

Welcome to New Orleans!

On behalf of the MDNA's Convention Committee, we are delighted to welcome you to New Orleans. Recently named in *Forbes Travel Guide* as a Top 12 Destination for 2025, no city in the world can lay claim to all the Big Easy offers: cuisine reflecting its history as a melting pot of French, African and American cultures, the spiritual home of jazz, one of the world's longest (and most well-known) Mardi Gras celebrations, home to the most historic districts in the U.S., and an abiding *laissez les bon temps rouler* ("let the good times roll") local vibe. We want everyone to know there's more to the city than the French Quarter so we have cultivated a list of the top things to see and eat in and around New Orleans.

During our convention, New Orleans will host the [New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival](#) which is a great addition to our list of recommendations. Because of the festival's world-wide popularity, we strongly encourage you to make as many reservations for activities and dining as far in advance as possible. We would hate for you to miss out on all that the Crescent City has to offer!

TOURS AND EXPERIENCES

From plantations, swamp tours, historic neighborhood tours, and cemeteries, there is a lot to choose from in NOLA. Here are a few highlights that we suggest:

[New Orleans Walking Tours](#)- Explore the French Quarter and Garden District on guided New Orleans walking tours, unveiling the history and mysteries that make the Crescent City so unique. From eerie grave sites, to stunning French and Spanish architecture, to the mysterious origins of voo-doo and the birthplace of jazz, each step of the Crescent City reveals a new discovery.

[Bike and EBike Tours of New Orleans](#) - Another fun way to explore New Orleans!

[Horse and Carriage Tours of New Orleans](#) - Explore NOLA scenery and history at a more leisurely pace.

[Swamp Tour](#)- Glide through gator territory in the Honey Island Swamp aboard a small, flat-bottomed boat, while a local expert captain shares fascinating insights about the swamp and its natural inhabitants.

[Airboat Swamp Tour](#) - An exciting tour of Louisiana's bayous and swamps on an airboat. Maybe you'll even meet your future husband (we're looking at you Lana Del Rey:)

[St. Louis Cemetery](#) - The Official Tour of St. Louis Cemetery No. 1 takes you through the gates, on the winding paths between tombs. The only tour to visit the burial site of New Orleans' most famous and historical figures, and to show you to the tombs of Voodoo Queen Marie Laveau, Homer Plessy, and more. *Bonus*: learn which famous Hollywood actor owns a burial plot there!

[Plantation Tours](#)- Step back in time and immerse yourself in one of Louisiana's historic plantations- Oak Alley, Laura or Whitney. Each offers a rich complex history of the region's heritage.

There are tours for just about anything you can imagine. Feel free to explore [this website](#) for more curated ideas!

MUSEUMS/CULTURAL ATTRACTIONS

[The National World War II Museum](#) This is the site of our Saturday evening event, but we encourage you to visit and spend more time to get an in-depth look at all the museum has to offer.

[Jackson Square](#) This historic landmark in the French Quarter is the cultural center of the city and is surrounded by many historic buildings and a bustling open-air artist colony.

[St. Louis Cathedral](#) Located in the historic French Quarter, it is the oldest continuously active Roman Catholic Cathedral in the United States. It was originally built in 1724 and rebuilt twice after a hurricane and a fire. The present church overlooks beautiful Jackson Square and was dedicated in 1794.

[Sazerac House](#) Sazerac House is dedicated to preserving and showcasing the vast and often untold history of craft cocktail culture, with an emphasis on the first: the Sazerac. From its origin to production, Prohibition and everything in between, this three-story museum does a flawless job of walking guests through the history of craft cocktails as we know them today. Each floor has a different focus, cocktail samples, interactive exhibits, and more. They also house their very own distillery space, bitters lab, and fun cocktail-making classes. The best part? Admission and tours are 100% free! Simply reserve your spot ahead of time.

[New Orleans Jazz Museum](#) It's only fitting that New Orleans has a museum dedicated to all that JAZZ. After all, NOLA is the home and heart of jazz music. Nestled on the edge of the historic French Quarter, the New Orleans Jazz Museum is a great way to get your day started in the Vieux Carré. It highlights local and international jazz giants like Danny Barker, Louis Prima, Fats Domino, and Louis Armstrong. You can also head to the Jazz Museum for weekly live music, and several local festivals are held on their grounds.

[Backstreet Cultural Museum](#) Created to document Carnival celebrations, second lines and jazz funerals throughout New Orleans. After nearly three decades of documenting, and two decades of operation, Backstreet remains one of the most respected and unique spaces highlighting Mardi Gras Indian culture. Backstreet also serves as the annual starting point for the [Northside Skull & Bone Gang](#) - well-known for kicking off Mardi Gras Day.

[Lower Ninth Ward Living Museum](#) A labor of love, the Lower 9th Ward Living Museum was founded and curated by Ms. Leona Tate - one of the four little girls who

desegregated public schooling in the United States. The six-room house museum tells the history of New Orleans' Lower 9th Ward through the perspective and voices of those who live there. It is a true hidden gem, and completely free.

[Museum of Southern Jewish Experience](#) The Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience houses a collection of nearly 4,000 artifacts including household items, business records, photographs, letters, and more to help tell the story of the experience of Jews in the South. This museum highlights a unique and niche aspect of history.

Many Wonderful [Art Museums](#):

New Orleans Art Museum

Ogden Museum of Southern Art

New Orleans African American Museum

DINING

"I can't remember enjoying eating anywhere in the USA as much as New Orleans!"
Travel Expert, Rick Steves

[Drago's Seafood](#)- Clarks and Conroys approved! Best charbroiled oysters anywhere

[Commander's Palace](#) Opened in 1893, world-renowned NOLA institution that has birthed the careers of many famous chefs including Emeril Lagasse and Paul Prudhomme.

[Brennan's](#) Innovative Creole menu, winner of many fine dining and wine awards. Beautiful atmosphere.

[Pêche](#) Contemporary seafood focused. Several James Beard awards. Troy Clark highly recommends!

[Palace Café](#) – Across the street from hotel- same owners as Brennan's, more casual menu and atmosphere. Kristine and Helen give it 2 thumbs up!

[Restaurant R'evolution](#) Modern, Imaginative Reinterpretations of Classic Cajun and Creole Cuisine.

[Antoine's](#) - Opened in 1840 and the home of oysters Rockefeller - a NOLA classic.

[Dooky Chase's Restaurant](#) - Authentic Creole cuisine since 1941

[Joey K's](#) – Located in the Garden District, small and indicative that there are many hidden gems in the city.

[Coquette](#)- Also in the Garden District, contemporary southern cuisine with an emphasis on locally sourced product and international inspiration.

[Tân Đình](#) Great Vietnamese spot in the city

[MaMou](#) – Modern French Country

[Saint Germain](#) Amazing Tasting Menu experience with a French emphasis

[Cafe Du Monde](#) If you come to New Orleans, you have to try a beignet. And if you try a beignet, you have to try it here. Most would describe these sweet treats as holeless doughnuts covered generously in powdered sugar, and Cafe du Monde is practically synonymous with them. While the French Market location is the most famous (and thus the busiest); their City Park location is much more relaxing.

LUNCH SPOTS

[Domilise's](#) - Best Shrimp Po-Boys in town. Great location that allows you to walk down Bayou Street to City Park (where the Museum of Art is located). Afterwards, you can visit the other location of Café du Monde which is much less touristy.

[Turkey & the Wolf](#) - Great Sandwiches!!

[Cochon Butcher](#) Amazing sandwiches, make all their own sausage and cured meats.

[Shaya](#) Contemporary Mediterranean cuisine

COCKTAILS

[Jewel of the South](#) AMAZING cocktail experience; voted Best U.S. Restaurant Bar and World 50 Best Bar/James Beard Award Winner

[Bacchanal Wine](#) Killer outdoor wine bar with small plates. Has live music and you feel like you are in another world.

[N7](#) Like Bacchanal but a lot better in many ways. Set in a beautiful French garden hidden away in the bywater.

[Cure](#) Amazing Cocktails! 2018 Winner of James Beard Award for Outstanding Bar Program. [Val's](#) is across the street and has really good Mexican food and cocktails as well. Same owners.

[The Will & The Way](#) Great French Quarter local bar with small plates.

[Fives](#) Raw bar and drinks in the French Quarter.

MUSIC

[Preservation Hall](#) Located in the heart of the French Quarter, one of the most iconic music halls in the country for jazz. Advance tickets are required. Schedule is posted about 2 weeks prior to the show times.

For more jazz, venture to Frenchmen's Street where the joint is jumpin' with LOTS of jazz clubs. A few suggestions:

[Spotted Cat](#) - Conroy's Recommended! No reservations needed.

[Three Muses](#)

[Le Maison](#)

[New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival](#) Annual celebration of NOLA's rich musical history that includes jazz, blues, R&B, gospel and more. We will be there for the final weekend of activities. Advance tickets are strongly encouraged.