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No Man's Land: Louisiana's Final Frontier

In western Louisiana, the Neutral Strip, known as No Man's Land, draws its name from the area's brief stint (1806-1819) as a buffer zone between Spain and the United States after the Louisiana Purchase. Sometimes described as a place filled with an outlaw culture or as a region with a reputation for a tough and isolated place, the region is better understood as a bastion for those cultural groups who wished to find a home where they could preserve a way of life they cherished. Join us as we explore the historical origins of the region and its modern-day place in Louisiana culture.

Day One (Afternoon Departure)

Baton Rouge, Alexandria, Pineville

3:00 PM

Depart Baton Rouge

5:00 – 6:00 PM

Tour Kent Plantation House

3601 Bayou Rapides Road, Alexandria, LA 71303

318.487.5998

www.kenthouse.org

Alice Scarborough, alice@kenthouse.org

Kent House is a classic example of French colonial architecture. Standing on the original land grant from the King of Spain to Pierre Baillio II, it offers a glimpse of the French, Spanish and American cultures that have influenced Louisiana. The flags of all three countries fly over the home's entrance.

The plantation house is one of the oldest standing structures in the state of Louisiana. Together with its outbuildings, it preserves the homestead of a successful Creole family typical of a Louisiana colonial era working plantation.

Kent Plantation House, listed in the National Register of Historic Places, is an authentic Creole plantation house built circa 1796 prior to the Louisiana Purchase. Guides in period costume will provide a glimpse of life at that time.

6:00 PM

Depart for Alexandria

6:15-7:00 PM

Check In at Hotel Bentley

200 Desoto Street, Alexandria, LA 71301

(318) 442-2226

www.hotelbentleyandcondos.com

Martha Turner, Martha@hotelbentleyandcondos.com

The grand Hotel Bentley was constructed in 1907 by Joseph Bentley, a native of Pennsylvania who became wealthy in Central Louisiana's lumber industry. Bentley was an eccentric fellow, and legend has it that the only reason he built the hotel is because he was turned away from the former Ice House Hotel.

Some say that it was out of spite that Bentley asked architect George R. Mann to design a showplace hotel in Alexandria, much like the Capitol Hotel in Little Rock, AR. Opened to the public on August 10, 1908, the gracious hotel has had quite a history. Most notably, during World War II, the United States military housed and trained more than 500,000 young troops in the Alexandria area. The commanders of these troops, Generals Dwight Eisenhower and George S. Patton, resided for long periods of time at the Hotel Bentley. It has been said they were occasionally joined by Omar Bradley and Henry Kissinger who were also stationed in the area.

7:00 PM

Depart for Dinner

7:15-9:00 PM

Dinner at Southern Creations

208 Main Street, Pineville, LA 71360

318-308-2292

<https://southerncreationscatering.com/>

Tommy Sauve, 318-445-2655

Home style, Southern specialties served buffet-style in a comfortable, group-friendly atmosphere.

Locally owned and operated by the Sauve family, Southern Creations is a long-standing staple (and a favorite) in Central Louisiana. Located just off of Pineville's Main Street, near the banks of the Red River, it's been called the spot where Pineville and Alexandria meet.

Day Two

Alexandria, DeRidder, Lake Charles

7:00-8:15 AM

Hotel Check Out and Breakfast

8:15-8:45 AM

Tour Maneuvers Exhibit at Hotel Bentley

Hotel Bentley was the site of much of the planning that made the Louisiana Maneuvers a significant and pivotal turning point in the US winning World War II. See the Bentley's miniature Museum exhibit that proudly showcases the Louisiana Maneuvers.

8:45-9:00 AM

Depart for DeRidder

10:30-10:50 AM

Tour First USO and War Room Museum

250 W. 7th Street, DeRidder, LA, 70634

337-463-7212

<http://www.beauregardtourism.com/museums.html>

Faith Scott, director.wmcc@gmail.com

The War Memorial Civic Center was the first building built for and donated to the United Services Organization (USO) in 1941. It was one of the largest of five different sizes of Type A buildings designed for USO's by the Quartermaster Corps. Off-duty soldiers from Camp Polk and DeRidder Army Air Base made it a home away from home. The structure, exterior and interior, is preserved on its original site and in its original condition. The shower house still exists to the south of the building and dances are still held on the original wooden floor. The USO houses a collection of military items as well as large collection of military artillery from several wars.

10:50-11:00 AM

Depart for Gothic Jail

11:00-11:30 AM

Tour Gothic Jail

313 W. 1st Street, DeRidder, LA 70634

337-375-3456

<http://www.beauregardtourism.com/>

Lori Darbonne, beautour@bellsouth.net

In the heart of DeRidder sits a majestic old building unlike any other in the area. The people of the area affectionately refer to it as The Hanging Jail, though it is also known as The Gothic Jail for the "Collegiate Gothic" style that the building was crafted in. Celebrated in the song "The Hangman's Jail," the lockup was the sight of a double execution in 1928. Nighttime lantern tours share stories about ghost and other paranormal activities.

11:30 AM-1:00 PM

Lunch and No Man's Land Presentation at Gothic Jail

Enjoy regional specialties from the parishes comprising No Man's Land, while learning about the history, folk life, and attractions of the area.

<https://www.visitnomansland.com/>

1:00-4:30 PM

Depart for Lake Charles and Mini-Tour of Creole Nature Trail and All-American Road

337-436-9588

<https://www.visitlakecharles.org/creole-nature-trail/>

One of only designated 43 All-American Roads in the entire United States, the Creole Nature Trail is a journey into an untamed wilderness. Right from the vehicle you will see alligators, multiple birds and waterfowl (over 400 species spotted each year) and other marsh wildlife...all in their natural habitat. Several over water boardwalks also provide opportunities where you can stretch your legs and as well as get up close and personal with your nature.

4:30-5:00 PM

Tour Golden Nugget Casino Resort

2550 Golden Nugget Blvd, Lake Charles, LA 70601

337) 508-7777

<https://www.goldennugget.com/lake-charles/>

Brett Forshag, BForshag@gnlcm.com

With Vegas-style gaming and luxurious hospitality, Golden Nugget Lake Charles offers 1,100 guest rooms, and 18-hole golf course, innovative gaming, multiple Landry's restaurants, retail shops, almost 30,000 square feet of meeting space, a marina, a private beach and more.

5:00-5:45 PM

Tour L'Auberge Casino Resort

777 Ave L'Auberge, Lake Charles, LA 70601

337-395-7777

<https://www.lakecharles.com/>

Kevin Guidry, kevin.guidry@pngaming.com

This 70,000 square foot Vegas-style casino with poker room, spa, golf, and entertainment.

5:45-6:00 PM

Depart for Lake Charles

6:00-7:00 PM

Check In TownePlace Suites and Freshen Up

Towneplace Suites Lake Charles

2985 L'Auberge Boulevard, Lake Charles, LA 70601

337-477-5824

<https://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/lchts-towneplace-suites-lake-charles/>

Gertinna Chretien, gertinnac@intermountainhotels.com

TownePlace Suites by Marriott® is an extended-stay hotel where you can balance work and play, as you like, with the comfort, flexibility and affordability you require. Relax and feel at home with a fully equipped kitchen and high-speed Internet access. From the town house exterior to

the pool, everything about TownePlace Suites is designed to make you comfortable while you are away from home.

7:00 PM

Depart for Dinner at Luna Bar and Grill

719 Ryan Street, Lake Charles, LA, 70601

337-494-5862

<https://lunabarandgrill.com/>

Dave Evans, dave@lunabarandgrill.com

Since 2004, Luna Bar & Grill has served a diverse menu that mixes regional flavor with eclectic tastes such as Crawfish Stuffed Avocado and Red Fish Apollo plus unique and delicious sandwiches. On Sundays, be sure to check out their Jazz Brunch from 10:00-14:00Luna for dinner and music; panorama for after music.

Day Three

Lake Charles, Lacassine, Jennings, Baton Rouge

7:00-8:15 AM

Hotel Check Out and Breakfast

8:15-8:30 AM

Depart for Lacassine

8:50-9:50 AM

Distillery Tour and Tasting at Bayou Rum

Louisiana Spirits

20909 S. Frontage Rd, Lacassine, LA 70650

337-588-5800

<https://bayourum.com/>

Amy McFarlain, amy@bayouRum.com

Bayou® Rum is distilled from locally grown sugarcane in southern Louisiana, USA. Our signature “sugarhouse” recipe uses a blend of 100% natural, unrefined Louisiana sugarcane and molasses. Every batch of Bayou Rum is copper pot-distilled and bottled by hand. Tours, tastings and a great gift shop.

9:50-10:00 AM

Depart for Jefferson Davis

10:20-11:05 AM

Tour Tietje Crawfish Farm

15375 Farm Supply Road, Roanoke, LA 70581

337-370-9468

www.Jeffdavis.org

Burt Tietje, burttietje@gmail.com

Join us pondside and Learn about crawfish habitat, harvesting process, biology of the species, pond ecology, harvesting equipment.

- 11:05-11:15 AM **Depart for Jefferson Davis**
- 11:15-11:30 AM **Demonstration at I-10 Crawfish Cooperative**
15317 Hwy 395, Roanoke, LA 70581
(337) 368-8783
www.Jeffdavis.org
Dione Sabelhaus, dione@jeffdavis.org
This crawfish processing plant (aka crawfish Dock) is where farmers bring their catch of the day. Here you will learn how we clean, grade, sack and market crawfish.
- 11:35 AM **Depart for Jennings**
- 11:50 AM-12:20 PM **Tour W. H. Tupper Museum**
311 North Main Street, Jennings, LA
337-821-5532
<http://www.tuppermuseum.com/>
Lin Fake, tuppermuseum@cityofjennings.com
W. H. Tupper operated his General Merchandise Store beginning in 1910 in a rural community just north of Jennings, Louisiana.
When he closed the doors in 1949, the complete inventory remained on the shelves, undisturbed, until 1971 when it was carefully packed and warehoused. There it remained until his grandson Joe Tupper, Jr., donated the store's contents for the creation of the W. H. Tupper General Merchandise Museum.
This unique museum offers visitors a glimpse of nearly every facet of early twentieth century life in rural Louisiana. Experience a simpler time when townsfolk picked up their mail, bought groceries, shopped for notions and toys and caught up on the news — all at the same place, the Tupper General Merchandise Store.
- 12:20-12:30 PM **Depart for Gator Chateau**
- 12:30-2:00 PM **Gator Chateau Tour and Lunch**
100 Rue de l'Acadie, Jennings, LA 70546
(337) 821-5521
<https://jeffdavis.org/gator-chateau/>
Dione Sabelhaus, dione@jeffdavis.org
The Gator Chateau is home to rescued, baby alligators. We foster the gators until they are able to be released back into their natural habitat. Our alligator docent will educate you in all things Alligator! Our babies are hand fed, they don't bite, and you can hold them and take your picture!

2:00 PM

Board Bus and Depart for Baton Rouge

3:45 PM

Arrive Baton Rouge