



## Group Tours

### Cajun Country One-Day and Specialty Tours

#### **Cultural Tour**

Begin the morning with a tour of the International Petroleum Museum & Exposition, the “Mr. Charlie,” the first submersible oil rig. Learn about the history of the oil industry, the role “Mr. Charlie” played and the future of the oil and gas industry. While in the downtown area, enjoy a walking tour of the Morgan City Historic District. Get a bird’s-eye view of the Atchafalaya River, shop along the Front Street area, tour Cypress Manor & Mardi Gras Museum or visit Trinity Episcopal Church, one of the oldest churches in Morgan City. For lunch, eat at one of our local seafood restaurants or enjoy a seafood boil at Lake End Park. After lunch, tour Swamp Gardens and learn about the Cajun swamp dwellers. If time permits, travel to Charenton to tour the Chitimacha Museum and learn about the history of the Chitimacha Native Americans. Return to Morgan City/Franklin for an evening with a Cajun storyteller or a Mardi Gras tableau. The next day, travel to Franklin and enjoy a sugar cane field tour. Learn how sugar cane is planted, the growing season and the harvesting of sugar cane.

#### **Nature-Based Tour**

For early risers, enjoy a walk around Lake End Park, where you’ll get an unobstructed view of Lake Palourde. For breakfast, travel to the Brownell Carillon Bell Tower, a 10-acre swamp park where you can walk the trail, sit and listen to the sounds of the swamp and Carillon bells while viewing wildlife. After Brownell Tower, travel to Patterson to board Cajun Jack’s Swamp Tour. On this two-hour tour, you’ll go deep into the Atchafalaya Basin Swamp. Bring your cameras and binoculars because you’re sure to see egrets, turtles, flora and fauna and possibly a gator. After Cajun Jack’s tour, enjoy a seafood boil at Lake End Park or enjoy lunch at one of the many seafood restaurants located throughout the Cajun Coast. Following lunch, travel to Jungle Gardens in New Iberia, where you’ll see various types of birds and wildlife. Return to Morgan City/Franklin for a night of Cajun comedy or let the bureau set up a Cajun Fais Do Do, complete with music, a catered meal and Cajun dance lessons.

#### **Civil War**

St. Mary Parish played an integral role in the War Between the States because of its strategic location next to the Atchafalaya River and Bayou Teche. Visit the sites of Fort Starr (also known as Fort Brashear), Fort Buchanan, Fort Bisland, the Battle of Bisland and the Battle of Irish Bend. See the bell from the gunboat Diana at St. Mary’s Episcopal Church or visit the Young Sanders Center for the Study of the War Between the States.

### **Preservation Tour**

Preservationists won't want to miss Franklin, described as one of the prettiest Louisiana towns by Lyle Saxon in *Old Louisiana*. A knowledgeable step-on guide from the Landmarks Society will tell you all about this stunning English town that boasts over 400 noteworthy properties, many listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Make up your own tour from a list of public homes open daily or from churches or private homes opened especially for your group. For lunch, enjoy a gourmet picnic basket at one of the homes. Mix the tour with a walking tour of the historic district or shopping down Main Street, where merchants will greet your guests with discounts and goodies. After a full day of touring and shopping, enjoy a wine and cheese party at a plantation home and dinner at one of the local seafood restaurants. Overnight in Franklin/Morgan City.

### **Birdwatching and Wildlife Photography**

Stop by the Cajun Coast Visitors & Convention Bureau for a copy of the America's Wetland Birding Trail on the Louisiana Great Gulf Coast brochure. The brochure highlights 11 sites along the Cajun Coast that are great for birding and wildlife watching. You can tour the area on your own, or you can take a boat ride on Cajun Jack's Swamp Tour, located next to our Patterson visitor center. Cajun Jack will take you through the mysterious Atchafalaya Basin swamp, the largest overflow swamp in the U.S., for an up-close view of bald eagles, osprey, heron, egret, nutria, alligators and many more animals native to Southern Louisiana. In January and February, view the American bald eagle.

### **Stained Glass Church Tour**

Spend the day touring three local churches, Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Trinity Episcopal Church and Church of the Assumption. All three are steeped in religious history, full of unique architecture and adorned with beautiful stained glass windows.

In Morgan City, visit the Sacred Heart Catholic Church, dating back to the 1850s, which has a rare European-style baptistery fashioned after the Roman bathhouses of centuries ago. The building is a Gothic church structure complete with ornate stained glass windows, comparable to those of Europe. The stained glass throughout the church illustrates Biblical scenes and depicts the four gospel writers. The church houses a baptismal font, chapel and a shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes, which is also adorned with stained glass windows complementing those found in the church. Trinity Episcopal Church, founded in 1874, is one of the oldest congregations of worship in eastern St. Mary Parish. At the turn of the century, a chancel was added to the "shotgun" style church, the interior and exterior were refinished, and the church was completely furnished. Native cypress lumber was used extensively, with lasting results. In 1911, the church was remodeled after the old St. Andrew's Church of New Orleans and beautiful stained glass windows were included in the mid 1950s. On one side of the church the stained glass windows depict the seasons of the Christian year and on the other side symbols of the miracles of Christ are represented. Throughout the church, musical symbols, Episcopal shields and chalices are pictured in the glass.

Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant and then travel to the City of Franklin. Church of the Assumption of Franklin is considered one of the most magnificent in the state of

Louisiana. Designed along the simple and elegant lines of classical Greek Architecture, this 1910 church features seven Romanesque columns with Corinthian capitals on either side of the interior. A plaster cast suspended ceiling of octagon shaped medallions is highlighted with brilliant gold leaf detail. The exterior has a beautiful Basilica designed twin façade and baroque gables with three arch front towers. The beautiful stained glass windows found throughout the church are of German craftsmanship and portray the life of Mary, the patron Saint as well as the Priest of the Old Testament, the Priest of the New Testament, the Sacrifice of the Old Law, the Sacrifice of the New Law and the Agony in the Garden.

### **Fairs & Festivals**

Louisiana has hundreds of fairs and festivals throughout the year where you and your guests can experience Cajun joie de vivre (joy of life). Labor Day weekend offers two top-rated festivals in Cajun Country. On Saturday, make your way to the Southwest Louisiana Zydeco Festival in Plaisance. Enjoy zydeco music and Creole cuisine. On Sunday and Monday, enjoy the Louisiana Shrimp & Petroleum Festival, named the best festival in Louisiana in the 50,000-plus attendance category by the Louisiana Fairs & Festivals Association. Also named a Top 20 Southeast Tourism Society event and a top 100 American Bus Association event, the festival features over 16 great events. Attend Mass in the Park, the historic Blessing of the Fleet and boat parade, street parade, music, arts and crafts and lots more.

### **Mardi Gras on the Cajun Coast**

Mardi Gras is celebrated throughout South Louisiana. If you're looking for the small town scene, Morgan City is the place for you. Arrive on Friday before Mardi Gras and enjoy the Krewe of Adonis parade at 7 p.m. Following the parade, enjoy a Cajun Fais Do Do complete with a catered meal, music and Cajun dance lessons, a Cajun humorist or dinner at one of the local Cajun restaurants. On Saturday, tour Cypress Manor & Mardi Gras Museum where you can view splendid costumes and memorabilia from previous carnival seasons. After Cypress Manor, get a bird's-eye view of the Atchafalaya River from on top the 21-foot seawall, take a walking tour of the historic district of Morgan City or enjoy shopping in the downtown stores. After lunch, drive to Franklin via the Bayou Teche scenic byway to Oaklawn Manor, a plantation home beautifully decorated in purple, green and gold. Afterwards, travel to Berwick/Bayou Vista for the Krewe of Dionysus parade. Following the parade, enjoy dancing at the Krewe of Dionysus After Parade Party or go back to the hotel to get ready for the Krewe of Hephaestus Mardi Gras Tableau Saturday evening. On Sunday, attend Sunday services at one of the local churches, enjoy lunch and then get ready for the Krewe of Galatea Mardi Gras Parade.

### **Christmas on the Cajun Coast**

Tour stunning plantation homes beautifully decorated for the holiday season including Cypress Manor, Grevemberg and Oaklawn Manor. Experience Christmas Under the Lampposts in Franklin, Morgan City's annual Christmas Festival and local parades. Enjoy Christmas carols at the Tuneweaver's Concert or Pharr Chapel's Old-Fashioned Christmas. See beautiful Christmas lights at Idlewild Plantation Christmas lighting.