

Cajun Country

When people think of Louisiana, this is the image that comes to mind: miles of bayou, sawdust-strewn shacks, a unique take on French and lots of good food. Welcome to Cajun Country, also called Acadiana for the French settlers exiled from L'Acadie (now Nova Scotia, Canada) by the British in 1755. Cajuns are the largest French-speaking minority in the USA, and while you may not hear French spoken at the grocery store, it's still present in radio shows, church services and the sing-song lilt of local English accents.

Observers have repeatedly remarked upon two distinct ethnic qualities in a very positive light, namely: family ties and hospitality. Travelers in the south have commented on the friendliness with which the Cajun people welcomed guests and strangers into their homes, and also their willingness to share whatever they had, even if it was just a little. Inspired not by charity, but more by hospitality (which is an inherited trait), these people opened the doors to their homes to all and sundry that cared to grace their doorsteps.

We look forward to having you grace our doorstep and experience all that the Louisiana Region AACA has to offer on the 35th Annual Founder's Tour!

Tour Hosts,
Ron & Dianne Sonnier
337-581-7776 • rsonnier@cox.net

Hosted by the
AACA
Louisiana Region



HOTEL INFORMATION:

Hilton Garden Inn

2350 West Congress

Lafayette, La. 70506

Ph: 337-291-1977

Fax 337-237-0400

Room rates from \$139 -\$159

Return your tour request card from
AACA magazine or call AACA to request
a tour packet at 717-534-1910

Touring Cajun Country

35th Annual
AACA

Founders Tour

March 17-23, 2024
Lafayette, La



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Come Tour With Us!



Day one:

We will head to the small rural Acadia Parish Community of Iota to visit and experience a Louisiana delicacy, crawfish aka the “mud bug”, being harvested, packed for retail sales and served for our lunch. Crawfish will be prepared in a Cajun delicacy known as Crawfish Etouffee, a spicy Cajun stew made with seafood and Cajun Trinity (onions, green bell peppers and celery). Then we’re off to the neighboring city of Crowley, the Parish seat of Acadia Parish for an authentic Cajun music concert in the restored Rice Theater dating back to the 1930’s.



Day Two:

We go south moving closer to the coast and marshland to Iberia Parish, the area that was known to be frequented often by pirate Jean Lafitte years ago. There we will visit Rip Van Winkle Gardens and the home of Joseph Jefferson who was an actor that played the role of Rip Van Winkle. The home is located on Lake Peigneur, which is situated over a salt dome. In 1980 a drilling oil well pierced the top of the salt dome causing

a giant whirlpool that drained the lake, consuming the derrick, barges and several acres of land. Luckily no lives were lost and the lake is now as beautiful as it was then. From there we travel to Avery Island to visit the factory that produces the world famous Tabasco Hot Sauce, where we will enjoy lunch.



Day Three:

We will travel to New Iberia, the Parish Seat of Iberia Parish where Shadows on the Teche, a former plantation home now on Main Street and sits on Bayou Teche. Next is a visit to the Bayou Teche Museum where you will learn that Bayou Teche was once the main course of the Mississippi River a loooooong time ago. Then we go to St. Martinville, and as you can guess, is the Parish Seat of St. Martin Parish and the third oldest city in Louisiana. The first Acadians (Cajuns) arrived around 1765 in St. Martinville. You will get to see the Evangeline Oak made famous in Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s poem Evangeline. We will also visit and tour the historic St. Martin de Tour Catholic Church, considered the Mother Church of the Acadians. We will have lunch at St. John’s Restaurant on the banks of Bayou Teche.

Day Four:

We travel westward today to visit Jennings, Parish Seat of Jefferson Davis Parish. We will visit The Ziegler Museum which houses artwork of world-renowned artists such as J. J. Audubon, Clementine Hunter and many more. Just down the street the W. H. Tupper General Merchandise Museum. This museum was once a working General Store that closed in 1949 and all stock in the store was left on the shelves. This is truly



a walk back in time. Then we will visit Gator Chateau where, if you are daring enough, you can handle a live Alligator. In between all the sightseeing we will of course have time to enjoy more delicious Cajun cuisine.



Day Five:

We’ll save wear and tear on the old cars by staying in Lafayette, which as you can imagine, is the Parish Seat of Lafayette Parish. Lafayette was first named Vermillionville before the name was changed. We will visit Vermillionville Historic Village, which occupies a 23-acre site consisting of a replica of an early Acadian Village. The village sits on the banks of the Vermillion River. Lunch will be in Vermillionville where you will be able to sample different foods that exemplify Cajun Cuisine at its best.

So, to the sum it up, be prepared to learn what Cajuns are, how they live, and not all of Louisiana is Cajun Country! Actually, only 19 parishes are considered Cajun. Oh, you might want to pack loose fitting clothes!