FUN AND ENERGY THAT COME ALIVE IN FESTIVALS, FOOD, MUSIC, AND ART. DOWNTOWN. IT CAPTURES THE SPIRIT AND INHABITS THE IMAGINATION.

FESTIVALS - Downtown Lafayette offers celebrations for every season. MARDI GRAS - Since 1934, Lafayette's family-oriented carnival. Throughout the season momentum builds with balls and festivities, culminating on Fat Tuesday with parades and parties for the whole family. DOWNTOWN ALIVE! - Free concerts in the streets every Friday night during the spring and fall. Showcasing Cajun, Zydeco, Rhythm and Blues, Rock and Roll, Country and Contemporary bands.

FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DE LOUISIANE - The country's largest international celebration of the French-speaking world. Music, Dance, Art, Theatre, Cuisine, Cinema, Architecture, and Social Customs. The result is spectacular; a world class event.

FESTIVALS ACADIENS - In September, experience everything unique to Cajun and Creole cultures. Spicy Food, Toe-Tapping Music, Native Crafts and a full day of activities Downtown, in a week-long combination of Festivals.

CAJUN CHRISTMAS - Holiday extravaganza, a festival of lights, parades and neighborhood tours. The Annual Abdalla's Christmas Parade has been a Yuletide tradition for over 30 years, bringing with it the arrival of Santa.

FOOD - A culinary experience - hot, spicy, and fun! Downtown restaurants offer some of the world's most mouth-watering specialties - Cajun & Creole delicacies such as crawfish etouffee, seafood gumbo, jambalaya, boudin, andouille, red beans and rice and other local originals.

MUSIC, DANCE, THEATRE - Days and nights filled with music and dance make any occasion a special celebration. Featuring the best Lafayette and Louisiana have to offer - the music will move you. Cajuns love dancing, from Two-Stepping in the streets to Ballroom, Ballet or Avant-garde performances. Complementing music and dance is a variety of offerings with modern and traditional performances in community theatre, dinner theatre and dance productions.

VISUAL ARTS - Brick and stone have become the artists' canvas of choice, as larger-than-life murals throughout the Downtown area portray the history and culture of the diverse peoples of Lafayette and Acadiana. The works of many of Louisiana's contemporary artists are exhibited in private galleries, shops and restaurants, as well as the interior spaces of public facilities and office buildings.
Lafayette - The Heart of Acadiana, Capital of Cajun Country. Its gleaming present belies an exciting, captivating past from a tiny village into a thriving city.

The unique downtown area, recognized as the heart of Lafayette's business community, is home to a variety of industries including banking, finance, real estate, insurance, print and broadcast media, accountants, attorneys, architects, engineers, retailers, and restaurateurs. Many City, Parish, State and Federal Offices are also headquartered in this hub of industry and commercial activity.

But Downtown is more than just the business center. It also holds a key to the past, as the place where the seeds of Acadiana were first planted. Throughout Downtown, we are constantly reminded of the historical and cultural aspects which make up the unique character of Lafayette.

The Acadians, descendants of the French who settled Nova Scotia in 1605, began arriving in Southwestern Louisiana in 1765. The area, now called Lafayette, was developed from Jean Mouton's donation of five acres of land to the Catholic Church in 1821. On this plot now stands the Cathedral of St. John.

In 1823, the State Legislature created Lafayette Parish, named for the French hero of the American Revolution. About that time, Jean Mouton donated more land for the construction of public buildings. A dispute over whether the town would be located at Vermilionville or Pin Hook was settled in Mouton's favor, and in 1836 Vermilionville was incorporated. In 1884 Vermilionville became LaFayette and later Lafayette. The city continued to grow and eventually became the metropolis of Cajun Country.

Today, Lafayette cherishes its history and celebrates its cultural heritage. And after three decades of dynamic suburban development, Downtown is redefining its place as the civic, cultural and economic heart of the community. The planned development of key public facilities and urban design improvements, such as a multi-arts district, public plazas and pedestrian walkways connecting major sites, will serve as the building blocks of tomorrow.

Downtown Lafayette - a walk through the past, a glimpse into the future.

Other Points of Interest
(For more information contact the Lafayette Convention and Visitor's Commission)
- Acadian Village
- Vermilionville
- Acadiana Nature Trail and Station
- University of Southwestern Louisiana
- University Art Museum
- Lafayette Natural History Museum and Planetarium
- Sterling Grove Historical District

Lafayette Centre
Downtown Lafayette Unlimited
Downtown Development Authority
556 Jefferson Street, Drawer 15
Jefferson Towers, Suite 101
Lafayette, LA 70501
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Visitor Information Center open daily.