The Atchafalaya Basin

There's a vast and beautiful strip of wild woodlands nestled in the heart of south-central Louisiana that is inhabited by thousands of different species of animals and plants. It's a place where hunters fill their bags, where fishermen pass countless hours of relaxation, and where alligators, deer, snakes, birds, rabbit, squirrel and frogs make their homes.

It's called the Atchafalaya River Basin, and it's one of America's few remaining great semi-wilderness areas.

The woods are so thick in many places in the basin that unless the sun is straight overhead it's actually dark deep in the woods.

The existence of the basin in Louisiana is one of this state's soundest arguments for calling herself "Sportsman's Paradise."

The basin begins near Simmesport and stretches some 75 miles southward to the Gulf of Mexico just beyond Morgan City. It's average width is 17 miles.

The lower part of the basin is characterized by moss-covered cypress, willow and oak trees, swamps, lakes and countless streams of various sizes. The upper reaches of the basin, while they were once under water, have become dry land largely because of silt deposits. The land has been built up by nature in parts of the upper basin to such an extent as to allow agricultural endeavors.

The basin is a place that can yield unexcelled pleasure for the sportsman; it's a place that will thrill the tourist; and it's a wild land that can be an insurmountable challenge for anyone not accustomed to life in the great outdoors.

The Atchafalaya Basin is a wild place where Boy Scouts go on combination fishing-hunting jaunts; it's a quiet place where some old men spend their last few years, just fishing away the hours; and it's a serene setting where writers and poets can go for inspiration.

The basin is the former home of thousands of Indians, including the Chitimachas. It is where a multi-million dollar cypress industry once flourished. It's a bonanza area for the oil industry.

The Atchafalaya Basin, which is the floodway for flood waters from the Atchafalaya River, is part of a complex flood-control system that helps to drain two-thirds of the contiguous United States. The system is operated by the U.S. Corps of Engineers and is designed to protect the lives of densely populated south Louisiana.

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Welcome to McGee’s Landing and to the beautiful swamplands of the great Atchafalaya Basin. Your tour of the basin will be taken in one of our 28-foot pleasure crafts. The boats are driven by our experienced personnel. The tour, which takes you into the heart of the Atchafalaya Basin, will last for about an hour and a half. To assure accommodations when you want them, may we suggest that you make your reservations in advance by calling (318) 228-8519 or 228-2384. We highly recommend that you bring your camera.

One of the features of the tour is a ride under the “Swampland Expressway” – that segment of Interstate-10 which crosses the Atchafalaya Basin. You can get a close-up look at how the bridge was built – which was originally said to be an impossible engineering and construction feat due to the basin’s soft and soggy earth.

**RATES**

**Adults:** $7.50  
**Children (under 12):** $4.00  
**Minimum cost per tour:** $30.00

*Persons from more than one party may ride in the same boat.*

- **Church, School, Business or Civic Organizations**
  - Group rates (adults) - 20 or more: $6.00
  - Children (under 12): Compliment guide, one chaperon per boat. Also, any other parents desiring to ride will get the $6.00 rate.

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**How to Get to McGee’s Landing**

**FROM 1-10:** Take Exit 115 to Henderson. Go through Henderson to the levee and turn right on top of the levee. McGee’s will be 2 miles down, just after Whiskey River landing!

**DRIVING TIME**

- **From Lafayette:** 25 minutes
- **From Baton Rouge:** 45 minutes
- **From St. Martinville:** 30 minutes

**FROM ST. MARTINVILLE:** Get on Hwy. 96 in St. Martinville, cross Bayou Teche, and go through the little community of Catahoula to the levee road (about 10 miles from St. Martinville). Turn left on the levee road. McGee’s will be about 7 miles down. This route, through the heart of Evangeline Country, is scenic and photogenic, taking you past ancient moss-draped oaks, sugarcane fields and generally through typical old Louisiana countryside.