

Louisiana's Creole Nature Trail & Visit Lake Charles Itinerary

<http://creolenaturetrail.org/>

<https://www.visitlakecharles.org/>



Location: Located on I-10, Lake Charles is perfectly positioned to kick off or wrap up your Louisiana adventure. Fly direct into LCH via American Airlines out of Dallas, TX, or United Airlines out of Houston, TX. Road trip your way through the best of the south with a 5-hour drive from Dallas (314 mi) or a 2-hour drive from Houston (140 mi). Lake Charles is an hour's drive away from Lafayette (74 mi), two hours from Baton Rouge (126 mi), and 3 hours from New Orleans (205 mi).

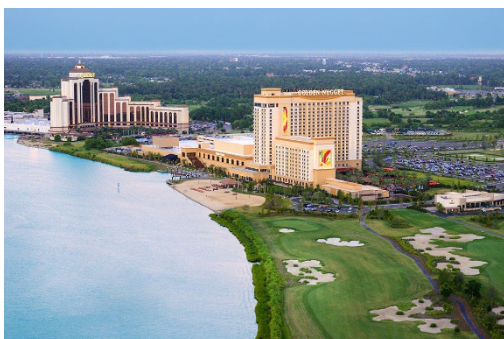
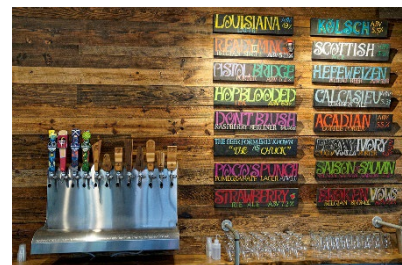
Arrive in Lake Charles – Day 1

When you arrive in Lake Charles, Louisiana, take a moment to unwind and check out incredible local craft beers at [Crying Eagle Brewing](#). Grab a bite to eat in the Beer Garden or at numerous other local restaurants, maybe even choose one with live music. Or enjoy dining, shopping, nightlife, and so much more at Lake Charles' world-class gaming resorts:

[L'Auberge Casino Resort](#)

| [Golden Nugget Lake Charles](#)

| [Horseshoe Lake Charles](#)





Day 2 - Fresh and ready to roll into the outdoor wonderland known as *Louisiana's Outback*. Let's depart for the Creole Nature Trail All-American Road.

One of only 57 All-American Roads in the United States, the [Creole Nature Trail All-American Road](#)'s 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 tour app, search "Creole" in your app store.



First stop is Creole Nature Trail Adventure Point.

[Creole Nature Trail Adventure Point](#) is 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 the mouthwatering

aromas of Cajun/Creole cooking, and "play along" with a Cajun and Zydeco band.

No trip down the west side of the trail would be complete without a stop at [Brown's Food Center](#) in Hackberry to stock up on snacks (yes, boudin is a snack!), drinks, crabbing gear, and, well, almost anything you might want.



Time to stretch your legs at the [Sabine National Wildlife Refuge's Wetland Walkway](#).

Located within Sabine National Wildlife Refuge, this 1.5-mile (loop) fully accessible boardwalk offers walking access into and over saltwater marshes.

Experience the "end of the earth." Visit [Holly Beach](#), part of more than 26 miles of accessible Gulf beaches perfect for picnicking, swimming, shelling, or surf fishing.



Calling all Birders! You do not want to miss [Peveto Woods Sanctuary](#).

Found directly at the center of the trans-gulf migration path on the edge of the Gulf of Mexico, Peveto Woods's chenier habitat is ecologically vital to a host of winged wonders — both birds and butterflies. It is preserved and maintained by the Baton Rouge Audubon Society. In the fall, Peveto Woods is a last stop for food and rest as birds head south over the Gulf. In the spring, as birds cross the Gulf heading north, it is the first stop for food and rest. It's an excellent place for birding, butterfly observation, and nature photography.



You've worked up an appetite.

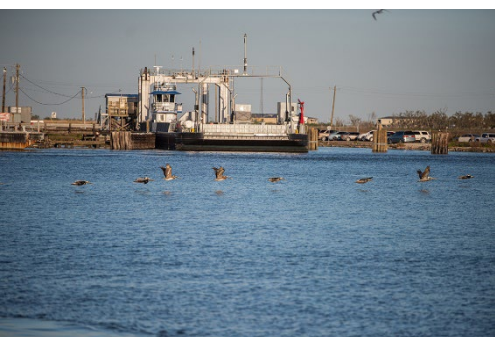
Treat yourself to a seafood dinner, po'boy, or a choice of plate lunches at one locally owned eatery in the area, such as [Bayak's Country Store](#).





The Scenic Route.

You've completed the west side of the Creole Nature Trail and most of the western spur. Head back to Sulphur to find unique souvenirs and gifts at [Flock of Five Gift and Art Emporium](#), which features over 7,000 square feet of works of local artists and celebrates the unique beauty of Louisiana. Enjoy dinner at a local restaurant like [LeBleu's Landing & Oyster Bar](#) or [Hollier's Cajun Kitchen](#) before you decide whether to call it a day or hit a nightclub or live music venue.



Motivated to conquer the entire Creole Nature Trail?

Continue your excursion along the Creole Nature Trail by heading east on Hwy. 82 for a ride on the [Cameron Ferry](#) that will take you (in your vehicle!) across the Calcasieu River Ship Channel. Keep a sharp eye out as porpoises are a common sight among the boats in the ship channel, hoping for a free meal from the shrimp boat nets or just lazy playing. Once you are back on land, head east into Cameron.

do some shellin'.

Rutherford Beach is a rustic beach that is prime seashell collecting territory! As you travel along Rutherford Beach Road, look for all kinds of birds and alligators floating in the roadside canals.

Enjoy a po'boy or a plate lunch at [Canik's Grocery](#) to keep up your strength for exploring!

Next, you will not want to miss [Pintail Wildlife Drive](#), which is located about .8 miles after the Conway LeBleu Memorial Bridge over the Intracoastal Waterway.

This 3-mile driving loop is a wonderful place to view alligators and birds. Bird watching, photography, and sightseeing are encouraged year-round on the refuge. Spring and summer are the best times to see long-legged wading birds and shorebirds. Open daily during daylight hours.



Continuing south, make a pit stop at [Chesson's Grocery](#) for a cool drink or maybe even some soft-serve ice cream.



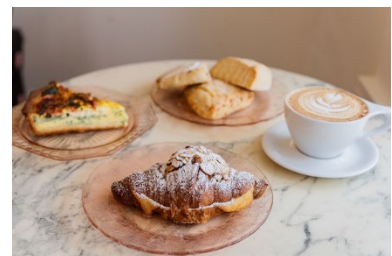


If you planned and made a reservation in advance, head to [Grosse Savanne Eco-Tours](#).

Grosse Savanne Eco-Tours has unlimited access to a multitude of various ecotypes, including both fresh and saltwater marshes, cypress swamps, native coastal prairies, pine forest plantations, and agricultural lands. If you made a reservation, this experience will not disappoint.

Day 3 – Today, we will keep it more urban and experience Southwest Louisiana culture.

[The Bakery](#) bakes fresh baguettes, scones, biscuits, muffins, quiche, coffee, and other delicious treats daily. Located just blocks from Lake Charles' scenic Shell Beach Drive, the French-inspired bakery is light, open, and airy.



Spend the morning immersing yourself in every aspect of Southwest Louisiana culture. Start your day at the newly redesigned [Mardi Gras Museum of Imperial Calcasieu](#) (opening in late 2025), home to the largest collection of Mardi Gras costumes in the world. Learn about regional Mardi Gras traditions and the history behind them.

Next, head to [Port Wonder](#), home to the nature museum and science center. Touch tanks and saltwater habitats allow you to experience the ecosystems local to Lake Charles while learning about ongoing preservation efforts.

Let's explore Downtown Lake Charles, starting with lunch. A couple of options include: [Luna Bar & Grill](#), a cultural cornerstone in Downtown Lake Charles, Louisiana, offering a diverse menu that mixes regional flavor with eclectic tastes.



Or, [The Villa Harlequin](#) combines favorites from Italian and Louisiana influences to present dishes like Harlequin Crab Remick, Crab Royale, Creole Tomato Bisque with Lump Crab, and Shrimp & Crab salad with famous Harlequin House dressing.

Leave the vehicle parked, and let's let that excellent food settle. [Biking Through The Lake, LLC](#) offers bicycle tours through Lake Charles with music, optional light-up wheels, and an exciting atmosphere that your group will love. Or, stroll to the [1911 Historic Arts & Cultural Center](#), where you can view three floors of the work of local artists and traveling exhibitions alike. If you haven't had your fill of the outdoors yet, enjoy a relaxing walk along the [Lakefront Promenade](#).



Where to Stay: Luxury Casino Resorts, first-class hotels, adventurous RV and camping spots...your choice!
<https://www.visitlakecharles.org/places-to-stay/>

If your journey takes you east from Lake Charles, be sure to visit [Bayou Rum – Louisiana Spirits Distillery](#) for a tour of this product made with all Louisiana ingredients – and tastings, of course!

