Three days of music, dancing, food, art and culture in Girard Park Oct. 9-11.

This year's Festivals Acadiens et Créoles commemorates 250 years of surviving and thriving here in South Louisiana — and celebrates the legacy of our first Acadian pioneers. New this year are an exhibit of muralist Robert Dafford's paintings on the history of the Acadians, Zachary Richard's "Attakapas: Story of the Cajuns" and a symposium on "The Path to a New Acadia."

Friday evening's festivities open with a procession featuring country and city versions of Mardi Gras, along with an Acadian-style Tintamarre, all leading up to the Acadian Connection concert with Terry Huval and Jambalaya and plenty of special guests. Don't miss this historic celebration of Acadian music and culture happening in your own back yard.
"Our first Festivals Acadiens was an absolute delight in every way — we had a blast! I danced my ankles off!"

- James Fears III, Dallas-Fort Worth, TX

Much like our Cajun and Creole culture has evolved since the first Acadians arrived 250 years ago, so has Festivals Acadiens et Créoles in its 41 years of existence. From one humble music stage surrounded by draft beer trucks to multiple stages, expanded fine arts and crafts and the tastiest variety of Cajun cooking anywhere, Festivals Acadiens comes together during the second weekend in October each year in order for us to check its pulse, witness its growth and celebrate its evolution.

Festivals Acadiens' roots can be traced back to the first Tribute to Cajun Music Festival organized by CODOFIL in 1974. Festivals Acadiens was officially established in 1977 with components of music, food and crafts. Since then, the Festival has continued to evolve by developing a community board and becoming an independent nonprofit corporation in 2007 — and officially changing its name to Festivals Acadiens et Créoles in 2008 in order to more accurately reflect the cultures that have always been its focus.

Organizer Pat Mould says the board wanted to ensure that programming stayed culturally sound, but also recognized the need for better signage, staging, sound and general infrastructure. The Dance Hall and Culture Sur La Table tents were added and the children's area revitalized during this time, and a new October date took the Festival out of the height of hurricane season in 2006.

With new sponsor and government dollars secured, the Festival was able to expand through the addition of merchandise for sale, more tents and musical venues and most recently art exhibits and an educational symposium.

“Festival has had an opportunity to grow because of stable funding,” says Board President Barry Ancelet. “We're trying to make sure the programming is as excellent as can be, and we want people who come to the Festival to have the best experience they can.”

Today, Festival goers can find 11 venues spread across Girard Park, programming of more than 60 bands, over 20 food vendors and 70 artists displaying their crafts, in addition to two days of special events leading up to the Festival. That’s not to mention an economic impact of more than $9 million annually and the title of "Best Cultural Festival" for 2015 from USA Today.

Dewey Balfa once famously said “you can’t put a culture under glass in a museum simply for display.” Festivals Acadiens et Créoles took his advice and put our unique Cajun and Creole culture on full display for the world to enjoy. Vivent les Festivals!

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Celebrating the legacy of our Acadian pioneers.

The Acadians arrived in South Louisiana 250 years ago. Ten years after they were exiled from their native Acadie by the British, Joseph Beausoleil Broussard and his brother Alexandre Broussard led a group of nearly 200 Acadian refugees here. They arrived in New Orleans in February of 1765 and in April of the same year, they and six other Acadians, Joseph Guilbeau, Jean Duga (Dugas), Olivier Tibaudau (Thibodeaux), Jean Baptiste, Victor Broussard and Pierre Arcenaud (Arceneaux), signed a contract with Antoine Dauterive to tend his cattle in the Attakapas. Their first camp was somewhere near Loreauville along the Bayou Teche. Beausoleil Broussard died shortly afterward, but these founding families eventually settled the area and attracted other Acadian exiles to join them.

This year, we celebrate the legacy of those first Acadian pioneers, who laid the foundation for what has evolved into Cajun culture, with their courage, tenacity and spirit of improvisation and social cooperation. Festivals Acadiens et Creoles commemorates 250 years of surviving and thriving here in South Louisiana.

During that time, the descendants of those Acadians integrated influences from their French, Spanish, German, Anglo-American, Native American and African Creole neighbors, with whom they shared this region, to produce a cultural fusion that has become nationally renowned.

“Bienvenus aux Festivals Acadiens et Créoles. Join us in this annual gathering to celebrate our culture and ourselves. This year, we’re celebrating the 250th anniversary of the arrival of the first Acadians here in the Attakapas region and the legacy of those pioneers. We’ll provide the food, the music and the crafts, you do the eating, dancing and enjoying.”

BARRY JEAN ANCELET, Festivals Acadiens et Creoles Board President

“In this, my last Festivals Acadiens et Creoles as city-parish mayor-president, I would like to say how honored I have been to play a small role in supporting this great festival for the past 12 years. Festivals Acadiens celebrates a culture made up of multiple cultures. We are a gumbo, not a melting pot. A melting pot combines ingredients that create a new, unique product. In a gumbo, the ingredients keep their own flavor, but contribute to the overall flavor of that gumbo. That is what Festivals Acadiens et Creoles celebrates. Diverse cultures, coming together to create an even better culture, while still proudly retaining our individual characteristics.”

JOEY DUREL, Lafayette City-Parish President

“We are always excited to welcome you to Festivals Acadiens et Creoles, but particularly this year as we celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Acadian people landing in Louisiana. For the last 40 years, the Festival has been a great showcase of our food, music, culture and traditions of the Acadian and Creole people. As we share those traditions with you this week, we hope you enjoy your time here in the Happiest City in America, and we hope to see you back in Lafayette Parish again!”

BEN BERTHELOT, President & CEO, Lafayette Convention and Visitors Commission

“We are celebrating the 250th anniversary of the Acadians settling in Louisiana. And what better way to celebrate than with Festivals Acadiens et Creoles? As major influencers on our revered food, music and outdoor traditions, the Acadians gave us a great deal to celebrate, and this lively festival is the best way.”

JAY DARDENNE, Lt. Gov. of Louisiana
Presented by Dr. Tommy Comeaux Endowed Chair for Traditional Music at UL, Cajun and Creole jam sessions hosted by guest artists. Bring your instruments. All players are welcome.