




DeSoto Parish
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DeSoto Parish


Quiet beauty, world-class fishing and friendly people define DeSoto Parish, a Bayou State hidden gem known for its history and bucolic charm. Situated along the Texas border, about 30 minutes south of Shreveport, DeSoto Parish is a wilderness wonderland and a road tripper's dream.

The Parish is bordered by the [Toledo Bend Reservoir](#), the largest manmade lake in the southern United States and an angler's paradise. Take in its vast beauty and experience its neighboring forest as you drive along



the 78-mile Toledo Bend Forest Scenic Byway. Enjoy camping, fishing, swimming, canoeing, biking and hiking at various points along the way.

Getting back to nature is just part of DeSoto Parish's magic. Wind your way through its constellation of small towns, each with its own distinct character. From the parish seat of [Mansfield](#) to artsy [Grand Cane](#) and to tiny [Keachi](#), a trove of Greek Revival architecture, each spot welcomes visitors with countless historic sites, tasty eats and beautiful scenery.



The area has been shaped by numerous historic events. It was part of "No Man's Land," the so-called neutral strip of land that created a buffer between New Spain and the United States after the Louisiana Purchase in the early 19th Century. Ungoverned between 1806 and 1819, the area attracted runaway slaves, escaped fugitives, pirates and profiteers and those who preferred to live outside the law. A diverse culture of Native Americans, descendants of early Spanish colonists, Scots Irish pioneers and African Americans sprang up in the area. That cultural gumbo still exists today.

DeSoto Parish was also the location of Civil War battles in which the Union and Confederacy fought for control over the Red River and ultimately, the city of Shreveport. The Mansfield-Pleasant Hill engagement included battles near Mansfield and the community of Pleasant Hill. Learn more at the [Mansfield State Historic Site](#), which sits on one of the battlefields. Inside the visitor's center, see letters from soldiers on both sides, photographs, uniforms, personal effects and more, and discover the women who served in the war by pretending to be men. Reenactments, complete with cannon fire, are put on annually at the site of the [Battle of Pleasant Hill](#), bringing the Civil War to life.

You can't make a trip to DeSoto Parish without a visit to the 185,000-acre [Toledo Bend Reservoir](#), which spans the parish's western border. Louisiana and Texas worked together to dam the Sabine River in the 1960s, creating a reservoir for the purposes of water supply, hydroelectric power and recreation. The Toledo Bend Reservoir is both the largest man-made body of water in the south and the fifth largest in surface acres in the U.S. From its dam site near the town of Hornbeck, the lake extends sixty-five miles upriver to the town of Logansport, where you can enjoy stunning waterfront views from the town's boardwalk.

Toledo Bend's recreational opportunities abound. The lake is consistently considered one of America's top bass fishing destinations and is home to both leisurely anglings as well as national and regional fishing rodeos that attract professionals. Spot migratory birds, and camp overnight at the reservoir.

A trip to DeSoto Parish is like going back in time. Take a break from city traffic and enjoy a leisurely drive down a country road. Catch a fish in the reservoir. Munch on some of the best country cooking you've ever

had—from a roadside gas station. Stay in a quaint bed-and-breakfast in a true American small town. Soak in rich, diverse history. That road trip feeling is yours today in DeSoto Parish.