VISIT ERSON PARISH 2020-2021

JUSTIMAGINE

JEFFERSON PARISH, LA

A Walk On Our Wild Side

www.VisitJeffersonParish.com



WELCOME TO JEFFERSON PARISH

A Message from the Jefferson Convention & Visitors Bureau, Inc.

Dear Travelers:

The Jefferson Convention & Visitors Bureau. Inc. is delighted to welcome you to Jefferson Parish for your visit to Louisiana. Jefferson Parish offers a variety of attractions, activities, cuisine and experiences. Travel may look different these days, but our destination's commitment to hospitality, authentic experiences and fond memories remains steadfast. As the state's largest parish, sprawling over sixty miles from the Gulf of Mexico to the shores of beautiful Lake Pontchartrain, we are also the most diverse. We invite you to step back in time exploring our historic districts each representative of our heritage and the cultural influences of the region. Delight your taste buds along our Louisiana Oyster Trail where the oyster is a delicacy whether charbroiled or deep-fried. The trail is a unique culinary and fine art experience as each eatery boasts a 3' oyster sculpture hand-painted by a local artist. If shopping is your pleasure, Jefferson Parish will not disappoint. From our beautiful tree-lined Metairie Road boutiques to the hustle and bustle of modern malls, with a Louisiana flare, to our quaint farmers & fisheries, and art markets, you are sure to find that perfect keepsake.

No visit to southeast Louisiana is complete without a trip to Cajun scenic hideaways and swamps. The tranquility of the moss-draped cypress trees and blooms of the Louisiana iris is equally matched by the thrill of an airboat ride through the bayous. Kick off your shoes and dance the Cajun two-step to the sounds of the zydeco or fiddle. Visit with the locals learning the traditions and intrigue of this picturesque region. Festivals abound in Jefferson Parish. Come celebrate life, culture, music, carnival, cuisine and more at one of our festivals yearround. From the pageantry of carnival to the Cajun, German, and Italian heritage of our neighborhoods, immerse yourself in our culture and traditions.

Fishing and outdoor recreation is a way of life in Louisiana and Jefferson Parish is no exception. Offering inland and off-shore fishing, a national park & preserve, and two state parks featuring camping, paddling, nature and bird watching trails, and seven miles of sandy beach for fun in the sun on Grand Isle, we've got the great outdoors covered!

We invite you to enjoy all we have to offer. Whether you're planning a family vacation, adventurous getaway, or a business trip, Jefferson Parish offers you all the comforts, entertainment and amenities to make your stay memorable.

Happy Travels,

Violet Peters

President & CEO

Jefferson Convention & Visitors Bureau, Inc.

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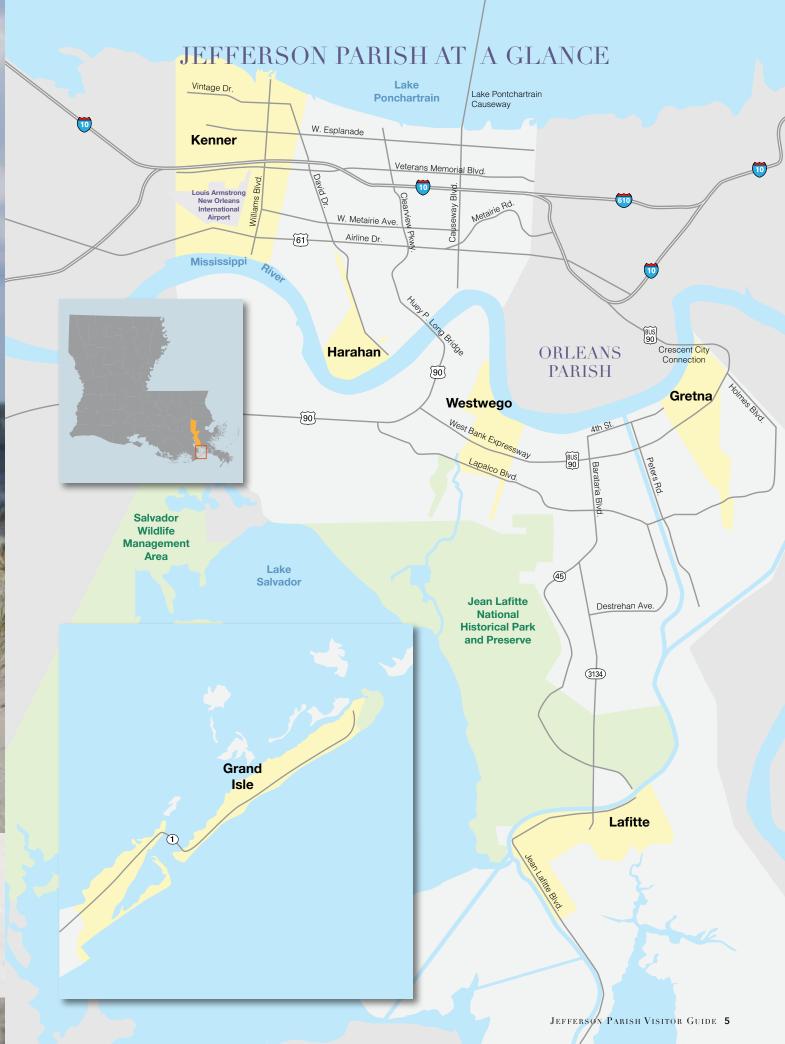
梦 @JeffersonLAFun

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On the cover: Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve. Photo by Jasper Soliven. Above: Grand Isle, Louisiana.

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JEFFERSON PARISH MARDI GRAS



The Carnival season traditionally begins on twelfth night or King's Day, January 6, and culminates on Fat Tuesday, annually the eve of Ash Wednesday.

Mardi Gras in Jefferson Parish is a Family Affair! Experience the sights, sounds, food, music, parades and of course, the BEADS!

Don't miss the annual Family Gras Festival taking place the first weekend of Mardi Gras in Metairie. Family Gras is a FREE 3-day festival of concerts featuring local and national acts, local cuisine, an art market, kids' zone, and Mardi Gras parades!

For information on 2021 Mardi Gras parades and events, visit www.familygras.com.









EVENTS AND FESTIVALS

Jefferson Parish's unique landscape is ideal for celebrating everything from savory Louisiana oysters, sweet pecans, spicy crawfish, to German, Italian, Hispanic, and Cajun culture. Fishing tournaments, birding and wildlife events abound throughout the coastal communities of Grand Isle, the Town of Jean Lafitte, Crown Point, and Barataria Bay while shopping, dining, historic districts, and theater are abundant in the urban sectors.

The holiday season and Mardi Gras celebrations rank among the most memorable visitor experiences in the region from our fall festivals and holiday lights to the pageantry of Carnival's royal courts and parade merriment.

Visit our website for a complete listing of festivals and events year-round. www.visitjeffersonparish.com/events



2020 NOVEMBER-DECEMBER Holiday Light Displays

2021 JANUARY New Year's Celebrations

FEBRUARYMardi Gras Events/Parades
Family Gras Festival



IINF. IIIIY

Bayou Segnette & Grand Isle State Park activities International Tarpon Rodeo, Grand Isle

AUGUST-SEPTEMBERFishing Rodeos
Gretna Heritage Festival

OCTOBER

Fall Outdoor Concert Events Bridge City Gumbo Festival Park-A-Boo Halloween Festival

MARCH

St. Patrick's Day Parade Spring in the Swamp, Lafitte

APRIL

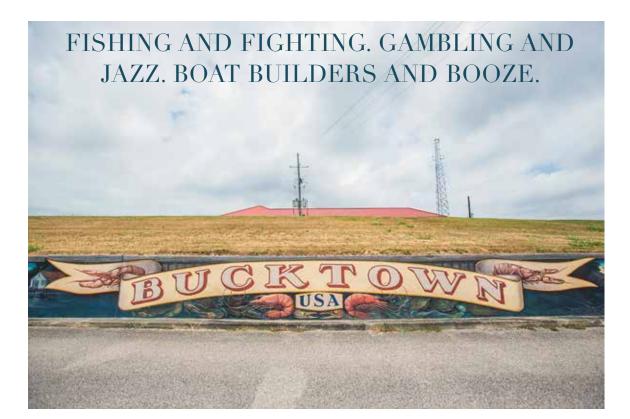
Blessing of the Fleet Events Migratory Bird Festival

MAY

Spring Outdoor Concert Events Crawfish Cook Off Events German-American Maifest



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by Drew Broach

All figure into tales of early Bucktown, the seafood sanctum in the northeast corner of Jefferson Parish just minutes from New Orleans' Central Business District. How much of it is true? Well, that just makes today's Bucktown all the more charming. Even the origin of the village's name is not settled.

Bucktown began as a tiny cluster of camps - houses built on stilts over the water - in the middle of the 19th century on the finger of land extending into Lake Pontchartrain north of what is now the intersection of Old Hammond Highway and Orpheum Avenue. In 1853, the Jefferson and Lake Pontchartrain Railroad opened, delivering passengers from what is now the St. Charles Avenue streetcar line to a long wooden pier where lake steamers could take them into or across the lake.

More camps and docks were erected along the lakefront and the 17th Street Canal, enhancing Bucktown's reputation for fishing. Residents built boats, made nets, trapped crabs year-round, hauled in shrimp in the spring and summer, worked in seafood processing plants, hunted ducks and deer in the winter, rented boats to visitors, operated a

grocery store and a hardware store and ran saloons and dance halls that attracted fun-seekers from New Orleans.

The Prohibition era might have been Bucktown's heyday. Informal histories conjure speakeasies, whorehouses and gambling parlors that regular spawned drunken brawls."Bucktown Bounce" by Johnny Wiggs and "Bucktown Blues" by Jelly Roll Morton captured the spirit in song.

By that time, one hurricane, in 1915, had already leveled Bucktown. The village made a comeback but was hammered again by a 1947 storm. The lakefront levee was then raised, eliminating most camps on the shoreline. The last camps in the 17th Street Canal were removed in

During Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Bucktown flooded with a foot or more of water. It quickly drained, in contrast to the other side of the 17th Street Canal: The canal's eastern floodwall failed, unleashing a juggernaut of water that destroyed blocks and blocks of houses and submerged the New Orleans' Lakeview area for weeks.

At least three stories purport to explain Bucktown's name. One attributes it to the

preponderance of mature male deer that residents hunted in the marsh to the west. Another cites the "young bucks" who visited the village on weekends looking for "another kind of 'dear'," Ned Hémard wrote in an article published by the New Orleans Bar

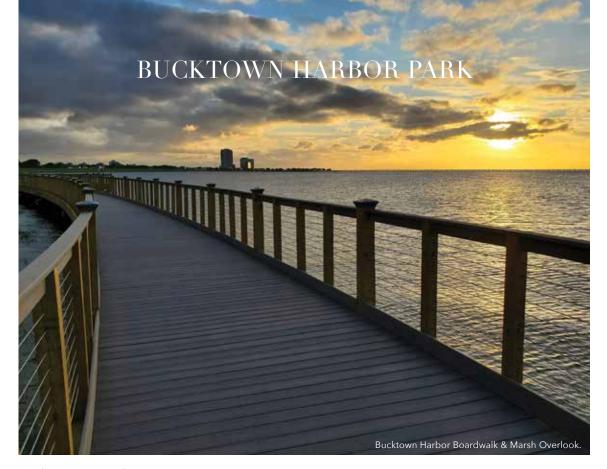
The most personal legend focuses on William Wooley, who moved into the area, became its night watchman and was "invested by the witty inhabitants with the nom de guerre of Buck Oliver," according to a 1921 newspaper article quoted by the Tulane University scholar Richard Campanella. That begat Buck's Town. Yet a 1936 article unearthed by Campanella describes Buck Oliver as a shorttempered cowboy who drove cattle to the area for

shipment across the lake, "only to end up spending more time in the village slammer."

Hémard has a different take on this colorful figure. He writes of Oliver "Buck" Wooley, "who shot a large buck and hung the antlers on the bridge crossing the canal. Folks who came to his boat rental business began calling the area 'Buck's Town.' An even more far-fetched explanation has 'Buck' Wooley carving a 'W' on the buttocks of a man who dared to dance with a coquette [whom Wooley] was courting. He is said to have defiantly staked possession of 'Buck's girl in 'Buck's town'."

When you visit Bucktown, ask around; you might hear more tales of its namesake and the legacy he left behind.





by Drew Broach

So new that even many local residents haven't discovered it is Bucktown Harbor Park, a 10-acre waterside retreat where one can feel the breeze off Lake Pontchartrain, smell its brackish water, fly a kite, fling a Frisbee, walk the dog, host a family picnic, watch for wildlife and learn about the environment.

And that's just for starters. In 2021 and 2022, Jefferson Parish officials hope to complete rock jetties that will spawn a living shoreline to the west, erect a performance pavilion and stage, raise a unique playground that reflects Bucktown's heritage and enhance access for bicyclists, piroque paddlers and wind surfers.

The ambitious plans for passive outdoor recreation and education build on a movement that dates from 2001, when the U.S. Coast Guard opened its \$11.3 million, scarlet-roofed patrol station here. As part of that project the agency spent \$3.3 million dredging a harbor and boat channel, dumping the spoil immediately to the west. That created new land and an expanse of green space where Bucktown Harbor Park is evolving.

Next came parking, two piers to accommodate 60 privately owned boats and three pavilions for shade, picnics and lounging by the lake. At times

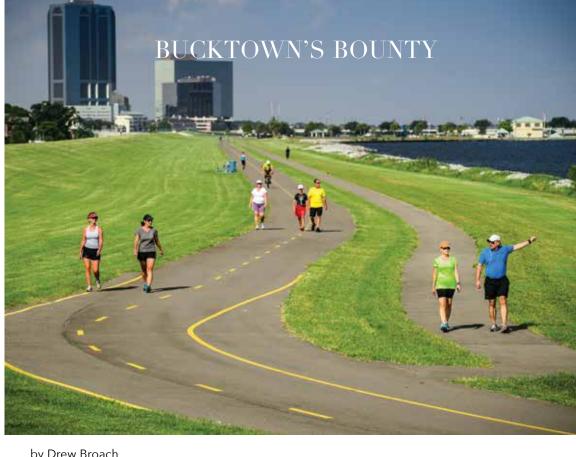
the park might be host to a farmers market, a concert, an outdoor movie screen or - on New Year's Eve and Independence Day - fireworks over the lake. More often, it's a place for casual visitors.

The latest addition is a gently curving boardwalk that was completed in 2020 at water's edge. On one side is open water and, in the distance, the world's longest bridge, the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway.

On the other is new 3½-acre marsh, a microcosmic recreation of the disappearing Louisiana coastline. Here amid the cordgrass the careful observer might see snakes, nutria, alligator, butterflies, fish and dozens of bird species. The marsh functions as a nursery for aquatic life, habitat and foraging grounds for mature fish and wildlife, a filter for water quality and protection from storm surge in the lake.

Along the boardwalk a series of explanatory panels educates the visitor on the importance of Louisiana's marshes.

Come to Bucktown Harbor Park to relax, soak up some nature, clear your mind and appreciate the unique ecology. And keep your eyes peeled for an alligator!



by Drew Broach

When the sun melts into the horizon and the seagulls squawk over the gentle waves, Bucktown's restaurants swell with diners arriving from the neighborhood, the region and the hotels through the New Orleans area. And with good reason, for this little gem is home to not only some of the finest seafood on the Gulf Coast but also a rich history of family, community and entertainment, a place destroyed and rebuilt by periodic hurricanes yet always married to the waters of Lake Pontchartrain and the 17th Street Canal.

Just minutes by car from the New Orleans Central Business District, Bucktown today is a flat three-by-20-block enclave at the northeast tip of Jefferson Parish. Most of it consists of tidy middle-class houses, apartment complexes, tasteful condominium buildings, churches and schools for its people, some of them retirees, some young families, some residents with deep ties to the fishing industry.

Betty Bonura, whose family moved to Bucktown in 1958 when she was a young teenager and who returned on her own in 2017, recalls from childhood the pirogue races in the 17th Street Canal, a shrimp processing plant where a major

philanthropic organization is now headquartered on the lakefront and neighbors who made their own fishing nets. "It's a little fishing community that now has more houses and paved streets," she said.

Peggy Poché moved to Bucktown in 1995. "Being a lover of New Orleans and a fifthgeneration New Orleanian," she said, "I thought being right next to the city and so close the lake that you can smell it was perfect. It's so accessible."

For visitors, the lure is the last two blocks of Lake Avenue and the two flanking blocks of Old Hammond Highway. But don't come looking for guided tours, souvenir shops, plastic trinkets or blinding neon. Instead, character, color and seafood animate Bucktown, says Russell Boudreaux, who has lived here all his life and has been crabbing and shrimping for a half century, since he was 10. Boudreaux's catch, and that of his fellow fishers, can easily end up fried, broiled or grilled on the plates of Bucktown diners.

"It's got first-class restaurants, and if you want something to go or something fresh to ship back home overnight, you've got seafood markets, too,"

You can do both at Deanie's. So popular that

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it keeps an overflow parking lot across Plaguemine Street, Deanie's occupies a building at 1713 Lake with a seafood market on one side and a restaurant on the other. Just out back is the canal that once was home to dozens of commercial fishing boats and houses built on stilts over the water. The lake is short stroll up the street and over the levee.

Alma "Deanie" Livaccari opened the place in the 1960s. The Chifici family bought it in 1982, expanded the dining room and revamped the menu. "All the recipes we have now are original from my parents' time," co-owner Chandra Chifici said.

The restaurant's walls are filled with photographs from Bucktown's past: Canal and lake houses that locals call camps, the annual blessing of the fleet, children pulling on fishing nets or jumping from a pier into the water.

From local fishers and seafood supply houses, Deanie's serves up shrimp, crab, catfish, redfish, red drum, flounder, sheepshead and speckled trout. In the spring, it hosts Pinchapalooza, a crawfish festival that not only fills stomachs but also benefits charities.

Then there's oysters. Deanie's serves them raw, fried and charbroiled. The restaurant is a member of the Jefferson Parish Oyster Trail, a collection

of about two dozen eateries that offer the south Louisiana staple and display out front a three-foot tall oyster replica painted by a local artist.

Another member of the Oyster Trail is R&O's restaurant, which faces the levee at 216 Old Hammond Highway. Ora and Roland Mollere opened it in 1980, and their children run it today. Seafood dominates here, too, but R&O's also is known for its pizza and its Sicilian influences of veal, sausage, artichokes, eggplant and pasta, often resting in or under "red gravy," the local term for homemade tomato sauce.

R&O's is also notable for its po-boys, the New Orleans version of what elsewhere is called a hoagie, grinder, sub or hero sandwich. New York Times food writer Brett Anderson, who lives in New Orleans, chose R&O's roast beef po-boy as the best in town. Ask for extra napkins; you'll need them.

Want fresh seafood to cook when you get back home? Buy some to be shipped overnight from one of the area's markets, then recreate the taste of Bucktown in your own kitchen. When you do, the scent and taste will remind you of your stroll through this quaint old fishing village, the sun melting into the horizon and the seagulls squawking over Lake Pontchartrain's gentle waves.



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Your guide to professional charter boats in Louisiana



by Jessica Fender

A shrimp trawler with massive wing nets motors by in the distance. A local fisherman eases his skiff down a ramp, en route to the Barataria Bay Waterway. And our burly, ginger-haired host holds court from behind a long fish cleaning station, the ground at his feet littered with scales.

This isn't the Disney version of a harbor. This is the real deal.

And it's just what we've trekked to this little fishing town on Louisiana's idyllic coast to find: An authentic look at the Cajun lifestyle.

"We're about to go on an adventure," promises Captain Shaw Couevas just before ushering the five of us onto a boat for what he calls the Cajun Experience, a half day exploring the waters that shape life here. Shaw's family, which owns the harbor, has lived here for generations. "We want to show you what it's like to be us."

Jean Lafitte, named for the state's most infamous pirate, sits where the road ends and the waterways leading to the Gulf of Mexico begin. Just 30 minutes outside of New Orleans, it somehow feels a world away.

Its boutique museums tell the stories of the fishermen, trappers and smugglers who have called this medley of land and bayou - and everything in between - home for more than 200 years. Nearby, a 26,000-acre national park offers miles of iconic, moss-draped hiking paths and canoe trails for fresh air-lovers to wander. Plentiful alligators, the stars of the swamp, wow tourists on guided tours.

And seafood? Whether visitors want to hook their own, buy fresh at a bustling open air market or have it served perfectly seasoned on a plate, this town has it covered.

"Lafitte is uniquely Louisianan," Mayor Timothy Kerner will later tell me by phone. "You're right here on the coast. And we have such a rich culture that's been passed down to us. It's a piece of paradise."

There are world championship pirogue races, seasonal seafood festivals and sip-and-strolls through the swamp.

But today on Shaw's boat, we're getting to the heart of the region: The water.

Shallow and inky, it reflects a bright blue sky and piles of clouds as we zip toward our first

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19 >>





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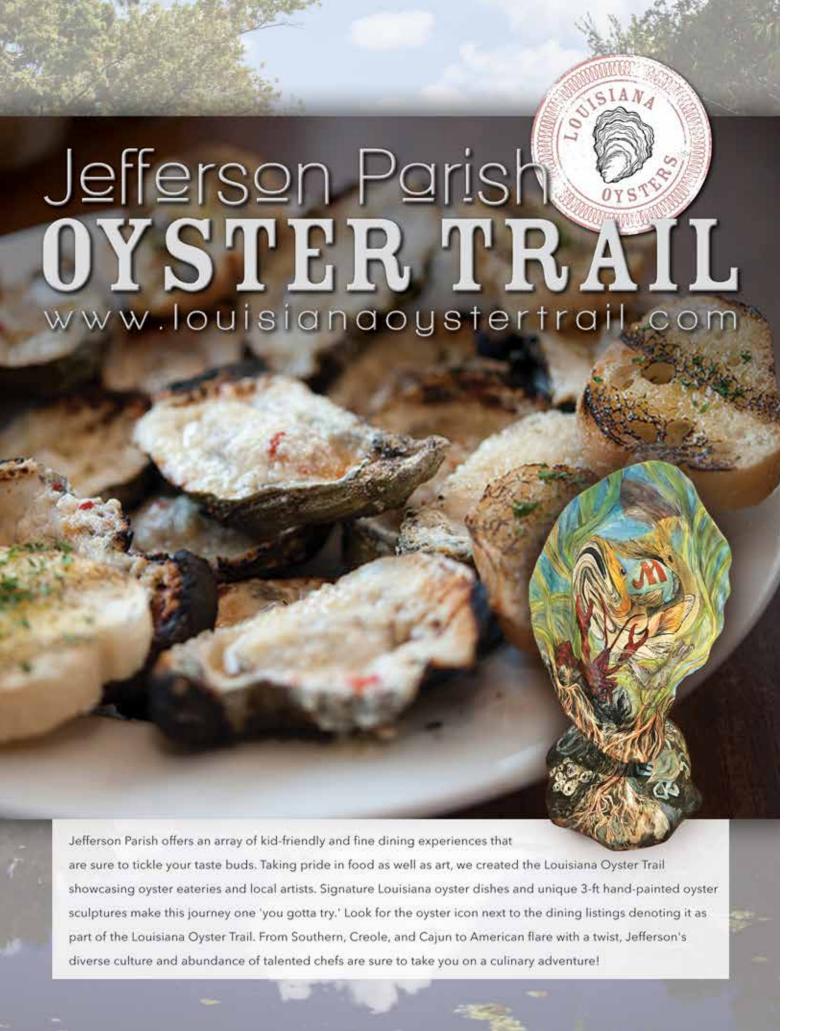
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fishing stop. The terrain is flat as far as the eye can see, a checkerboard of channel and reeds entangled with vibrant purple morning glories sitting just at the waterline.

We're moments out of the marina, but I'm already turned around. Then, Shaw cuts the engine and the rest of us look at each other with excitement.

There are plenty of standard fishing charter options in Jean Lafitte. The town, after all, offers the easiest access to world class offshore fishing beyond nearby Grand Isle. But today's lessons are going to focus on the industrious inland techniques Cajuns have used for centuries, none of which involve the rods and reels I'm familiar with.

"Everything you're about to do, somebody

does for a living," Shaw explains. "It's sustainable; it's commercially viable; and it's how people survive and feed their family."

I'm up first, and the catfish pieces are ice cold and slippery in my hand as I drop them into a small compartment in a boxy wire cage. Firstmate Kyle Rome double checks that

the latch is secure before I toss the contraption into the water with a splash. With any luck, some tasty blue crabs will find their way into the trap by tomorrow, though everything we catch today will be released. This is an educational tour.

Over the next few hours, we take turns retrieving crab traps and squealing when their bounty skitters across the deck at our feet. We pull up lines to find gaping puncture marks in bobbers, telltale signs of gator activity. Shaw and Kyle show us how to set up trotlines, a series of hooks dangling from a main line strung between two bamboo poles.

They demo fisherman's knots and quick connects. We learn the best hooks and bait to use in order to bag the biggies like redfish and drum.

Shaw and Kyle had set up several lines the day before, and at one of our many stops, a white

jug zigzags furiously at the surface of the water, a clear sign something exciting is happening on the hook below. Then, fellow sightseer Charlene Hale spots trouble.

"He's going for our fish!" she shouts, excitedly pointing out an adolescent alligator gliding purposefully toward the action on the jug line.

The good news: The gator doesn't get the fish. The bad: Neither do we.

As Kyle pulls up a 30-pound drum, we catch a glimpse of its giant black maw before it slips the hook and dives back into the murk. A collective groan goes up from the crew.

"That's why they call it fishing and not catching," Kyle offers ruefully. "Anything can happen."

These days, the Barataria Bay Waterway we're

exploring spreads about 1,000 feet across. But at one point - before coastal erosion from damming and channel clearing set in - it was just wide enough for two fishing boats to pass each other, says Kyle.

"You can imagine pirate ships hidden back around these bends," he adds. He's not joking. In

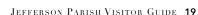
fact, "Barataria" comes from the Spanish word for dishonesty at sea.

In the early 1800s, Jean Lafitte and his brother Pierre ran a smuggling empire out of this place, floating stolen goods and enslaved people up from the bay via schooners before secreting them to nearby New Orleans through the swamp.

Just up the road from the harbor, the Jean Lafitte Historic Park and Preserve gives visitors an up close look at the landscape and stunning biodiversity that Lafitte and other non-Indigenous settlers likely encountered here when they arrived. Giant live oaks, freshwater marshes and cypress stands greet hikers on nearly 5 miles of trails. Paddlers who canoe through the swamp get an even more intimate experience.

At the nearby Barataria Museum and Wetland

Trace, exhibits include a rusted cannonball and >>>





wooden shard of schooner that may have been part of the pirate fleet. The massive stern of another ship – much larger, though much less historic – rests at the entrance to the museum's picturesque swamp boardwalk. It's the bridge of the Black Pearl from the Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl. (The bow of the lifesized prop ship greets visitors upon arrival at the Lafitte Seafood Market.)

French, Spanish, Croatians, Germans, Filipinos and more have all made homes here, linked by an independent streak that still runs through the town today.

"It was just in them to give it their all. It's made us a very self-sustaining, resilient and family oriented community," as the mayor tells me later. "And you still see that. It's really something special down here"

On tour, our day is punctuated with other little insights into the culture.

A local captain pulls alongside us with a deck full of belly-up alligators and camouflage-clad hunters from a town near Baton Rouge. "We're going to sink this boat with alligators," the captain jokes.

The largest measures 10 feet nose to tail, and I cannot take my eyes off the pile. But the local Louisianans on both vessels have more important things to consider. Chatter erupts about last names, family lineages and hometowns as they try to work

out who they might know in common.

Around here, that's how you shake hands.

At another stop, Shaw points to the trees growing on a square mile of land, an unusual sight in the waterway nowadays. He explains some of the fascinating ways engineers are fighting the rapid coastal erosion threatening areas like Jean Lafitte, such as building islands like this one and breeding new types of cypress trees that can survive saltier water.

"Without trees, there aren't roots to hold the land together," Shaw explains.

Then, just before heading back for a fried seafood lunch at the harbor, we pull up to a row of so-called "camps" along Bayou Norman. These simple cabins - some stilted, some with docks, some new and others tumbledown - are used by local fishers, hunters and trappers every season.

For hundreds of years, all of Jean Lafitte would have looked like this - minus the air conditioning units.

Then Shaw hushes us and cuts the engine.

It is so still and peaceful out here that I can hear my pen scratching away on my notebook. Somewhere out there, a mullet jumps three... four... five times across the water. A single cricket chirp seems to echo through the air.

On a clear night, Kyle says, the Milky Way feels impossibly close and bright.

"This is another reason people fall in love with this place," he says.

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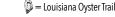
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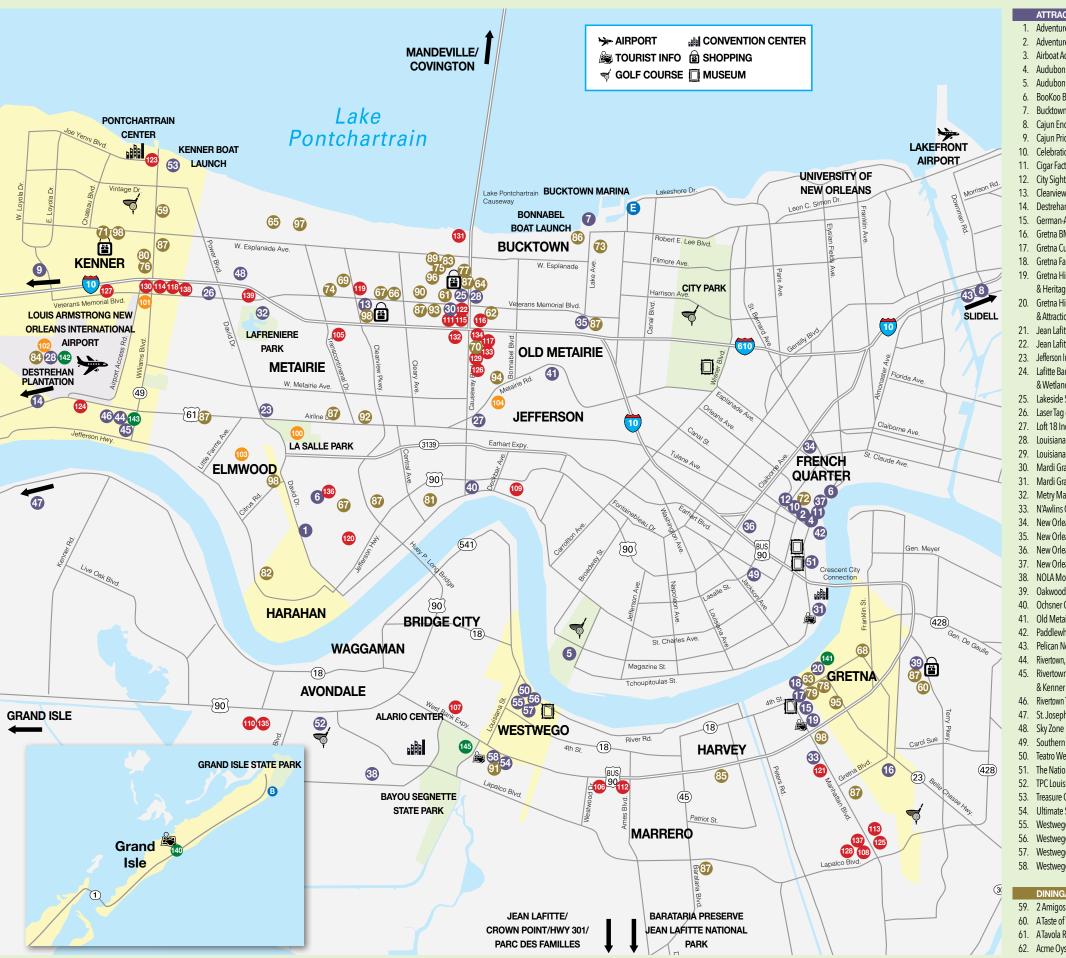
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- 22. Jean Lafitte Swamp & Airboat Tours
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- 47. St. Joseph Plantation & Felicity House
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