

South Louisiana Loop Tour Arriving Houston/ IAH Airport Sample FIT Itinerary & Options

Louisiana's convention bureaus look forward to working with you to customize an itinerary that suits your clientele. This sample itinerary is intended to provide options for a loop tour through South Louisiana.

Day One

Arrive **Houston, Texas** via IAH airport

Pick-up rental vehicle and head for [Lake Charles, Louisiana](#) to begin your South Louisiana tour!

Take Interstate 10 east to **Lake Charles** for dinner and overnight accommodations

[**Lake Charles Convention & Visitors Bureau, Anne Taber Klenke, aklenke@visitlakecharles.org, 800-456-7952, <http://www.visitlakecharles.org/>]**

Day Two

- 1 hour or more Tour of the [Historic Charpentier District](#)
Charpentier Historic District: Covers 40 blocks of downtown Lake Charles. Homes dating from the late 1800s to the early 1900s. Free tour app, in multiple languages, available – search “Lake Charles Historic”
- 30 minutes [Mardi Gras Museum of Imperial Calcasieu](#), 809 Kirby St., Lake Charles, LA, 337-430-0043
www.swlamardigras.com
This museum features the largest Mardi Gras costume display in the world. The rooms display the history of the festival, the Captains’ Den, costume design, king cakes, and the marvel of 12th Night. Also showcased are ballroom costumes, a Mardi Gras parade display, including a parade float that everyone can climb aboard.
- Dining Choose from a huge variety of cuisines at local restaurants including, of course, Cajun. For a list of the top 20 restaurants, as voted by the locals, visit <http://www.visitlakecharles.org/restaurants-culinary/top20/>
- Other high-end dining options for FIT’s, in addition to those located at our casino resorts, are:
- Harlequin Steaks and Seafood** - Memorable service and fine, quality steaks and seafood for nearly 60 years. <http://www.harlequinsteaks.com/>
- Mazen’s** – Serving exquisite Continental and Mediterranean cuisine. <http://mazengrill.com/>
- Pat’s of Henderson** - Offering the best in Louisiana seafood and steak inspired by their Cajun heritage and love for great food for over 50 year. <http://patsofhenderson.com/>
- Restaurant Calla** – The freshest locally sources foods prepared creatively in a laid-back and comfortable atmosphere. <http://restaurantcalla.com/>
- 2-3 hours [Southwest Louisiana Boudin Trail](#)
Considered a staple snack in the southern regions of Louisiana, boudin (pronounced boo-dan) is made of varying amounts of rice, pork meat, liver, onions, parsley and dry seasonings. Bought by the pound, boudin is Southwest Louisiana's favorite finger food. And each boudin master has their own secret recipe...follow-the trail and try them all!
- 45 minutes [Creole Nature Trail Adventure Point](#)
Kick off your Creole Nature Trail journey at the new Creole Nature Trail Adventure Point—a free, fun attraction that immerses you in nature and Louisiana’s unique culture. Through imaginative, hands-on displays sure to inspire, you can learn the best places to spot alligators and migrating songbirds, take a peek at wildlife found in bayous and marshes, smell mouthwatering aromas of Cajun/Creole cooking, and “play along” with a Cajun and Zydeco band.
- 3-6 hours [Creole Nature Trail All-American Road](#), 337-436-9588

One of only 43 designated All-American Roads in the entire United States, the Creole Nature Trail is a journey into the untamed wilderness of Louisiana's Outback. World-class bird and alligator populations make this byway a natural wonder while top-notch fishing, hunting, crabbing, boating, nature photography and other outdoor opportunities distinguish the byway as a recreational paradise. Free self-guided tour app in English, German, French, Spanish, Mandarin Chinese and Japanese, just search "Creole."

Special attractions along the Creole Nature Trail:

Grosse Savanne Eco-Tours, 358 Chalkley Rd., Bell City, LA, 337-310-4260

2-hour fully-guided boat tour (maximum of 4 guests) of private 500 acre marshland where you can view several bird rookeries, numerous migratory and residential bird species, along with various small mammals, reptiles, insects, flowering plants and numerous plant communities. (\$75/person, other tour options also available and noted on website, reservations must be made in advance)

Charter Fishing: Just 20 minutes south of Lake Charles or Sulphur, LA lies some of the best saltwater fishing in the world, especially for redfish and speckled trout. Numerous professional charter guides are available with the boat, bait, tackle and experience to make sure you not only fish but catch! www.visitlakecharles.org/charter

Additional activity options:

- 1.5 hours Experience an exquisite Southwest Louisiana sunset from the water with **Paddle Up**. Paddle Up will provide stand up paddle board, paddle, and life jacket. Paddle Up guides will give beginner instruction while allowing repeat or seasoned customers to warm-up on their own. After initial warm up the group will head out to circle Prien Lake and enjoy the breathtaking sunset on the water. (Already an experienced paddler and want to go out on your own, paddle board rentals as well as private paddle board lessons are also available.)
- 3 hours Enjoy an intimate hands-on cooking class, followed by a family-style meal of what you and your classmates cooked, with Chef Nicole Butler of **The Velvet Pig**. Classes range from Cajun/Creole, to French Influence and Thai, with Vegetarian options available for any of these.
- 30 minutes Experience the brand new state-of-the-art **Crying Eagle Brewing** constructed from the ground up to produce great craft beer and be a place to enjoy it. Features a custom 30 barrel brewhouse for our large distributed brews while the "Brewer's Playground" pilot system is for taproom-exclusive brews along with a taproom with plenty of comfortable indoor seating made for sampling our rotating line of beers. Or, step outside to the beer garden to relax and enjoy Louisiana's beautiful outdoors while playing a game of washers or bean bag toss. Tours are free. Tasting flights, consisting of 4 - 8oz pours, are regularly \$10 (\$8 rate for receptive tour operator bookings)

Casino gaming: Lake Charles/Southwest Louisiana boasts four casino resorts offering Las Vegas-style gaming with all the amenities!

L'Auberge Casino Resort, 777 Avenue L'Auberge, Lake Charles, LA

26-story casino resort with 1,000 casually elegant rooms and 147 luxury suites. 70,000 square foot casino with 70 table games and 1,600+ slot machines. Contraband Bayou® Golf Club, an 18-hole Tom Fazio championship course. Eight innovative restaurants, world class spa and pool with a lazy river and exquisite shopping at The Shops at L'Auberge.

Golden Nugget Lake Charles, 2550 Golden Nugget Blvd. , Lake Charles, LA

Full service casino resort featuring 740 Luxury rooms & suites (soon to be 1,040!), one-of-a-kind beachfront pool and marina, 18-hole championship golf course, world-class spa, luxury retail promenade, nine incredible dining options (including Vic & Anthony's, Grotto, Saltgrass Steak House, and more,) not to mention 1,600 Slots, 60 Tables & a Poker Room.

Isle of Capri Casino & Hotel, 100 Westlake Ave., Westlake, LA

Enjoy the newest, hottest slots and over 40 table games along with a live poker room. Pick from three savory dining options and two luxurious hotels.

Delta Downs Racetrack Casino & Hotel, 2727 Delta Downs Drive, Vinton, LA

Over 1,600 of the hottest slots with Texas-sized aisles plus live Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse racing action from fall through summer. Off-track betting from the country's best tracks year-round. Fine dining, buffet and food court and well-appointed hotel.

Golf: Five public golf courses, each designed to preserve the authenticity of the area as well as provide an unforgettable golfing experience, feature lush scenery and championship golf for all levels of play.

The Country Club at the Golden Nugget, 2550 Golden Nugget Blvd., Lake Charles

18 hole, par 72 golf course designed by the award winning Todd Eckinrode and Origins Golf Design. Located right on the bayou, the course has Miniverde greens and Celebration tees, fairways and roughs. The most unique feature is the 15+ acres of waste bunkers.

The National Golf Club of Louisiana, 1400 National Dr., Westlake, LA

18-hole, par-72 course set in a mature growth pine forest, featuring an abundance of water hazards, preserved wetlands, and roughly 90 bunkers.

Gray Plantation Golf Course, 6150 Graywood Pkwy., Lake Charles, LA

60 acres of lakes coming into play on 12 holes of veteran course architect Rocky Roquemore's Calcasieu River course, which includes 94 bunkers and towering pines at most every turn. Particularly impressive are the club's four dynamic par 3s, two of which feature island greens.

Contraband Bayou® Golf Club, L'Auberge Casino Resort, Lake Charles, LA

Designed by world-renowned golf architect Tom Fazio, this 7,077-yard, par-71 championship golf course features a combination of aquatic and natural vegetation winding around eight spectacular lakes with Champion Ultradwarf Bermuda grass greens.

Frasch Park Golf Course, 400 Picard Rd., Sulphur, LA

18-hole, par 71 lay out with a flat and open terrain with a canal winding among the holes. Majestic oak trees, numerous bunkers, two island greens and a canal provide deceptive barriers. Mini Verde contoured greens.

Head east to Lacassine and Jennings, Louisiana on your way to overnight in Lafayette

1 hour Distillery tour and tasting at [Louisiana Spirits](#), home of Bayou Rum
Louisiana Spirits is the largest private distillery in the U.S. The facility offers distillery tours, a rum tasting bar and gift shop. Bayou Rum is handcrafted on site the Louisiana way – in a traditional copper pot using 100 percent natural, unrefined Louisiana cane sugar and molasses.
20909 South I-10 Frontage Rd, Lacassine, LA, (337) 588-5800

30 minutes [Gator Chateau](#), 100 Rue de l' Acadie, (I-10 Park Exit 64), Jennings, LA, 337-821-5521,
Interact with live alligators and learn about them! We foster orphaned baby alligators until they are able to be released back into their natural habitat. Our alligator docent will educate you in all things Alligator! Our babies are hand fed so they don't bite. You can hold them and take your picture!

1 hour Take Interstate 10 east to **Lafayette** for dinner and overnight accommodations
[**Lafayette Convention & Visitors Commission**, **Eugenie Mitchell**, Eugenie@lafayettetravel.com, 800-346-1958,
<http://lafayettetravel.com/>]

The perfect end to a fun day, dinner & dancing! Experience the “joie de vivre” (joy for living) of the Cajun & Creole people of South Louisiana as you dine on delicious Cajun food and dance to the wonderful tunes of a local Cajun band at **Prejean's**, **Randol's** or **Pont Breaux** Cajun Restaurants.

Day Three

1-1/2 hours Enjoy a swamp tour adventure into the interior of one of America's greatest river swamps, the *Atchafalaya Basin* or at beautiful **Lake Martin**. Get ready for an adventure through moss-draped trees, where you will experience lush vegetation, birds and alligators. Young and not-so young will enjoy these tours through one of the most unique places on earth.

2 hours Learn about the Acadians “Cajuns” and Creole cultures at our historic villages **Acadian Village** or **Vermilionville** or several other culture rich stops like the **Jean Lafitte Acadiana Cultural Center** or the home of Evangeline- **St. Martinville**.

1 hour Live like a local...experience why Lafayette was voted “**Tastiest Town of the South**” by Southern Living & “Best Food City in USA for Small Towns” by Rand McNally & USA Today. Taste boudin and cracklins on the Cajun Boudin Trail or adventure Downtown Lafayette for a wide variety of unique and local food.

30 minutes Take US Highway 90 South to **New Iberia**
[**Iberia Parish Convention & Visitors Bureau**, www.iberiatravel.com, 888-942-3742]

1-1/2 hours The **TABASCO®** Factory & Country Store located on beautiful Avery Island is one of the most visited attractions in Cajun Country. See where the famous hot sauce is bottled and labeled, visit the museum and choose from a multitude of TABASCO® retail products and sample many of the many food products.

1-1/2 hours **Jungle Gardens** - Jungle Gardens, also on Avery Island and home of "Bird City" and founded by E. A. McIlhenny, is a three mile driving tour around the remains of an unusual nursery featuring 170 acres of extraordinary, beautiful, strange, and useful plants, as well as a refuge for many animal species of special concern.

45 minutes Take LA Highway 90 South to Houma for dinner and overnight accommodations
[**Houma Area Convention & Visitors Bureau**, Hal Moser, harold.moser@houmatravel.com, 800-688-2732, www.houmatravel.com]

Day Four

1 hour **Swamp Tour** - Venture into Houma’s swamps and wetlands, the natural environment of exotic birds, brilliant flora, nutrias, deer, wildcats, black bears, otters, and a wide assortment of reptiles, including the ancient and ferocious kings of the swamp –alligators!

1 hour **Greenwood Gator Farm** - Visit an alligator farm and processing plant and learn all about alligators up close... and we mean, REAL CLOSE! Not only will you see these large reptilian monsters, you’ll actually be able to hold live baby alligators and may even see them hatch from eggs!

2 hours **Southdown Plantation** and **Ardoyne Plantation** – Houma is fortunate to have two plantation homes on Cajun folklife. Southdown includes a fascinating Mardi Gras exhibit as well as an exhibit celebrating the importance of the Houmas Indians. Ardoyne is a rare example of Victorian Gothic architecture.

1-1/2 hours **Chauvin Sculpture Garden** - This is one of the top three best examples of American Folk Art in the United States with more than 100 life size sculptures exhibited and made entirely of concrete. It also features a 45 foot tall lighthouse that is composed of 7 thousand bricks. Begun in 1990, it is a fascinating and unique collection of artwork created by Kenny Hill and his own personal struggle between good and evil.

1 hour **Bayou Terrebonne Waterlife Museum**, 7910 Park Avenue, Houma, LA, 985-580-7200;
www.terrebonnewaterlifemuseum.org
A museum dedicated to honoring the economic, social and historical culture of Terrebonne Parish. Open Tuesday – Friday from 10:00am to 5:00pm and Saturdays from Noon to 4:00pm,

1 hour **Regional Military Museum**, 1154 Barrow Street, Houma, LA, 985-873-8200;
www.regioanalmilitarymuseum.com
A museum that honors the heroes that fought for the liberty of America. A new facility will be completed in the fall of 2014 that will house President Eisenhower’s Air Force One! Open Monday through Friday from 10:00am to 4:00pm.

Dining/Nightlife Enjoy fresh gulf seafood, locally grown vegetables prepared with a Cajun flair at our many family owned restaurants throughout Houma. Then dance the night away or just listen to live Cajun music. If you would prefer, visit our Downtown Art Gallery 630, 985-851-2198 or go shopping in one of our many shops. Whatever you decide, you’ll have fun!

Day Five

25 minutes Take LA Hwy. 24 North to **Thibodaux**

[**Bayou Lafourche Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, Wilma Harvey, wharvey@visitlafourche.com, 877-537-5800, <http://visitlafourche.com/>]**

- 1 hour **Donner-Peltier Distillery**, 1635 St. Patrick Hwy., Thibodaux, LA, 985-446-0002; dp-distillers.com
Thibodaux's first craft distillery produces handcrafted vodka & rum from all Louisiana products. Their rum, Rougaroux, is named after the legendary creature said to roam the local swamps & sugar cane fields.
- 1 hour **Jean Lafitte National Historical Park & Preserve, Wetlands Acadian Cultural Center**, 314 St. Mary Street (LA Hwy. 1), Thibodaux, LA, 985-448-1375
Learn the story of the Acadians who settled along the bayous, in the swamps and wetlands of southeastern Louisiana through indoor exhibits and an outdoor boardwalk along Bayou Lafourche. Park rangers are on hand to answer questions.
- 40 minutes **Laurel Valley Village Sugar Plantation & Museum**, 595 LA Hwy. 308, Thibodaux, LA, 985-446-7456
The largest surviving 19th & 20th century sugar plantation complex in the United States featuring over 50 original structures. The general store contains many antiques and farming implements.
- 45 minutes **E. D. White Historic Site/Louisiana State Museum**, 2295 St. Mary Street (LA Hwy. 1), Thibodaux, LA, 985-447-0915
1840's Acadian style plantation boyhood home of Edward Douglass White, U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice. Exhibits of the White family as well as area culture. Outdoor kitchen, centuries old live oak trees & picnic area.
- 1 hour Take LA Highway 90 to New Orleans for dinner and overnight accommodations
[**New Orleans Metropolitan Convention & Visitors Bureau, Leslie Straughan, lstraughan@neworleanscvb.com, (504) 566-5011, <http://www.neworleanscvb.com/>]**

Day Six

- As time allows Experience **Jackson Square**, the **St. Louis Cathedral** and the **French Market**. Snack on beignets and café au lait at **Café Du Monde**.
- 3 hours or as time allows Walk over to the **French Quarter** to see the incredible blend of architectures, shop at boutiques and art galleries and enjoy a spectacular meal at one of the many local restaurants in the quarter.
- 3 hours **Steamboat Natchez Dinner/Jazz Cruise**
Savor the beauty and romance of the New Orleans skyline aboard the 7:00 pm Dinner/Jazz Cruise on the authentic Steamboat NATCHEZ. Freshly prepared casual buffet-style dining and live jazz music by the Grammy nominated "Dukes of Dixieland" (Reservations recommended)

Day Seven

- 1 hour Take Interstate 10 west to the Great River Road (LA Hwy. 18) and **New Orleans Plantation Country**
[**New Orleans Plantation Country, Megan Ryburn, megan@visitnopc.com, 866-204-7782, <http://www.neworleansplantationcountry.com/>]**
- 1-1/2 hours **Cajun Pride Swamp Tours, 110 Frenier Road, LaPlace, LA 70068, (985) 651-4477**
Where the gators are waiting! New Orleans Plantation Country is not only known for its historic plantations, but also its mysterious swamps. Tour the famous Manchac Swamp for a unique journey back to the early days of Louisiana bayou and mysterious swamp explorations.
- 3 hours **Oak Alley Plantation, 3645 Hwy 18, Vacherie, LA 70090, (225) 265-2151**
Begin your journey back in time as you tour the lush grounds and mansion of, Oak Alley. At this iconic setting renowned for its quarter mile alley of 300 year old live oaks, a timeless story of romance, wealth, greed and tragedy unfolds. After, enjoy a southern Louisiana-style lunch at Oak Alley Restaurant, housed in a 19th century cottage.

- 1-1/2 hours **Laura Plantation, 2247 Hwy 18, Vacherie, LA 70090, (225) 265-7690**
 Tour and hear stories based upon 5000 pages of documents and personal memoirs of life on the 1805 Creole Plantation. Here, two centuries of stories about the daily plantation life of Creole owners, women, slaves, and children come alive. Learn more about the Creole families who lived charmed and tragic lives apart from mainstream America for over 200 years.
- Overnight Finish off your day at **Houmas House Plantation & Gardens**, where you enter the world of the Sugar Cane Baron. Explore the exotic gardens, rare art, lavish furnishings and fine dining of this Grand Sugar Palace. Enjoy dinner in the tradition of Old Louisiana Dining. Executive Chef, Jeremy Langlois has created menus that will delight and please the finest of guests, and present you with an experience rivaling those of the great Sugar Barons of the 1800's, **Latil's Landing or The Carriage House**. Unwind, and spend a wonderful quiet evening in luxurious cottages at **The Inn at Houmas House**.
Houmas House Plantation & Gardens, 40136 LA 942, Darrow, LA 70525, (225) 473-9380

Day Eight

- 1 hour Take Interstate 10 west to **Baton Rouge**
[Visit Baton Rouge, Tracy Francis, tracy@visitbatonrouge.com, 225-382-3578, <http://www.visitbatonrouge.com/>]
- 3 hours On your way into Baton Rouge, don't miss **Tanger Shopping Outlet**. Over 50 designer and manufacturer outlet stores and restaurants are featured in this popular outlet mall. **Cabela's**, the "World's Foremost Outfitter" of hunting, fishing and outdoor gear, is adjacent to Tanger. Once you arrive in Baton Rouge, head to the **Mall of Louisiana**, Baton Rouge's 1.6 million square foot enclosed mall. After that, visit **Perkins Rowe**, a unique residential and shopping village. Louisiana Tax Free Shopping provides refunds of state sales tax. Louisiana also has six refund centers (one located in Mall of Louisiana), making it easy for international visitors to get cash refunds on the spot.
tangeroutlet.com malloflouisiana.com perkinsroweshops.com
- as time allows **Tin Roof Brewery**, 1624 Wyoming Street, Baton Rouge, LA, 225-377-7022, tinroofbeer.com
 Finish off your day with a tour of Tin Roof Brewery, a new locally owned and operated brewery near downtown Baton Rouge. Tour Tin Roof to see how these small business owners keep up with the rest of the brewing world. Tastings of their delicious, Southern-inspired, handcrafted brews available!
- 1 hour **Louisiana's Old State Capitol**, 100 North Blvd, Baton Rouge, LA, 225-342-0500; louisianaoldstatecapitol.org
Visit Louisiana's Old State Capitol, where you'll experience a mesmerizing presentation of the Capitol's history told by the building's very own ghost, Sarah Morgan. (Free admission. Nominal fee for 12-minute movie)
- 1 hour **Capitol Park Museum**, 660 N. Fourth Street, Baton Rouge, LA, 225-342-5428,
crt.state.la.us/museum/properties/LSMbr.aspx
Tour the Capitol Park Museum, a Louisiana State Museum highlighting the state's history and lively culture. Be sure to walk through the "Dance Hall" to hear a variety of Louisiana's musicians. Also, check out the Mardi Gras exhibit, a two-story shrimp boat, and some of Governor Long's famous speeches.
- 1 hour **Louisiana's State Capitol**, State Capitol Drive & North 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA, 225-342-7317
crt.state.la.us/tourism/capitol
Learn just how powerful Governor Huey Long became when you walk through the "New" State Capitol, which he designed and was later assassinated in while walking out of a meeting. Be sure to visit the Observation Deck on the 27th floor to see a bird's-eye view of Baton Rouge. (Free admission)
- 1 hour **Main Street Market**, 501 Main Street, Baton Rouge, breada.org
A great shopping and lunch-on-your-own option downtown is Main Street Market. Choices include sandwiches, salads, wraps, crepes, sushi, southern plate lunches, and of course, Jambalaya. This market also houses the Red Stick Farmers Market every Saturday of the month.

- 2.5 hours **Baton Rouge Food Tour**, batonrougefoodtours.com
The "C'est Si Bon Food Tour" is a guided walking tour in downtown Baton Rouge which includes food tastings at local restaurants infused with entertaining historical and cultural details; sure to get you full from belly to brain. It's a 2.5 hour leisurely paced walk and ends at the historic Hilton Capitol Center. (Reservations required).
- 2 hours **Rural Life Museum**, 4560 Essen Lane, Baton Rouge, LA, 225-765-2437, rurallife.lsu.edu
Visit the renovated Rural Life Museum at Burden Museum and Gardens to get a feel for working plantation life at one of the top ten outdoor museums in the US!
- Evening Looking for a fun evening? Look no further than downtown Baton Rouge. Home to award-winning local restaurants such as **Stroubes Chophouse**, **Restaurant IPO**, and **Zolia Enoteca**, the booming culinary scene in the thriving **Downtown Arts & Entertainment District** and **Historic Third Street District** is drawing in visitors from all over the world. With numerous new places to grab drinks and listen to live music, there is a pulsating nightlife scene of Blues, Country, Cajun, Zydeco and everything in between! Explore Baton Rouge's walkable downtown and enjoy open views of the Mississippi River, historic architecture or one of three relaxing green parks.

Day Nine

Take I-10 west headed for Houston International Airport to depart

A couple of great stops along the way:

- 1-1/2 hours **Atchafalaya Basin Welcome Center**, located off Interstate 10 at exit 121. *In addition to restroom facilities and fresh coffee, this first-class facility offers historical information within the walls of this beautifully designed Acadian-style cottage and museum. Open seven days a week from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.*
- 1 hour **Louisiana Spirits: Home of Bayou Rum**, 20909 S. Frontage Road, Lacassine, (337) 588-5800
Located right off Interstate 10, Bayou Rum is handmade in the largest privately-owned rum distillery in the USA, utilizing traditional methods with state-of-the-art technology for all four steps: fermentation, distillation, maturation, and bottling. Offering complimentary distillery tours, a rum tasting bar and an incomparable gift shop experience.