



Stirring Up 59 Years of Flavor: Ascension Parish's Jambalaya Festival Returns in May

Gonzales, Louisiana (*April 30, 2026*) – Things are heating up in Gonzales ... and it's not just the spring weather. The 59th annual Jambalaya Festival returns May 21–24 (Memorial Day weekend) at the Lamar-Dixon Expo Center, bringing four days of bold flavors and a whole lot of Louisiana spirit to the town that has earned the nickname “Jambalaya Capital of the World.” As the oldest festival in Ascension Parish, this beloved tradition has been serving up good times for nearly six decades. Whether you're a first-time visitor or a seasoned festival-goer, come hungry and ready to have a rice time.

Jambalaya cooking teams from across the region will fire up their pots and compete for top honors, filling the air with the unmistakable aroma of one of Louisiana's signature comfort foods. It's a competition where the stakes are high, the flavors are bold, and everyone's trying to prove that their recipe is the best in the batch. With nearly 100 teams participating in last year's cook-off, the competition continues to grow, proving this festival isn't just stirring the pot; it's turning up the heat. Beyond the main cooking event, the festival also delivers a full menu of entertainment and activities, including:

- Live music featuring local, regional and national performers
- An array of carnival rides and games to please families and thrill-seekers alike
- A car show with classic cars and custom builds
- Dozens of food vendors and craft booths offering everything from festival favorites to unique finds
- Junior (ages 12-17) cooking and mini pot competitions so that everyone has a chance to bring their cooking skills to the table
- 5K and 1K runs, giving participants a chance to burn off all those jambalaya samples



Credit: APTC

With Gonzales conveniently located between Baton Rouge and New Orleans, which is one of the many reasons this part of the state is known as “Louisiana’s Sweet Spot,” the Jambalaya Festival is the perfect easy getaway for both locals and visitors looking to experience authentic Louisiana culture.

So whether you're coming to dance, shop, ride or just spice things up, one thing's for sure: you won't leave hungry!

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