

Visit Baton Rouge Tour Itineraries



Bloomin' Garden Tour

Our subtropical climate means our gardens get started early. Visit as early as mid-March when Baton Rouge and Plantation Country burst into bloom at public and private gardens and arboreta. The beauty remains until the leaves begin to turn in the fall.

- Begin with a visit to Windrush Gardens, adjacent to the Rural Life Museum to see the semi-formal personal garden of one of the country's outstanding landscape architects.
- Stop at the Orangerie on the way out.
- Explore 12 acres of labeled trees and plants at the LSU Hilltop Arboretum.
- Visit the breathtaking sight of the gardens at the State Capitol--best viewed up-close or from the top of the building.
- Stop at the Cohn Memorial Arboretum and its 16 landscaped acres before continuing on to St. Francisville and Rosedown. Here you'll see a formal garden patterned after the Versailles.
- Continue on to Audubon State Commemorative Area to experience the memorable gardens, forests and birdlife that inspired John James Audubon in the 1820s.

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Capitol District, Downtown and City Tour

Duration: 1/2 day (morning or afternoon) to full day

Begin your visit to Baton Rouge and Plantation Country with a stop at Louisiana's magnificent State Capitol building. The Louisiana Office of Tourism can provide by appointment an excellent half-hour tour of the building's Memorial Hall, the House and Senate chambers, and a look at one of the unsolved mysteries of the 20th Century-the assassination of Governor Huey P. Long in 1932. The building's architecture is even more spectacular in view of the 1997 restoration. Hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily.

A visit to the Capitol should include an elevator ride to the observation deck, an education in itself. From here you can see in every direction: downtown Baton Rouge; Spanish Town; and Beauregard Town, a handsomely laid out community of 1806. See the state's second largest inland port (the fourth largest port in tonnage in the country) and

view the amount of river traffic for work and pleasure on the Mississippi River.

Once back on the ground floor, it is easy to walk to several sites nearby. Visit the Pentagon Barracks, military home to General Zachary Taylor and generals Grant and Lee, Stonewall Jackson, Sheridan, Custer, Beauregard and many others. Look for a historical marker that proclaims where Fort New Richmond, the original post of the Baton Rouge settlement, once stood. See a larger than life Huey Long-his statue in the Capitol garden marks his grave. Stroll over to the Old Arsenal Museum and wonder what life was like in a Civil War bunker more than 100 years ago. Discover more remnants of Louisiana's colorful past at the Old State Capitol, where Huey Long made his fieriest speeches. Plan a tour of the old Governor's Mansion on North Boulevard for a glimpse of every day life in the Huey Long era. While downtown, discover the USS KIDD, one of the best restored WWII destroyers in the country, and the Louisiana Naval War Memorial Museum along the river.

For lunch, or even dinner, there are many downtown restaurants offering everything from casual dining to down-home cooking, from soups and salads to white table cloth fare-it's all good to eat.

While in the downtown area, you'll notice two distinctive adjuncts: Spanish Town and Beauregard Town. In 1778, Spanish settlers from the Canary Islands migrated about 20 miles southeast of Baton Rouge to oversee the Manchac-Amite waterway. When the Louisiana Purchase took place in 1803, they moved to the area known as Spanish Town near what is now downtown Baton Rouge. Today, Spanish Town is a much smaller area than the original plan, but it retains its narrow streets, its irregular block layout, and high concentration of historic buildings that tell of a fascinating past. Beauregard Town was a planned community laid out in the grand European manner in 1806 by Elias Beauregard. The plan included hospitals, a town hall, the Ursuline Convent, the customs house and King's Store. Four diagonal streets would radiate from the cathedral at the center square to the four corners of the design. As happens so often to developers, pieces of the community were sold before completion. The various styles of architecture give the area an eclectic, quaint flavor.

Group tours or individuals can spend hours learning how Baton Rouge's earliest settlers lived at Magnolia Mound Plantation. Get back to real basics at Rural Life Museum and see the way of life for rural settlers in Louisiana before the Industrial Age. Include Mount Hope Plantation for a glimpse of how another group of Baton Rouge settlers, the Germans, lived.

Travel back further in time to the days of explorers and trappers and traders at Alligator Bayou Swamp Tours, a fascinating historical and environmental tour of Louisiana's precious wetland resources. Food service and entertainment are options here. Experience swamp life up-close at Bluebonnet Swamp, a boardwalk swamp tour practically in the middle of this city of nearly half a million. Both outdoor experiences are less than 20 minutes from most hotels!

If your group prefers a different breed of wildlife, try Casino Rouge or Argosy Casino - two elegantly appointed riverboat casinos in downtown Baton Rouge. Both offer food service daily and Argosy Casino offers the Argosy Casino Atrium.

If you enjoy fine art, you'll appreciate Louisiana Arts & Science Museum, which also features a permanent exhibit of Egyptian artifacts. Louisiana State University and Southern University both feature fine art museums with gallery exhibits, as well as athletic events and other leisure activities throughout the year.

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Go West - Port Allen and Cajun Country Option

Duration: Port Allen - 1/2 day (morning) to full day

Port Allen & Cajun Country - full day

Plantation Country truly offers something for everyone-and in every direction! Cross the Mississippi River to West Baton Rouge Parish, the city of Port Allen. Take La. Highway 1 north to the West Baton Rouge Parish Museum for a close look at how sugar goes from the field to your coffee pot in an audio-visual exhibit. Be amazed by the intricate detail of a complete, miniature sugar mill, c. 1901. While there, tour the Allendale Plantation Cabin and the Aillet House, which dates from the 1830s. Visit Poplar Grove, a plantation house which was once the Banker's Pavilion at the 1884 World's Fair in New Orleans, or reserve time for a special lunch or elegant dinner there.



Continue west to Cajun country via I-10. Optional stops include Henderson and Breaux Bridge for great food and well-known swamp tours. Enjoy dinner and dancing "Cajun-style" before returning to Baton Rouge or enjoy a plantation-style evening at Poplar Grove or Nottoway Plantation, about 20 minutes south of I-10.

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North by Northwest - To French Creole Country

Duration: 1/2 day (morning or afternoon) without Gaming

Take Louisiana's first land highway-the Mississippi River really was the first highway-LA 1 to New Roads, enclave of French Creole planters from the 1700s. Drive around the curve of False River, an oxbow lake cut off from the Mississippi River centuries ago. Include Parlange Plantation in your itinerary, and learn about the family that has called the dwelling home for more than 200 years. Enjoy a swing through the town's historic district, explore the antique shops and have lunch overlooking False River.

If yours is a casino tour, spend a couple of hours at the Grand Avoyelles in Marksville.

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Turn East - Find Yourself in West, West Florida!

East Feliciana - 1/2 day

When you reach LA Highway 10, follow the signs to the ferry and cross the Mississippi River to St. Francisville, and what must have seemed a very different world 150 years ago. Walk through the historic district of "English Louisiana," and spend time at the Historical Society Museum. Stop in one or more of the delightful shops nearby-many will prepare tea for groups with reservations. Explore one grand mansion or all of them. Begin with Greenwood, backdrop for "North and South I & II;" Oakley, where John James Audubon found inspiration for his "Birds of America;" Rosedown, with gardens patterned after Versailles; and the Myrtles, the legendary "most haunted house in America." If you still need to see more, be sure to include Butler-Greenwood and Green Springs.

When the Spanish held dominion over this part of Louisiana (including Baton Rouge) it was as part of West Florida, along with Mobile and Alabama. It was briefly an independent republic before Louisiana gained statehood in 1812.

Golfers heading back to Baton Rouge by way of US 61 will want to detour at The Bluffs, designed by Arnold Palmer. Civil War students of all ages will be eager to see the site of the longest siege in U.S. military history at nearby Port Hudson.

Should you continue east along LA 10, you'll arrive in East Feliciana Parish in Jackson-a small town with historic attractions including Milbank, the Old Centenary Inn, Feliciana Cellars Winery and Rickenjacks Brewery, Centenary State Commemorative Area, and the site of the Civil War Battle of Jackson Crossroads. In nearby Clinton, you can see the historic courthouse and Lawyers' Row, as well as the Confederate Cemetery. Taste more Louisiana wine at Casa de Sue Winery.

Enjoy lunch at one of many delicious eateries in either parish-whether you prefer the elegance of the Inn at Asphodel, Bear Corners, or the restaurant at the Myrtles. After all, you came to Louisiana because of the food, right?

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War Stories

Its strategic location along the Mississippi River made Baton Rouge quite a prize throughout history. Iberville liked the location as early as 1699 because the bluffs on the Mississippi River provided an ideal location for a fort.

Begin with the Pentagon Barracks adjacent to the Capitol grounds. The site was military home to General Zachary Taylor and generals Grant and Lee, Stonewall Jackson, Sheridan, Custer, Beauregard and many others.

- Fort New Richmond was long ago swallowed by the Mississippi River, but it was the sight of the only Revolutionary War battle to take place outside of the original thirteen colonies.
- Tour the Old Arsenal Museum, another relic of the time between the Revolutionary and Civil Wars in Louisiana. This armory was constructed away from the fort for the protection of the citizenry.
- Be sure to include a drive-by of the Lafayette-Tessier buildings, where General Lafayette made a speech to adoring throngs in 1825.
- Stop at Magnolia Mound, where the general probably stayed with one of his top aides, Armand Duplantier.
- Visit the Old State Capitol, almost destroyed by fire during the Union occupation of the city. A portion of the Senate Chamber has been left to show how the fire damaged the building.
- Drive by historic Magnolia Cemetery to see where the Civil War Battle of Baton Rouge was actually fought, and where many local veterans are buried.
- Head north to Port Hudson - site of the longest siege in American military history.
- Include the site of the Battle of Jackson Crossroads in East Feliciana Parish.
- Stop at the USS KIDD to see one of the best preserved WWII Fletcher-class destroyers in the country.
- Visit the Adjacent Nautical Museum with its memorial to U.S. service men and women killed in action, and Korean War P-40 and Vietnam era Corsair exhibits.

