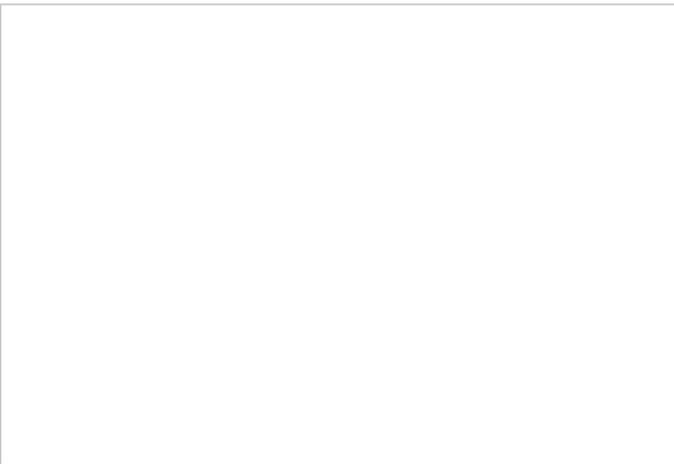


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## Tangipahoa Parish



With its stunning natural features, mouthwatering local food, friendly people and charming culture, Tangipahoa Parish shows visitors the best of Louisiana. A multitude of things to do appeals to every age group. Shop for antiques, test your shooting skills on a guided dove hunt or hop on an ATV for some mud riding. Take the Amtrak train into vibrant downtown Hammond and explore its shops and restaurants. Check out Killian, Springfield and Maurpas, as they also have lots to offer.

Spot scores of migratory birds on America's Wetlands Birding Trail and get up close and personal with free-roaming giraffes and zebras at one of the largest wildlife preserves of its kind in the country. Tangipahoa Parish offers engaging experiences for travelers young, and young at heart, all in one happy place.

Start by exploring Hammond, the parish seat, and find out why its downtown is consistently praised. The historic area's revived storefronts feature numerous local shops, chef-driven restaurants, bars with live music, spa services and more. It's easy to spend the day window shopping and sampling the local cuisine.

On Saturday mornings in downtown Hammond, find fresh produce and artisan foods at the Hammond Farmers Market in quaint Railroad Park. At night, enjoy live music at local bars, or see a show at the magnificently restored [Columbia Theatre](#), which first opened in the community in 1928. Like many towns across America, Hammond was originally established as a railroad stop, but here, the depot features an Amtrak passenger rail. Hammond is a stop on the route between Chicago and New Orleans. All aboard!

Tangipahoa Parish's many hotels and inns will ensure you find the accommodations of your choice. Award-winning [Bienvenue Mon Ami](#) in Amite features Antebellum and Acadian-style grandeur on 30 acres with forested rolling hills and beautiful views. Enjoy hiking trails, a fire pit, a stocked pond for fishing, wrap-around verandas and stately, detailed grounds with statues and fountains. VIP packages include chauffeured service to and from the Columbia Theatre, dinner at a Hammond restaurant and a gourmet breakfast.



Home to some of Louisiana's favorite food festivals, Tangipahoa Parish is well known for the [Ponchatoula Strawberry Festival](#). One of the state's largest and oldest food festivals, it celebrates the annual crop of red-ripe, juicy strawberries grown here in the Strawberry Capital of the World. But that's not all. Amite hosts an annual [Oyster Festival](#) that celebrates Louisiana's favorite mollusk. And in downtown Hammond, experience barbecue south Louisiana style at the [Hammond Smokin' BBQ Challenge](#).

Two Italian festivals also take place in Tangipahoa Parish, including the [Independence Sicilian Heritage Festival](#) and [The Italian Festival](#) in Tickfaw, a reflection of the large number of Italian immigrants who arrived in this part of Louisiana in the early 1900s. And fans of the Renaissance and all its lore will love the [Louisiana Renaissance Festival](#), a multi-weekend gathering every November and December that recreates an English Renaissance village. Actors in period costumes showcase everything from lute-playing and puppetry, to falconry and food.

There's no shortage of things to do for families in Tangipahoa Parish. Kids will squeal with delight when they hold a baby gator at [Kliebert & Sons Gator Tours](#), and they'll learn to speak pirate at the new [Pirates of the Pontchartrain Fest](#). Youngsters can see exactly how long a giraffe's tongue is when they feed the gentle creatures at the [Global Wildlife Center](#). And families flock to as many as seven small town Christmas parades featuring floats, treats, sweets, kids' activities and of course, visits from Santa.

Whether you're day-tripping or planning a longer stay, friendly and charming Tangipahoa Parish is ready to show you a good time.