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Louisiana, Pick your Passion...

In Louisiana, we celebrate life with great passion — both the ups and the downs, the good and the bad, for the bad only makes the good times sweeter.

Louisiana has a long history of turning tragedies into triumphs. In 1755, after being forced out of Canada, the Cajun people settled in the swamps of Louisiana, turning the bayou into a paradise, filled with lively music and spicy food. At the turn of the last century, out of the hopelessness of Storyville's bordellos, came soul-stirring, heart-lifting jazz. And out of every hurricane comes a renewed appreciation for our rich culture and heritage, a pride in who we are and what we're made of, and a desire to share that elusive something that makes Louisiana special with the rest of the world.

In Louisiana, we seize every day, come what may. When you visit, you'll find our passion for living, our "joie de vivre," as addictive as our gumbo.

Louisiana is a history book with many fascinating chapters. There's the one about the Evangeline and Gabriel, the Cajun Romeo and Juliet who inspired the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. There's the one about Marie Therese Coincoin, a former slave who came to own Melrose Plantation and was able to buy the freedom of many of her children. There's the one about the patriot pirate, Jean Lafitte who helped Andrew Jackson win the Battle of New Orleans, weeks after the War of 1812 was over. And there's the one about the flamboyant governor Huey Long, who according to a Ken Burns documentary, was both a champion of the poor and a reviled dictator. Come hear all the stories and embellish them as you like in the retelling.

Jazz has been called "America's only original art form," but it's just one page in the Louisiana songbook. Before the Grand Ole Opry would spare them a glance, Hank Williams, Sr. and Elvis Presley hit it big in Shreveport on the Louisiana Hayride radio show. At the Stage of Stars Music Museum in Shreveport, you can hear the first time the words "Elvis has left the building" were uttered. (It was at the Hirsch Coliseum in Shreveport.)

Louisiana is also home to the Liberty Theater in Eunice, home of the Rendez-vous des Cajuns radio and TV program, a kind of Cajun "Prairie Home Companion." We hope someday you're lucky enough to sit in the audience on a Saturday night. Louisiana is the birthplace of Louis Armstrong, Jerry Lee Lewis, Fats Domino, Tim McGraw, Lucinda Williams, Wynton Marsalis, Harry Connick, Jr., Mahalia Jackson, Aaron Neville, Allen Toussaint and countless others. The passion that inspired them may inspire you.

There are as many festivals in Louisiana as there are recipes for jambalaya. We're always celebrating something here—music, art, seafood, history, a good crop. Grab some sunscreen and a wide-brimmed hat and come join us.

They don't call Louisiana "Sportsman's Paradise" for nothing. If you've ever seen the Atchafalaya Swamp at sunset, if you've ever sat in a duck blind on Lake Lery at dawn, if you've ever gone surf fishing for trout on Grand Isle, you know we deserve the moniker. For hiking, camping, fishing, hunting, bicycling, canoeing, kayaking, or birding, this is the spot.

Musicians aren't the only stars in Louisiana. Chefs are literally at the top of the food chain. Emeril Lagasse, Paul Prudhomme, Leah Chase and John Folse are major celebrities here, and an epiphany is guaranteed with every spoonful whether you're sampling Cajun, Creole, soul food or something equally wonderful. From oys-ter po-boys to oysters Rockefeller, Natchitoches meat pies to crawfish pie, corn maque choux to corn and crab bisque, we satisfy every craving. You could eat your way across the state and back again and never have the same meal twice.

There is nothing we love in Louisiana so much as having company. Come on down and let us show you what hospitality is all about – let us help you discover the hidden passions in your life.

Start Planning Your Louisiana Vacation Today. Visit www.LouisianaTravel.com for more information on where to stay and what to see.

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