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LOUISIANA ITINERARIES

Houston to New Orleans

After the hustle and rush of Houston, it is time to slow down the pace a little and enjoy the Joie de Vivre (Joy of Life) found in Louisiana. Once you cross the Texas/Louisiana line, you are entering the most European-like state in America. Groups of different backgrounds blend together to make our Louisiana cultural jambalaya.

Lake Charles is the first major city after crossing the Texas/Louisiana state line.

The choice is yours. You can take a trek around the Creole Nature Trail to view Louisiana's prairies, marshes and shores bursting with birds, alligators, and other wildlife.

Or enjoy the glitter and glam of the casinos that catch the eye of those who like to try their luck. In addition to many games of chance, casinos offer superb entertainment, dining, and shopping experiences.

Looking for a hands-on experience? Stop at the Gator Chateau in Jennings, where you can see and hold real alligators. Located at the Jennings Visitor Center Right off Interstate 10, it is an easy-off and easy-on stop.

Or head to the Tietje Crawfish Farm to learn everything from crawfish harvesting to marketing. Visitors will also hear about the biology of the species such as dietary information, pond ecology, and harvesting equipment. After soaking up all of the information, a trip to the I-10 Crawfish Cooperative begins the explanation of the marketing sector and demonstrates the cleaning, grading, and distribution process. Contact Dione Sabelhaus at dione@jeffdavis.org or call (337) 368-8783.

Bienvenue and welcome to Lafayette! This is the mecca of Cajun and Zydeco culture and music. Explore the city, music, and arts and take the opportunity for dinner and dancing at Cajun restaurants such as Prejean's in Lafayette or Mulate's in New Orleans.



Creole Nature Trail



Gator Chateau



Martin Accordions



Capitol Park Museum

A short distance from Lafayette is Scott, Louisiana – home to some of the world's finest handmade Cajun accordions at Martin Accordions. Here, you can see demonstrations on how accordions are made and learn about the role the instrument plays in Cajun music. After the factory tour, you can listen to authentic Cajun music made possible with their finest accordions.

Continue on Interstate 10 or get off the beaten path and drive the Bayou Teche Byway, which hugs the western side of the Atchafalaya Basin, the largest swamp river in the United States. Bayou Teche passes through some of Cajun Country's most notable towns and landscapes.

Visit the Wedell-Williams Aviation and Cypress Sawmill Museum or the Chitimacha Museum in Charenton. Check out the shopping in Breaux Bridge and on Main Street in New Iberia. Or head to Avery Island to visit the TABASCO headquarters and see how the world-famous hot sauce is made. If you are lucky, you may be able to sample TABASCO ice cream, a spicy-sweet delight.

From Bayou Teche Byway, you have two choices, you can continue on US Highway 90 to Morgan City or return to Interstate 10 to head to the Capitol City of Baton Rouge. Heading towards Morgan City, you must stop at LeJeune's Bakery, a family-owned establishment since 1884 still using the original recipes. Pass through Franklin's Historic District for a quaint dining or shopping experience and then experience the International Petroleum Museum and Exposition in Morgan City.

If you selected to visit Baton Rouge, the main attraction is the State Capitol Building – the tallest capitol in the United States, built in only 14 months in 1932. The symbolism in the carvings on the State Capitol represent the state's people, crops, traditions and history.

While in the downtown Baton Rouge area, visit the Capitol Park Museum. Learn about Louisiana icons and traditions – from Louis Armstrong and Huey P. Long to Mardi Gras and the fais-do-do. From the nation-building commerce of the Mississippi River to the life-sustaining bounty of the Gulf of Mexico, the Capitol Park Museum provides a panoramic exploration of the most vibrant state in America.

Other notable attractions in Baton Rouge include the Old State Capitol – a gothic structure standing high on a bluff overlooking the Mississippi River. Built in 1847-1852, it housed the Louisiana Legislature and government offices until the new state capitol building was built in 1932.

Check out the Louisiana State University Rural Life Museum, located on Essen Lane, which is dedicated to the preservation and exhibition of rural life in Louisiana in the 18th and 19th centuries.

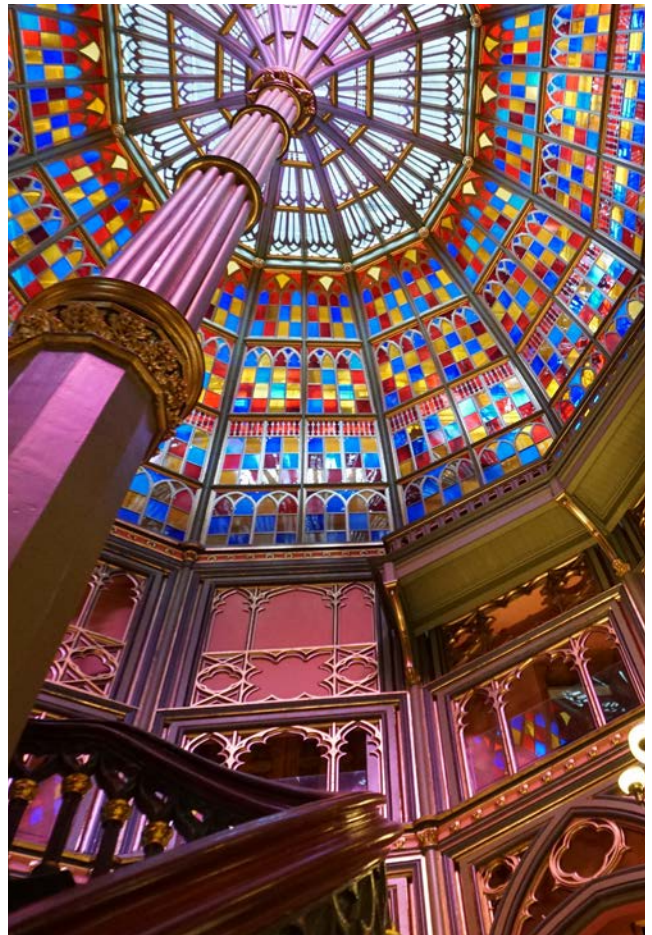
Did you know Louisiana was the first state to offer sales tax refunds to international visitors? This means international visitors find Louisiana to be a shopping paradise. Not to be confused with duty free, Louisiana Tax Free Shopping is available at well-known stores, such as Saks Fifth Avenue, Best Buy, Macy's and at most factory outlet stores and shopping centers in Baton Rouge and New Orleans. The sales tax refund is provided on tangible items purchased at tax-free stores and permanently removed from the United States. There is no refund for sales taxes paid for personal services, such as: hotels, restaurants, entertainment, and transportation.



Stop off at Tanger Outlet Mall for some shopping before heading to the plantations of the Louisiana River Road – All-American Road. Tanger has a Louisiana Tax Free Shopping Refund Center.

From Baton Rouge, travel the Louisiana Great River Road to the magnificent plantation homes of the antebellum era - including Oak Alley, Laura Plantation: Louisiana's Creole Heritage Site, or Houmas House and The Great River Road Museum. At The Great River Road Museum on the grounds of Houmas House, visitors can walk through an entrance reminiscent of the massive paddle wheel of a steamboat and into an experience of 1800s-era steamboat grandeur. The museum highlights the history of the Lower Mississippi River and how it helped create the culture of Louisiana.

Finally, head over to New Orleans where antique shopping, café and beignets, the French Quarter and rides on the St. Charles Streetcar are waiting. New Orleans is a feast for the senses – music, world-renowned food, interesting sightseeing and historical architecture everywhere.



Old State Capitol



Houmas House & Gardens



Jackson Square



Café du Monde

In the festival spirit? Check out Blaine Kern's Mardi Gras World – Where Every Day is Mardi Gras.

When you begin your Mardi Gras World tour, you'll get an overview of the history of Mardi Gras in New Orleans before our guides take you through our float den, where artists work year-round to build spectacular floats and props. You never get this close to the floats while they're rolling in Mardi Gras parades, and this is certainly the only place to see how these amazing pieces come to life each year. When you're sightseeing in New Orleans or looking for fascinating tours in New Orleans, this is something you just can't miss. Come see where the Mardi Gras magic is made!

Whether this is your first time to New Orleans or you're a seasoned visitor, the city's infectious spirit is sure to invigorate, captivate and motivate you to jump in and see and do so much. With so many options and many things to do all the time, narrowing the playing field can be a challenge.

Think of it this way: divide how much time you have by what your priorities are – history, art, music, culture, and on and on - and then add in a little time for the spontaneous joy that is the Crescent City's calling card. Subtract a few hours for sleep, multiply your dining pleasure by at least three times a day, and you have the perfect equation for an amazing New Orleans experience. Here is where to start making decisions.

There is no shortage of things to do: the French Quarter, St. Louis Cathedral, Jackson Square, Café Du Monde for beignets and coffee, museums such as The Cabildo, The Prebytere, Marie Laveau's House of Voodoo, Audubon Aquarium of the Americas, New Orleans City Park, Audubon Zoo, New Orleans Museum of Art, among many, many places to visit – not to mention all the places to eat. New Orleans is an American European City like no other!

Louisiana Office of Tourism

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