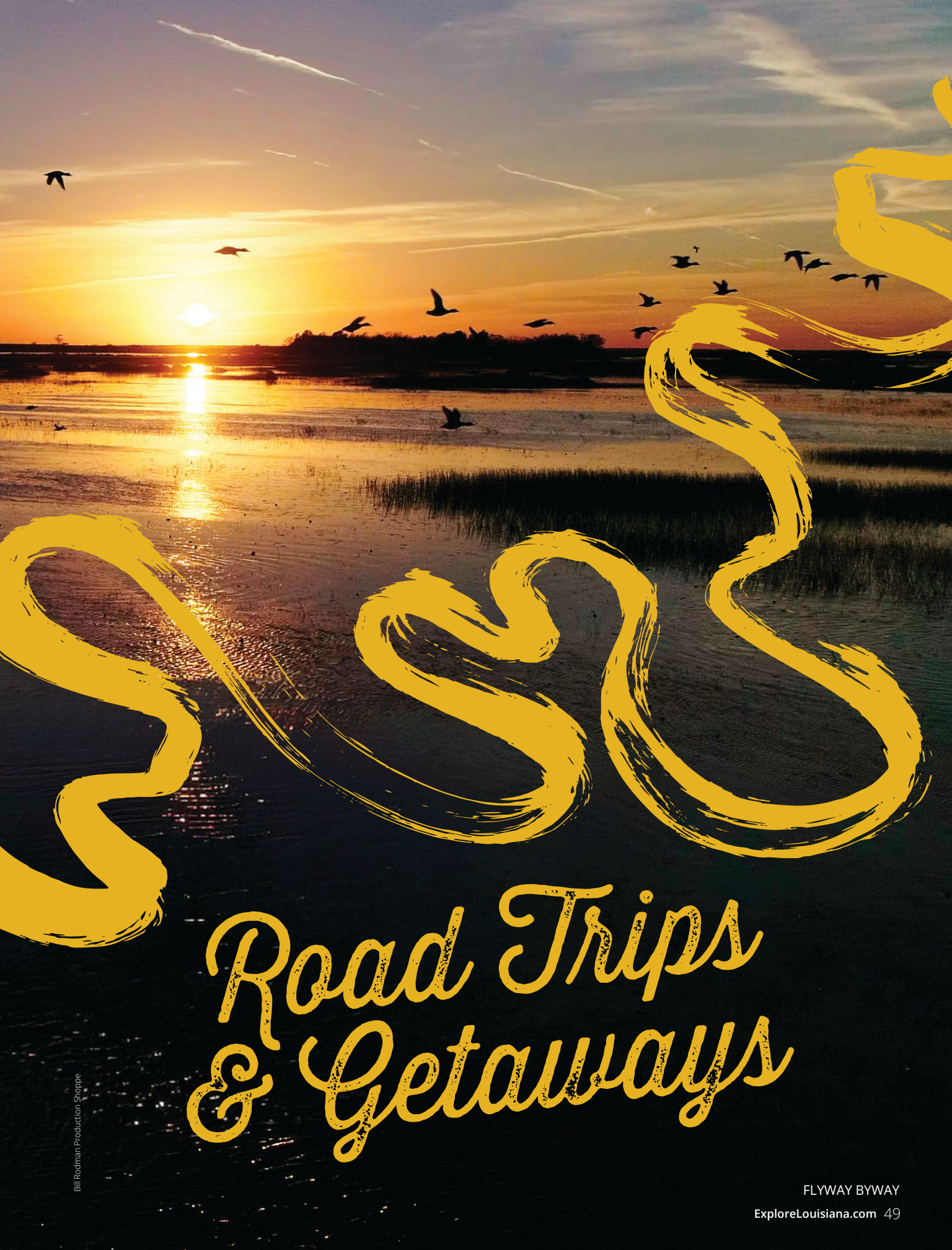
And even in New Orleans you can discover some of the lesser-known "secret" krewes locals love. **Intergalactic Krewe of Chewbacchus** caters to sci-fi fans, while the **Society of St. Anne** welcomes all to enjoy over-the-top parade creativity and fashion!



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information and
handy interactive
maps of our
Louisiana
Trails & Byways.

FLYWAY BYWAY

55 Miles

Bask in the beauty of the prairie in southwest Louisiana. Spot more than 160 types of birds (including many migratory species), learn about one of the state's most legendary foods on a crawfish farm tour (March through May) or pet a baby alligator at **Gator Chateau** in Jennings.

WETLANDS CULTURAL TRAIL

282 Miles

Uncover the splendor of southeastern Louisiana's vast marshes and their importance to the state's ecology and seafood industry. Duck into locally owned restaurants in Houma to experience the bayou's bounty yourself. Marvel at views of the wetlands at **DeFelice Marine Center** in Cocodrie or meet egrets, gators and turtles on a swamp tour from Kraemer.

CREOLE NATURE TRAIL ALL-AMERICAN ROAD

207 Miles

This journey through remote terrain showcases the Bayou State's diverse ecosystems. Look for signs marking alligator crossings and see them up close at **Sabine National Wildlife Refuge**, a habitat for indigenous gators and birds. From here, take a short drive to walk along 26 miles of beaches outside of Lake Charles, ideal areas for shelling.

BOOM OR BUST NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY

137 Miles

Cotton fields, cattle pastures and oil derricks scattered among northwest Louisiana's rolling hills and biodiverse bayous tell the story of Western expansion. Learn about the state's industrial riches at the **Louisiana State Oil & Gas Museum** in Oil City, then go fishing, tubing and boating at **Caddo Lake** – one of many outdoor playgrounds off the byway.

TOLEDO BEND FOREST SCENIC BYWAY

78 Miles

Toledo Bend Reservoir and the pine and hardwood woodlands that surround its waters are the heart of this byway. Admire blooming wildflowers in the summer, then hike or bike the trails and drop a line in the water any time of the year. Other popular activities include fishing, camping and birding.

LONGLEAF TRAIL BYWAY

17 Miles

Hills and bluffs tower beside longleaf pines in Central Louisiana's **Kisatchie National Forest**. Take in panoramic sights of the **Kisatchie Hills Wilderness Area** from the famed "Little Grand Canyon" overlook. Spy on deer, wild turkeys and other critters and gaze at the night sky at a campground.

100 Years on the Open Road



Travel US Route 80, a scenic way to soak up the state's culture and charm.

Start out in Shreveport to explore Native American artifacts and also dioramas depicting life in 1940s-era Louisiana at the **Louisiana State Exhibit Museum**. Traveling east, stop for an afternoon of antique shopping in Minden.

Continue east to **Ruston** to learn about the area's post-Civil War reconstruction and railroad history at **Lincoln Parish Museum**. Head over to **D'Arbonne National Wildlife Refuge** in Farmerville (north of West Monroe) to fish for largemouth bass or catch sight of waterfowl, then explore both flora and fauna at **Louisiana Purchase Gardens & Zoo** in Monroe.

Take a detour to **Poverty Point UNESCO World Heritage Site** in Pioneer, a 3,400-year-old Native American trade and cultural complex.



US Route 90 is a history-rich journey through coastal enclaves and welcoming communities brimming with Cajun and Creole culture.

Wander New Orleans' **French Quarter**, where well-preserved architecture reflects the city's French and Spanish colonial past. Head east to Marrero to watch turtles and alligators sun along **Barataria Preserve's** bayou. Gear up for a fishing or swamp tour in Des Allemands, the "Catfish Capital of the Universe."

In Thibodaux, view exhibits on how Acadian exiles helped shape Louisiana's Cajun culture at the **Wetlands Acadian Cultural Center**. Turn up the heat at the **TABASCO® Factory and Museum** on Avery Island, also home to the lush **Jungle Gardens**. In Lafayette, explore **Vermilionville Living History Museum & Folklife Park** to see how Native American, Acadian, African and Creole communities once lived in southern Louisiana.

**EXPLORE
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IN 2026**



Drive through the heart of Louisiana on US Route 190, an east-west highway connecting piney woodlands, historic towns and marshland.

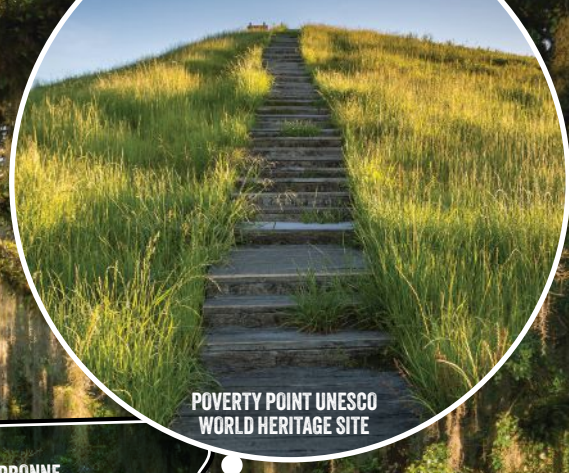
In Mandeville, count sailboats on Lake Pontchartrain from **Fontainebleau State Park**, a top locale for hiking, biking and camping. Delve into the Bayou State's pre-industrial past at **LSU Rural Life Museum's** 27-building complex, then visit **Port Hudson State Historic Site**, a Civil War battlefield.

Devour pecan-crusted catfish and other Southern specialties at a waterfront restaurant on the False River.

Test your luck on the 990-plus slot machines at **Evangeline Downs Racetrack and Casino** in Opelousas, then spot black bears and hawks at **Atchafalaya National Wildlife Refuge** in Lottie before zipping over to **DeRidder's Gothic Jail**, an early 20th-century cellhouse rumored to be haunted.



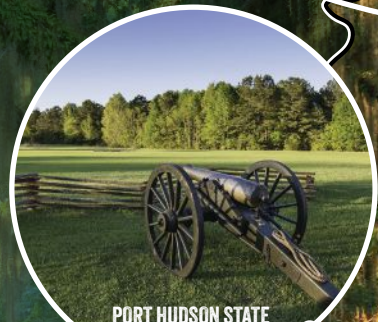
LOUISIANA STATE EXHIBIT MUSEUM



POVERTY POINT UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE



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Your starting point is New Orleans, where must-sees include **Jackson Square's** nearly 300-year-old **St. Louis Cathedral**, **The National World War II Museum**, **Vue Orleans**, **Magazine Street** shopping and the lively bars and music clubs of **Frenchmen Street**. When you're ready to call it a night, relax in luxe lodging or comfortable inns throughout the city.

Make your way to Baton Rouge to visit the **Baton Rouge Zoo** and **Greenwood Community Park**, then finish the day in St. Francisville, a vibrant small town with lots of locally owned boutiques and picturesque homes and churches. Rest up for another day of play at the welcoming 11-room **St. Francisville Inn**, where you can unwind with a glass of bubbly upon arrival.

In Lafayette, explore the Acadian way of life at folk-life museum **Acadian Village** or check the performance schedule at the **Acadian Center for the Arts**. Make a stop in Arnaudville to browse pieces by local creatives at **NUNU Arts and Culture Collective** and then kayak along the peaceful **Bayou Teche Paddle Trail**.

After looping back to New Orleans, take in sweeping **Mississippi River** views along the waterfront and book a fully immersive river experience on the historic **Steamboat NATCHEZ** or **Riverboat CITY OF NEW ORLEANS**.



Paqui Meiu

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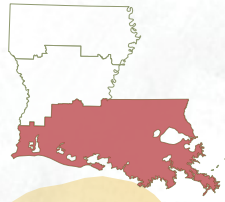
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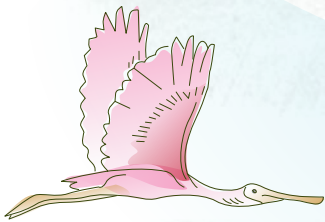
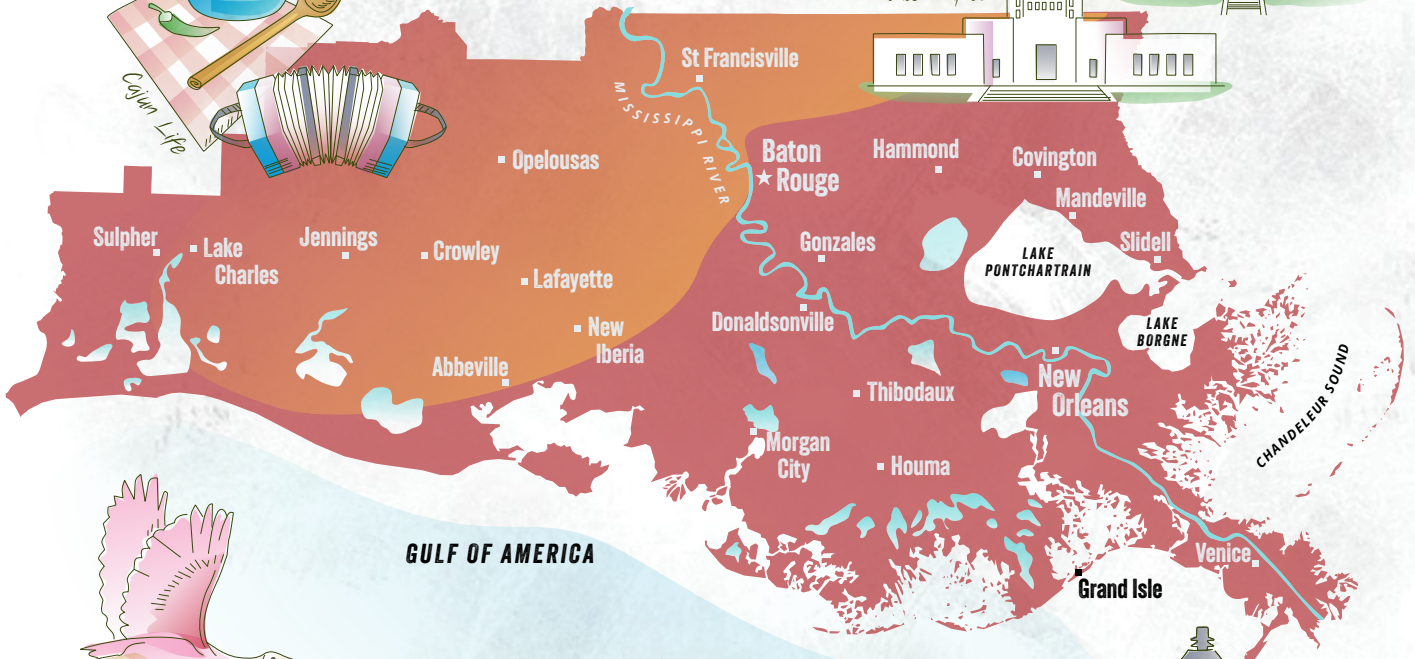
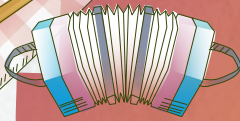
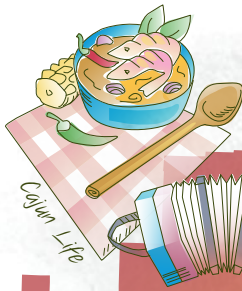
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
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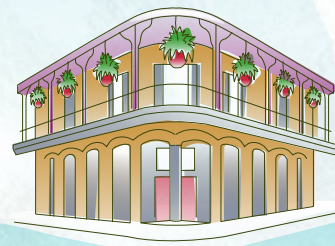


South Louisiana

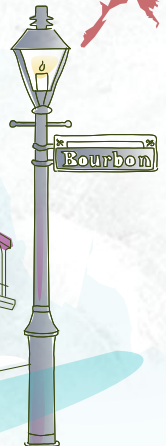
South Louisiana is a fragrant and flavorful mix of music, culture and cuisine – all simmered in complex history and surrounded by natural wonders as diverse as its people.



Creole Nature Trail



New Orleans



South Overview

South Louisiana is something special: a gorgeous gumbo of people, places, traditions and nature that can only be found here. After all, this is the place that gave birth to both jazz and jambalaya, so you can expect an unforgettable experience that's both expertly crafted and unabashedly freestyle — with an essence that lingers in your memories for years to come.

Even better? Every ingredient in this playful stew has a flavor all its own. Start with French, Spanish, African and

Native American influences that combine to form something that's uniquely ours. Season to taste with globally sourced spices, fresh-caught seafood and recipes passed down across generations.

Next, work in a collection of quaint-to-cosmopolitan cities with wildly diverse personalities, from the storied grandeur of New Orleans to the wit and whimsy of Lafayette to the quiet dignity of the towns along River Road. Then add water — rivers, streams and bayous — for an extra *je ne sais quoi*.

What you've got is a recipe for relaxed exploration, the delight of discovery and an improvisational spirit that means you never quite know what's coming next.



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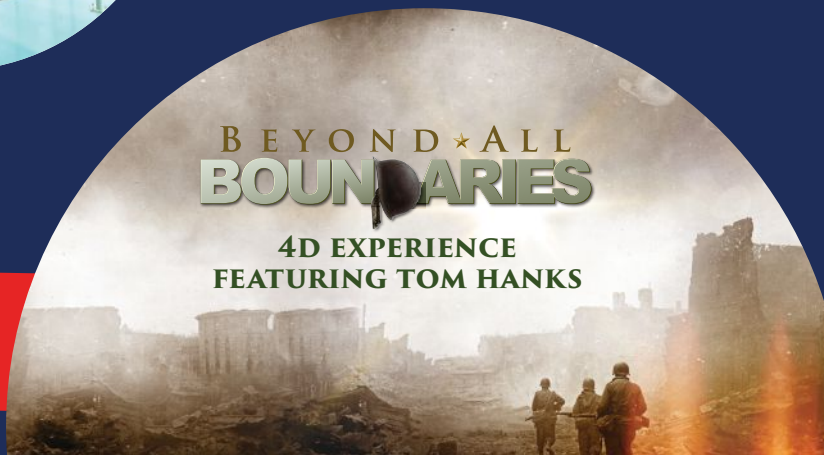
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Essential Crescent City

Start in **New Orleans City Park** with a stroll around the **New Orleans Botanical Garden** followed by beignets at **Café Du Monde**. Absorb the artfully blended architecture of **Jackson Square** and the filigreed balconies of the **French Quarter**, grab a muffuletta from **Central Grocery and Deli**, then catch some live jazz on the acclaimed stage of **Preservation Hall**.

Historic Big Easy

Celebrate music's most liberated art form at the **New Orleans Jazz Museum**, home to 25,000+ artifacts and always awash in sound. Unveil the Big Easy's layered past and dynamic present

with a free visit to the **Historic New Orleans Collection**, then summon the spirits with a **French Quarter Phantoms Ghost Tour** through a solemn cemetery.

New Orleans, Naturally

Just a stone's throw from the city, there's a wealth of wilderness to explore. Trek the trails of **Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve**, where wetlands, cultural centers and a battlefield offer both beauty and history. Or slip your kayak into a cypress swamp with **Louisiana Lost Lands Environmental Tours**, an outfitter committed to balancing recreation and conservation.

Tim Mueller Photography



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HISTORIC ANTIQUE DISTRICT, SLIDELL

NORTHSHORE

Offbeat Adventures

Just across Lake Pontchartrain from New Orleans, there's a place even easier than the Big Easy: a tranquil clutch of waterfront communities brimming with charm. In nearby Slidell, explore the **Slidell Museum**, housed in the town's 1888 jail, before adjourning to **Old Town Slidell Soda Shop** for an all-American meal. You'll also want to meet the locals at **Insta-Gator Ranch & Hatchery** in Covington, where you can feed 'em, catch 'em — and maybe even hatch 'em.

Bayous & Beyond

The Northshore's abundance of water makes total immersion a must. In Covington, connect with **Canoe and Trail Adventures** to kayak the shady, slow-moving Bogue Falaya, paddleboard through the bayou along the rolling Tchefuncte River or peddle into local history with a self-guided bike tour through Mandeville along the **Tammany Trace**.

Top to bottom: Tim Mueller Photography, Neal Alfano



INSTA-GATOR RANCH & HATCHERY, COVINGTON

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LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY, BATON ROUGE

BATON ROUGE

Capital Gains

An hour from New Orleans, Louisiana's capital city is a bustling blend of old and new. The city's iconic symbols are notable both inside and out. The "new" **Louisiana State Capitol** is not only the tallest in the country, but is also known for its art deco interior. The **Old State Capitol**, known as The Castle on the River, has a breathtaking stained-glass dome covering the interior in living color. Put your brain cells to the test at the interactive **Louisiana Art & Science Museum**, then raise a tasty pint at locations along the city's **Capital Area Craft Trail**.

Out & About

Baton Rouge has a three-time National Gold Medal award-winning park system, with 175 tranquil spaces to play and lay out your picnic spread. Sports fans can tour the sprawling **Louisiana State University** campus, catch a game or meet mascot **Mike the Tiger**, a rescued Bengal-Siberian mix who now lives in a lush state-of-the-art habitat. This area is also rich in **African American Heritage Trail** stops, including the **West Baton Rouge Museum**, offering a wealth of opportunities to explore the state's complex history.

Right: Paul Kieu



Bridging the Gap between History and Hospitality

Festivals, food and fun are on tap at four major events throughout the year. West Baton Rouge Parish is home to the only Kite Festival in Louisiana, held at the end of April each year. The Oldies but Goodies Fest, which features a championship BBQ cook-off and antique car show, takes place in mid-September. A sweet celebration in October at the West Baton Rouge museum, Sugar Fest, celebrates the journey of the Louisiana sugar industry, with plenty of food vendors, crafters and live music. Lastly the holiday season kicks off when we host a cavalcade of festive jeepers, craft vendors and live music at the Jingle Jeepin' Parade and market in the beginning of December.

westbatonrouge.net





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Livingston Parish

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Visit **Carter Plantation House**, the early-1800s site of the first African American to own property in the area, then celebrate the contributions of settlers from the late 1800s at the **Hungarian Settlement Museum**. Explore two sites on the National Register of Historic Places – a former town hall that now holds the circa-1898 **Creole House Museum** and the art deco-style **Old City Hall** in Denham Springs that serves as the region's Welcome Center today.

With its vibrant, carefree, fun-loving nature, Livingston Parish provides the perfect backdrop for a one-of-a-kind adventure filled with leisure activities and experiences that reflect its playful spirit. Whether exploring its many scenic waterways, shopping for a specialty item or digging into fascinating multicultural history, you can't help but have a good time in Livingston Parish.

"Make a Fun Run" to an area where history abounds, just 10 minutes from downtown Baton Rouge and 45 minutes from New Orleans!



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Our history, real and unvarnished, is felt in the historic homes of **New Orleans Plantation Country** and the museums along the **1811 Slave Revolt Trail**, offering compelling and authentic experiences which provide a stark, yet revealing, reminder of our complex past.

Make adventure your destination out here in the bayous, swamps, and lakes of **New Orleans Swamp Country**, where you can fish the waters of the Catfish Capital of the Universe, hike on boardwalks raised over marsh swamplands, zipline over alligators, turtles and more, and enjoy a guided tour through Manchac Swamp.

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CAJUN VILLAGE, GONZALES

RIVER ROAD

Honoring History

Hugging the curves of the mighty Mississippi, Louisiana's River Road region has borne witness to the ever-shifting currents of history. Dip a toe into the area's early life at **The Great River Road Museum** and explore early American river transportation history at **Plaquemine Lock State Historic Site**. Then put this era into personal context by exploring the **Historic Homes of River Road** — each carefully preserved site documenting the complex history of the area.

Cajun Flavors

Louisiana is nothing if not flavorful and each region has only-found-here specialties worth tasting. The River Parishes are home to the **Andouille Trail**, so you'll have ample opportunity to sample this area's version of spicy sausage. Visit Gonzales as new champions are crowned at the annual **Jambalaya Festival**, and swing by Sorrento's **Cajun Village & Coffee House** to savor authentic Acadian dishes.

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Urban Eclectic

Get a foundation for Lake Charles' freewheeling past in the **Charpentier Historic District**: 40 blocks of stately homes whose impromptu designs were created during construction. Further embody Louisiana's "*laissez les bon temps roulez*" lifestyle by sipping artisan spirits to a Zydeco soundtrack at **Bayou Rum** in Lacassine. Then continue the fête with the area's celebrated nightlife, including one of its non-stop fun spots: **L'Auberge Casino Resort**.

Great Outdoors

With so much big-city fun offered, it's easy to forget that Lake Charles is also rich in natural wonders. Cruise the **Creole Nature Trail All-American Road** for scenic swampland and virtually guaranteed gator sightings. Visit **Cameron Prairie National Wildlife Refuge** for epic birdwatching and then adjourn to **North Beach**, Louisiana's only white-sand beach, offering a wonderful place to while away the warm-weather hours.

Top: Tim Mueller Photography

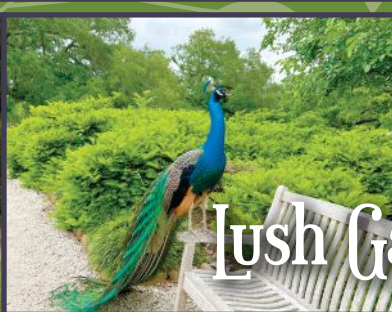


CREOLE NATURE TRAIL

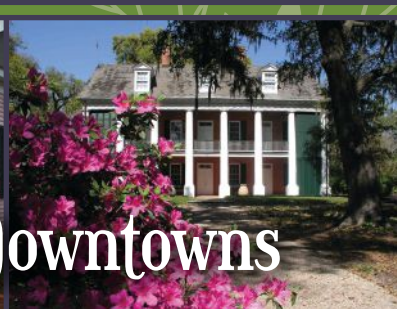
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Posies & Peppers

In early spring, Louisiana bursts into brilliant bloom. Get your fill of the local flora on the **New Iberia Azalea Trail**, which meanders past quaint cottages, historic homes and stately oaks along **Bayou Teche**. Stop for lunch at lovely **Rip Van Winkle Gardens** and see a collection of pink birds roosting with their young in the garden's rookery in spring. Then get spicy at **Avery Island**, home of TABASCO® Pepper Sauce as well as **Jungle Gardens**, the founder's delightful wildlife menagerie.

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Immerse yourself in the untouched purity of a cypress and tupelo swamp. Sway your hips to the upbeat tempo of accordions and washboards. Let the seductive flavors of Cajun and Creole cooking dance on your palate. All these experiences await in Lafayette, Louisiana, the Happiest City in America. Set within the heartbeat of Louisiana, Lafayette is unquestionably uniquely seasoned. Read on to discover why.

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Craving delightfully smoked boudin, mouthwatering gumbo, and piping hot crawfish seasoned to perfection? Beyond being delicious, there's a reason Cajun food is known worldwide: because there's nothing like it. Plan your food adventure at LafayetteTravel.com/FoodiesGuide.



Experience

LIVELY FESTIVALS

One of the best ways to immerse yourself in Lafayette's unique heritage is to attend one of its festivals, a treat for all your senses. See below for a list of upcoming festivals, or visit LafayetteTravel.com/Festivals for a complete list.

Explore

MAGNIFICENT TRAILS

When you're ready for an escape, there's a trail in Lafayette for everyone. From our culinary trails like crawfish, boudin, and gumbo to our cultural trails like ancient oaks, dancehalls, and history, you can find them at LafayetteTravel.com/Trails.



MARDI GRAS

Held annually, usually in January or February

FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL

Held annually on the last Wednesday through Sunday in April

CRAWFISH FESTIVAL

Held annually on the first weekend in May

FESTIVALS ACADIENS ET CRÉOLES

Held annually the second full weekend in October

Two-Step

THROUGH LAFAYETTE

Lafayette is known as the Heartbeat of Acadiana, and with good reason. Their one-of-a-kind mix of Cajun, Creole, and Zydeco can be heard any night of the week. For a weekly playlist and schedule of live music, visit LafayetteTravel.com/LafayetteWeekly.



From the rich cultural history and the vibrant flavors of Cajun and Creole cooking to the wealth of ways to enjoy the outdoors, Lafayette is truly Uniquely Seasoned. Plan your next getaway at LafayetteTravel.com/Seasoned





ATCHAFALAYA BASIN LANDING AIRBOAT SWAMP TOURS

LAFAYETTE

Cultural Étouffée

If this simple shrimp stew is Cajun and Creole cultures' signature dish, then lively Lafayette is its quintessential town — full of fascinating history, great food and joyful music. Explore the eclectic boutiques and galleries downtown, then spend the afternoon soaking up local history. Cap off the night with an authentic Cajun meal at **Prejean's** or enjoy food, live music and bowling at **Rock 'n' Bowl**.

Acadian Outdoors

Lafayette is also an astounding gateway to the natural world. Hike through bald cypress, water tupelo and giant oaks at **Cypress Island Preserve**, a pristine example of Louisiana's unique bottomlands ecosystem. In St. Martin Parish, get up-close views of alligators on your guided canoe cruise with **McGee's Louisiana Swamp & Airboat Tours** or skim over the slow-moving waters with an Atchafalaya airboat adventure, courtesy of **Atchafalaya Basin Landing Airboat Swamp Tours**.

Left to right: Cameron Gott; Paul Kieu/Larry Lynn

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HOUMA & THIBODAU

Bayou Byways

These southeastern sister cities are surrounded by wetlands and wildlife, so there's plenty of outdoor exploring to do. At the **Wetlands Acadian Cultural Center** in Thibodaux, learn how Cajun bayou settlers acclimated to their new floating world. Meet Samson the snapping turtle at **Zam's Swamp Tour**, where local guides weave Cajun life and legend into their combination eco-park and boat tour. Then combine the outdoors and art with a stroll through **Chauvin Sculpture Garden**.

Curated Culture

Cajun culture extends far beyond the bayou. Savor a house-made crawfish pie at **Lumiere Blues & Jazz Bistro** in Houma, where the Sunday Jazz Brunch will have you singing the chef's praises. Or head down to Main Street Thibodaux, where you can shop off your lunch of original catfish chips from local standby **Spahr's Seafood**. Finally, admire the stunning Renaissance Romanesque architecture of **St. Joseph Co-Cathedral** with a guided or self-styled tour of the hundred-year-old house of worship.



CHAUVIN SCULPTURE GARDEN, THIBODAU

Maggie Heller

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A refreshed pool experience is on the way in 2026 with more space to lounge, inviting cabanas and beautiful landscaping. Guests can enjoy peaceful mornings in the water, bright afternoons in the sun and a laid back setting that truly feels like paradise.



RELAX, RECHARGE AND ENJOY THE MARGARITAVILLE LIFESTYLE

From hammock time to cool drinks by the pool, every moment encourages you to unwind and savor the scenery. The colorful setting and easygoing pace create the perfect place to settle in, recharge and enjoy the good life.

SPLASH, PLAY AND MAKE MEMORIES

Families love the resort for its lively energy and variety of activities. The large water playground keeps kids smiling with slides and splash features. Peak season brings daily fun with crafts, games, foam parties, and more.

LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL EVERY WEEKEND

Celebrate Louisiana culture with music, food, and festive gatherings. Weekends feature live music with local Louisiana talent, along with our popular Gumbo and Jambalaya Cook Offs. Guests can also enjoy seasonal events throughout the year, including Mardi Gras activities, summer parties, fall happenings and holiday celebrations.

STAY YOUR WAY

The resort offers spacious RV sites, cozy cabins, pet friendly options and convenient golf cart rentals. Every stay provides comfort, relaxation and plenty of room to enjoy your time in Cajun Country.





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Scan the QR code to explore events, view amenities or book your stay at Camp Margaritville RV Resort Breaux Bridge.







Central Louisiana

Meandering byways, colorful history and laid-back lakeside vibes. This is Central Louisiana, peppered with pine woods, cotton and plenty of small-town charm.



Central Overview

Beyond Louisiana's largest cities and into its laid-back interior, the Bayou State's colorful soul takes on a whole different vibe. Here, civilization sprawls a little wider, and scenic byways saunter past historic homes and wandering waterways that go through cities almost as old as the country itself.

Natchitoches, the oldest of them all, dates back to 1714 and today balances its colonial legacy with small-town

charm — not to mention memorable local delicacies like plate lunch specials and their famous meat pie. Alexandria is home to Kent Plantation House and a thriving modern art culture steeped in its complex heritage.

Throughout Central Louisiana, but especially in Toledo Bend Lake Country, nature is a constant companion. Whether you're on a scenic drive, a National Historic Trail or headed out on the

water, there's family-friendly fun around every corner and in every cove. Every stop has a story ... and most have an outstanding signature dish to savor.



**EXPLORE
CENTRAL
LOUISIANA!**



Tim Mueller Photography



Paul Kieu

GONE WILD SAFARI, PINEVILLE



ALEXANDRIA, PINEVILLE & MARKSVILLE

History & Art

Thanks to their location in the heart of Louisiana, these three central towns are en route to some of your favorite places, each one becoming a new best-kept-secret location. In downtown Alexandria, you can get your steps in and peek into the city's past with the free, self-guided **Historical Markers District Walking Tour**. Two tour stops demand extra attention: the **Alexandria Museum of Art**, with exhibitions honoring area artists, and the **James Wade Bolton House**, a restored Queen Anne Revival structure housing the **River Oaks Square Arts Center**.

Wilder Times

At the **Alexandria Zoological Park**, a modest size means intimate encounters with tigers, jaguars, otters and a variety of charismatic species. Among the rolling piney hills of nearby **Kisatchie National Forest**, 400+ miles of hiking trails beckon. **Spring Bayou State Wildlife Management Area** offers a tranquil wetlands escape in Marksville, where you can also fuel up at **La Petite Affaire Café** to enjoy local ingredients prepared in from-scratch recipes.

Tim Mueller Photography

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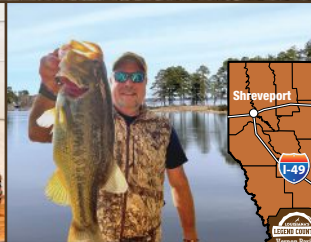
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CHOCTAW-APACHE POW-WOW, TOLEDO BEND



TOLEDO BEND LAKE COUNTRY

Two for the Road

For a stunning sense of Lake Country's scale, try these two picturesque drives:

Toledo Bend Forest Scenic Byway for endless lake-and-sky panoramas and **El Camino Real de los Tejas**, a National Historic Trail with French, Spanish and Native American roots.

Family Fun

Scoop up some ice cream at popular **Curtis Grocery** after enjoying a day on the lake, or beat the summer heat at Zwolle's **Toledo Bend Family**

Adventure Park offering spa pools, slides, a splash pad and a lazy river. The new **Zwolle Museum** tells the story of the area's lake, forests and Native American heritage.

Festive Celebrations

Zwolle is also home to the **Zwolle Tamale Fiesta**, a fun-filled (and filling) celebration of the area's shared Spanish and Native American heritage. And Toledo Bend hosts the **Choctaw-Apache Pow-Wow** celebrating tribal culture, dancing, artistry and more.

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NATCHITOCHEs

Classic Southern Charm

With a history dating back to the Louisiana Purchase, Natchitoches (pronounced NAK-a-tish) is Louisiana's oldest city. Tour the historic district to see the reconstructed **Fort St. Jean Baptiste Historic Site** and restored homes with ornate grillwork galleries overlooking **Cane River Lake**. (Bonus points for touring via horse-drawn carriage with **Southern Carriage Tours!**) And be sure to stop at the nostalgic **Kaffie-Frederick General Mercantile**, founded in 1893 and in its third generation as a pillar of the Natchitoches community.

Claims to Fame

Natchitoches has some modern claims to fame, too. You'll need to stop in at **Lasyone's Meat Pie Restaurant**, where the eponymous entree is always prepared with love. Plan your visit around the **Natchitoches Jazz and R&B Festival** in May to enjoy rollicking, genre-blending grooves. And by all means, book a room at 320 Rue Jefferson. It's a bed and breakfast today, but served as the Eatenton family home in **Steel Magnolias**, a 1989 movie starring Dolly Parton that filmed there.

Paul Kieu



Frogmore

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Take a tour highlighting historical and modern plantation life, complete with restored authentic buildings dating from the 1700s to 1890 on this 210-year-old plantation. You'll see cabins of the enslaved, the overseer's dogtrot house, a church and a rare 1880s Smithsonian-quality steam gin. The adjacent seed-cotton house features dozens of pieces of antique farm equipment, plus a museum and gift shop.



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Founded in 1714, Natchitoches is the oldest settlement of the Louisiana Purchase. Shop the Landmark Historic District along the Cane River, explore Creole culture at National Parks and historic homes, visit the sites and scenes of Steel Magnolias, sample the famous Natchitoches Meat Pies and celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Natchitoches Christmas Festival! Natchitoches is a must-visit for 2026!



Take Home a Memory

Shop Natchitoches Landmark Historic District filled with locally-owned shops and restaurants. Find something for yourself or someone you love!



Stay in a Bed & Breakfast

Natchitoches is known for its warm hospitality, and nowhere is that more evident than in its charming collection of bed and breakfasts. With 18 B&Bs located in the Historic District and 22 throughout the greater Natchitoches area, visitors have plenty of options.



100th Celebration!

Celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the Natchitoches Christmas Festival! Enjoy six-weeks of lights, fireworks, shopping and family fun during one of the longest-running holiday celebrations.

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North Louisiana

Nature and culture walk hand-in-hand in North Louisiana, an ideal place to immerse yourself in the creative, culinary, topiary and even sonic arts, from larger riverfront cities to quaint smaller towns.



North Overview

Thanks to an extra helping of the great outdoors, Louisiana has earned the nickname “Sportsman’s Paradise” — and the northern part of the state gets it honestly. A surplus of both wilderness and wildlife make this area a natural choice for fishing, hunting, hiking and camping throughout the region’s rolling hills, river bottoms and piney woods.

But don’t let the North’s rustic reputation fool you. Shreveport-Bossier City, the state’s third-largest metro area, offers a more cultivated big-city feel with

notable nightlife supported by casinos, culinary delights and a cool music scene. This area is also home to the American Rose Center, the largest park in the U.S. dedicated to this fragrant flower — and a great place to go for a stroll.

Due east, Minden, Monroe-West Monroe and Ruston are also blessed with bloomin’ beauty. One example is The Biedenharn Museum & Gardens, where enchanting traditional English landscape designs surround the historic home of Coca-Cola’s first bottler, now

a museum. An inviting attitude and a “something for everyone” range of attractions give the northern part of Louisiana a flair for all-ages fun ... and a taste for the unexpected.



**EXPLORE
NORTH
LOUISIANA!**



Maggie Heller

SHREVEPORT-BOSSIER CITY

Tune In & Turn Up

Like all of Louisiana, the North is swimming in memorable music. Shreveport has been a star-maker for more than a century, with celebrated artists ranging from Lead Belly to Kenny Wayne Shepherd — and famously, Elvis Presley — getting their start here. Today, the city's annual **Red River Revel Arts Festival** is where future music history is made.

Curated Creativity

Shreveport is also a hub for the visual arts, with an equal devotion to past and present, local and global talents. Historic works from masters like Cassat, Rodin and Audubon grace the collection at **R.W. Norton Art Gallery** and you'll find

African and African American artworks spanning centuries at the **Southern University Museum of Art Shreveport (SUMAS)**. Catch beautifully rendered scale dioramas portraying early 1900's Louisiana life at the architecturally stunning **Louisiana State Exhibit Museum**.

Foodie Finds

Dive into the seafood-forward Creole flavors of **Orlandeaux's Café**, where you can sample regional specialties like boudin balls and alligator bites. Enjoy delicious crawfish at **Seafood Empire** or savory sandwiches at **Geaux Fresh** in Minden, then pop down to Gloster for scenic sips at **Kickapoo Twist Winery & Vineyards**.



LOUISIANA STATE EXHIBIT MUSEUM, SHREVEPORT



ORLANDEAUX'S CAFÉ, SHREVEPORT

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NORTHEAST LOUISIANA CHILDREN'S MUSEUM, MONROE



MONROE-WEST MONROE & RUSTON

Little Adventures

Traveling with little ones? At Monroe's **Northeast Louisiana Children's Museum**, kids can play at being a firefighter or paramedic, make massive bubbles and much more. An hour away in Bastrop, they can work off those wiggles in the shady acres of **Chemin-A-Haut State Park** with two engaging playgrounds, plus swimming and wading pools.

Grown-Up Activities

Put some patina on your retail therapy in West Monroe's **Antique Alley**, a collection of 40+ boutiques that Southern Living magazine calls a "shopaholic's delight." Afterward, sip some Crimson Cabernet

at nearby **Landry Vineyards**, a family-run winery whose warm welcome and tranquil property may tempt you to stay in one of their on-site cottages. And don't miss a visit to **Poverty Point UNESCO World Heritage Site** in Pioneer. Dating back to approximately 1700-1100 BC, it's one of the most important archaeological sites in North America.

Palate Pleasers

Stop for sustenance at Ruston's **Heard Freighthouse Food Park**, where you can choose from several artisan food trucks. Then pick up the ultimate Louisiana souvenir — house-made fruit preserves — at **Mitcham Farms Peach Store**, a sweet Ruston staple for 70+ years.

Larry Lynn/Paul Kieu

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■ South Louisiana ■ Central Louisiana ■ North Louisiana


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