




Acadia Parish
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Hot-boiled crawfish, golden sunsets over rice fields, and lively cultural festivals are just some of the experiences you'll have in Acadia Parish, heart of Louisiana's fun-loving Cajun Prairie. Ease into simpler times in this world-famous part of the Bayou State where you'll meet friendly people, taste sumptuous and humble food, and try your hand at the Cajun two-step.

Witness an Authentic Cajun Mardi Gras

There's more to Louisiana's mega Mardi Gras scene than just the rollicking fun of New Orleans. The Cajun Prairie is home to some of the state's most fascinating and historic Mardi Gras celebrations, including the [Church Point Courir de Mardi Gras](#), or Mardi Gras run. This centuries old tradition was brought to the

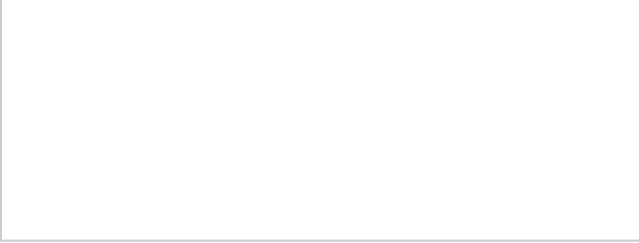


area by immigrants from rural Europe and hasn't changed much in nearly 300 years. Plan a day trip to the town of Church Point where grown men dressed in colorful masks and costumes embark on the delightfully quirky exercise of chasing down a chicken for the communal gumbo pot. While lilting Cajun songs play in the background, participants ride on horseback, or scamper on foot to capture fast-moving fowl. After watching the morning festivities, spectators enjoy a midday parade, Cajun music, dancing and of course, chicken and sausage gumbo among other treats. That's not the only way to celebrate Louisiana's favorite holiday in Acadia Parish. Visitors also love the town of Crowley's

festive Mardi Gras celebration known as [Carnival D'Acadie](#). Enjoy the parade with meticulously decorated floats, live music, and vendors selling all sorts of Cajun cuisine.

Experience Legendary Food Festivals

Louisiana is home to more than 400 annual food and cultural festivals, and one of the largest and most famous is the [International Rice Festival](#) in beautiful downtown Crowley. Every October, tens of thousands come out to enjoy the three-day event, which champions all things rice. Sink your teeth into a variety of rice-centric dishes, from crawfish etouffee and gumbo to red beans and dirty rice. Dance to live music from a succession of bands playing a variety of genres. Jump on a rollercoaster at the carnival midway and pick up a trinket from the artisan booths. It's family fun for everyone.



The Rice Festival isn't the only festival in these parts! May brings the beloved springtime gathering in honor of the town of Rayne's signature creature, the [Rayne Frog Festival](#).

You'll see "it's easy being green" at this popular two-day gathering, which includes carnival rides and games, arts and crafts, live music, a parade, and all sorts of opportunities to sample fried legs. There's even an eating contest for diehards. In the fall, visitors get to know Acadia Parish's important German heritage at the [Roberts Cove Germanfest](#). This warm and welcoming cultural festival celebrates the wave of 19th century German immigrants who helped settle the area and pioneered its longstanding rice industry. There's plenty of German fare and draft beer to enjoy, as well as German music and agricultural demonstrations.



Spend the Day Shopping, Sipping, and Antiquing

The majestic streets of downtown Crowley are a terrific place to take pictures and meander among [locally owned shops](#). When you need a break, grab a meal and something cold to drink at [Reggie's](#)

[Downtown](#), Acadia's first microbrewery and taproom featuring beers made with Crowley rice. It's also a great place to grab a burger, po'boy or southern plate lunch. Pay a visit to Rayne for reliable antiquing at spots like the wonderfully expansive [Antiques on the Avenue](#), where you're sure to find European and American furniture, and quirky finds like hood ornaments and foundry mold patterns. Devoted pickers won't want to miss a trip to Rayne's [Cajun Friendly Flea Market](#) for furniture, housewares, memorabilia, and a lot more.

Soak in the Only-in-Louisiana Arts and Culture Scene

Acadia Parish is packed with sites that provide a window into the area's fascinating history and its irrepressible creative streak. Check out the historic [Grand Opera House of the South](#) in downtown Crowley, one of the country's only remaining two-story opera houses, and home to regular live theater and musical guests. Believe it or not, it's not the only theater in Crowley's downtown. The [Historic Rice Theatre](#), constructed in the 1940s, is also a great place to catch a show. Get to know the town's many layers of history with a stop at the free [Crowley Motor Co. & Ford Building](#), home to four separate museum experiences including the Rice Interpretive Center, History of Crowley, J.D. Miller Music Recording Studio (a pioneer in recording local roots music), and the Ford Automotive Museum. For a truly moving outdoor cultural experience, plan a visit to [Istre Cemetery](#) in the town of Morse, listed on the National Register of Historic Places and significant for its "grave houses," Acadian-style structures once built to shelter graves. Only three remain at this site, which has been designated an endangered historic place by the State of Louisiana.



Sample Mouthwatering Boudin, Cracklins, and More on the Meat Market Trail

Sampling the tasty eats at Acadia Parish's numerous locally owned [Cajun meat markets](#) is essential for visitors. You've never seen so many ways to make use of a hog! Reflecting Cajun Country's long history of agricultural thrift, these charming local meat market /grocery stores feature shelves and freezers lined with all sorts of expertly spiced products, from savory pork

boudin, a type of sausage mixed with rice, to deep fried, pork cracklins'. Smoked sausages, turduckens, cornbread-stuffed chicken breasts and pork chops, tasso, and many other traditional products are in full supply. Bring your ice chest and stock up.

[Visit Acadia Parish](#) for more information on the amazing things to do in this charming and historic Louisiana town.