

An Acadian Cultural Adventure

Cajun Country, Louisiana

Seven Day Tour ~ March 18-24, 2025

Highlights: Nonstop, Roundtrip Airfare Newark to New Orleans • Two Historically Charming Nights at Maison Mouton Plantation B&B, Lafayette • Three Alluring Nights at The Myrtles Plantation, St. Francisville • One Peaceful Night at De La Bleu B&B, Mandeville • Wetlands Acadian Cultural Center • Jean Lafitte National Historical Park's Barataria Preserve • Cajun Town Thibodaux • Tabasco Factory Tour • Jungle Gardens • Rip Van Winkle Gardens • Shadows on the Teche Plantation • Vermillionville Historic Village • Cute Cajun Grand Coteau • Quaint St. Francisville • Rosedown Plantation • Afton Villa Gardens • Locust Grove State Historic Site • Greenwood Plantation • Bluebonnet Swamp Nature Center • Cultural Covington • HJ Smith & Sons General Store & Museum • Abita Mystery House • Memorable Mandeville • All Breakfasts • Five Lunches • One Dinner • Fully Escorted

An incredibly diverse and fascinating region outside of New Orleans was created by the unique culture of Acadians whose difficult journey from Canada to Louisiana has evolved into today's Cajun Country. As we explore this historically interesting area and culture, our experience will teach us what it means to be Cajun! Cajun culture stemming from the French Canadian colonists who settled the challenging topography of grassy prairies, swamps, bayous, and marshlands of south Louisiana has remained surprisingly intact for three centuries. It's a place filled with a certain joie de vivre and passion for music, dancing, and having a good time along with a culture filled with positivity and freedom of expression. It's one that still uses its own language and where food is an integral part of its lifestyle. The rustic, country style of cooking that arose from what was available in the newly settled Louisiana environment just may be the best meal of your life! We'll follow the bayou as it flows through wetlands and authentic Cajun communities where we'll discover generations of unique traditions, way of life and flavor of each area. We'll step among the hauntingly beautiful swamps and bayous whose landscape has been the main source of inspiration for Cajun culture and go back in time among the beauty of historic plantation homes and their gardens. So why not soak up a warmer climate and delve into the relaxed Cajun Culture on our Louisiana Adventure!

"There are parts of America that are special, unique, unlike anywhere else. Cultures all their own, kept close, much loved but largely misunderstood. The vast patchwork of saltwater marshes, bayous, and prairie land that make up Cajun country is one of those places." - Anthony Bourdain

Day 1. After we land, we're heading straight to the best lunch you will ever have! Now it's time for a walk, so let's step among Louisiana's wild wetlands in the Barataria Preserve, part of the Jean Lafitte National Historical Park. A lovely boardwalk will lead us through the scenic preserve where we will first-hand experience the unique ecosystem that sustained a culture of people, present and past. If you're not up for a walk, explore the Visitor center where films and exhibits explain the wetlands habitat. As we move more into Cajun Country, we'll stop in the small community of Thibodaux where a second part of the Jean Lafitte



Cajun Fun!



Cajun Country Plantation

National Historical Park awaits exploration. At the Wetlands Acadian Cultural Center, we'll step into history and discover the cultural influence and journey of the Acadians and how they made the banks of the Bayou Lafourche their home. Wander through the fascinating array of exhibits, photographs, and artifacts that date back over 100 years. Onto the Sterling Grove Historic District of Lafayette where we'll get comfy at the historically charming Maison Mouton. If you're up for a bite, enjoy a delicious dinner out at a local place nearby before resting our weary heads for the night.

Day 2. We'll start the day off hot with a self-guided tour through the infamous Tabasco Factory, a recipe created right here on Avery Island in 1868 that has been passed down for over 5 generations. Built on a salt dome, it's a mysteriously beautiful place where the red peppers grow and here the secrets of this super sauce will be revealed along with the family who created it. Let's go for a stroll in nature at the nearby Jungle Gardens, a former private estate turned botanical heaven and see what wonders await. It's time for a delectable, included Cajun lunch in the coolest local spot. Now we need to walk off all those delicious calories, so let's explore a charming place filled with surprises and adventure around every corner. In 1870, the actor Joseph Jefferson who played Rip Van Winkle on stage over 4500 times built a mansion among the beauty of Jefferson Island, and today we can wander his whimsical Rip Van Winkle Gardens and practice the story's message to embrace change and live in the moment. Later this evening, let's head out to downtown Lafayette where you can choose a nice Cajun dinner.

Day 3. Set among towering live oaks lies Shadows on the Teche, a sugar plantation built on the banks of the Bayou Teche that paints a vivid picture of life for the plantation owners and the enslaved who lived and worked there. This is our first stop where we'll delve into the history and legacy of the Weeks family before and after the Civil War. Next we step into Vermillionville, a living history museum along the banks of the Bayou Vermillion where we'll get a taste of life for the 18th century Acadian settlers among recreated period homes, costumed artisans, music and best of all an included Cajun lunch. One more stop on the way to St. Francisville in the tiny, historic Cajun town of Grand Coteau and learn all the secrets it hides. Our last stop is our home for the next three nights at The Myrtles Plantation, a circa 1796 antebellum mansion with an extensive veranda surrounded by exquisite ornamental ironwork, hand painted stained glass and frieze work. Step inside history and get comfy or wander the beautiful grounds before enjoying dinner on your own at your leisure here at the plantation, or out at a local spot nearby.

Day 4. Since we haven't had enough plantations, there's one more to visit! At Rosedown Plantation we'll walk in the footsteps of the Turnbells whose extreme wealth was a result of the enormous rows of cotton plants that once grew among the scenic hills and valleys. On our guided tour of the Big House, we'll be wowed by luxurious European furnishings, elaborate wallpapering and formal gardens that remain intact from 1835. This afternoon we'll experience Southern hospitality as we explore the quaint town of St. Francisville. A stroll through its historic center awakens a sense of place and an awareness of history with two centuries of architecture and lifestyles. It's here where you can find a tasty lunch, have time to wander, and walk through history in the Royal Street Neighborhood. Once back at our own plantation, we'll delve into the history of the Myrtles on a guided tour that will offer a tangible connection to the past. Enjoy the rest of your night with an included dinner at Restaurant 1796.

Day 5. We start off the day with a historic, mid-19th century, enchanting garden that will leave us captivated by its beauty and rich history. Afton Villa Gardens was once part of a grand estate that fell victim to a devastating fire whose ruins remain. As we wander, the gardens will reveal the story of a succession of people who have owned and loved it through over a century and a half, all of whom contributed something to its beauty and in turn, have left something of themselves. Now it's time for a tasty, included lunch in downtown St. Francisville. Next, we visit the Locust Grove State Historic Site, a representation of small family cemeteries that were a part of plantation life. Here we can wander and discover the tale of those who laid the foundation of Louisiana as it exists today. We can't end the day without one more truly magical and majestic place, the Greek Revival style Greenwood Plantation. Its 28 original columns still stand despite another devastating fire and although rebuilt, the mansion stands substantially as it did over a century ago amidst alleys of majestic moss draped oaks. Tonight choose to stay at the plantation for dinner on your own or come out to a different local spot near downtown St. Francisville.

Day 6. Today we head back south towards the Northshore, Louisiana's Easy Escape, where our enchanting journey will lead us through more vibrant cultures, tantalizing cuisine and fabulous landscapes. Let's step into nature at the hidden treasure Bluebonnet Swamp Nature Center and follow the gravel paths and boardwalks that wind through cypress tupelo habitats filled with diverse wildlife. Take time to visit the exhibits with live animal displays, wood carvings and a real working beehive. A bit of treasure hunting is next at the Denham Springs Antique Village where you may find something you didn't know you were waiting for. Onto the charming historic district of Covington where we'll enjoy an included local Cajun lunch and take in the sights. We have one more intriguing stop filled with an explosion of oddball collections, art and humor all mixed together like ingredients for some kind of great cosmic gumbo! You never know what's around the next corner at the Abita Mystery House so explore the

eccentric and see what you find among the labyrinth of folk art and found objects. Last stop Mandeville, a sweet Southern town draped across the northern shores of Lake Pontchartrain. After checking into our charming B&B, enjoy the night as you please with a choice of two local spots for a nice dinner on your own.

Day 7. Today we must tear ourselves away from this cheery culture and Southern hospitality and make our way back home filled with Cajun joie de vivre. © 2024 Group Tours & Travel

Air transportation is provided by United Airlines. A surcharge will apply if United Airlines increases the price of its airfare. One piece of luggage per person (baggage fee by United is not included) and one small carry-on are permitted. **A valid, government-issued picture ID is required to board the plane.**

Thursday, March 13: Flight # departs Newark at AM and arrives in New Orleans at PM

Wednesday, March 19: Flight # departs New Orleans at PM and arrives in Newark at PM

*Due to the changes in airline booking policies, airfare will need to be booked before the cancellation date, Once flights are booked, we cannot refund that portion of the tour unless you'd like to pay an additional cost for refundable tickets.

*Pricing is based upon estimated airfares. Due to the erratic nature of airline pricing, the trip price may need to be increased accordingly at the time of airline booking. We will notify you of any increases before airfare is purchased. We will do our best to find the most affordable airfare while maintaining non-stop flights.

Price per person is \$2,995 Twin & \$3,775 Single. No reservations accepted without a deposit of \$350 per person. Make checks payable to "Group Tours & Travel" and mail to our address above. Final payment is due January 25, 2025. There are no refunds if cancellation occurs after January 25, 2025. Travel protection/cancellation coverage is available and highly recommended, but not included. Educated Wanderer is not responsible for any delays, cancellations, injuries or circumstances beyond its control and reserves the right to change the itinerary. All trip components are subject to change in accordance with Government, State and Local guidelines and/or mandates. This tour will run rain or shine. Visit www.educatedwanderer.com for photos and additional tours.

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Legal Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Zip Code: _____

Rooming with: _____ Phone: _____

Add email for registration confirmation/final payment notice: _____