

## Population

City of Lafayette – 124,276 • Lafayette Parish – 230,845

## What is Acadiana

Acadiana is made up of 22 parishes with a strong French Acadian culture, language and traditions. Lafayette is the hub of the eight-parish heart of Acadiana. It includes the parishes of Acadia, Iberia, Evangeline, Lafayette, Vermilion, St. Mary, St. Martin, and St. Landry. It is the financial, service, medical, educational, cultural, energy, and entertainment and consumer capital of Acadiana.

## What is a Cajun

Many of the residents of Lafayette Parish are called Acadians or "Cajuns." The name comes from the Acadian settlers who, in 1755, were forced to leave their native Canada and find a home elsewhere. Their French-Canadian customs, language and Catholic religion came with them as did their love for merriment, strong work ethic, and ability to live off the land. About 45 percent of the people in Acadiana still speak French as a second language.

## History

The Lafayette area was first settled in 1763 when exiled Acadians from Nova Scotia reached Louisiana. Many were assigned lands in and near Lafayette on the Vermillion River. In 1821 early settler Jean Mouton, a successful cotton planter, donated over five arpents of land to trustees of the Catholic congregation. Mouton conceived the idea of laying out a town called Vermilionville named for the river on which it was situated. Vermilionville was originally incorporated in 1836 and reincorporated in 1869. In 1884 the act of incorporation was amended to change the name to Lafayette for the Marquis de Lafayette who fought in the American Revolution. Lafayette Parish has been as we know it today since 1823, one of the smallest parishes in the state with an area of 178,560 acres or 279 square miles.

## Cajun & Zydeco Music

Cajun music is the product of creolization, like most other features of Louisiana French culture. The Cajun sounds are a blend of German, Spanish, Scottish, Irish, Anglo-American, Afro-Caribbean and American Indian influences with a base of western French and French Acadian folk tradition. Cajun music is most noted for its up-beat tempos, cheerful lyrics and peculiar dance rhythms. Zydeco (pronounced Zah-dee-ko) is the most contemporary expression of black Creole music. Zydeco, born out of a music called "lala", is a unique form of American-Creole music native to Southwest Louisiana. The music is said to have originated from many sources, but the influence of the blues and soul music is most significant in its development. The word "Zydeco" has also been translated to mean "snap bean."

## Visit our Information Center

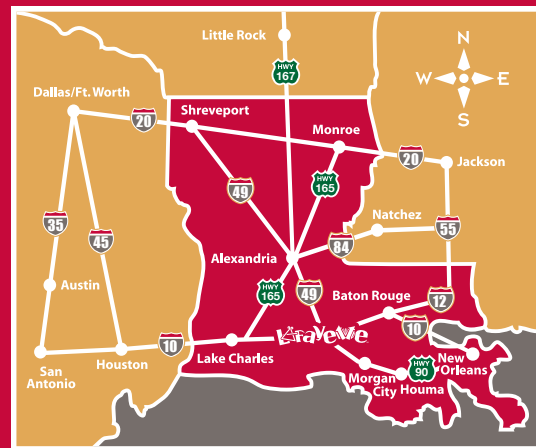
Intersection of I-10 & I-49  
1400 N.W. Evangeline Thruway  
I-10 Exit 103-A  
I-49 South of I-10

## Hours of operation

Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.  
Saturday-Sunday, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

## DISTANCES - MAJOR CITIES

Alexandria	89 mi. / 143 km
Atlanta	580 mi. / 933 km
Baton Rouge	59 mi. / 98 km
Dallas	391 mi. / 629 km
Houma	102 mi. / 164 km
Lake Charles	75 mi. / 121 km
Memphis	438 mi. / 705 km
Monroe	184 mi. / 296 km
Morgan City	68 mi. / 109 km
Natchez	134 mi. / 216 km
New Orleans (via I-10)	135 mi. / 217 km
New Orleans (via Hwy.90)	153 mi. / 246 km
Shreveport	212 mi. / 341 km
Houston	217 mi. / 349 km



PHOTOS BY DENNY CULBERT, TRAVIS GAUTHIER, PHILIP GOULD, KENT HUTSLAR, GARY KNOWLES, ERIC LINDBERG, NATHANIEL MARTIN, TIM MUELLER AND JAMIE ORILLON.



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*Food*

Nowhere in the world is the variety greater and the food more flavorful than in Lafayette. The city boasts a tantalizing selection of restaurants, which offer Cajun and Creole delicacies such as gumbo, crawfish, boudin, rice and gravy, jambalaya and so much more. From elegant French cuisine with white tablecloths to good old fashioned home cooking with a white paper napkin, Lafayette's menus hit the spot.

*Music*

Born out of the enduring spirit of the Acadians and Creoles, Cajun and Zydeco music is as much a part of the Lafayette landscape as the meandering bayous and moss-draped cypress trees. To find true Cajun, Creole and Zydeco music, visit one of the many dancehalls or attend one of our year-round festivals. Visitors are always welcome and eager dance partners are never far off. You'll soon learn to two-step and waltz to the rhythms of accordions, fiddles and triangles.

*Culture*

Lafayette is at the heart of Louisiana's Cajun & Creole Country, an area known as the Happiest City in America. The region's history dates back to the 18th century, when Canada's Acadians were expelled in the late 1700s and settled in Louisiana. More than two centuries later tourists come to Lafayette for a rare taste of the genuine Acadian experience, from traditional food fixings and music to the warm hospitality that greets you at every turn.