

# Cajun Culture

The Acadians, or Cajuns as they are referred to today, immigrated to Louisiana in the late 1700's. They are descendants of French who migrated first to a region of Canada known as Acadie, or Acadia (most of which is now known as Nova Scotia). Many were exiled by the British beginning in 1755, and eventually found their way to colonial Louisiana, which already had a strong French heritage. They settled in rural areas of south Louisiana, and lived in relative isolation for many years. This enabled them to retain many traditional aspects of their language and culture and avoid being absorbed into the American mainstream.

With time and the movement of people in search of better jobs, many of the traditional elements of the Cajun culture have been blended with other cultures. Likewise, the foods known as Cajun have been intermixed with food styles from other cultures. In many places Cajun and Creole style cooking and foods have been blended together, like ingredients in a cooking pot. In some places, the terms Cajun and Creole cooking are used interchangeably, much to the dismay of traditionalists. In New Orleans, Creole style cooking could be described as more refined with a blend of exotic herbs and spices and ingredients from the Caribbean, Africa, Europe and other places. Cajun cooking would have been more “country” or rural in that the style was a little more simplistic with the ingredients coming from local wildlife and plants. Today, one can find a blend of Cajun and Creole style foods under one roof in many restaurants and in the homes of folks in this region.

Much of the area that we will be traveling through between Shriever, LA and Beaumont, TX still retain strong Acadian influences, and the Cajun French language is still spoken by many people in the region.

## **Source(s):**

## **Author(s):**

Written by James E. Miculka with the National Park Service based with the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences at Texas A&M University, as part of a National Park Service Trails and Rails project funded by Amtrak, 2009.