From the time you stumble upon the ruins of the old sugar mill, drive past the historic oak grove and then discover the vast expanse of Lake Pontchartrain, you’ll realize this park is something special.

The crumbling brick ruins of a sugar mill built in 1829 by Bernard de Marigny de Mandeville, founder of the nearby town of Mandeville, suggest an interesting history for this site, and indeed there is. The wealthy Marigny developed this area across Lake Pontchartrain from New Orleans as a sugar plantation until 1852. The plantation income helped support his lavish lifestyle.

He named his large land holding Fontainebleau after the beautiful forest near Paris, a favorite recreation area of the French kings.
Along the Lakeshore

The day use area of the 2,800-acre park is located on the shores of Lake Pontchartrain. Numerous picnic sites, complete with tables and grills, and an adjacent pavilion are nestled under the oak trees in sight of the lake. On a clear day, visitors can see the lake dotted with multi-colored sailboats of all sizes and types. Fontainebleau contains a sailboat ramp where sailors may launch small, non-motorized sailboats directly into Lake Pontchartrain.

The sandy beach is a delight for sunbathers, while the nearby swimming pool offers refreshment from the summer heat. Two pavilions are located along both sides of the pool’s bathhouse. The pool is open six days a week during the summer. It is closed on Mondays, except holidays.

Large cleared areas next to the picnic sections are handy for sporting events. An old railroad track that runs through the park has been converted into the Tammany Trace as a part of the Rails to Trails program. It is a wonderful route for cycling, hiking and in-line skating. The park’s nature trail is a favorite of nature lovers. Interpretive signs along the trail will help you identify many of the common trees and shrubs. Always be on the lookout for birds and other animals. Over 400 different species live in and around Fontainebleau. Some species to look for include the endangered red cockaded woodpecker, turkey, opossum, squirrel, mink and other native Louisiana creatures.

The Fontainebleau Birding Guide is a good resource for birding enthusiasts to identify the numerous species found in the area. Bordered on three sides by water—Lake Pontchartrain, Bayou Cane and Bayou Castine—and characterized by a convergence of diverse ecosystems, it has a multitude of habitats for birds. Fontainebleau offers an excellent opportunity for you to discover the wildlife of the marsh, pines, mixed hardwoods, open fields and lake.

Spend the Night

For the overnight visitor, Fontainebleau has several different types of accommodations.

In the camping area, there are 127 improved campsites with water, electricity and picnic tables at each. An adjacent bathhouse and dump station are also provided. In addition, there are 180 unimproved campsites and a primitive camping area for those who want to “rough it.”

The park also offers three group camps. Camp Number 1, which can sleep up to 150 people, and Camp Number 2, which sleeps 30, are located close together on the beachfront. A nearby swimming pool is available for guests at the group camps. Camp Number 3 is located in another part of the park and can
accommodate 65 people. An enclosed swimming area and freshwater fishing are available at this camp. All group camps include dormitory sleeping areas and fully equipped kitchens.

There is also a primitive group camping area which is used by Scouts and other organizations. Located near Camps Number 1 and 2, this area has access to running water and a bathhouse, but no other improvements are provided.

Just across US 190 from the main part of the park is the Fontainebleau Park Lodge. The Lodge includes sleeping facilities for ten people, with a maximum capacity of twelve, as well as a kitchen and two baths.

This park, named for a place for kings, is truly fit for a king. Come visit us and receive the royal treatment at Fontainebleau State Park.

Nearby Attractions:
**Fort Pike State Commemorative Area**—(adjacent to Old Spanish Trail, or Old 90, approximately 23 miles east of downtown New Orleans)—This historic masonry fort was completed in 1827 to defend New Orleans. Stroll through arched casemates and stand overlooking the Rigolets as sentries once did, enjoy living history programs, visit the museum or picnic at the pavilion.

**Fairview-Riverside State Park**—(12 miles east of Madisonville on LA Hwy 22)—Nestled among magnificent live oaks and situated on the cool clear waters of the Tchefuncte River, this gem of a state park features 81 improved camp sites, excellent fishing, canoeing and picnicking. A nearby boat ramp offers access to the park and Lake Pontchartrain.

**Town of Mandeville**—(I-10 to US 190 north of New Orleans, on the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain)—Take the longest bridge over water in the world to scenic byways, swamp tours, antiques, shopping, festivals, and trails.

**Town of Madisonville**—(LA 22 northwest of US 190 on north shore of Lake Pontchartrain)—Nostalgic river town on Tchefuncte River with great restaurants, antiques, boating and specialty shops.

**Town of Covington**—(I-12 to US 190)—A charming town of specialty shops, antiques, scenic byways, festivals, trails, campgrounds, and B&Bs. A short drive from New Orleans and the Gulf Coast.

**St. Bernard State Park**—(18 miles southeast of New Orleans at Poydras)—Located on the Mississippi River, just minutes from New Orleans, the park features 51 improved campsites, a covered pavilion with grill, picnic tables, playground, swimming pool and nature trail in a tranquil and quiet setting.

**Bayou Segnette State Park**—(7777 Westbank Expressway, Westwego)—Minutes from New Orleans, the park offers 20 waterfront cabins, 98 improved camp sites, a group camp, wave pool, conference center, playgrounds, picnic tables and pavilions, a large boat launch, and abundant wildlife.

**Tammany Trace**—(Koop Drive, Mandeville)—Nine miles of the projected 32-mile “Rails-to-Trails” are open from Mandeville to Abita Springs. It is a popular spot for cyclists, horseback riding, runners, skaters and walkers.

**New Orleans and the Historic French Quarter**—Visit downtown New Orleans’ museums, casinos, Aquarium of the Americas, the Riverwalk, or take a cruise on the Mississippi River.

**Louisiana State Museum**—(French Quarter, New Orleans)—One of New Orleans’ top ten attractions, the State Museum is comprised of the Cabildo, Presbytère, 1850 House and the Old U.S. Mint.

**Antique Shopping in Ponchatoula**—“America’s Antique City.”

**Swamp Tours**—Contact local guides for tours of Honey Island Swamp.

**Pearl River Wildlife Management Area**—(2 miles east of Slidell in St. Tammany Parish)—This 34,896-acre area is managed for wildlife and includes a cypress-tupelo swamp and hardwoods. Visitors may enjoy fishing, canoeing, boating, birding, crawfishing, hunting, a nature walk and rifle range.
Fontainebleau State Park
(P.O. Box 8925,
Mandeville, LA
70470-8925;
504-624-4443 or
1-888-677-3668)
is located southeast of Mandeville on US 190. The park embraces 2,800 acres on the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain. Camping, a nature trail, group camps, a lodge, swimming, a playground, and the ruins of a plantation brickyard and sugar mill are a few of the reasons why visitors return to Fontainebleau year after year.