

# BOUND FOR THE BOWLS

From touring historical sites to visiting casinos to dining on Southern barbecue, there's plenty to amuse Hawkeye and Cyclone fans who head south for the bowl games.

## Shreveport glitters with holiday lights

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Are you ready for some football?

Iowans will converge on Shreveport, La., and the surrounding area for the Dec. 27 Independence Bowl between Iowa State and Alabama. There will be tailgate parties all weekend at the Louisiana State Fairgrounds, a pep rally, and pre-game party festivities to keep Cyclone fans occupied.

But Iowa State fans may want to take time to embrace a bit of the local culture in Shreveport, which combined with adjoining Bossier City has a population of about 350,000.

### **Christmas displays**

With the Independence Bowl just two days after Christmas, fans still caught up in the holiday spirit can check out the American Rose Center's "Christmas in Roseland," named one of the Top 20 Events in the Southeast for 12 years by the Southeast Tourism Society.

The 118-acre gardens, 8877 Jefferson Paige Road, features a winter wonderland of more than four million lights as part of displays and animated scenes accenting the Windsounds Carillon Tower, Japanese Tea Garden and Hardtner Chapel. There's a display of electric trains and intricately designed railroad scenes in the administration building, an illuminated path highlighted by "Christmas Cards to the Community," and a gift shop. Open 5:30 to 10 p.m. through Dec. 30, except Christmas Day, admission is \$10 per carload or \$3 per person.

The Spirit of the Red River Cruise offers lighted boat tours showcasing the lights of downtown Shreveport and Bossier City from the Red River. The one-hour daytime cruises cost \$10 and the 30-minute evening lights cruises are \$5, with discounts for children. Boats depart Friday through Sunday

every two hours from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m, with boarding across from the Sci-Port Discovery Center, Clyde Fant Parkway, Shreveport.

### **Plenty of casinos**

After a cruise, one of Shreveport-Bossier's five dockside riverboat casinos might fit the bill.

Harrah's, 315 Clyde Fant Parkway, features the area's newest hotel, with 514 rooms. Also new is Hollywood Casino Shreveport on Spring Street, bringing a touch of Tinseltown's glitz to the Red River. For a tropical atmosphere, there's the Isle of Capri Casino and Hotel at 711 Isle of Capri Blvd. in Bossier City, while the elegant Horseshoe Casino & Hotel, off Exit 19-B of Interstate 20, features a wall of money called the Million Dollar Wall. Nearby Casino Magic has three decks of gaming activities, as well as an open air deck and deli.

The Shreveport downtown area retains many historical landmarks and should take Iowa State fans to its liking. Maps are available for a walking tour. The self-guided tour of downtown Shreveport has 27 stops, including Spring Street Museum, which houses exhibits and memorabilia of the early days of northwest Louisiana.

Most interesting, perhaps, is the architecturally magnificent Municipal Auditorium off Elvis Presley Blvd., where The King himself as well as Johnny Cash, George Jones, Hank Williams and many other stars got their start at "The Louisiana Hayride." The Hayride ran from 1948-1960.

The courthouse became a model for the Kansas City courthouse because it so impressed Missourian Harry Truman.

### **Mmmm, Cajun food**

For dinner, Crescent Landing offers all-you-can eat catfish, located a little more than one mile south of Interstate 20 out of Shreveport. Call (318) 686-4450. For true Louisiana cuisine, there are Cajun and Creole offerings at Gators Seafood Grill off Benton Road. Call (318) 747-1272.

Iowans seeking after-dinner entertainment might check out James Burton's Rock 'n' Roll Cafe, featuring live entertainment. Burton, the owner, played with Elvis and was just this year inducted into Rock's Hall of Fame. There's also the cozy Blind Tiger at 120 Texas St., serving drinks.

The area boasts museums. The interactive Sci-Port Discovery Center at 820 Clyde Fant Parkway has an IMAX Dome Theater.

The Antique and Classic Vehicle Museum, 601 Spring St., is in what was a car dealership and features an array of automotive history and displays of historic area landmarks. The recently renovated Eighth Air Force Museum at Barksdale Air Force Base in Bossier City features uniforms, dioramas and authentic aircraft and barracks. Call (318) 456-3067 for admission restrictions.

The R.W. Norton Museum features paintings, sculptures and decorative arts spanning four centuries. The

museum, at 4747 Creswell Ave., is highlighted by an azalea gardens with 10,000 plants.

**Information**

Information on Shreveport is available by calling the Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau, (318) 222-9391 or (800) 551-8682. Web site [www.shreveport-bossier.org](http://www.shreveport-bossier.org).

**For shoppers**

The Line Avenue district in Shreveport, near the art museum, has five miles of shops and restaurants.

**Weather**

Like San Antonio, the weather in Shreveport is not much warmer than Iowa this unusual December. Last week, high temperatures were in the upper 50s and low 60s and lows were in the 40s.