

LOUISIANA IS FULL OF STORIES.

Yours begins here.

The Louisiana Trails & Byways network takes visitors on 19 epic road trips through the state's culture, geography and history. Make the most of your journey with maps and insider info that highlight noteworthy experiences along each — just visit LouisianaByways.com or one of the state's Welcome Centers for maps of individual trails and suggested stops along each of them.

A BIT OF BACKGROUND

The National Scenic Byway Program is a federal initiative whose goal is to "identify, designate and promote scenic byways and to protect and enhance the intrinsic qualities of the areas through which these byways pass."

The Louisiana program focuses on the interactions between the landscape and those whose heritage is tied to it. Forestry, agriculture and industries such as seafood have provided livelihoods for Louisianans for generations, and continue to do so today. More than 300 years ago, Spanish and French explorers arrived in what is today Louisiana, settling in the Mississippi River Delta and building outposts throughout the backcountry. Go back further in time, and you'll find evidence of the American Indians who lived here thousands of years before the first Europeans made landfall.

These people, plus the Germans, Italians, Africans and other groups who have made Louisiana their home over the past three centuries, have contributed to Louisiana's food, music, artwork and traditions, making the state one of the top cultural destinations in the country.

Drive the Louisiana Trails & Byways to see, hear, taste and explore Louisiana's culture.

19 BYWAYS. COUNTLESS STORIES.

Louisiana's Trails & Byways are like book chapters. Each reveals something about Louisiana's culture, but none alone can tell the whole story. The more you explore, the richer the story becomes.

To experience Louisiana's music traditions, head to the Zydeco Cajun Prairie Byway that goes through Mamou, "the Cajun Music Capital of the World," where Saturday morning concerts are a local tradition that will wake you up faster than a stout cup of coffee. In Opelousas, boogie down to the sounds of the city's native son King of Zydeco, Clifton Chenier. In Crowley, visit the J.D. Miller Music Museum, a recording studio and museum where swamp pop musicians have been recording songs more than 50 years. In Ville Platte, hear the tunes of the prairie at the Louisiana Swamp Pop Museum. Travel the Louisiana Great River Road Byway, where concert venues, memorials and museums honor the region's Delta blues and old-time country music traditions.

Next stop, Louisiana's legendary culinary traditions. Connoisseurs of local cuisine will find no shortage of dining options in Louisiana. The

San Bernardo Byway, starting on the outskirts of New Orleans, takes visitors past southeast Louisiana plantations, swamps and Mississippi River vistas, while passing small-town restaurants serving up fresh seafood and roadside stands selling Louisiana-grown produce. Even more authentic Louisiana cuisine is found throughout the entire byways network, with flavorful Cajun fare on the Southern Swamps Byway and down-home, farm-to-table dishes on the history-rich Louisiana Colonial Trails Byway.

History fans will find plenty to love on the Louisiana Trails & Byways, where catching a glimpse into the past is as easy as driving up to it. Stops along the Boom or Bust Byway tell dramatic stories of northwest Louisiana's oil and gas industry of yesteryear; the Myths and Legends Byway is a living history book filled with colorful characters such as the local outlaw Leather Britches Smith. On the Historic US 80 Byway, travelers wind through landscape largely unchanged from decades ago, as well as the 3,400-year-old Poverty Point World Heritage Site. The Cane River National Heritage Trail brings together tales of plantation life with scenes of rustic central Louisiana, and passes through downtown Natchitoches, the oldest permanent settlement in the Louisiana Purchase territory.

Diverse as these byways are, they all share a common theme: Spectacular roadside scenery that showcases the best of Louisiana. Get up-close with remote bayous and cypress forests along the Bayou Teche and Wetlands Cultural byways. The 20-mile Tunica Trace Byway is among the state's shortest, but it delivers gorgeous scenes of south Louisiana's hill country. The Longleaf Trail Byway and Toledo Bend Forest Scenic Byway take travelers through west Louisiana's lesser-known forested landscapes steeped in Native American, Spanish, French and American history. And in southwest Louisiana, the Flyway Byway and Creole Nature Trail All-American Road offer visitors views of one of North America's largest bird migration routes, along with remote beaches and communities that make up Louisiana's agricultural heartland.

Louisiana's backroads have countless stories to tell. Use this Louisiana Trails & Byways guide to help make the most of your time in the Bayou State.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information visit LouisianaByways.com or email Doug Bourgeois with Louisiana Trails and Byways dbourgeois@crt.la.gov.



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1



BAYOU TECHE 183 Miles – Hugging the western edge of the Atchafalaya Basin and following the scenic (and kayaker-friendly) Bayou Teche, this byway passes through some of Cajun Country's most notable towns and landscapes. Visit the Wedell-Williams Aviation and Cypress Sawmill Museum (a Louisiana State Museum) in Patterson, the American Indian-focused Chitimacha Museum in Charenton, or walk through history in Franklin's, Beaux Bridge's and Morgan City's gorgeous neighborhoods. Dine on authentic Cajun cooking in New Iberia and taste Louisiana's spicy side with a visit to the TABASCO® headquarters on Avery Island.

2



BOOM OR BUST 137 miles – Dramatic ups and downs in the oil and gas, lumber, transportation, farming and entertainment businesses over the years produced both the best and the worst of times in northwestern Louisiana, a region known for its rolling hills, tall pines, beautiful lakes and bayous. Oil derricks are reminders of the state's longtime ties to the energy industry, and are memorialized at the Louisiana State Oil and Gas Museum (located, appropriately, in Oil City). Fields of cotton and tranquil cattle pastures reflect the ongoing importance of agriculture, and the area's cultural history is honored at the Germantown Colony Museum in Minden. Not far from Shreveport, communities with names like Plain Dealing and Shongaloo that dot the area preserve a small-town, relaxed way of life.

3



CAJUN CORRIDOR 34 miles – The Cajun Corridor Byway runs through the self-proclaimed "most Cajun place on Earth" and provides the best places in the state to enjoy fresh shrimp, crawfish and oysters. The drive covers gently sloping terrain highlighted with allées (alleys of shade trees) and cheniers (coastal ridges covered with stands of oak trees). Sugar cane fields dot the horizon, and cattle graze near the marshlands. Towns with lilting names such as Maurice, Abbeville and Delcambre, reflect the influences of French and Acadian (Cajun) settlers who founded them. Local museums pay tribute to the rich heritage of the area and residents here speak French, just as their ancestors did.

4



CANE RIVER NATIONAL HERITAGE TRAIL 71 miles – Once a primary channel of the Red River, the Cane River is now an oxbow lake bordered by corn and soybean farms, thick stands of sugar cane and pecan orchards. The Cane River National Heritage Trail begins in charming Natchitoches, which many recall as the setting for the film "Steel Magnolias." Tracking the river, the trail winds through rich farmland and pretty towns, ending at Cloutierville, once the home of writer Kate Chopin. Views along the way include plantation homes, Creole architecture, historic landmarks and Cane River Creole National Park, along with graceful Southern magnolias and live oaks that flourish on the river's red-soil banks.

5



CREOLE NATURE TRAIL ALL-AMERICAN ROAD 207 miles – Louisiana's prairies, marshes and shores teem with wildlife, and a drive along this byway gives visitors a chance to experience nature's bounty up close. Signs along the route mark favorite spots for alligator crossings — though the so-called King of the Swamp is not the only wildlife you'll see. Boardwalks at stops throughout the Creole Nature Trail guide visitors through marshes with more than 400 migratory bird species. This spectacularly scenic, remote terrain includes four wildlife refuges and 26 miles of Gulf of Mexico beaches. Untouched wetlands and small fishing communities await visitors. Kick off your Creole Nature Trail journey at Creole Nature Trail Adventure Point — a free, fun attraction that immerses you in nature and Louisiana's unique culture.

6



HISTORIC US 80 113 miles – The Dixie Overland Highway was one of the early American auto trails connecting motorists from Georgia to California. In 1926, it was renamed US 80. On this byway you'll find rustic vistas, acres of farmland and northeast Louisiana's largest city, Monroe, known for fine Southern restaurants, Antique Alley, Biedenharn Gardens and the Chennault Aviation & Military Museum. Ruston is synonymous with peaches. Find plenty in season at Mitcham Peach Farms and others. Also, visit Ruston's 18-block historic district. Nature and history lovers can stop at Lake D'Arbonne State Park for spectacular scenery and fishing, while Poverty Point UNESCO World Heritage site holds secrets to civilization from 3,400 years ago.

7



FLYWAY 55 miles – This byway takes visitors on a scenic loop through Jefferson Davis Parish, offering a quick getaway to enjoy the countryside while experiencing the area's natural beauty and local wildlife. Paddle the waterways or bike an extreme trail to the beautiful, historical Lorrain Bridge. Shop in small towns and taste some of the best food in all of Louisiana, and venture past rice fields and crawfish farms that have come to define this special part of the state. The Flyway Byway was named for the migratory bird path through the region, which is home to more than 160 species — bring your binoculars. In Jennings, you'll find the family-friendly educational center known as Gator Chateau — you can even hold a baby alligator!

8



LONGLEAF TRAIL 17 miles – Nestled within the hills of central Louisiana's Kisatchie National Forest, the Longleaf Trail Byway covers some of the most varied terrain in the state. Elevations range from 80 feet to 400 feet above sea level, and the topography is rugged by Louisiana standards. You'll want to stop at the frequent turnouts to get a good view of the mesas, buttes, sandstone outcrops and, of course, the trees that gave the trail its name. Longleaf pines, known as "super trees," are a dominant feature. Bike, hike and horseback ride through the pine forests of Caroline Dornon Hiking and Horse Trail, and once you've worked up an appetite, grill out at a campground and bed down at one of Kisatchie National Forest's RV campgrounds, cabins or tent sites.

9



LOUISIANA COLONIAL TRAILS 484 miles – Discover the legends and locations that continue to provide lore and opportunity on Louisiana Colonial Trails, a cultural crossroads that once included fortifications from Indian tribes, Spain, France and the early American western frontier. Remnants of them still dot this landscape, which also included parts of the El Camino Real and Old San Antonio Road that linked the original colonies to Mexico and the West. Prehistoric tribes left behind tools and pottery. Settlers migrating west found a land of opportunity. Plantation owners made fortunes in cotton. Travel this region to see where generations of settlers from across the Americas and Europe once called home.

10



GREAT RIVER ROAD NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY 773 miles – Paralleling the mighty Mississippi, the Louisiana Great River Road spans hundreds of miles, countless historic milestones and centuries of history. On the river's west bank, the byway runs from the Louisiana/Arkansas state line to the town of Venice on the Gulf of Mexico. The east bank route begins at the Louisiana/Mississippi state line and ends at the little village of Pointe a la Hache. Plantation homes, museums, ancient oaks, elegant restaurants and seafood joints — you'll see it all on this byway that runs alongside the levees that overlook the river. This byway is part of the enormous federally designated Great River Road Byway that stretches from the Mississippi River's headwaters and crosses through 10 states.

11



MYTHS AND LEGENDS 181 miles – Louisiana's Myths and Legends Byway is a drive into the stories, tall tales and life of a gunslinger named Leather Britches Smith. The byway travels through a region settled by the Atakapa and Coushatta Indians. Sawmill towns came later, and DeRidder is the largest among them. Top DeRidder sites include the Gothic Jail (or "Hanging Jail") and the Beauregard Parish Museum, housed in an old railroad depot in the historic district. Farther afield, find southwest Louisiana's oldest permanent settlement, Sugartown; the Leatherwood Museum in Oakdale, which honors the region's cultural history; and the Museum of the New Llano Colony, a late 19th century Utopian community that survived more than 20 years in the "piney highlands of west Louisiana."

12



SAN BERNARDO 36 miles – Like much of the area, St. Bernard Parish reflects a French and Spanish past, but also strong in this region are influences of the Isleños people from the Spanish Canary Islands. Natives of those islands were drawn here more than two centuries ago by the fertile soil and plentiful trapping and fishing; their descendants populate the area today. As you follow this byway, you'll discover their influences, along with such sights as plantation homes and working fishing villages, plus the historic site of the last great battle of the War of 1812, the Battle of New Orleans.

13



SOUTHERN SWAMPS 69 miles – This byway gives visitors a look at the natural beauty of the state's wetlands. View awesome scenery up-close at Tickfaw State Park. Drive through the Maurepas Swamp and dine on seafood at legendary Middendorf's Restaurant in Akers. Ponchatoula is the main city on this byway, with notable stops including antique stores — the town is nicknamed "America's Antique City," after all. Hammond has Kliebert's Turtle & Alligator Farm and the Tangipahoa Parish African American Heritage Museum. At the byway's south end, you'll find Sorrento, home to the historic Cajun Village, where shops sell locally made souvenirs and foods.

14



TOLEDO BEND FOREST 78 miles – The largest manmade lake in the South, Toledo Bend Reservoir, is surrounded by some of Louisiana's most impressive pines and hardwoods. In fact, Toledo Bend is so renowned for its fishing, that it was named Best Bass Lake by Bassmaster magazine two years in a row. The byway parallels the reservoir and encompasses many parks, golf and fishing resorts, marinas and outlooks where visitors can drink in the scenery and spot eagles and blue herons. The rolling byway is especially lovely in the spring and summer, when the wildflowers and native blooming trees add their color. Cyclists can take advantage of the byway's 26 miles of bicycle trails. Bring your camera; you'll find a lot to photograph.

15



TUNICA TRACE 20 miles – Rugged and winding, this byway near the Louisiana/Mississippi border was once an important route for Indians, early explorers and settlers. Today, the Tunica Trace Byway gives travelers a sample of the hills, forests, winding roads and open green spaces that make this section of Louisiana so special. Notable spots include scenic St. Francisville, a charming historic city where you'll find B&Bs, cafés and restaurants. Get up close to history with many historic plantation tours offered in the area, and see the world's largest bald cypress tree at Cat Island National Wildlife Refuge. At the end of the byway is the Louisiana State Penitentiary, where you will find the Angola Museum — the only prison museum in the country operated within an active prison.

16



WETLANDS CULTURAL 282 miles – Serving as a buffer between the country's coastline and the Gulf of Mexico, Louisiana's wetlands are a national treasure. This southeastern Louisiana drive is an ideal way to see towns and villages where shrimping, trapping and farming have been ways of life for hundreds of years. Attractions along the byway include the Wetlands Acadian Cultural Center in Thibodaux, which features a trove of Cajun artifacts. The Center for Traditional Louisiana Boat Building in Lockport showcases historic, homemade south Louisiana watercraft. See where the wild things are by visiting Mandalay National Wildlife Refuge, learn about the region's sugar-producing history at Southdown Plantation in Houma and get down to weekly Cajun music jam sessions at the Bayou Terrebonne Waterlife Museum in Houma.

17



ZYDECO CAJUN PRAIRIE 283 miles – The Zydeco Cajun Prairie Byway pays tribute to the music of south Louisiana, touching many iconic music spots while ambling through serene, rolling countryside that is home to crawfish farms and rice fields. Music is the main attraction to this byway, and you'll see exactly why at places such as the Louisiana Swamp Pop Museum in Ville Platte, the Cajun Music Capital of the World (Mamou) and the Zydeco Capital of the World (Opelousas). Check out the J.D. Miller Music Museum in Crowley, whose namesake founder spent decades recording zydeco, Cajun and country albums by some of the genres' best performers. Learn more about the region's history (musical and otherwise) at the Prairie Acadian Cultural Center in Eunice and the Louisiana Orphan Train Museum in Opelousas.

18



NORTHUP TRAIL 83 miles – The Northup Trail takes visitors along the path of Solomon Northup during his 12-year journey as a slave in Louisiana. Originally from New York, Northup was kidnapped, sold as a slave in New Orleans and arrived in Alexandria in 1841, where he remained until legally regaining his freedom at the Avoyelles Parish Courthouse in 1853. The trail follows his path through Rapides and Avoyelles parishes and visits sites such as the Red River Landing, where Northup disembarked the steamer Rodolf, the Epps House, the Bunkie Depot and the Avoyelles Parish Courthouse. The novel "Twelve Years a Slave" was made into a movie that won the Best Picture Oscar in 2013.

19



ZACHARY TAYLOR PARKWAY LOUISIANA'S MILITARY HISTORY 203 miles – Named for the only Louisianan to be elected President, Zachary Taylor Parkway is the State's Byway of Military History and a treasure trove of natural resources, recreational facilities and scenic beauty, as well as sites particular to Louisiana's military history. The corridor connects visitors with historical sites, plantations and cultural events from Louisiana's easternmost border to Alexandria in the central part of the state. Learn about Taylor's long military history in Louisiana, his family ties to the state (daughter Sarah Knox Taylor is buried near St. Francisville) and his ascent to the nation's highest office.



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LOOK FOR THESE
SIGNS ALONG
EACH BYWAY





Longleaf Trail Scenic Byway through the Kisatchie National Forest



Holding an alligator at the Greenwood Gator Farm in Gibson



Kent Plantation House in Alexandria



Audubon Bridge



Crawfish dish



Kayaking through cypress trees in Lake Martin



Marsh sunrise on the Creole Nature Trail All-American Road ©Brenda LaFleur



Jackson Square in New Orleans



Downtown riverbank in Natchitoches



Bowl of shrimp gumbo



Vivian Railroad Station Museum



Lacassine National Wildlife Refuge Lacassine Pool



WELCOME TO LOUISIANA!

Discover our Byways



Billy Nungesser
Lieutenant Governor

The best of Louisiana can be found just off the interstate along one of our 19 Byways, our roadways into the real stories of Louisiana. Our Byways tell stories of the history, culture and people that have created not just a special state, but a state of mind and living found only in Louisiana.

Along the Byways, you can stop at local fishing spots and purchase the catch of the day right from the fisherman who caught it, watch a local artist at work in her own gallery, order a piece of pie and get the recipe from the cook who made it or take a historic house tour given by the owner or a descendant of the people who lived there.

Experience #OnlyLouisiana with the real people who live it each and every day. It's just a Byway trip away.