



Louisiana Rambles: Exploring America's Cajun and Creole Heartland

Ian McNulty

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After Hurricane Katrina laid bare the fragility and environmental peril of south Louisiana, author Ian McNulty set out on a series of daytrips to delve into the area's diverse cultural landscapes. He explored communities staked up and down the Mississippi River, nestled into the teeming bayous, braced along the edge of the Gulf, and planted out on the golden prairie stretching to the west. *Louisiana Rambles* is his richly evocative guide to those journeys.

McNulty delivers an inimitable take on Cajun and Creole Louisiana—the siren call of zydeco dancehalls pulsing in the country darkness; of crawfish "boiling points" and traditional country smokehouses; of Cajun jam sessions, where even wallflowers are compelled to dance; of equine gambits in the cradle of jockeys; and of fishing trips where anyone can land impressive catches. In south Louisiana, distilled European heritage, the African American experience, and modern southern exuberance mix with tumultuous history and fantastically fecund natural environments. The territories McNulty opens to the reader are arguably the nation's most exotic and culturally distinct destinations.

McNulty quests for the heart of these places and people. Much more than a travel guide or collection of travel narratives, *Louisiana Rambles* is a seasoned writer's witness to an epic locale that is very often joyous, sometimes heartbreaking, and always vital and stimulating. An extensive, chapter-by-chapter appendix filled with travel tips and notes from the road (or the bayou) will let visitors explore well beyond the beaten tourist paths and help Louisiana residents appreciate their own terrain in a new light.

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