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# ACADIA

PARISH

*Cajun Harvest Country*

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.

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## **Witness an Authentic Cajun Mardi Gras**

There's more to Louisiana's Mardi Gras season than the high-energy celebrations of New Orleans. On the Cajun Prairie, some of the state's most fascinating and time-honored Mardi Gras traditions are still celebrated, much as they were centuries ago. One of the most unique is the [Courir de Mardi Gras de L'anse](#), or The Cove's 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 Mermentau Cove, where men

dressed in brightly-colored costumes and masks travel through the countryside on horseback or on foot, taking part in a playful ritual of chasing a chicken that will be used to make a shared gumbo. Musicians playing traditional Cajun tunes enhance the celebration. After watching the morning festivities, spectators

enjoy a midday parade, more 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. You can find a list and description of local celebrations [here](#).

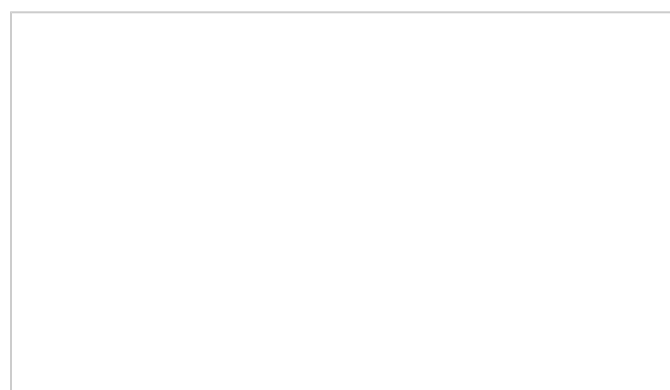
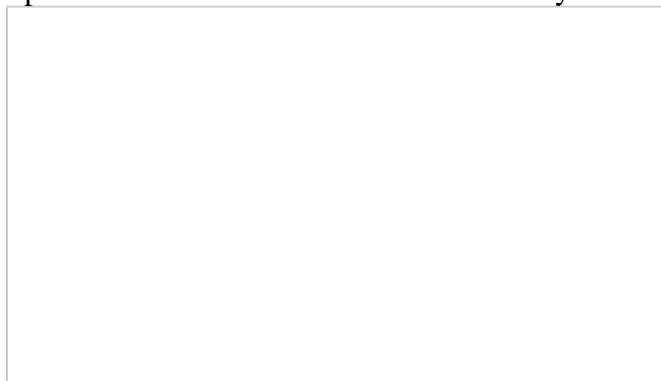
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## Experience Legendary Food Festivals

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 an impressive lineup 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 frog legs. There's even a frog-leg eating contest for the bravest participants. 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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.



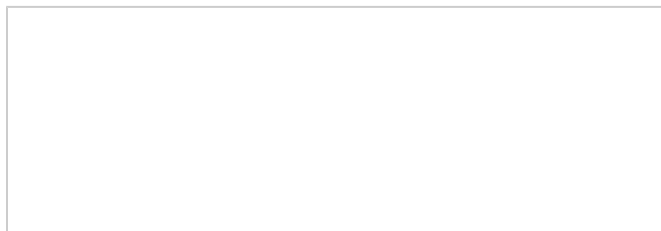
## Spend the Day Shopping, Sipping, and Antiquing

The majestic streets of downtown Crowley are a terrific place to take pictures and meander among [locally-owned shops](#). When you need a break, stop in at [Cakebar](#) because dessert is always a good idea. 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.

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## 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, it's 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.



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## 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 Tourism](#) for more information on the amazing things to do in this charming and culturally-rich Louisiana parish.