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Parishes

During the 18th century, Spain and France were fighting for control of the region now known as Louisiana. Both Spain and France were Catholic nations at the time and so the land was split up into parishes each with its parish priest. When Louisiana was first purchased by the United States in 1803, it was split into 12 counties.1 However, the people living in Louisiana continued to refer to them as parishes. In 1807, the United States redrew the borders in Louisiana into 19 parishes.1 The first nineteen parishes were Ascension, Assumption, Avoyelles, Concordia, Iberville, Lafourche, Natchitoches, Orleans, Ouachita, Plaquemines, Pointe Coupee, Rapides, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. James, St. John, St. Landry, St. Martin, and West Baton Rouge. Most of the parishes we have today originated from those first 19 parishes.

Each parish has its own form of government. 41 parishes are run by a Police Jury structure. A police jury is comprised of anywhere from five to fifteen jury members. Police juries have a fair amount of freedom in how they may perform their duties but can provide little protection from legislative interference.2 Their duties include “road and bridge construction and maintenance, drainage, sewerage, solid waste disposal, fire protection, recreations and parks, parish prison construction and maintenance, road lighting and marking, many water works, health units and hospitals, etc.”3 The remaining 23 parishes operate under various types of home rule charters. Home rule charters are designed to leave the leaders of each parish with more power to carry out their duties in whatever way they decide is best.2

There are currently sixty-four parishes in Louisiana. The following is a list4 of the parishes with their pronunciations:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Acadia | uh-key-dee-uh | Iberia | ahy-beer-ee-uh | St. Charles | seynt chahrlz |
| Allen | al-uhn | Iberville | **ib**-er-vil | St. Helena | seynt hel-uh-nuh |
| Ascension | uh-sen-shuhn | Jackson | jak-suhn | St. James | seynt jeymz |
| Assumption | uh-suhmp-shuhn | Jefferson | jef-er-suhn | St. John | seynt jon |
| Avoyelles | *uh-***voil** | Jefferson Davis | jef-er-suhn dey-vis | St. Landry | seynt lan-dree |
| Beauregard | boh-ri-gahrd | Lafayette | **laf**-ey-et | St. Martin | seynt mahr-tn |
| Bienville | be*-***en***-*vil | Lafourche | lah-**foosh** | St. Mary | seynt mair-ee |
| Bossier | **bo**-zhure | LaSalle | luh**-sal** | St. Tammany | seynt tam-uh-nee |
| Caddo | kad-oh | Lincoln | ling-kuhn | Tangipahoa | **tan**-gi-pa-hoa |
| Calcasieu | **cal**-ca-shoe | Livingston | liv-ing-stuhn | Tensas | ten-saw |
| Caldwell | kawld-wel | Madison | mad-uh-suhn | Terrebonne | **tair**-*uh*-bone |
| Cameron | kam-ruhn | Morehouse | **mohr**-hous | Union | yoon-yuhn |
| Catahoula | cat-ah-**hoo**-lah | Natchitoches | **nack**-*uh*-tish | Vermilion | ver-mil-yuhn |
| Claiborne | **clay**-burn | Orleans | awr-lee-uhnz | Vernon | vur-nuhn |
| Concordia | kon-kawr-dee-uh | Ouachita | wosh-i-taw | Washington | wosh-ing-tuhn |
| DeSoto | duh soh-toh | Plaquemines | **plack**-*uh*-mihn | Webster | web-ster |
| East Baton Rouge | eest bat-n-roozh | Pointe Coupee | point **cuh**-pea | West Baton Rouge | west bat-n-roozh |
| East Carroll | eest kar-uhl | Rapides | rap-ids | West Carroll | west kar-uhl |
| East Feliciana | eest feh-**lee**-see-ah-nah | Red River | red riv-er | West Feliciana | west feh-**lee**-see-ah-nah |
| Evangeline | ih-van-juh-leen | Richland | rich-luhnd | Winn | wihn |
| Franklin | frangk-lin | Sabine | s*uh*-**been** |  |  |
| Grant | grant | St. Bernard | seynt bur-nahrd |  |  |

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