

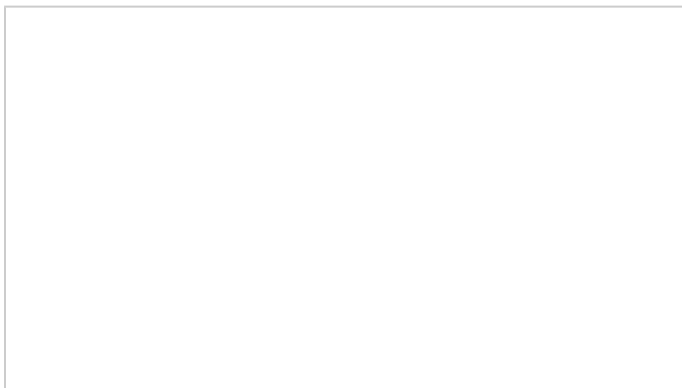


Monroe-West Monroe
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Walk through the halls of the breathtaking home of the first bottler of Coca-Cola. Immerse yourself in the natural beauty of North Louisiana’s swamps and forests. Savor palate-pleasing wines as you overlook a lush vineyard bathed in the sun’s warm glow. Make these experiences part of your next adventure in the Bayou State when you visit [Monroe-West Monroe](#). Set on the banks of the Ouachita River, these inviting twin cities are full of local restaurants, one-of-a-kind shops and art galleries, and a host of ways to enjoy your next Louisiana vacation. Read on to discover some of the top things to do in Monroe and West Monroe.

Visit the Biedenharn Museum & Gardens



When it comes to American trivia, few people have had as much of an impact on “pop” culture as Joseph Biedenharn. Credited as the first bottler of Coca-Cola (in 1894), Biedenharn moved his bottling operation from Mississippi to Monroe (and later had a hand in establishing Delta Airlines), in turn becoming one of the town’s most prominent citizens. Uncover his family’s legacy at the [Biedenharn Museum and Gardens](#). Check out vintage Coca-Cola memorabilia, including a delivery truck and vending



machines, and learn about the early days of bottling the beverage at the Coke Museum, where you'll also find a soda fountain where you can tip back a five-cent coke.

While there is plenty of Coca-Cola goodness to drink in, there's far more to see and do at the Biedenharn Museum & Garden. Explore the luxurious home decorated by Biedenharn's daughter, Emy-Lou, a prominent pre-World War II opera singer. Then tour the one-acre Elsong Gardens full of fountains, statues, French iron grillwork, and flowers that bloom year-round.

Finally, stop by the Bible Museum. Here you'll see a stunning collection of rare and historical Bibles, including a page from the 1454 – 55 Gutenberg Bible and an original 1611 King James Bible. As one of the top attractions in Monroe and West Monroe, the Biedenharn Museum & Garden is a must visit during your stay in North Louisiana.

Check Out Duck Commander The Tour

If you're a fan of the hit A&E show *Duck Dynasty*, you've got to check out [Duck Commander The Tour](#). Embark on a self-guided tour of this 10,000-square-foot museum and you'll come across all sorts of interesting things from the show throughout 15 distinct galleries, including family artifacts and pictures, set recreations, vehicles, and costumes. Don't forget to stop by Miss Kay's Sweets and Eats, a bakery and coffee shop owned by Miss Kay Robertson.

Explore Black Bayou Lake National Wildlife Refuge

Vast lakes, scenic bayous, and dense pine and hardwood forests. Not only do all these environments provide an escape to the natural beauty of North Louisiana, they house a wide variety of flora and fauna that's worth taking your time to see. Experience it all at [Black Bayou Lake National Wildlife Refuge](#). Covering 5,300 acres, the refuge is a fine showcase of why this part of Louisiana is called Sportsman's Paradise.



Try your luck at hooking a largemouth bass, bluegill, red-ear sunfish, or crappie, or rent a canoe or kayak from the Friends of Black Bayou and paddle among the cypress and tupelo trees. Keep an eye out and you may spot a great blue heron or an egret wading along the shoreline, or an alligator just breaking the water's surface. For the best chance to see migratory birds and other animals, follow the refuge's three trails that take you through its varied habitats.

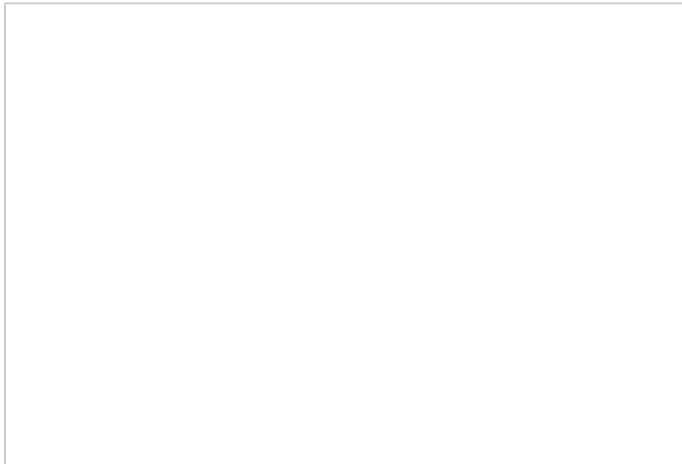
For an escape to nature that's just minutes away from downtown Monroe, go on an adventure at Black Bayou Lake National Wildlife Refuge.

Uncover WWII History at the Chennault Aviation & Military Museum

For all the noteworthy individuals that emerged from World War II, Louisiana native General Claire Chennault was one of the era's most significant people. Leader of the Flying Tigers, a volunteer group of American pilots that flew with the Republic of China Air Force from 1941 – 42, Chennault played a key role in the early stages of the war in the Pacific theater. Learn more about this chapter in American history at the [Chennault Aviation & Military Museum](#).

Based in one of the last buildings at the WWII Selman Army Airfield Navigation School, the museum covers history of the war with displays of weaponry, uniforms, photographs, and other artifacts. The museum also has an outdoor display of historic aircraft and vehicles, as well as a collection of items from Nazi Germany. Take all of this in, then learn how one of the world's largest airlines, Delta Air Lines, started in the Monroe-West Monroe area as a regional crop-dusting service.

Shop for Unique Finds at Antique Alley



Set within a stone's throw of the Ouachita River in West Monroe's Cotton Port Historic District, [Antique Alley](#) is just the place you need to go if you're needing some retail therapy. Full of one-of-a-kind boutiques, specialty shops, antique stores, and restaurants, you can spend all day uncovering treasures that you'll be proud to bring home with you. Step into the Cotton Port Antique Mall to see the selection of vintage baseball cards, jewelry, furniture, glassware, pottery, and more sold by over 20 vendors before checking out the curated collection of New England-style furnishings at Memory Lane Antiques. To augment your wardrobe

with the latest in fashion, head to Eleven 26 Boutique or The Nude Nomad.

When your appetite catches up with you, indulge in delicious Cajun food at Trapp's or Kayla's Kitchen's delicious home cooking. Not in a hurry to leave? Book a night at Hamilton House Inn, where you can lounge in your private room and enjoy complimentary breakfast before starting your day in Monroe-West Monroe.

Explore Art Alley in Monroe

Downtown Monroe is a place for artists and art lovers, and you can experience it at its best during The Crawl. Held on the first Thursday in February, April, June, August, October, and December, this event lets you get an up-close look at the works of Monroe's artists displayed in their own galleries, as well as works from visiting artists. There are nine stops on The Crawl, including The Downtown Gallery and Sugar Gallery, both of which feature the works of multiple artists. Even if you can't make it during The Crawl, you can still see the monumental works of The Outside Gallery. Covering the side of a building facing the railroad tracks on the north side of Art Alley, the gallery showcases a revolving set of vibrant murals created by artists from around the country.

Savor Award-Winning Wine & Other Spirits

Tip back a glass of your favorite red or white and take in the vine-covered rolling hills that stretch before you. Set just a few miles southwest of West Monroe, [Landry Vineyards](#) isn't just a place to enjoy wine; it's an authentic destination for oenophiles. Maker of 20 wines, ranging from dry whites to semi-sweet reds, Landry Vineyards is one of the top wineries in Louisiana. Come for a tasting and a behind-the-scenes tour of the vineyard, cellar, crush pad, and bottling facility, then think about the finer points of winemaking as you sip on your wine of choice on the outdoor patio. The vineyard also hosts concerts and other events throughout the year, so make sure to check the winery's [calendar](#) so you don't miss out.



As delicious as the wines are, they aren't the only locally made beverages you can taste here. If a hoppy IPA is what you crave, find your way to either [Flying Tiger Brewery](#) or [Ouachita Brewing Company](#), two craft breweries in Monroe and West Monroe. Both brew their own range of enticing craft beers that you can enjoy in each brewery's lively taproom. Finally, [Two Warriors Meadery](#) is truly one of a kind. It's the only meadery in Louisiana, and its top-class honey wines are inspired by historical mead recipes from around the world.

No matter what kind of drink you enjoy, you'll savor a true taste of North Louisiana at these places in Monroe-West Monroe.