

LOUISIANA'S CAJUN BAYOU TOURISM

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.

Drive: Louisiana's Cajun Bayou is a short drive from New Orleans, which means it's also a terrific road trip from other points in Louisiana as well as Alabama, Mississippi and Texas.

E.D. White Historic Site: 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 on 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 étouffée. And don't forget the pecan pie. Pack your stretchy pants, because we do it up right around here.



Gulf: 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 in a few ... 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 understand just who we are. Visit the [Bayou Lafourche Folklife & Heritage Museum](#) in Lockport for some general background, or stop by our [Wetlands Acadian Cultural Center](#) in Thibodaux to learn more specifics.

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’s oil production and supplies nearly 20 percent of the country’s oil.



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.

King Cake: The special pastry that’s served for Mardi Gras incorporates plenty of the region’s famous land-based ingredient ... sugar! Some places serve king cake year-round, but most of the truly authentic bakeries make it from the Epiphany (January 6) through Mardi Gras (see below for more details on that!). Think of a very glorified cinnamon roll topped with rich icing and capped with green, gold and purple sugar granules. We’re home to the [Louisiana King Cake Festival](#), but for those who can’t make it to town to sample dozens of king cakes in person during this sweet event, [Cajun Pecan House](#) in the town of Cut Off has a few great versions of this cake and even ships nationwide.

Laurel Valley Village & Sugar Plantation: 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 visitors 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 more than a dozen 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.

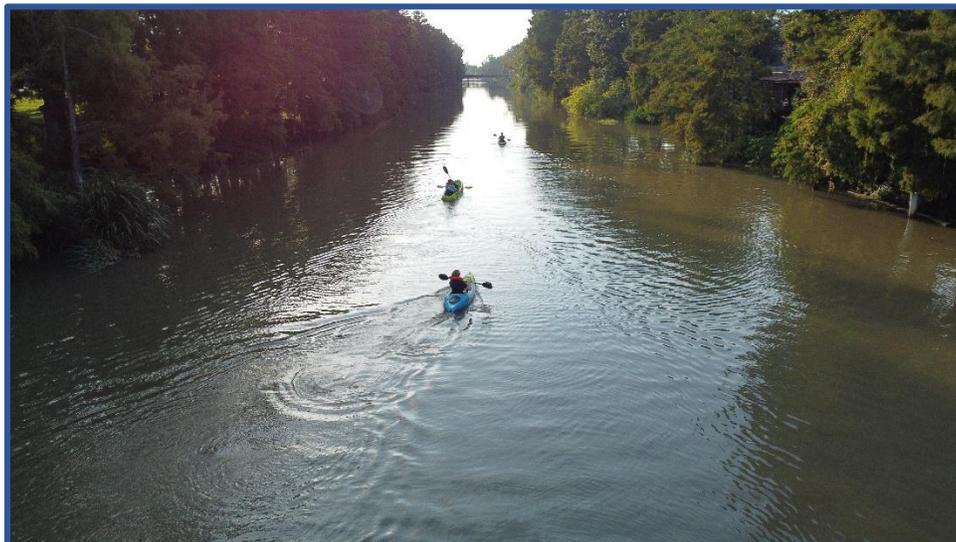
Neighborly: We have a lot going for us: at least 26 categories of interesting things, if you’re following this list from A to Z! But our greatest resource – and the element that will keep you coming back – is our people. Most of us have lived along the Bayou our entire lives. Our families have been here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

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 down the Bayou or playing a round of golf, our climate ensures that locals and visitors alike can have year-round fun outside.

Pétanque: Pronounced “pay-tonk,” this is a leisurely game that can be enjoyed by players of all ages. This traditional French lawn game involves standing in a small circle and throwing metal balls as close as possible to a small wooden target ball. It’s sort of the Cajun answer to bocce. Head to Peltier Park on a Saturday morning and you’ll probably spot the Thibodaux Pétanque Club assembled for some fun. Look interested enough and they might just teach you how to play!

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. Our new [Louisiana’s Cajun Bayou Visitor Center](#) is easily accessible to visitors, 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 hiking and golf. 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, or you can opt for the speed of an airboat, which moves faster but only has room for six passengers. 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. If you plan ahead, you can have a special treat by reserving dinner at the culinary program's [Bistro Ruth](#), which is entirely operated by students.

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 stars 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 are a little more 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, and we encourage you to grab 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.

