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Things To Do in Lafayette



Plan your Culinary Escape in the Happiest City in America

Lafayette is at the heart of Louisiana's Cajun & Creole Country, an area known as the [Happiest City in America](#) by the Wall Street Journal's MarketWatch. com, and it's no mystery why. Their distinctive blend of [food](#), [music](#), and [history](#) has people from all over heading down south with a smile on their faces.

Cultural History

[Lafayette](#) has a long and profound history. The indigenous Atakapa-Ishak, Choctaw, Chitimacha, and Opelousa were some of the first to inhabit the area. Numerous Acadian refugees settled in this area after being expelled from Canada after Great Britain defeated France in the Seven Years' War. They married other settlers, forming what became known as Cajun and Creole cultures. Both cultures [spoke French](#) and were deeply [Catholic](#). Tourists flock to Lafayette to get a rare taste of the genuine Cajun & Creole experience, from traditional food fixings and music to the warm hospitality that greets you at every turn.

For a taste of genuine history, visit [Vermilionville](#), a historic and folklife village that demonstrates Acadian, Creole, and Native American history from the time period 1765 – 1890. The park sits on a 23-acre site on the banks of the [Bayou Vermilion](#) with 19 attractions, including seven restored original homes with more than 13 local artisans that provide demonstrations on a variety of essential crafts performed by the early settlers. Inside or outside this historical village, it's always easy to find locals who can switch effortlessly into [French](#) when the need arises.

Festivals

No matter what time of year you visit Lafayette, they will have something for you to celebrate. That's in large part because the region is teeming with celebratory events year-round, from the largest outdoor francophone festival in the world, [Festival International](#), to the fall's [Festivals Acadiens et Creoles](#) and of course [Mardi Gras](#).

Lafayette truly comes alive in the fall and spring with remarkable weather to compliment the multitude of events and festivals. One thing unique to Lafayette is the [free concert series](#) that takes place in the fall and spring. Kick-off your weekend off early on Thursdays with [Rhythms on the River](#), a free evening concert held in River Ranch's Town Square. [Bach Lunch](#), a free popular lunchtime music series on Fridays in Downtown Lafayette, couples local food with music for all ages. The fun continues into the evening with [Downtown Alive!](#), another local favorite concert series offering free music from regional artists of all genres.



Food

Lafayette has the Cajun & Creole flavors you crave, along with the freshest in Louisiana seafood, and always a little something unexpected. Homegrown chefs are putting an inventive spin on time-honored recipes with the freshest local ingredients. But don't take their word for it. Lafayette has received many [awards](#) for its cuisine, including being named the Tastiest Town of the South by Southern Living magazine, Best Food Town by Rand McNally, and a Top 10 Foodie City by Livability.com.

One staple to the area's unique cuisine is the smoked pork and rice delicacy known as [boudin](#). While the ingredients are basic, the variations of how to cook boudin are endless, which is why you need to take a trip down the Boudin Trail. Restaurants stretching across the metro are cooking boudin every which way you can imagine, and some you can't.

For the less adventurous, [Cajun Food Tours](#) takes you through the culinary mainstays of Cajun culture, all the while sharing tidbits of history. Leave the driving and decision-making to a local while you sit and soak in everything Lafayette has to offer.

Outdoor

Lafayette also happens to be situated on the Mississippi Flyway and the Atchafalaya Loop of America's Wetland Birding Trail. Nature watchers and photographers have access to some of the best [birding](#) sites in North America, including Spanish Lake. At last count, birders have spotted 240 species in its expansive shoreline and bottomland hardwood forest.

If [paddling](#) is your passion or something you're looking to try, Lafayette is the perfect starting point to explore rivers, swamps, and bayous. The [Vermilion River Paddle Trail](#) offers various routes to explore the flora and fauna of the area. [Gear rentals and guided tours](#) are available through several outfitters in and around Lafayette. There's also an annual three-day 50-mile paddle held in March called the [Vermilion Voyage](#) for those looking to do a multi-day paddle through Lafayette and Vermilion Parish.

You can experience multiple types of fresh and saltwater [fishing](#), all within a short drive from Lafayette. Cast your line from the shore of some of the most peaceful fishing spots along [Lake Martin](#) or the [Atchafalaya Basin](#) banks while soaking in the bayou views. If saltwater is your preference, paddle or launch your boat near the [Gulf of Mexico](#) to discover the abundant species of fish, crabs, shrimp, and so much more that can all be caught and cooked in a day.

[Hiking](#) is the perfect way for the entire family, at any skill level, to experience the outdoors in Lafayette without breaking the budget. It provides the opportunity to see places you would never get to see at a pace that allows you to soak in your surroundings. Most trails are open to [pets](#), so feel free to take your dog along for the hike, but they must be leashed at all times and always follow leave no trace practices of packing out all waste.

If you're looking to turn that hiking trip into an overnight adventure, the area surrounding Lafayette offers [camping options](#) unlike any other. While the summers' heat and humidity can somewhat limit the camping season, those willing to brave the elements are rewarded with the chance to experience unique ecosystems and wildlife. Plus, you will likely have many areas all to yourself.

Whether your passion is for their rich cultural history, the bustling culinary scene, or distinctive blend of Cajun and Zydeco music, you can be sure you will leave beaming from ear to ear.