



# LOUISIANA





<b>LOUISIANA</b>	<p>Louisiana, open for business and welcoming ever increasing numbers of visitors. Especially Canadians, who recognize it as a great value destination – and the shopping is tax free!</p> <p>Louisiana creativity comes in many forms. Delight in its famous live music - native musician Buckwheat Zydeco just took home a Grammy music award. Louisiana has Award winning Chefs and you can savour the diverse and authentic cuisine through seven “Culinary Trails”. And Louisiana provides a distinctive backdrop to many films.</p> <p>Louisiana Festivals are world renowned! There are year-round food and music festivals - in all, more than four hundred each year - from the Frog Festival in Rayne to the Zwolle Tamale Festival. Plus Louisiana has an international reputation for live music with events such as the Essence Music Festival and the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival. Find out more at <a href="http://www.LouisianaTravel.com">www.LouisianaTravel.com</a></p> <p>From the music, cuisine and festivals, to the traditions of Cajun culture, and the grandeur of Louisiana’s antebellum architecture in the many stunning, river-side plantation homes – Louisiana offers unique and vibrant experiences.</p>
<b>Location</b>	Louisiana is bordered to the west by the state of Texas; to the north by Arkansas; to the east by the state of Mississippi; and to the south by the Gulf of Mexico.
<b>Geography</b>	<p>One of the best things about visiting Louisiana is you get five distinct destinations in one. Each of Louisiana's five regions is different from the next. Some places are famous for food, others for music, others for history and others for outdoors activities. And no matter where you are, you'll find a little bit of everything. Use the links to the right to check out profiles of Louisiana's five regions. You'll learn about some of the most popular things to do, see, hear and taste in each region, as well as some lesser known finds.</p> <p>Here are the five Louisiana Regions:</p> <p><b>Cajun Country</b> <b>Crossroads</b> <b>Greater New Orleans</b> <b>Plantation Country</b> <b>Sportsman's Paradise</b></p>
<b>Name</b>	Louisiana (also known as New France) was named after <b>Louis XIV</b> , King of France from 1643–1715. When René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle claimed the territory drained by the Mississippi River for France, he named it La Louisiane, meaning " <b>Land of Louis</b> ". Louisiana was also part of the Viceroyalty of New Spain of the Spanish Empire.

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	The territory was acquired in <b>1803</b> by the United States through the <b>Louisiana Purchase</b> from France. Once part of the United States, the Louisiana Territory stretched from present-day New Orleans north to the present-day Canadian border. Part or all of 15 states were formed from the territory.
<b>Population</b>	The state's population is approximately 4.5 million
<b>Language</b>	English, with French spoken as a first language by almost 5%
<b>Currency</b>	US Dollar – currently (17 May 2010) one Canadian Dollar buys 97 cents US, so the dollars are close to parity, making the US really good value for Canadians.
<b>Tipping</b>	The custom of tipping is a common practice in Louisiana: 15% to 20% for waiters; 10% to 15% for taxi drivers; \$1 per bag for bellmen. Occasionally gratuities are automatically added to restaurant checks, but not usually.
<b>Government</b>	In 1849, the state moved the capital from New Orleans to Baton Rouge. The Louisiana State Capitol and the Louisiana Governor's Mansion are both located in Baton Rouge. The current Louisiana governor is Bobby Jindal, the first Indian American to be elected governor. The current U.S. senators are Mary Landrieu (Democrat) and David Vitter (Republican). Louisiana has seven congressional districts and is represented in the U.S. House of Representatives by six Republicans and one Democrat.
<b>Documentation</b>	Passports are required for Canadian visitors arriving by both air and land, so make sure you apply well in advance of travel if you do not have a Passport currently.
<b>Time zone</b>	Central Standard Time Zone, one hour behind Toronto and Montreal
<b>Health</b>	Excellent services available but ensure that you have travelers health insurance as health costs in the US can be very high
<b>Safety tips</b>	Sensible travellers precautions should be adopted, but this destination is considered a safe region to visit in general. In New Orleans however, exercise more caution: most of the serious crime there is drug-related, and confined to areas where tourists do not go, but very cautious about where you go at night.

<b>CLIMATE</b>	
<b>General climate</b>	Louisiana has a humid subtropical climate, with long, hot, humid summers and short, mild winters.
<b>Today's weather</b>	33C sun and showers (19 May 2010)
<b>Best time to visit</b>	The best times to visit are in winter and spring.

<b>GETTING AROUND</b>	
<b>Flights</b>	There are no direct flights from Canada to Louisiana; however, all the major airlines fly from Canada into Louisiana via US hubs.

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<b>Cities</b>	<p><b>New Orleans:</b></p> <p>It's been called the most European city in North America, and a stroll down any <b>French Quarter</b> avenue reveals the statement to be accurate. Wrought-iron balconies cast lacey shadows on the flagstone sidewalks below. Slate rooftops reflect the springtime sun as a cool breeze spirits you along. Take a moment to regard a street vendor's colorful works of art. Head over to Café du Monde for a café au lait and hot beignets dusted with powdered sugar. Enjoy your snack on a nearby park bench overlooking the mighty Mississippi River. Be sure to save room for later. You have reservations at Emeril's Restaurant at 8 o'clock sharp. This is New Orleans. Feel free to fall in love.</p> <p>It's true that New Orleans took a hit from Hurricane Katrina, but many of the things that people love to see and do in the Big Easy are alive and well and open for business. So what does that include? For starters, the <b>architecture</b> will amaze you. From the magnificent hundred year old mansions along St. Charles Avenue and the Vieux Carre's colorful Creole cottages with their lacy iron balconies and secret gardens to the gothic spires of St. Louis Cathedral and the haunting marble tombs of the above ground cemeteries, the landscape reads like an epic novel, full of mystery, adventure, heartbreak and romance.</p> <p>Dig deeper with a visit to any number of <b>museums</b>, where you can learn about Marie Laveau's voodoo spells, Jean Lafitte's pirate treasure, the Battle of New Orleans, and of course the jazz. It's been said that jazz was born in New Orleans because you simply can't do this city justice with words alone.</p> <p>New Orleans has long been a haven for <b>musicians, writers and artists</b>. This thriving arts community is yours to discover in the galleries of the Warehouse District and the eclectic shops on Magazine Street. The Warehouse District is also home to the Ogden Museum of Southern Art, with the largest and most comprehensive collection of Southern art in the world. Across the street we recommend the very moving National D-Day Museum, and just down the block is the New Orleans Children's Museum. In the City Park area is another must-see's the <b>New Orleans Museum of Art</b>, with its permanent collection of Fabergé eggs, expansive sculpture garden and Botanical Gardens, filled with rare and wonderful specimens of native plants and flowers.</p> <p>You can get to know New Orleans in a number of ways. Take walking tours through the French Quarter and Garden District. Take a horse and buggy through the narrow brick streets of the Vieux Carre and Jackson Square where you'll find fortunetellers, portrait artists, street performers, and shops filled with every kind of antique and collectible you could imagine, from Confederate dollars to alligator claw backscratchers. You can also get another view of the city, with a ride on an authentic six-story, paddlewheel steamboat.</p>
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	<p>You can ride a streetcar around the city to the Audubon Zoo. Families should be sure to check out the Zoo, and also the Aquarium of the Americas.</p> <p>If all this sightseeing makes you hungry, you're in luck. New Orleans is famous for many things and at the top of every list is the <b>food</b>. Every meal is a feast, from beignets at breakfast to thick gumbos and even thicker po-boys at lunch to pecan-crusted trout and bourbon-soaked bread pudding for dinner.</p>
<b>Distances</b>	<p>New Orleans to Shreveport: 560 kms</p> <p>New Orleans to Baton Rouge: 140 kms</p>
<b>Ferries</b>	There are a number of river ferries in the state which not only offer short cuts around long road loops, but are a leisurely way of getting a short experience of river life in Louisiana.
<b>Trains</b>	Amtrak's Crescent Line (tel. 800/872-7245; <a href="http://www.amtrak.com">www.amtrak.com</a> ) starts in New York City and ends in New Orleans, making stops in the Midwest and Tennessee along the way.
<b>Car Rental</b>	All major car rental companies are available in Louisiana and there are sample touring itineraries on <a href="http://www.louisianatravel.com">www.louisianatravel.com</a> to download. The tour guide has valuable information for planning an itinerary as well.
<b>Buses</b>	There is a good network of bus routes within the town and cities. For more information in New Orleans, call the Regional Transit Authority (tel. 504/248-3900; <a href="http://www.norta.com">www.norta.com</a> ).

<b>ACCOMMODATION TYPES</b>	<p>In Louisiana, accommodations are attractions. Whether you stay in a luxury resort, an historic hotel, a charming bed &amp; breakfast, an elegant plantation home or a picturesque campsite, where you lay your head at night is an integral part of the Louisiana experience. Visit <a href="http://www.louisianatravel.com/stay/">http://www.louisianatravel.com/stay/</a> for more information and to book your stay.</p>
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<b>TARGET GROUPS</b>	
<b>Kids</b>	<p>The state offers many activities for the family, which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Global Wildlife</b> (900-acre preserve that has rare, endangered &amp; extinct wild animals; feed camels) outside of Hammond</li> <li>- <b>Audubon Aquarium &amp; Insectarium</b> in New Orleans</li> <li>- Statewide zoos, i.e. Audubon Zoo, Baton Rouge Zoo, Alexandria Zoological Park, Louisiana Purchase Gardens &amp; Zoo</li> <li>- <b>National World War II Museum</b> in New Orleans</li> <li>- <b>Louisiana Art and Science Museum</b> (including a Planetarium) in Baton Rouge</li> <li>- <b>Vermilionville</b>, a Cajun/Creole Heritage &amp; Folklife Park</li> <li>- <b>Sci-Port Discovery Center</b> in Shreveport</li> <li>- <b>The Northeast Louisiana Children's Museum</b></li> <li>- USS Kidd</li> </ul>

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	With the wealth of family-centric fun to be had in Louisiana, it's the perfect destination for all ages. Kids can learn about the Cajun way of life at Vermilionville in Lafayette, and they can hold a baby alligator at the Alligator Park in Natchitoches. The whole family will have a ball at any of the 4,000 festivals held each year throughout the state.
<b>Teens</b>	Fun activities for teenagers include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Monroe Motor Speedway</b></li> <li>- <b>Entergy IMAX theatre</b></li> <li>- <b>Blain Kern's Mardi Gras World</b></li> <li>- <b>Blue Bayou Water Park &amp; Dixie Landing</b></li> <li>- <b>Overnight in the swamp at Wildlife Gardens in Houma</b></li> <li>- <b>Chimp Haven</b></li> <li>- <b>Swamp Tours</b></li> </ul>
<b>Romance</b>	Romance is in the air in many of the old inns and plantation homes where you feel transported back to another era. Echoes of "Gone with the Wind"...
<b>Honeymoons &amp; Weddings</b>	Many of the <b>Historic Plantation homes</b> offer wedding venues and reception halls. Bed and Breakfasts sites are wonderful, quaint honeymoon retreats, i.e. Woodridge Bed and Breakfast on the Northshore. New Orleans is always a favorite honeymoon destination.
<b>Genealogy</b>	<b>Louisiana State Archives</b> Address: 3851 Essen Ln, Baton Rouge, LA 70809 Phone: 225-922-1000 Email: <a href="mailto:archives@sos.louisiana.gov">archives@sos.louisiana.gov</a> Website: <a href="http://www.sos.louisiana.gov">http://www.sos.louisiana.gov</a> Official repository for Louisiana historical records and an extensive genealogy research library with two exhibit halls. More than 30,000 cubic feet of archival materials. Free admission.
<b>Seniors</b>	In Louisiana, discover hidden gems, revisit old favorites, find unique dining experiences and outdoor adventure around any bend in the road. The tour guide & website are useful guides for more information. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Swamp Tours</li> <li>- Plantation home tours</li> <li>- Culinary Trails</li> <li>- Bird watching</li> <li>- Cemetery tours</li> <li>- Walking tours</li> <li>- African American Heritage Trail</li> <li>- New Civil War Trail</li> <li>- New Orleans city tours</li> <li>- Avery Island</li> <li>- Conrad Rice Mill (in Iberia Parish near Lafayette)</li> <li>- Blain Kern's Mardi Gras World</li> </ul>

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<b>UNIQUES</b>	<p>There are so many historical, cultural, and unique things to see and do in Louisiana. An experience in Louisiana is never forgotten. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Louisiana's Culinary Trails</li><li>- New Orleans French Quarter</li><li>- Mardi Gras</li><li>- Statewide music and food festivals year-round, such as the Jazz and Heritage Festival, Crawfish Festival, Contraband Days Pirate Festival, Peach Festival, Christmas Festival of Lights, and Tomato Festival.</li><li>- Statewide Swamp Tours</li><li>- Avery Island (home of Tabasco hot sauce)</li><li>- Louisiana State Museum in the capitol city, Baton Rouge</li><li>- Antebellum Plantations, such as Oak Alley, Houmas House, Laura, Nottoway, the Myrtles, Magnolia Mound and Loyd Hall.</li><li>- Listening &amp; dancing to Jazz, Cajun, and Zydeco music</li><li>- Shopping and Antiquing</li><li>- Riverboats</li></ul>
<b>Surprising</b>	<p>Surprising facts about Louisiana:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Louisiana has the tallest state capitol building in the nation at 450 feet.</li><li>• The Superdome in New Orleans is the largest enclosed stadium in the world.</li><li>• The Lake Pontchartrain Causeway is the longest over-water bridge in the world at 23.87 miles.</li><li>• The first bottler of Coca-Cola, Joseph Biedenharn, lived in Monroe (northeast Louisiana) and was one of the founders of Delta Air Lines. Delta Airlines got its start in Monroe.</li><li>• Southern University in Baton Rouge is the largest predominantly black university in America.</li><li>• Louisiana produces 24% of the nation's salt, the most in America.</li><li>• Steen's Syrup Mill in Abbeville, LA is the world's largest syrup plant producing sugar cane syrup.</li><li>• The Louisiana Hayride radio show, broadcasted in Shreveport, helped launch Hank Williams, Elvis, and Johnny Cash into stardom.</li></ul>

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	<p>Louisiana is also famous for its <b>haunted plantations</b>, hotels and historic sites. For instance:</p> <p>Located on Royal Street in the French Quarter, <b>Hotel Monteleone</b> is a New Orleans landmark. It was purchased by Antonio Monteleone in 1886 and has been run by the same family ever since. So loved is the Monteleone that people don't want to leave, and some never do. For generations, both guest and employees have experiences that skeptics would be hard pressed to explain away. A restaurant door that opens almost every evening at the same time and then closes again, even though it is locked. An elevator that stops on the wrong floor, leading a curious couple down a hallway that grows chilly and reveals the ghostly images of children playing. In March 2003, the International Society of Paranormal Research spent several days investigating Hotel Monteleone. While at the hotel, the team made contact with more than a dozen earthbound entities. Yes, ghost and spirits still haunt the legendary French Quarter, and you can learn all about them on the famous New Orleans Haunted History Ghost Tour. Tours depart nightly from Rev. Zombie's Voodoo Shop at 723 St. Peter Street in the French Quarter.</p>
<b>History</b>	<p><b>First Nations:</b> Louisiana was inhabited by Native Americans when European explorers arrived in the 16th century. Many place names in the state are transliterations of those used in Native American dialects.</p> <p><b>Spanish:</b> The first European explorers to visit Louisiana came in 1528. The Spanish expedition (led by Panfilo de Narváez) located the mouth of the Mississippi River. In 1541, Hernando de Soto's expedition crossed the region. Then Spanish interest in Louisiana lay dormant.</p> <p><b>French:</b> In the late 17th century, French expeditions, which included sovereign, religious and commercial aims, established a foothold on the Mississippi River and Gulf Coast. With its first settlements, France lay claim to a vast region of North America and set out to establish a commercial empire and French nation stretching from the Gulf of Mexico to Canada. In 1682, the French explorer Robert Cavelier de La Salle named the region Louisiana to honor France's King Louis XIV. The first permanent settlement, Fort Maurepas (at what is now Ocean Springs, Mississippi, near Biloxi), was founded by Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville, a French military officer from Canada, in 1699.</p> <p><b>US:</b> In 1803, Thomas Jefferson, third President of the United States, was disturbed by Napoleon's plans to re-establish French colonies in America. With the possession of New Orleans, Napoleon could close the Mississippi to U.S. commerce at any time. Jefferson authorized Robert R. Livingston, U.S. Minister to France, to negotiate for the</p>

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	purchase of the City of New Orleans, portions of the east bank of the Mississippi, and free navigation of the river for U.S. commerce. The Louisiana Territory, purchased for less than 3 cents an acre, doubled the size of the United States overnight, without a war or the loss of a single American life, and set a precedent for the purchase of territory. It opened the way for the eventual expansion of the United States across the continent to the Pacific.
<b>Books</b>	Frommer's USA for excellent information on New Orleans Frommer's New Orleans 2010
<b>1000 Places to see before you die</b>	All six entries are based on New Orleans! The French Quarter of New Orleans The New Orleans Restaurant Scene Mardi Gras, New Orleans New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival Preservation Hall, New Orleans – birthplace of Jazz Soniat House, New Orleans – quintessential NO hotel
<b>Must Sees</b>	<b>Louisiana's Plantations</b> On the Mississippi River corridor between New Orleans and St. Francisville you will find some of the most striking examples of antebellum plantations still standing on the Great River Road in the South. Perhaps the most stunning example is Oak Alley, 3645 Hwy. 18, Vacherie ( <a href="http://www.oakalleyplantation.com">www.oakalleyplantation.com</a> ), with its enormous quarter-mile of oak trees lined up like sentries leading to the columned entrance to the plantation. While you can't stay in the main Greek Revival mansion, there are guest cottages on the property that include breakfast in the price. Also in Vacherie is the Creole sugar plantation Laura, 2247 Hwy. 18 <a href="http://www.lauraplantation.com">www.lauraplantation.com</a> , where the West African tales of Br'er Rabbit were first recorded. The tour here bases its information on the 500 pages of diary entries written by the plantation's namesake mistress.

<b>SPORTS ACTIVITIES</b>	Louisiana is nominally the least populous state with more than one major professional sports league franchise: the National Basketball Association's <b>New Orleans Hornets</b> and the National Football League's <b>New Orleans Saints</b> .
<b>Golf</b>	Golfers can hit the links on the <b>Louisiana Audubon Golf Trail</b> with 12 world-class golf courses covering every region of the state. Visit <a href="http://www.audubongolf.com">www.audubongolf.com</a> The trail has grown to include 13 world-class courses, covering every region of the state. Without hesitation, Louisiana can boast great golf along with all its other riches. Come experience the courses of Hal Sutton, David Toms, Pete Dye, Robert von Hagge, and the most magnificent designer of theme all, Mother Nature. Live oaks dripping with Spanish moss, cypress knees peeking from the swamp, graceful egrets taking wing ... these all just some of

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	the sights you'll see while enjoying a great game of golf. The Trail was named for John James Audubon, who was enchanted with the natural beauty and nature of Louisiana. To preserve the natural beauty and heritage of the game, each of the courses are members of Audubon International's Cooperative Golf Sanctuary Program
<b>Fishing</b>	<p>Louisiana's almost 400 miles of coastline means anglers can find world-class fishing offshore in the Gulf of Mexico out of Grand Isle, Empire and Port Fourchon where tuna, tarpon, marlin, sailfish, cobia and grouper are regularly pulled from the waters. Across the state, freshwater fishermen land boatloads of catfish, bluegill, and bass. Lake Pontchartrain, which is fresh &amp; salt water, boasts record speckled trout, redfish and flounder. Some other fishing destinations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Toledo Bend</li> <li>- Red River</li> <li>- Manchac</li> <li>- Holly Beach</li> <li>- Atchafalaya Basin</li> <li>- Lake Bistineau</li> </ul> <p>Charter and guide services are available. Also, within the State Park system, there are 20 sites that have a lake, river, or the Gulf of Mexico onsite or in close proximity. All sites feature boat and/or canoe launches and overnight accommodations.</p>
<b>Horse riding</b>	<p><b>Sunflower Ranch</b>  Address: 84080 Pierre Cemetery Rd, Folsom, LA 70437  Phone: 985-796-1149  Website: <a href="http://www.sunflowerfarmandranch.net">http://www.sunflowerfarmandranch.net</a>  Horse rentals for pleasure Trail Riding on 100 acres of wooded trails and pasture in the eastern part of the state.</p>
<b>Hiking</b>	<p>Louisiana's somewhat flat to hilly terrain makes it a great destination for novice to intermediate hikers and bikers. For additional information, visit <a href="http://www.bikelouisiana.com">www.bikelouisiana.com</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- For hiking, the <b>Barataria Preserve</b>, south of New Orleans, has nine miles of hiking boardwalks and hard-surface trails through 20,000 acres of hardwood forest, cypress swamp, and fresh water marsh.</li> <li>- <b>Kisatchie National Forest</b> has 355 miles of hiking and biking trails through over 600,000 acres of pine highlands.</li> <li>- For biking, hiking, and walking, the 31-mile <b>St. Tammany Trace</b> winds through the Northshore, a paved ribbon connecting five communities interspersed with lovely green space.</li> <li>- Walk and bike along the Mississippi River</li> </ul>
<b>Cycling</b>	<p>Biking in Louisiana is easy because the terrain is flat and there is a network of lightly traveled, paved rural roads.</p> <p>On <a href="http://www.bikelouisiana.com">www.bikelouisiana.com</a>, you'll find tours in Cajun Country, Greater</p>

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	<p>New Orleans, Plantation Country and along the Atchafalaya Trace.</p> <p>The tours in <b>Cajun Country</b> will give you many opportunities to hear and dance to Cajun and Zydeco music. Restaurants and small cafes serve up etouffee, jambalaya and gumbo and all kinds of wonderful seafood. Grocery stores have pots of steaming boudin, a Cajun sausage rich in the spices of South Louisiana.</p> <p>The <b>Louisiana Purchase Bike Route</b> takes you through Plantation Country as it winds its way to New Orleans. It starts in Natchitoches, the oldest town in the Louisiana. Along the way, you will see Creole-style plantations, the Great River Road plantations, the Morganza Spillway, the largest spillway in the world, and small towns that reflect the cultures of the many people who settled this area. Total distance from Natchitoches to New Orleans is 760 kms.</p> <p>The <b>Atchafalaya Trace Bike Route</b> makes a 620 km loop around the Atchafalaya Basin. The Atchafalaya Basin is one of few great wetland semi-wilderness areas left in the nation. Its 833,000 acres are home to the country's most productive habitats for fish and wildlife. Along this route, you will visit towns whose histories date back to the 1700 and 1800's. The French, Spanish and Indians all played an important role in the development of the area. Along the way, there will be opportunities to take guided tours of the Great Atchafalaya swamp.</p> <p>Tours in the <b>New Orleans</b> area are designed to give you the history of the area as you peddle through one of the most interesting cities in the U.S. In New Orleans, you can enjoy café au lait and beignets, ride the historic St. Charles street car, see dozens of mansions built by the Americans that came to New Orleans after the Louisiana purchase, tour the Vieux Carre, hear jazz, and of course eat fabulous food.</p>
<b>CULTURE</b>	<p>Louisiana is home to many, especially notable are the distinct culture of the Creoles and Cajuns.</p> <p><b>Creole culture</b> is a cultural amalgamation that takes a little from each of the French, Spanish, African, and Native American cultures.</p> <p>The ancestors of <b>Cajuns</b> came from west central France to the provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, Canada, known as Acadia. When the British won the French and Indian War, the British forcibly separated families and evicted them because of their long-stated political neutrality</p>
<b>Arts</b>	<p><b>Ballet</b></p> <p>The Lafayette Ballet Theater has a two-fold purpose: to entertain and to educate. Its productions have entertained ballet lovers in Cajun Country</p>

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	<p>for nearly 30 years and, through its educational arm, it reaches more than 2,500 students annually through its educational program. The Shreveport Metropolitan Ballet, founded in 1973, presents several full-length classical ballet productions a year and offers affordable ticket prices. And the New Orleans Ballet Association offers a number of performances each season, featuring a variety of world-class dance companies.</p> <p><b>Visual Arts</b>  New Orleans has been home to countless artists, from Degas to Michalopoulos, so it's not surprising that the city has long enjoyed a vibrant art scene. In recent years, however, it has become even more so. The Ogden Museum of Southern Art, which opened in New Orleans in 2003, offers permanent and temporary collections exhibiting the visual arts and culture of the American South. The nearby Contemporary Arts Center focuses on the art of today with curated exhibitions, performances and programs. In the same part of the city, an area that has come to be known as the Arts District, Julia Street is home to a number of fine art galleries offering collections of local and national artists. Across Lake Pontchartrain from New Orleans is a town with a bustling art all its own. Visit Covington and browse the art galleries and shops in its quaint, historic downtown area. In Natchitoches, you'll find a National Historic Landmark District centred around Front Street, a popular destination full of museums, art galleries, as well as historic sites and great shopping and dining.</p>
<p><b>Music</b></p>	<p>Louisiana's music includes <b>Cajun, jazz, Zydeco, blues, swamp pop, country, bluegrass, gospel, and Rockabilly</b>. Louisiana blends music, festivals, nightlife, and local events together for a must-do experience, such as Mardi Gras, Live After Five, Harrah's Casino, Acadian Village, Randol's and Café de Amis restaurants, Cajun Food &amp; Music Festival, Tales of the Cocktail, Preservation Hall and of course, Bourbon Street. There are several music museums to visit throughout the state as well. Louisiana offers over 400 fairs and festivals year-round that include food and live-music.</p> <p><b>Opera</b>  Many of the world's most famous operas made their U.S. debut in the opera houses of New Orleans, the first of which appeared in the late 18th century. Today, the New Orleans Opera Association upholds the fine tradition. Each season, fans are offered five first-rate productions, with several performances each, combining world renowned visiting talent with the New Orleans Opera's core group of performers. West on I-10 in Baton Rouge, you'll find another great opera company. The Baton Rouge Opera presents three productions each season, including</p>

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	<p>national and local artists. Founded in the late 1940s, the Shreveport Opera has been entertaining audiences for six decades. The Shreveport Opera stages several different productions each season.</p> <p><b>Orchestra</b>          With roots dating back prior to World War One; the Rapides Symphony Orchestra is a staple of Alexandria's culture scene. The Rapides Symphony Orchestra's season runs from fall through spring, and is a perfect choice if you're seeking a stellar orchestral performance in central Louisiana. In New Orleans, the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra has a devoted following, and the upstart New Orleans Jazz Orchestra, led by jazz phenom Irvin Mayfield, Jr., is turning heads around the world. The popular Lake Charles Symphony has been around for more than 70 years, offering talented musicians, world-class soloists and magnificent classics.</p>
<b>Films</b>	<p>Many motion pictures have been set in whole or in part in the state of Louisiana, the most recent blockbuster example being <b>The Curious Case of Benjamin Button</b>, starring Brad Pitt and Cate Blanchett.</p>
<b>Museums</b>	<p>Learn all about <b>Storyville</b>, New Orleans' notorious red-light district where jazz was born. Splash ashore with the soldiers of D-Day. See exhibits on 130 years of prison life. View Civil War displays created by the actual soldiers. You'll find history and cultural heritage preserved and interpreted by more than 200 museums statewide. For more on Louisiana's State Museums including the Cabildo, the Presbytere and the Old U.S. Mint in New Orleans and the Old Courthouse Museum in Natchitoches, call (800) 568-6968. For more on Louisiana's independent museums and historic sites, call (225) 383-6800. A good place to start is the <b>Louisiana State Museum</b> in Baton Rouge: telephone 225-342-5414</p> <p><b>The National World War II Museum</b>          Renowned historian, author and educator, Dr. Stephen Ambrose founded The National World War II Museum Foundation in New Orleans in 1991. The Museum, which opened on June 6, 2000, is the only museum in the United States that addresses all of the amphibious invasions or "D-Days" of World War II, honouring the more than one million Americans who took part in this global conflict. The National World War II Museum opened its doors on the 56th anniversary of the Normandy invasion that liberated Europe. It is located in New Orleans, Louisiana because it was here that Andrew Higgins built the landing craft used in the amphibious invasions; the landing craft which President Eisenhower believed won the war for the Allies. The Museum stands as a tribute to the men and women who made the invasions in Europe, Africa and the Pacific theatres successful. It presents their</p>

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	<p>stories to an international audience, preserves material for research and scholarship, and inspires future generations to apply the lessons learned from the most complex military operation ever staged.</p>
<b>Festivals</b>	<p>With <b>more than 400 festivals in the state each year</b>, Louisiana averages over a festival every day. It's easy to see why there seems to be a festival for every crop harvested, every indigenous dish cooked, every type of music that's played, every element of their culture. So you can attend the world famous Jazz &amp; Heritage Festival in New Orleans, the Strawberry Festival in Pontchatoula, Festival Acadiens in Lafayette, the Crawfish Festival in Breaux Bridge, the Tamale Fiesta in Zwolle, the Folklife Festival in Monroe, the Meat Pie Festival in Natchitoches, the Cotton Festival in Ville Platte, and that's just to name a few.</p> <p><b>Mardi Gras</b> (<a href="http://www.MardiGras.com">www.MardiGras.com</a>)</p> <p>Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday) in New Orleans, Louisiana, is one of the most famous Carnival celebrations in the world. The New Orleans Carnival season, with roots in preparing for the start of the Catholic season of Lent, starts on Twelfth Night (January 6). It is a season of parades, balls (some of them masquerade balls), and king cake parties. It has traditionally been part of the winter social season, at one time closely related to "coming out" parties for young women at debutante balls. Celebrations are especially concentrated for about two weeks before and through Fat Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday. There is usually one major parade each day (weather permitting); many days have several large parades. The largest and most elaborate parades take place the last five days of the season. In the final week of Carnival many events large and small occur throughout New Orleans and surrounding communities.</p> <p>The parades in New Orleans are organized by Carnival krewes. Krewe float riders toss throws to the crowds; the most common throws are strings of plastic colorful beads, doubloons (aluminium or wooden dollar-sized coins usually impressed with a krewe logo), decorated plastic throw cups, and small inexpensive toys. Major krewes follow the same parade schedule and route each year.</p> <p>While many tourists center their Mardi Gras season activities on Bourbon Street and the French Quarter, none of the major Mardi Gras parades has entered the Quarter since 1972 because of its narrow streets and overhead obstructions. Instead, major parades originate in the Uptown and Mid-City districts and follow a route along St. Charles Avenue and Canal Street, on the upriver side of the French Quarter. To New Orleanians, "Mardi Gras" refers to the whole Carnival season; visitors tend to refer to Fat Tuesday as "Mardi Gras." Some locals have thus started to refer to the last two days of Carnival as "Lundi Gras" (Fat</p>

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	<p>Monday) and Fat Tuesday to avoid confusion.</p> <p><b>The New Orleans Jazz &amp; Heritage Festival</b> (<a href="http://www.nojazzfest.com">www.nojazzfest.com</a>) long ago grew beyond what its name promises, with big names in contemporary and pop music sharing the same stage as jazz greats, old and new. The post-Katrina spirit inspired new songs dedicated to the people of New Orleans, and even brought favorite son Fats Domino out of retirement to perform in 2006, drawing legions of thrilled music lovers to spend much-needed tourist dollars. April/May each year.</p>
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<b>ATTRACTIONS</b>	
<b>Beaches</b>	<p>The best beaches in the state tend to be fresh water beaches on the many lakes, rather than the coast of the Gulf of Mexico. One example:</p> <p><b>Crooked Creek Recreation</b>  Address: 1300 Sandy Beach Dr., Ville Platte, LA 70586  Phone: 337-599-2661  Camping, fishing, boating, swimming, skiing &amp; sailing on a 400-acre clear lake with sandy beaches.  If you have any concerns about Louisiana's beaches in the wake of the 2010 Gulf oil spill, see the special section at the end of these notes.</p>
<b>Wildlife</b>	<p>Louisiana is an outdoor wonderland. The <b>Wetlands</b> are more than just a haven for rare cypress trees, birds and animals, they are a national treasure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wetland's Birding Trail</li> <li>- Atchafalaya Basin</li> <li>- Bayous, swamps, and marshes</li> <li>- State Parks</li> <li>- Explore by a canoe, kayak, or pirogue</li> <li>- Swamp Tours</li> <li>- Bayou Teche National Wildlife Refuge, find wild black bears</li> <li>- Tunica Hills, see white-tailed deer</li> </ul> <p><b>Louisiana's Great Gulf Coast:</b> Traveling along the Creole Nature Trail All-American Road and six additional state scenic byways, the <b>America's Wetland Birding Trail</b> crosses through 22 Southern Louisiana parishes rich with unparalleled history, culture, arts and entertainment. The trail will guide you to some of the state's most productive natural places along the Great Gulf Coast and will offer ready access to some of the best birding in the country. The America's Wetland Birding Trail consists of 115 bird watching sites crossing through 22 Louisiana parishes. Go to <a href="http://www.louisianatravel.com/explore/louisiana_birding_trails.cfm">http://www.louisianatravel.com/explore/louisiana_birding_trails.cfm</a> for more detailed information.</p>
<b>Parks</b>	<p>Louisiana has a natural beauty for every taste. Four out of every 10</p>

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	<p>acres of wetland in the U.S. can be found in Louisiana.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Atchafalaya Trace National Heritage Area (America's largest river swamp)</li> <li>- Creole Nature Trail, an All-American Road</li> <li>- Cane River Heritage Area</li> <li>- Gardens of the American Rose Center, Shreveport</li> <li>- Swamps and Bayous, i.e. Honey Island Swamp</li> </ul>
<b>Gardens</b>	<p>There are nearly a hundred entries for gardens on the <a href="http://www.louisianatravel.com">www.louisianatravel.com</a> website, so green-fingerer visitor will be spoiled for choice. Top of the list:</p> <p><b>New Orleans Botanical Garden</b>  Address: Victory Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70124  Phone: 504-483-9412  Website: <a href="http://www.neworleanscitypark.com/garden">http://www.neworleanscitypark.com/garden</a></p> <p>Louisiana's only Botanical Garden has roots in WPA/Art Deco period. Explore 12 acre garden featuring over 2,000 plant varieties, tropical conservatory, themed gardens such as Butterfly Walk, Rose, Tropical, Japanese and Train Garden.</p>
<b>Historical Sites</b>	<p>Louisiana possesses a rich, unique and authentic culture and offers many historical sites &amp; landmarks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Jean Lafitte Acadian Cultural Center</li> <li>- Scenic Byways</li> <li>- Historic plantation homes along the Great River Road</li> <li>- State museums</li> <li>- Chalmette Battlefield</li> <li>- Birthplace of Jazz</li> <li>- Poverty Point Park</li> <li>- City of Natchitoches (Louisiana's oldest permanent settlement in the Louisiana Purchase territory)</li> <li>- Louisiana Indian Heritage Association Powwow, Robert, LA</li> <li>- State Capitol Building</li> </ul> <p>If you're a <b>Civil War</b> buff, Louisiana offers you the opportunity to visit forts, battlegrounds and other important links to Civil War history. They also have 27 sites on the <b>Civil War Discovery Trail</b>.</p> <p>Louisiana has such a rich history that, no matter where you are, there's no telling what might have happened in that very location over the centuries that led up to the present. But many locations do have histories that are very well known, and they're worth a visit.</p> <p>The <b>Edgar Degas House</b> in New Orleans, for example, is the only of the master artist's many residences that is open to the public and is where Degas created at least 17 works of art.</p> <p>The <b>Kate Chopin House</b> in Cloutierville was built in the early 19th century and is visited by literary buffs interested in seeing the domicile</p>

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	<p>of the acclaimed author of <i>The Awakening</i>. And the many Louisiana libraries, including the State Library of Louisiana in Baton Rouge, offer a fascinating and in-depth view of our state's history.</p> <p><b>Laura Plantation</b> in Vacherie was built in 1805 and offers daily tours covering seven different themes, such as Creole women, architecture, and slaves. The Poverty Point National Monument in Epps dates back much further. This site has some of the largest prehistoric earthworks in North America, from a Native American culture that lived in the first and second millennia BC.</p>
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OTHER ACTIVITIES	
<b>Shopping</b>	<p>Louisiana is known as Sportsman's Paradise, but you could also call it Shopaholic's Paradise. Throughout the state, shoppers can find everything from one-of-a-kind antiques to fine local art to national clothing brands, and find them at a bargain, too!</p> <p>Check out the fine antique shops in the <b>French Quarter, the art galleries in Covington, or the Cottage Shops in Lake Charles</b>. Visit the Mall of Louisiana in Baton Rouge, where more than 175 retailers offer just about anything you might want. Or stroll the picturesque historic district of Natchitoches with its variety of souvenir shops, antique stores and gift shops.</p> <p>Many retail establishments in Louisiana participate in a state program that provides tax-free shopping on purchases to international visitors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Louisiana Boardwalk in Bossier City-Shreveport (north LA)</li> <li>- Mall of Louisiana in Baton Rouge</li> <li>- The Riverwalk in New Orleans</li> <li>- Outlet malls</li> </ul> <p>Don't miss shopping on Magazine Street, in the French Quarter, Lafayette or Lake Charles and go antiquing statewide.</p>
<b>Markets</b>	<p><b>New Orleans: The French Market</b></p> <p>Shops within the market begin on Decatur Street across from Jackson Square; offerings include candy, cookware, fashion, crafts, toys, New Orleans memorabilia, and jewelry. It's open from 10am to 6pm (and the Café du Monde, next to the Farmers Market, is open 24 hr.). Quite honestly, you'll find a lot of junk here, but there are some very good buys mixed in, and it's always fun to stroll through - and grab a nibble. Be sure to walk all the way to the "flea market" in the back (near Esplanade), where you can find jewelry, handbags, pretty, flowing dresses, and more. Just about every dealer in back will bargain with you, so don't take the first price offered, just in case. Despite the mix of quality, this is a must-start place for souvenirs or other sorts of New Orleans shopping. Drop into the actual farmer's market portion for some excellent fruit and veggies. <a href="http://www.frenchmarket.org">www.frenchmarket.org</a></p>
<b>Nightlife</b>	<p>The official language of Louisiana is music - <b>jazz, blues, zydeco</b>,</p>

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	<p><b>swamp pop</b>, you name it. And no matter where you are across the state, there's music in the air. Check out Grant Street Dance Hall in Lafayette for the best in live local cajun and zydeco music, as well as frequent national acts.</p> <p>In New Orleans, stop by world-famous Tipitina's, where you'll find everything from local brass bands to national rock bands. And don't miss the Cajun Fais Do Do with the Bruce Daigrepoint Cajun Band every Sunday evening. For a more traditional vibe, head down to Bourbon Street to Fritzel's Jazz Pub, where music lovers are treated to international and local favorites playing traditional and Dixieland jazz. Music lovers traveling to Monroe must visit Enoch's Irish Pub, a venerable restaurant, watering hole and musical venue that has achieved legendary status since opening in 1980, having hosted performances by the likes of Jerry Jeff Walker, Leon Russell and Zachary Richard.</p> <p>Night owls should feel right at home in <b>New Orleans</b>, a true 24-hour city, where the party never stops. Be sure to stroll down Bourbon Street, home to dozens of nightclubs of various types - from chic, multilevel dance clubs to small, local watering holes. For more of a local feel, head over to Frenchmen Street, sometimes described as Bourbon Street for the locals, with its many music venues, ethnic restaurants and shops. In Shreveport, the Red River Entertainment District offers unique restaurants, shops and nightlife daily from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. where downtown meets the river. And beer enthusiasts would be wise to visit Finnegans Wake in Alexandria. Located on 3rd Street, which is becoming an entertainment hotspot in Alexandria, Finnegans Wake is home to a great beer selection, even better bartenders, and frequent live Irish music.</p>
<b>Casinos</b>	<p>From Shreveport-Bossier City, south to Lake Charles, east to Baton Rouge, all the way down to New Orleans, Louisiana is a top gaming destination. And the twin cities offer a bustling nightlife, too.</p> <p>With three dockside <b>riverboat casinos</b> in Shreveport-Bossier, the entertainment never stops. Casino Magic Riverboat was voted best casino in Shreveport Bossier. Horseshoe Riverboat Casino is the largest riverboat casino in the area, and Hollywood Casino is Shreveport's newest resort.</p> <p>In Baton Rouge, the popular <b>Argosy Casino</b> and <b>Casino Rouge</b> - both with about 30,000 square feet of gaming space - keep gaming enthusiasts entertained around the clock.</p> <p>And in New Orleans, <b>Harrah's Casino</b> offers musical performances, stand-up comedy, award-winning restaurants and a huge gaming floor, including the south's largest poker room.</p>

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## CUISINE

### Louisiana Culinary Trails

This is an exciting new culinary program highlighting the Gumbo State's most celebrated chefs, restaurants, markets and festivals.

Choose a trail from the 7 listed below, hop in a car and take a ride through the rich culinary and cultural experiences only Louisiana can offer. Visit the Louisiana Culinary Trails website at:

<http://louisianaculinarytrails.com>

#### 1. Seafood Sensation Trail

Bordered by Texas to the west and Cajun Country to the east, southwestern Louisiana has developed its own brand of cooking.

Rustic, spicy, and stick-to-your-ribs might best describe the food of this marshland. Dominating menus are fried and boiled seafood, pork stew, catfish courtbouillon, rice dressing, shrimp and okra gumbo, jambalaya, wild game, and lots and lots of rice. This trail zigzags across the southwestern corner of the state, sometimes known as the Louisiana Outback, stopping at a variety of crawfish houses, oyster bars, cafes, and grocery stores.

Kick things off in Lake Charles, the largest city in this corner of the state. Don't miss the award-winning seafood at Steamboat Bill's (1004 Lakeshore Dr., Lake Charles; 337-494-1070; and 732 S. MLK Hwy., Lake Charles; 337-494-1700; [www.steamboatbills.com](http://www.steamboatbills.com)). Starting out as a shrimp stand by the side of the road, this restaurant has grown to offer crawfish fixed any way you like it, in addition to po'boys, gumbo, and fried shrimp. At Seafood Palace (2218 Enterprise Blvd., Lake Charles; 337-433-9293) the main attraction is boiled crabs, shrimp, and crawfish. Downtown's Pujos St. Cafe (901 Ryan St., Lake Charles; 337-439-2054; [www.pujostreet.com](http://www.pujostreet.com)) serves up more sophisticated choices, such as pecan-crust oysters with a spinach, tasso, and smoked gouda sauce. And at Chastain's Food & Spirits (3922 Ryan St., Lake Charles; 337-474-4700) you'll find an oyster bar and a beef brisket poboy that's to die for.

#### 2. Red River Riches Trail

The Red River runs through Shreveport/Bossier City, and the area that sits near the Texas border has always been known for its wild side. Early feuds have given way to a killer nightlife, with riverboat casinos, good music, and memorable cuisine. The wealth of fresh waterways provides an abundance of fish and wildlife, as well as fertile ground for fruits and vegetables. The discovery of oil in the early 20th century brought an influx of people, expanding the already mixed bag of immigrants. More recently, the film industry has discovered the area's riches. Today's diners find themselves rubbing elbows with Hollywood's elite - all with the same goal in mind: to soak up the flavors of this

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metropolitan crossroads.

Follow Highway 1 and the Red River to Pineville, where modern-day people thank their stars for the fried catfish, shrimp, oysters, stuffed crabs, and hush puppies at Paradise Catfish Kitchen (4820 Monroe Hwy., Pineville; 318-640-5032). Afterward, hike off your meal along the beautiful wild azalea trail at Kisatchie National Forest (2500 Shreveport Hwy., Pineville; 318-473-7160; [www.fs.fed.us/r8/kisatchie](http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/kisatchie)) or fish the clear waters of lakes Valentine and Kincade.

### **3. Creole Fusion Trail**

Universally famous for its food, New Orleans definitely has a place among culinary capitals of the world, yet it stands alone as the seat of Creole cuisine. Myriad cultures combine to render a distinctive style reflecting all but tasting like none other. Beignets, gumbo, blackened fish, oysters Rockefeller, shrimp remoulade, bread pudding - such are the dishes that typify area kitchens, exemplifying French, Spanish, Caribbean, and African influences and drawing on the riches of the nearby Gulf of Mexico.

This trail begins in the Big Easy and loops west along Lake Pontchartrain before turning northward into the Florida parishes of Tangipahoa, Washington, and St. Tammany, then returning to the bedroom communities on the North Shore. It takes you to some venerable dining establishments as well as picks off the beaten path.

### **4. Capital Cuisine Trail**

Meander along the Mississippi River on the great River Road on the southern half of this trail. Lovely and picturesque, it follows levees past stately live oaks, sprawling pecan orchards, and majestic plantations. It'll also take you to some taste-tempting eats. At the center of the trail, like a command center for the river, is the sophisticated capital - first called baton rouge (red stick) by 17th-century French settlers observing animal blood on sticks marking tribal territories. Today, diverse dining options from casual to cosmopolitan (with an emphasis on fresh seafood) mark the culinary turf of Baton Rouge and the surrounding Audubon and River Road parishes.

Start this trail at Destrehan Plantation (13034 River Rd., Destrehan; 985-764-9315; [www.destrehanplantation.org](http://www.destrehanplantation.org)), the oldest documented plantation home in the state. On Mondays, Martin Spindel cooks up 200-year-old recipes in an authentic open-hearth kitchen. The demonstration changes often but includes simple, hearty dishes such as bean soups and cornbread. A nice chunk of andouille, the classic Louisiana-style pork sausage, gives a kick to gumbo or dish of red beans and rice. To taste the best, hit the Andouille Capital of the World for Jacob's World Famous Andouille & Sausage (505 W. Airline Hwy.,

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LaPlace; 985-652-9080; [www.cajunsausage.com](http://www.cajunsausage.com) ).

### **5. Delta Delights Trail**

Rich farmland, recreational waterways and scenic highways dominate Northeast Louisiana. This side of the Delta still lays claim to unspoiled and undeveloped back roads that take modern day explorers back in time. It's all about Southern tradition in this neck of the Great Southern Pine Forest, where many of the go-to eateries have been in continuous operation for at least a half-century. Grab a map and head off to discover one of the nearby rural treasures within an hour's drive of Monroe/West Monroe. Slow down, relax, and enjoy a perfectly seasoned Southern dish - from frog legs to fricassée - prepared from a distinctive recipe passed down for generations.

In Ruston, at the Blue Light Cafe (902 Arlington St., Ruston; 318-513-2230) you'll chow down on hearty helpings of gravy-smothered steak, pork chops, fried chicken, vegetables, and cornbread. The folks in this town are serious about their barbecue, and Dowling's Smokehouse (1313 Cooktown Rd., Ruston; 318-513-9966) keeps them coming back for dry-rubbed ribs, pulled pork, beef brisket, chicken, and sausage. Their claim to fame is a scatterload sandwich smothered with cheese and a little bit of chopped everything, served piping hot on sourdough, wheat, or jalapeno cheese bread. Sundown Tavern Patio & Grill (111 E. Park Ave., Ruston; 318-255-8028), boasts the best burgers in town, along with homemade French fries. Enjoy a cold drink and an afternoon round of Jeopardy on the outdoor patio. And things get even sweeter in June during the annual Louisiana Peach Festival ([www.louisianapeachfestival.org](http://www.louisianapeachfestival.org)) celebrating the juicy fruit hailing from the rolling hills of Ruston. June 25-27, 2010.

### **6. Prairie Home Cooking Trail**

Home to one of the state's oldest European settlements, central Louisiana serves up dishes that naturally reflect the diverse cultures that settled here. Food is an obsession in this part of the world and the love and attention that go into every dish - from the field to the table - is celebrated with every meal. Focusing on freshness, the mild climate and rich soils allow a wide variety of vegetables to be grown year round and the many bayous and rivers in addition to the close proximity to the Coast make seafood an important ingredient in this cuisine.

This is also smoked meat territory, and an abundance of smokehouses in the Cajun parishes convert pork and beef into spectacular sausages with names like boudin, andouille, tasso, and ponce. You'll sample them all on this itinerary.

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	<p><b>7. Bayou Bounty Trail</b></p> <p>French is the language of cooking in Cajun Country, where French Acadians from Nova Scotia settled after being exiled by the British in 1755. Some of Louisiana's most famous foods are identified with this region - gumbo, boudin, étouffée, andouille, tasso, jambalaya, and boiled crawfish.</p> <p>Fresh and smoked meats and sausages and just-caught fish and seafood are the nuts and bolts of eating here, and you'll find them prepared every way imaginable - stewed, stuffed, smothered, boiled, and crisply fried - all with a good jolt of spice. This trail takes you through the heart of Cajun Country (the Seafood Sensation and Prairie Home Cooking trails include additional Cajun parishes), and we've packed your agenda with a tantalizing assortment of seafood restaurants, plate lunch counters, meat markets, and crawfish houses.</p>
<b>Food</b>	<p>In Louisiana, no single dish defines the state. Seafood, Cajun, Creole, &amp; rustic country fare together make up one of the world's truly distinct regional cuisines.</p> <p>The newest way to explore the state's world-acclaimed indigenous cuisine is to travel on the Culinary Trail. It encompasses 7 trails known as Creole Fusion, Seafood Sensation, Delta Delights, Capitol Cuisine, Bayou Bounty, Prairie Home Cooking, and Red River Riches, which feature nationally renowned and locally loved restaurants and food markets, food production facilities and food-related attractions.</p> <p>Whether you have spicy boiled crawfish in Lafayette, seafood gumbo in New Orleans, southern barbecue in Monroe, good old fashioned pecan pie in Alexandria, or Natchitoches Meat Pies in Natchitoches, you'll understand that eating in Louisiana is more than a way to sustain life; it's a way to enjoy it. In fact, there's a saying about dining in Louisiana: In other places they eat to live, but in Louisiana they live to eat.</p>
<b>Wine</b>	<p>There are several wineries located within the state that offer tastings and tours. For example:</p> <p><b>Feliciano Cellars Winery</b>  Address: 1848 Charter St., Jackson, LA 70748  Phone: 225-634-7982  Website: <a href="http://www.felicianocellars.com">http://www.felicianocellars.com</a>  Award-winning wines in this beautiful Spanish mission winery; gift shop and tours.</p>
<b>Restaurants</b>	<p>So many to choose from...The seven Culinary Trails listed above will give visitors an excellent entrée into Louisiana restaurants, but if I highlight just one, it should be that of our guest chef on the radio show in 2009, Louie Finnan:</p> <p><b>Louie &amp; the Red Head Lady</b>  (985) 626-8108 at 1851 Florida St, Mandeville, LA 70448</p>

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	<p><a href="http://www.theredheadlady.com">www.theredheadlady.com</a></p> <p>Chef &amp; owner Louie Finnan first entered the restaurant business in 1980 with his mother - the original Redhead Lady, located on Hwy. 25. A New Orleans native, Louie was stirring the pots at 7 years old at a family spot located on Rampart Street, which his grandmother and uncle owned and operated. You might say Louie Finnan was "born" into cooking. In 2001 a "New Louie &amp; Redhead Lady" opened and rekindled the flames. Serving up traditional "New Orleans" fare, po-boys, meatballs and spaghetti, crab cakes, veal parmigiano and adding breakfast to the menu, you might say he has come full circle. From its eclectic decor to its electric atmosphere, Louie &amp; the Redhead Lady is a fun and enjoyable way to begin or end your day.</p>
<b>MORE INFO</b>	The mission of the <b>Louisiana Office of Tourism</b> is to preserve and enhance Louisiana's heritage and natural landscape; provide cultural information and recreational resources; and promote the use of these resources.
<b>Brochures</b>	<p>The <b>Louisiana Office of Tourism</b> is located at 1051 N. Third St., Room 327, Baton Rouge, LA 70802 (tel. 800/33-GUMBO) and is happy to send you a Louisiana Tour Guide and official state driving map. They also advise you check out their extremely thorough website, with downloadable maps, eTour Guide, bike routes and tours, cultural happenings statewide, and the ability to create a personalized travel planner for your visit.</p> <p>Check with your local travel agent for Canadian Tour Operators that have vacation getaway packages including air and hotel to New Orleans, such as: Alio, Holiday House, Intair, Royal Scenic Holidays and Total Vacations.</p>
<b>Websites</b>	<p><a href="http://www.LouisianaTravel.com">www.LouisianaTravel.com</a> for all your Louisiana planning</p> <p><a href="http://www.HanoverHolidays.com">www.HanoverHolidays.com</a> for coach tours to Louisiana</p>
<b>CURRENT DEALS</b>	<p>Louisiana's destination Convention &amp; Visitors Bureaus websites has information on special deals. To find the destinations and websites, visit <a href="http://www.louisianatravel.com/travel_information/cvbs.cfm">http://www.louisianatravel.com/travel_information/cvbs.cfm</a></p>
<b>GULF OIL SPILL UPDATE</b>	<p>The Louisiana Office of Tourism, along with other state and federal government agencies and private sector entities, continue to work together to monitor the impact of the oil spill and cleanup efforts in the Gulf of Mexico. The latest information is posted at this website: <a href="http://oilspill.louisianatravel.com/office-tourism-update">http://oilspill.louisianatravel.com/office-tourism-update</a></p> <p>Much of the Louisiana Gulf Coast is unaffected by the oil spill and remains open for commercial and recreational fishing. All nine</p>

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Louisiana coastal parishes (counties) continue to offer travelers historic and cultural attractions, world-acclaimed indigenous food and music, and notable restaurants and overnight accommodations. The primary affected area is around the mouth of the Mississippi River in the southeast region of Louisiana. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration forecast maps identify an "area of uncertainty" that extends around the origin of the spill.

Affected coastal areas, as well as areas of uncertainty, have been closed to fishing by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries in portions of Jefferson, Lafourche, Plaquemines, St. Bernard and Terrebonne parishes. Grand Isle has closed its public beach.

Recreational and commercial fishing activities have reopened in some waters off the coast of Iberia, St. Bernard and Vermilion parishes, the LDWF reports. The agency also opened Lake Pontchartrain and Lake Borgne to shrimping.

See <http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/oilspill/map/fishing-closure> for a map of fishing closures.

Louisiana crawfish are a freshwater shellfish species and all commercial crawfish ponds and natural habitat are inland and away from threatened areas.

Few affected areas are near inhabited areas. New Orleans is approximately 100 miles inland from affected areas and foresees no disruption in guest service or any negative impacts on visitors.

Louisiana's Departments of Health and Hospitals, Department of Environmental Quality and Department of Wildlife and Fisheries continue to monitor and map affected and unaffected coastal and nearby inland areas daily, as they test seafood, soils and drinking water for safety and quality.

To date, those three agencies have spent or have committed to spend a combined \$11 million for performing those functions to the benefit of tourists and residents alike.

Official information is being posted by the response team (U.S. Coast Guard, Office of Homeland Security, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of the Interior, BP and Transocean) and updated several times each day at

<http://www.deepwaterhorizonresponse.com> and <http://response.restoration.noaa.gov>.

You can also find up-to-date information, along with links to other resources such as volunteer opportunities, at

<http://emergency.louisiana.gov>

Visitors with concerns about plans to travel in Louisiana are encouraged to contact their destinations directly. Information is also available from local convention and visitors bureaus.

Contact Information for Coastal Parishes:

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	<p>Cameron Parish tourist information – 800-456-7952 Iberia Parish Convention and Visitors Bureau – 888-942-3742 Jefferson Parish Convention and Visitors Bureau – 877-572-7474 Lafourche Parish Tourist Commission – 877-537-5800 Plaquemines Parish Department of Economic Development and Tourism – 888-745-0642 St. Bernard Parish Tourist Commission – 888-278-2054 Mary Parish/Cajun Coast Visitors and Convention Bureau – Terrebonne Parish/Houma Area Convention and Visitors Bureau – Vermilion Parish Tourist Commission – 337-898-6600 6600</p>
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<b>HANOVER HOLIDAYS</b>	<b>Hanover Holidays</b> was incorporated in 1974 and is a family owned, medium sized tour operator, where the owners engage in the daily activities of the company, enabling them to continually meet with customers and stay in touch with the ever changing needs of today's consumer. For the past 36 years, Hanover Holidays has produced fully directed tours throughout North America that are built with First Class accommodation, attractions and meals.
<b>Fast Facts</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hanover Holidays began in 1974 and is one of Canada's longest and most successful tour companies</li> <li>2. Hanover began tours to Louisiana many years ago – one of the first Canadian companies to do so</li> <li>3. Provides a van pick-up service across southern mid western and central Ontario</li> <li>4. All Hanover tours feature a daily breakfast as part of the tour</li> <li>5. Hanover has been a proud supporter of the Grey-Bruce Alzheimer Society for last 8 years</li> <li>6. Only sells through travel agents</li> <li>7. Jim Diebel is working with the Motor Coach Industry to design a more comfortable coach</li> <li>8. Exceptional Tour Directors who have regular professional development programs</li> <li>9. Company theme is "exceeding expectations"</li> </ol>
<b>Coaches</b>	Hanover Holidays has recently unveiled their new "deluxe" touring motor coach, in partnership with the main carrier, Cherrey Bus Lines of Drayton, Ontario. This motor coach is equipped with 3 inches more leg room at each seat, tray tables, an upgraded sound system, onboard beverage center and a very modern paint scheme.
<b>Drivers and Guides</b>	All of the uniformed Tour Directors employed by Hanover Holidays can boast of three to eighteen years of directing experience. Hanover Holidays believes that their professionalism is key to the success of each tour. To enhance each Tour Director's professionalism, an annual Training event is held every January, where each Director can share ideas and learn new techniques from presenters. Additionally, each Tour Director receives a weekly newsletter to assist them in staying in touch with current company and industry issues.
<b>Baggage</b>	Hanover will handle one large suitcase per person at hotels, with hand luggage carried personally aboard the motor coach
<b>Tipping</b>	Guidelines are about \$4.00 per person per day, for each of the Tour Director and Driver
<b>Pick-up Points</b>	There are multiple pick-up points with over 120 across SW Ontario
<b>Singles</b>	Hanover will attempt to match singles for sharing

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<b>Other Destinations</b>	Hanover Holidays has a wide range of tours throughout Canada and the USA, from Alaska to Savannah and from Arctic Cruising to Victory Lane NASCAR Tours!
<b>For more information</b>	Pick up the Hanover Holidays brochure from your local travel agent and visit <a href="http://www.hanoverholidays.com">www.hanoverholidays.com</a>
<b>Prize Trip</b>	<p>The featured prize trip is a trip for two to Louisiana on the Hanover Holidays motor coach tour <b>“New Orleans, Back to the Bayou”</b> departing <b>October 22, 2010</b>.</p> <p>This tour includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relaxing motor coach transportation</li> <li>8 nights hotel accommodations, including hotel tax</li> <li>Porter service for one large suitcase per person</li> <li>Breakfast daily (some continental)</li> <li>Three dinners</li> <li>Guided City Tours of New Orleans and Baton Rouge</li> <li>Mississippi River – New Orleans Steamboat Cruise</li> <li>Tour of Oak Alley Plantation</li> <li>Lunch at “Armand’s Bistro”</li> <li>Cajun Tour Swamp Tour</li> <li>Service of a Hanover Holidays Tour Director</li> </ul> <p>For more information visit <a href="http://www.HanoverHolidays.com">www.HanoverHolidays.com</a></p> <p><b>Trip itinerary:</b> (B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner included)</p> <p><b>DAY 1: Toronto to Cincinnati, OH</b> Join the motor coach this morning as you depart and travel to the border where you cross into the United States, en route to our destination this evening in Cincinnati, Ohio.</p> <p><b>DAY 2: Birmingham, AL</b> Making your way down through the Blue Grass State of Kentucky and into Tennessee you will be arriving into the warmer temperatures of Birmingham, Alabama for this evening. (B)</p> <p><b>DAY 3: New Orleans, LA</b> Arriving at your hotel in this incredible city of New Orleans, you have some time to freshen up and catch your breath. To celebrate your arrival in New Orleans, dinner this evening as a group will be a perfect way to start off your southern experience.(B,D)</p> <p><b>DAY 4: New Orleans, LA</b> This morning following breakfast at your hotel, you will be enjoying a guided city tour of this extraordinary area, known as “The Birthplace of Jazz”! This afternoon you board a Mississippi Steamboat for a cruise up the mighty Mississippi River, followed by time to explore the city on your own. Take in the Riverwalk Market Place, with over 140 specialty shops, enjoy lunch at Bubba Gump Shrimp Co. or Jimmy Buffett’s – Margaritaville. Here’s your chance to experience a French Quarter</p>

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	<p>Walking Tour, Jackson Square or a visit to St. Louis Cathedral. (B)</p> <p><b>DAY 5: New Orleans, LA</b></p> <p>Following breakfast at your hotel, your day will start off with a historical tour of a true “southern plantation” at the Oak Alley Plantation. A Southern Style lunch will be included in your day, before your afternoon adventure, aboard a Swamp Tour, to experience the wildlife of Cane River. Returning to New Orleans late afternoon, the evening will be free to explore the city, go out for dinner, or just sit back and relax. (B,L)</p> <p><b>DAY 6: Natchez, MS</b></p> <p>Enjoy breakfast at your hotel, as this morning you are going to make your way to Baton Rouge. You will enjoy a mid-morning stop at the “Cajun Village”; here you will have time to walk through a collection of restored Acadian buildings housing unique shops and galleries featuring original Louisiana artists and products, the Coffee House and alligator pond. Upon arrival in Baton Rouge you will enjoy a guided city tour of the capital of Louisiana. Later continue to Natchez, Mississippi and after you arrive at your hotel and have time to freshen up before departing for Dinner and old Southern Style Dining. (B,D)</p> <p><b>DAY 7: Memphis, TN</b></p> <p>After breakfast in our hotel, you will be departing this incredible southern area of Louisiana, travelling north to Memphis. Upon your arrival, you will have time to enjoy a visit to “Elvis’s – Graceland Mansion”, which is always a popular stop when visiting Memphis.(B)</p> <p><b>DAY 8: Indianapolis, IN</b></p> <p>Departing for Indianapolis after breakfast this morning, you will find yourself easing your way back in the northern part of the States, en route back to Ontario. A farewell dinner is included this evening. (B,D)</p> <p><b>DAY 9: Home</b></p> <p>Breakfast in your hotel this morning will start your day off, as you prepare to make your way back to the border, stopping at Duty Free before crossing and then returning to your joining point. (B)</p>
<b>Louisiana Tour</b>	<p>The price of Hanover Holidays’ Louisiana tour is <b>\$1699</b> for the tour leaving October 22, 2010 for departures from Toronto.</p>

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