

# NEW ORLEANS *Revival*



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With the city's rich culture and historic architecture, its delectable dining and party atmosphere, New Orleans is once again attracting millions of visitors. Experience this American classic for yourself, and let the good times roll!



For all of Katrina's dousing destruction, the floodwaters could not extinguish the bright light that is, and always will be, New Orleans. Although the city is still in recovery mode, the heart of what made it one of America's most popular tourist attractions is still beating strong. The French Quarter escaped the storm virtually unscathed, as did many of the adjacent neighborhoods. The dining, architecture, music, nightlife, shopping—it's all here, waiting to be rediscovered or experienced for the first time.

#### Historic Stops

New Orleans has come a long way since a French explorer stumbled upon the swamp at the mouth of the Mississippi back in 1682. Isolated from the mainland for close to 250 years, the city became a hotbed of innovations, including Dixieland jazz, Creole cuisine, gospel music, jazz funerals, and a sassy stew of African-American, French and Spanish cultures.

Start your visit in the French Quarter, with its Old World spirit, infinitely varied architecture and faded elegance. A good beginning is in Jackson Square, an 18th-century public square, military parade ground and open-air market that is now the epicenter of the French Quarter, a meeting place for street musicians, voodoo queens, fortunetellers, artists, grifters, historians and tourists.

Although it looks like a fairy-tale castle, Saint Louis Cathedral on Jackson Square is the oldest continuously oper-

ating cathedral in America. Check out St. Anthony's Garden, with its statue of Christ with uplifted arms and a white marble obelisk dedicated to 19th-century victims of yellow fever. Follow Pirates Alley, adjacent to the cathedral, to number 624, home to Nobel Prize winner William Faulkner while he was writing his early works *Mosquitoes* and *Soldiers' Pay*. Now the site houses Faulkner House Books, with its large collection of Faulkner first editions and literary collectibles.

In a world of Disney-esque attractions, the French Quarter is unfailingly authentic. It's not an interpreted historic attraction, it is 120 blocks of the real deal. Many of the city's more than 35,000 buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places are located here.

#### Neighborhood Flavor

Too many visitors don't venture far off of Bourbon Street, and that's a shame. Although you have to walk it at least once—and there is good music (and overpriced drinks) to be had—Bourbon Street's 14 blocks of tacky souvenir shops, bars and adult entertainment are not what this town is really about. Head a block toward the river to Royal Street, a 10-block stretch of antique shops and art galleries that is also the address for some of the Quarter's most elegant homes. Landmarks include Mr. B's Bistro; Rodrigue Studio New Orleans, with its collection of Blue Dog paintings; and the Gallier House, a Creole townhouse turned museum.

Head toward Decatur Street, once the Quarter's roughest piece of riverfront real estate. Now it's home to shopping at Canal Place and Jax Brewery, the House of Blues and a Hard Rock Café. A bit farther down you'll find the French Market and Café Du Monde, a must for café au lait and beignets, N'Awlins' version of the doughnut.

To the north, just up from where the Mississippi bends into its famous crescent, is Faubourg Marigny, an original Creole neighborhood that is a hotbed of night-



clubs, bars and restaurants. Decidedly Boho in feel, the central Frenchmen Street is five blocks of cafés, music clubs and restaurants that spill people out into the street every weekend. You'll find music from reggae to blues to salsa here, and restaurants reflect a global mix of everything from sushi to Turkish kabobs, from Southwestern to Indian curry.

On the other end of the spectrum, a walk through the Garden District is one of the sophisticated pleasures of a visit to New Orleans. This sector sheltered wealthy Americans who built the antitheses of French- and Creole-style homes, hence the Victorian, Italianate and Greek Revival manses that still line the streets. Until the St. Charles Streetcar line starts running again in 2007, temporary buses serve St. Charles Avenue into the Garden District.

Keep your walking shoes on, and visit the galleries on Julia Street in the Warehouse Arts District, a neighborhood that is also home to the National World War II Museum, the Contemporary Arts Center, the Louisiana Children's Museum and the acclaimed Ogden Museum of Southern Art.

Across town, in City Park, the New Orleans Museum of Art houses an impressive \$200 million permanent collection of more than 40,000 pieces of art, photography and more.

Through January 21, *¡Carnaval!* explores pre-Lenten festivals around the world, followed March 4–June 2 by *Femme, Femme, Femme: Paintings of Women in French Society from Daumier to Picasso from the Museums of France*. While at the museum, be sure to walk through the outside Sculpture Garden, which includes more than 50 works by the likes of Henry Moore, Pierre Auguste Renoir and George Segal.

#### Shopping Stops

From kitschy souvenirs to world-class art, New Orleans offers retail therapy for every occasion. Antique-shop on Royal Street, get funky on Magazine Street or peruse culinary take-homes in the French Market. You're guaranteed to find something you didn't know you needed.

Shopping in the French Quarter is all about discovery. Free of chain stores and fiercely proud of its owner-operated retail sector, this neighborhood boasts fine art galleries, eclectic

A jazz parade in the French Quarter (page 16). The French Market entrance; a young tourist; a restaurant sign at the Riverwalk Shopping Mall; a coffee and beignet at Café Du Monde (page 17, clockwise from top left). A statue at the New Orleans Museum of Art (page 18). Chef John Bush at Restaurant August; Satsuma Seared Gulf Fish from Commander's Palace (this page, left to right).



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Acme Oyster House is hopping; a musician waits near the Cabildo (this page, top to bottom). Artisan jewelry draws the eye at the French Market (page 21).



boutiques and quirky ateliers for everything from handmade leather masks to hammered silver jewelry. Don't miss New Orleans Gem & Lapidary on St. Philip, an untouristy spot for bling on a side street between Decatur and Chartres. Bring home zydeco, blues and traditional brass music from Louisiana Music Factory, pralines from Aunt Sally's and custom-blended scents from Bourbon French Parfums.

Stretching six miles parallel to the Mississippi River from Canal Street to Audubon Park, Magazine Street travels from the Central Business District all the way through the Garden District to Uptown. Local designer Mignon Faget has a gallery here, showcasing jewelry inspired by symbols of New Orleans, from a gumbo necklace—dripping with shrimp, crab and okra charms—to king cake doll pendants and French fleur-de-lis designs.

#### It's All About the Food

Inspired cuisine rules in the Crescent City, always famous for its mix of joints and upscale eateries. For your first taste of New Orleans, skip the pretense and stop at Liuzza's by the Track, famous for roast beef po' boys (\$7.25), dark seafood gumbo (\$4/cup; \$7.50/bowl) and garlicky barbecued shrimp (\$8.25). If it's Old Guard you want, Galatoire's is the epitome of a Creole Palace, staffed by waiters who have tended the same families for generations. The Trout Meunière (\$19.50) and Pompano Meunière Amandine with crabmeat garnish (\$31) are signatures.

Uptown, JoAnn Clevenger at Upperline is the effusive doyenne of the restaurant scene, serving updated Creole cooking like the signature fried green tomato with shrimp remoulade (average entrée \$21) in an art gallery setting. While there are scores of creative chefs in town, John Besh is at the top of the list. Restaurant August spotlights his Creole-influenced contemporary cuisine in a former warehouse space now aglow with French doors, burgundy velvet chairs and chandeliers. Besh keeps one foot in his

native Bayou and the other in the big city, putting out creative seasonal dishes such as his BLT (\$12)—buster crabs, lettuce and heirloom tomatoes—and Louisiana rabbit with morels served with sage grits.

Post-Katrina openings include Vizard's on the Avenue, powered by veteran chef Kevin Vizard; Longbranch in Abita Springs on the Northshore of Lake Pontchartrain; and Cochon, Donald Link and Stephen Stryjewski's Warehouse District Valentine to authentic Cajun fare.

#### Music Is in the Air

New Orleans and music go together like riverboats and the Mississippi, fried shrimp and po' boys, or beignets and cafe au lait. A music lover's paradise—home to jazz, Cajun, R&B and soul—the city has produced its share of musical giants, from Louis Armstrong and Dr. John to contemporary acts like Better Than Ezra and Galactic.

While you probably know about Preservation Hall, you may be new to places that cater more to locals than to the tourist trade. From Donna's for brass on Rampart to swamp boogie at Rock 'N' Bowl in Mid-City, the music never has to stop. Another uptown spot not to miss is the Maple Leaf Bar, with its sweaty dance floor and lineup of great funk, Cajun, R&B and blues. Walter "Wolfman" Washington is a regular, and if Beausoleil or the ReBirth Brass Band is playing on the bandstand in the window, you won't have a better time anywhere in town. On a hot night, parties spill onto the street or out on the pretty patio for a breath of air.

For more live music and your choice of more than 160 beers, head for d.b.a. in the Marigny, a sultry lounge spot owned by the same folks who run the New York club. Good live music includes local acts like Theresa Andersson and Cyril Neville. There's never a cover at the Spotted Cat across the street, a tiny club that delivers more great local music, from brassy jazz combos to acoustic strummers. It doesn't get more classic than on Friday nights at Snug Harbor, with Ellis Marsalis, patriarch

#### Top 10 Must-Do's

- 1 **Beignets, everyone?** Café Du Monde serves pillows of sugary fried dough with chicory-flavored café au lait at seven locations around the city.
- 2 **Giddy-up.** OK, it's touristy, but taking a mule-drawn carriage ride around the Quarter is also really fun.
- 3 **Jazz it up at Preservation Hall.** This iconic haunt on St. Peter Street has been the place for no-frills brass since 1961.
- 4 **Sample muffalettas at Central Grocery.** The N'Awlins version of a sub is piled high with Italian meats and smeared with the Grocery's trademark green olive salad.
- 5 **Catch Kermit Ruffins at Vaughan's.** Most Thursdays, the local trumpet impresario rocks this friendly Bywater dive. Take a cab.
- 6 **Shop the French Market.** A mixed bag of kitsch, local artwork and imported knockoffs keep company with hot sauce and Cajun spices.
- 7 **Join the scene on Frenchmen Street.** A diverse alt crowd frequents this street off of Esplanade in the Marigny, a hub of nightlife and international restaurants.
- 8 **Dine at a legend.** The newly reopened Commander's Palace, housed in a Garden District Victorian mansion, is the flagship of the Brennan family, with a history that dates back to 1880.
- 9 **Visit the National World War II Museum.** This repository of military history is vivid with personal stories. It's here because the landing craft used in the D-Day invasions was built locally and tested on nearby bayous.
- 10 **Aw, shucks!** Have a seat at the scarred marble oyster bar and watch the pros in action at Acme Oyster House, where Gulf oysters are a specialty and the fried oyster po' boys, dressed (with the works), are just about perfect.



of the Marsalis clan, holding court upstairs. The show is televised downstairs at the standing-room-only bar.

Line up a taxi, have a double espresso and don't worry if you can't get to four clubs in one night. You might feel better in the morning if you take it one at a time. *Travel writer Beth D'Addono first fell in love with New Orleans 15 years ago, and the honeymoon isn't over yet.*

## If you've seen New Orleans, try ...

From Beale Street to 18th and Vine, the roots of American music reach beyond the Big Easy. And you don't have to travel far to find some toe-tapping alternatives.



### Memphis, Tennessee

As the city that calls itself “Home of the Blues, Birthplace of Rock ‘n’ Roll,” Memphis doesn’t disappoint. This city of 650,000 people grew up along the banks of the Mississippi River. The nation’s first original musical form—the blues—grew up here, too, on Beale Street, where legends like W.C. Handy and B.B. King got their start. Today, the street is still alive with the sounds of live blues, jazz and rock pouring from the neon-lit clubs that line the brick sidewalks. Visitors can also glimpse Elvis Presley’s day-to-day life at Graceland and see where he launched his career—Sun Studio—which also gave us Johnny Cash and Jerry Lee Lewis.

► **Where to Stay:** Radisson Hotel Memphis Airport

PHOTOS: (TOP) GETTY IMAGES; (BOTTOM) CORBIS

### Kansas City, Missouri

Jazz may have been born in New Orleans, but many of the genre’s greatest performers got their start in Kansas City. During the 1920s and ’30s, the area of 18th and Vine streets was the epicenter of the city’s African-American community—and home to more than 60 jazz clubs hosting the likes of Charlie Parker and Count Basie. Today, visitors can hear live jazz and relive the city’s musical legacy at the American Jazz Museum on 18th Street. Housed in the same complex is the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, paying tribute to legends like Jackie Robinson.

► **Where to Stay:** Radisson Hotel & Suites Kansas City–City Center, Radisson Hotel Lenexa–Overland Park, Radisson Kansas City Airport

Memphis’ Beale Street Entertainment District is home to more than 26 clubs and shops (above). A statue outside Kansas City’s American Jazz Museum honors local jazz legend Charlie “Yardbird” Parker (right).



PHOTO: SEAN MCCORMICK

## New Orleans Basics

Before you experience the excitement of New Orleans, explore this practical guide with all the Web resources and information you need.



### SPECIAL EVENTS

**Mardis Gras** If you plan to be in New Orleans for this year’s celebration, you’ll want to remember several dates. That is, Mardi Gras isn’t one day, it’s a carnival season that starts on Twelfth Night, January 6, and picks up speed until midnight on Mardi Gras—February 20, in 2007—the day before Ash Wednesday (the date of which varies in different years). There are free parades in neighborhoods around town on February 3, 4, 9–11 and 13–20. For a complete schedule, check [www.mardigrasneworleans.com](http://www.mardigrasneworleans.com).

On Lundi Gras, the day before Mardi Gras, some of the city’s best musicians play at Zulu’s free party in Woldenberg Park, which climaxes at 5 p.m. with the arrival of the king and queen. Then head to the Plaza de España, where, in a formal ceremony unchanged for over a century, the mayor hands the city to Rex, King of Carnival. The party continues with more live music and fireworks. The climax of the festival is on the day of Mardi Gras, or “Fat Tuesday,” a traditional day for masking, feathers and sequins.



### PRACTICAL TIPS

- Walking is a great way to see New Orleans, but if you’d rather ride, \$1.25 will get you on a bus or one of the city’s historic streetcars.
- Instead of west, east, north or south, you’re likely to hear “uptown,” “downtown,” “lakeside” and “riverside” when asking for directions.
- If you hear someone refer to a “banquette,” they’re talking about a sidewalk.
- Ask for your po’ boy “dressed,” and it will come with lettuce, tomato, pickles and mayo.



### TOUR STOPS

**Bourbon French Parfums**, [www.neworleansperfume.com](http://www.neworleansperfume.com)  
**Café Du Monde**, [www.cafedumonde.com](http://www.cafedumonde.com)  
**Cochon**, [www.cochonrestaurant.com](http://www.cochonrestaurant.com)  
**Contemporary Arts Center**, [www.cacno.org](http://www.cacno.org)  
**d.b.a.**, [www.drinkgoodstuff.com](http://www.drinkgoodstuff.com)  
**Donna’s**, [www.donnasbarandgrill.com](http://www.donnasbarandgrill.com)  
**Faulkner House Books**, [www.wordsandmusic.org](http://www.wordsandmusic.org)  
**French Market**, [www.frenchmarket.org](http://www.frenchmarket.org)  
**Galatoire’s**, [www.galatoires.com](http://www.galatoires.com)  
**Gallier House**, [www.hgghh.org](http://www.hgghh.org)  
**Jax Brewery**, [www.jacksonbrewery.com](http://www.jacksonbrewery.com)  
**Liuzza’s by the Track**, 1518 N. Lopez St., 504-943-8667  
**Longbranch**, 21516 Hwy 36, Abita Springs, 985-871-8171  
**Louisiana Children’s Museum**, [www.lcm.org](http://www.lcm.org)  
**Maple Leaf Bar**, 8316 Oak St., 504-866-9359  
**Mignon Faget**, [www.mignonfaget.com](http://www.mignonfaget.com)  
**Mr. B’s Bistro**, [www.mrbsbistro.com](http://www.mrbsbistro.com)  
**National World War II Museum**, [www.ddaymuseum.org](http://www.ddaymuseum.org)  
**New Orleans Gem & Lapidary**, 520 St. Philip St., 504-524-9595  
**New Orleans Museum of Art**, [www.noma.org](http://www.noma.org)  
**Ogden Museum of Southern Art**, [www.ogdenmuseum.org](http://www.ogdenmuseum.org)  
**Restaurant August**, [www.rest-august.com](http://www.rest-august.com)  
**Rock ‘N’ Bowl**, [www.rockandbowl.com](http://www.rockandbowl.com)  
**Rodrigue Studio New Orleans**, [www.georgerodrigue.com](http://www.georgerodrigue.com)  
**Snug Harbor**, [www.snugjazz.com](http://www.snugjazz.com)  
**Spotted Cat**, 623 Frenchmen St., 504-943-3887  
**Upperline**, [www.upperline.com](http://www.upperline.com)  
**Vizard’s on the Avenue**, 2203 St. Charles Ave., 504-529-9912

### FUN FACT

Some of New Orleans’ most fascinating attractions are its cemeteries. Called “Cities of the Dead,” they include elaborate above-ground monuments, a necessity because of the city’s high water table and below-sea-level elevation.