



Louisiana's Cajun Bayou ... From A to Z!

Attractions: We have more than two dozen of them, many of which are outlined elsewhere on this list. Whether you're into heritage, food, crafts, culture, adventure or natural history, we have an attraction that suits your style ... and helps you gain a better understanding of ours.

Bayou: Bayou Lafourche extends more than 100 miles, through the length of our parish, and it's truly what defines us. It's where we live, work and play ... and it's always a point of reference when we're giving directions. Whether we send you "up the Bayou" to Thibodaux or "down the Bayou" to Port Fourchon, you'll find fabulous food and fun people all along the way.

Cajun Culture: What you see – and hear and taste – in Lafourche Parish is *real* Cajun, not something contrived for marketing purposes. We're proud of our heritage, and we want to share it with guests, whether they want to explore our history at museums, sample our cuisine at restaurants or enjoy our music at one of our many festivals. No matter where you go or what you do, you'll discover that our Cajun runs deep.

Donner-Peltier Distillers: This distillery uses local crops to make its spirits. There's rice in their Oryza vodka and sugar cane in their Rougaroux rum (which, by the way, is named for our Cajun version of a werewolf). The staff will gladly take you on a tour of the distillery to show you how it's done, then pour you some samples so you get a real taste of the Bayou.

E.D. White Plantation Home & Museum: This National Historic Landmark sits right on the banks of the Bayou, just outside Thibodaux. It's where one of Louisiana's former governors, Edward Douglas White (who served from 1835 to 1839) lived. So did his son, Edward Douglass White, who was appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1894 and served as its chief justice from 1920 to 1921.

Food: Oh, where to begin? How about Mondays, which are "red beans and rice day" here in the Bayou. And then there's all that seafood – shrimp, oysters, crabs, crawfish and fish of all descriptions. Add to that all those famous Cajun creations, including gumbo, jambalaya and etouffée. And don't forget the pecan pie. Pack your stretchy pants, because we do it up right around here.

Gulf of Mexico: Bayou Lafourche – and the two state highways that run right along it – will take you straight to the Gulf. And you know what's really appealing about that? Fish, fish and more fish. They're plentiful -- and big -- here, and Louisiana has generous limits. Our charter captains are ready to take you out so you can reel a few in ... and simply enjoy the beauty of the Gulf while you're at it.

Heritage: We're proud of our unique history, and teaching you about it will help you get an education about just who we are. Visit the Bayou Lafourche Folklife & Heritage Museum in Lockport for some general background, or perhaps the Golden Meadow Historical Center. To learn more specifics, stop by our Acadian Wetlands Cultural Center in Thibodaux or the Center for Traditional Boat Building in Lockport, which introduces you to the Cajun pirogue – and how to pronounce it.

Industry: We're home to some of America's most exciting and profitable industries. You'll see the seafood and sugar cane industries in action as you head "down the Bayou," but it's when you get to Port Fourchon that you'll learn all about the petroleum industry. The port services more than 90 percent of the Gulf of Mexico's oil production and supplies about 18 percent of the country's oil supply.

Jean Lafitte National Historical Park & Preserve: The National Park Service operates the Wetlands Acadian Cultural Center, a phenomenal place to learn about Cajun life through exhibits, films and special activities. The Center hosts a Cajun Music Jam each Monday night, and you're welcome to bring an instrument and play along, get up and dance, or just enjoy the music. On Tuesday nights visitors are invited to experience *Cercle Francophile*, one of the ways we're keeping the French language alive in Louisiana.

King Cake Ale: Our craft brewer, Mud Bug Brewery, specializes in Cajun beer. What's that, you wonder? Their brews include Café au Lait Stout, which pays tribute to the way we love our coffee, and White Boots Blonde, a nod to the favored footwear of shrimpers. But the brewery's pride and joy is King Cake Ale, named for the delicacy enjoyed at Mardi Gras and giving us hints of cinnamon and vanilla. Yes ... that's dessert in a beer. Who knew?

Laurel Valley Village: The largest surviving 19th- and 20th-century sugar plantation complex in the United States, Laurel Valley is still a working sugarcane farm ... but it's also on the National Register of Historic Places. The village's general store is open to guests so they can examine the tools used for sugar caning and get a glimpse at local arts and crafts.

Mardi Gras: Literally translated as "Fat Tuesday," this is what many folks think of when they imagine life in our state. And here in Louisiana's Cajun Bayou, it's an essential part of our culture. We host 17 Mardi Gras parades, all very family-friendly and open to spectators. Carnival season is a special time around here, but it's just the start of the fun; we have two dozen festivals that keep things hopping all year long.

Native Americans: Lafourche Parish is home to residents from all backgrounds, and we've blended beautifully into a rich human gumbo. You can visit the United Houma Nation Settlement School Museum in Golden Meadow to see artifacts and photographs highlighting the story of the Houma Indians, who were the first to harvest and fish along the Bayou.

Outdoors: We love our natural resources and encourage you to get out and enjoy Mother Nature's handiwork during your visit. Whether you're fishing or hunting, birdwatching or hiking, paddling or playing a round of golf, our climate ensures that locals and visitors alike can have year-round fun outside.

People: We have a lot going for us: at least 26 categories of interesting things, if you're following this list from A to Z! But our greatest resource – and the element that will keep you coming back – is our people. Most of us have lived along the Bayou our entire lives; our families have been here for generations, so we know a thing or two about Lafourche Parish and we're happy to share that insight, a restaurant recommendation or a tip about where to find the biggest fish.

Questions: You probably have a few – about where to go, what to do, how to get from here to there – and we're ready to answer them. The Bayou Lafourche Area Visitor Center is easily accessible to visitors arriving from New Orleans, and it's open Mondays through Saturdays.

Recreation: Yes, we're known for fishing ... but you can get out on the water and do other things, too. Kayaking and paddling are popular activities, and you're likely to see some interesting wildlife while you're getting some exercise. We have land-based sports, too ... including hunting, golf and hiking. So balance all that good food with some activity!

Swamp Tours: If you don't enter a swamp while you're here, you haven't really experienced Louisiana's Cajun Bayou. You can take a more easy-going tour on a larger boat with seats for about 20 passengers, or you can opt for the speed of an airboat, which has room for six. Either way, you'll see the swamps – and all their residents (yes, alligators!) – like you never imagined.

Thibodaux: This is our parish seat, and it's all the way “up the Bayou.” Visitors rave about the architecture, which can be further explored on a walking tour hosted by the Wetlands Acadian Cultural Center. You'll also find plenty of attractions, accommodations and restaurants.

University: Nicholls State University, part of the University of Louisiana system of colleges, is right in the heart of Thibodaux ... and you don't have to be a student or alumni to stop by. A highlight for visitors is the Chef John Folse Culinary Institute, which is dedicated to the preservation of our state's culinary heritage.

Visitor: That's YOU! As you scan this list you can see we have a lot to offer, but Lafourche Parish isn't complete until you come see Louisiana's Cajun Bayou yourself. Check out www.lacajunbayou.com to get started, or call 877-537-5800.

Wildlife: Lafourche Parish is home to fascinating people, to be sure. But you'll also find interesting critters ... with the star of the show being our alligators. They're plentiful in these parts, but the best way to see them is on a swamp tour. If gators aren't your speed, look up instead. The Bayou is home to hundreds of species of birds, which are especially prominent during spring and fall migrating seasons.

X-tremely Close: The parish is just 45 minutes from Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport, so we're New Orleans' neighbor to the south ... but a completely different sort of destination.

Youngsters: There's fun for all generations here, though some attractions – like our distillery – are geared to adults. A highlight for the under-10 set is the Bayou Country Children's Museum, which helps kids learn our special stories in an interactive and entirely fun way.

Zydeco: It's just one style of music you'll hear around here. Its fast tempo is perfect for dancing to, and we encourage you to don a washboard and join the band. You'll also hear Cajun ballads, “chank-a-chank” and “swamp pop” in Louisiana's Cajun Bayou – at our festivals, on our radio stations or maybe just by listening to the people around you.