

MAN ABOUT WORLD

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NEW ORLEANS TRAVEL GUIDE 2016

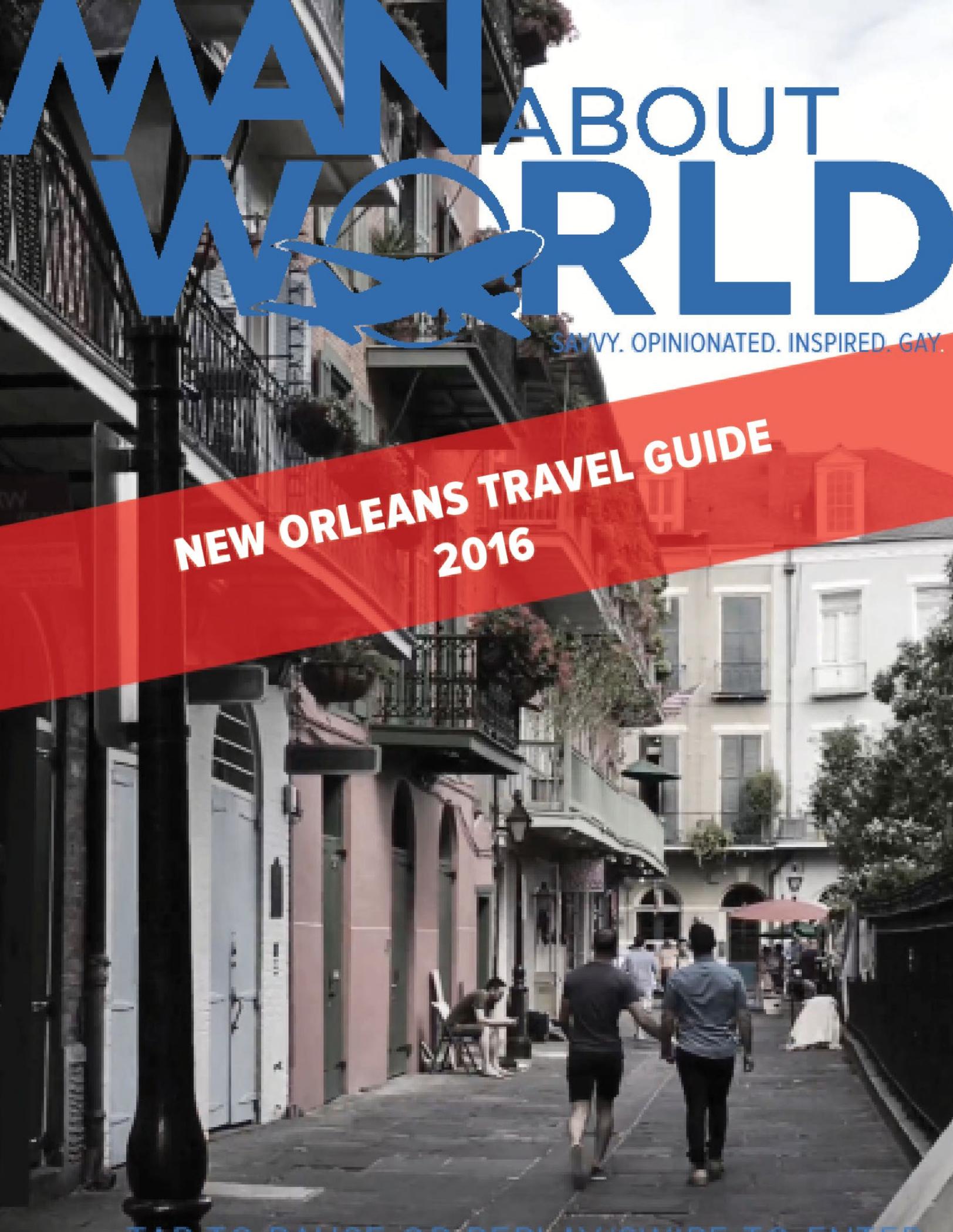


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NEW ORLEANS

**NEW
PERSPECTIVE**



**FIVE
PERFECT DATES**



FOOD CULTURE

- EXPERIENCES
- RESTAURANTS
- FOOD SOUVENIRS
- CLASSIC vs MODERN
- FOOD MAP



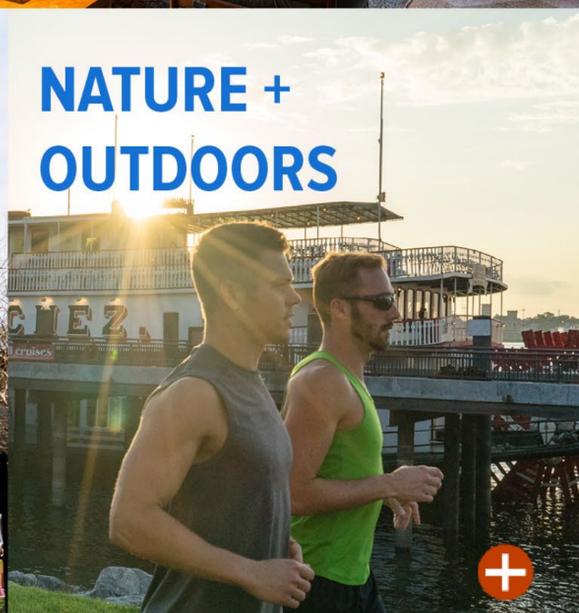
WHERE TO STAY



ARCHITECTURE



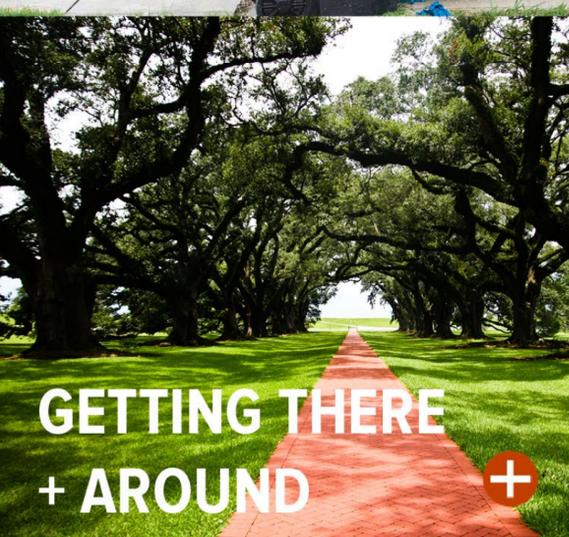
**NATURE +
OUTDOORS**



MEMENTOS



**NOLA GAY: BEYOND THE BARS
NOLA NIGHTLIFE**



**GETTING THERE
+ AROUND**



CREDITS



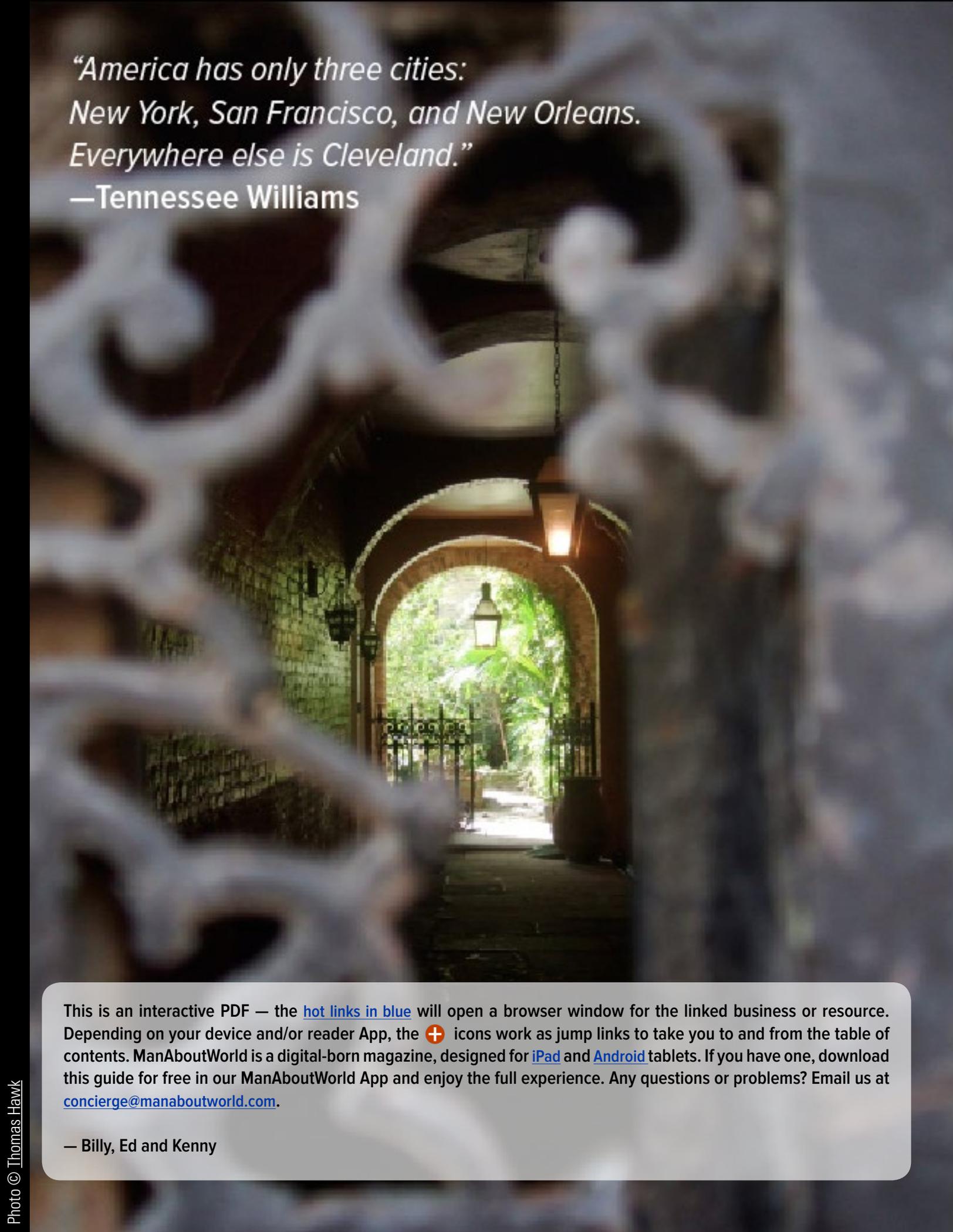
PERSONIFIED

- VARLA JEAN MERMAN
- JEFF SCHIFFMAN
- MARVIN ANDRADE
- MATT + BEAU
- TI MARTIN
- SETH FORNEA



ARTS + CULTURE





*“America has only three cities:
New York, San Francisco, and New Orleans.
Everywhere else is Cleveland.”*
—Tennessee Williams

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— Billy, Ed and Kenny

The brilliance of New Orleans is this: The city belongs to the locals. The rest of us get Bourbon Street. But for those willing to put in a little effort and look a little deeper, you'll get to experience the most artful and distinctive city in America the same way those locals do; you just gotta know the right people. Take a look with us beyond Bourbon, beyond the beignets, past the street cars, and into Bywater backyards, Garden District side streets, and funky Marigny jazz bars that too few experience, but that make-up the inexplicable magic that exists here.

Understanding the city's many diverse neighborhoods is essential for understanding the scope of its greatness and eccentricity. The city's built around the curve of the Mississippi, and the French Quarter remains the city's centerpiece, packing more food, culture, music and history inside a single square mile than we knew possible. The Quarter predates America herself. Established by the French in 1717, it was then, and still is today, the main square for meeting and shopping and creating. There's nothing in America that looks or feels like the French Quarter.

Outside the Quarter, you'll find the funky and gay-ish Faubourg Marigny, a neighborhood defined by its colorful row houses, corner coffee shops and alternative nightlife. Nearby, the Bywater feels like the quintessential hipster 'hood, the kind of place where it's not uncommon to run into Edward Sharpe and the Magnetic Zeroes while ordering organic avocado toast at an art-adorned coffee shop. And like most hipster neighborhoods in America, they're too damn cool for their own good, and gentrification is rampant. (to wit: Beyonce's sister bought a house here.)

Southwest of the Quarter, along the slope of the river, you'll find the Warehouse District neighborhood, rife with the city's hottest restaurants, art galleries and museums. Beside it, beneath the overpass, the streets turn bucolic and residential, and the calming Garden District comes alive with its gorgeous architecture, coffee shops, and idyllic charms.

For gay travelers, New Orleans represents the ultimate escape from the surrounding states of Southern intolerance. This city has seen it all, and it doesn't care what you wear or who you kiss or what bathroom you use. It only cares that you're here, and you're well-fed and your drink is full. The city has no official 'gay district' because it doesn't need one.

While visions of drunken revelers in the famed French Quarter may be many travelers' image of New Orleans, the Crescent City has much more to offer. Foodies will find an astonishing array of cuisines, including Cajun and Creole specialties. Architecture buffs drool over the intricately detailed wrought-iron balconies of the Vieux Carré, as well as the Victorian mansions of the Garden District. And if that's not enough for you, there's that intoxicating mix of French and Southern rhythms in the local boys' voices. New Orleans remains an icon of the American South. It is a city that will surprise you.

So, c'mon and let it.

— Kenny, Billy + Ed

THE PERFECT NOLA DATE

There's no better backdrop for romance than New Orleans. Sultry, scenic, and sexy, there's no city where courtly gestures and couple moments come as naturally or frequently. It's not as if anyone needs an itinerary for love here, but we want to make sure the logistics don't get in the way. Here are five dates to put your honey in the mood.



THE ARTSY DATE

Get an early start and head uptown to [Morning Call Coffee Stand](#), an adorable little coffee shop where you and your boyfriend can enjoy authentic beignets and cafe au lait with views overlooking the green and beautiful City Park. Once you're fueled up, it's just a quick stroll through the park, around the [New Orleans Museum of Art](#), and into the Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden, a treasure of world class sculptures, each of them landscaped, placed, and named, and the area's aura brought to life with romantic bridges, hidden groves, massive trees, colorful flower patches, and stunning Iris specimens. (We especially enjoyed the giant Mardi Gras beads in the branches of one tree.) The garden is free and an idyllic landscape to walk hand-in-hand enjoying thought-provoking, engaging works of art. There is no food allowed in the park.

THE ADVENTURE DATE

A VISIT TO THE BAYOU

About 30 minutes southwest of New Orleans you'll find the [Jean Lafitte National Park and Preserve](#) (but that's really just a fancy way of saying "the swamp.") The beauty and charm of these wetlands will enchant you: the Spanish moss, the exotic birds, the lonely cabins. It's here you'll find the Barataria Preserve, where you'll explore more than 23,000 acres of Louisiana's wild wetlands and you and your man can explore the gothic and haunting bayous, swamps, forests, and alligators of the south.

Your best bet is booking an airboat tour directly through Jean Lafitte, which will provide a guide and take you on an expert tour through the swamps (try to avoid third-party operators, if you can, which may needlessly complicate matters if they are tardy — a common occurrence.) You can also opt to take a romantic stroll, just the two of you, along the wooden trail through the bayou, where you'll see rabbits, turtles, snakes, and 'gators. If alligators are your thing, be sure to check the weather, as they tend to only appear in warmer weather (usually 70 degrees or higher.) The boat tour is fun and informative, and the sinister-looking 'gators give you plenty of excuses to grab and hold onto each other. You can also do a self-guided tour or a cell phone tour (the latter of which will help guide you and inform you about different exhibits on your path.) And don't forget your mosquito repellent. This is nature!

THE LOCALS' DATE

A BOTTLE AT BACCHANAL WINE

This is a popular date for couples, though a first date could work, too. Take an Uber to the outskirts of the Bywater, where on the corner adjacent to an industrial canal, you'll see [Bacchanal Wine](#). It could be argued that this venue is the quintessential date spot in all of New Orleans. It started as a small wine shop and has expanded into a destination with an adorable backyard, lit with Christmas lights and warmed with a fire pit, live music, and the chatter of locals. Buy a bottle of wine and take it into the backyard, snag a table (if you can!) order some delicious food, and enjoy a cool New Orleans evening. Simple, classic, romantic. Sometimes it's the little things.

THE EUROPEAN DATE

FRENCH BISTRO + VENETIAN GONDOLA

Begin your evening with a romantic dinner at the quaint [Cafe Degas](#), an intimate French country bistro named after the impressionist Edgar Degas who briefly lived nearby. The menu is classic French — famous for their onion soup — and the ambience is warm and overflowing with charm. After dinner, take a quick Uber ride up Esplanade Avenue to City Park, where you'll surprise him with Champagne and a Venetian gondola ride with [Nola Gondola](#) through the gorgeous park. Be sure to stop briefly under the bridge to write your names along with the other lovers who have passed through. Roberto, your guide, will play soft Italian music or R&B, and give you an amazing tour of the park, as you rest your head on your man's shoulder and escape from the city and into a European dream.

THE ELEGANT DATE

CANDLELIGHT DINNER AT AMELIE CAFE

There's real magic at Cafe Amelie, this intimate tree-softened cafe on Royal where locals come for proposals and anniversaries. The cafe is a snapshot of romance: its candlelit, centuries-old courtyard and French gothic fountains, tucked away on Royal Street just far enough from the hectic strip to offer some privacy. [Cafe Amelie](#) is a favorite among locals and gay visitors, in the Quarter but off the hectic strip and tucked away to offer some privacy. After dinner, take a nice stroll through Royal Street and see the galleries, shops and boutiques.

NATURE/OUTDOORS



Who says you need a beach or mountains to be one of the great outdoor cities of America?

What New Orleans has is something different, a kind of offbeat charm and magic and natural beauty unlike most other U.S. cities. NOLA opens your mind and forever changes how you'll interpret an outdoor adventure. Because in New Orleans, to be outdoors means to be biking through streets with centuries old cottages, hiking through humid wetlands, or exploring great European art in a verdant garden. It's lazing in City Park on a hot summer day, or playing softball with your buddies..

Yes, beyond the touristy buzz of Bourbon Street exists a metropolis of a different kind of natural beauty with wide-open spaces and exotic wildlife, hidden in plain sight, and long overdue to be recognized as a top attraction of New Orleans.

[New Orleans City Park](#)

One of the nation's oldest urban parks, this 1,300-acre space has been welcoming New Orleanians for more than a century. We like to start our City Park excursions with coffee at Morning Call, a small coffee stand inside City Park, before we explore the Botanical Garden, the world's largest stand of mature live oaks including an 800 year old oak; the birding corridor, and the art museum. We're also keeping our eyes open for the soon-to-be water park, City Splash.

[Audubon Park](#)

Audubon Park is a gorgeous uptown park about six miles from the city center, and yet, few visitors explore its amazing charms and nooks. This is a park for locals, and among the best city parks in America. Inside, you'll find 10 museums, a world-class zoo and aquarium, jogging paths, a giant 3D theater and a few cafes.

[Audubon Zoo](#)

The zoo is a part of the Audubon Nature Institute, located inside Audubon Park, which also manages the Aquarium of the Americas. Sprawling over an astounding 58 acres, it's home to more than 2,000 animals.

[Jean Lafitte National Park and Preserve](#)

About 30 minutes southwest of the city is this wet and verdant park preserve where city folks go to escape the urban life and catch a glimpse of alligators, blossoming flowers and dozens of different bird varieties. There are wooden sidewalk hikes, airboat, and bike tours available. The park is free and one of the best outdoor excursions to experience the historic wetlands of the area.

[Algiers Ferry](#)

Some of the best views of the city are from the water... and \$2 is all it takes for a ride on the Algiers Ferry across the Mississippi River to Algiers point, a residential neighborhood that has preserved much of its original 19th century village charm.

[NOLA Softball League](#)

Whether you're a pitcher or a catcher, this gay, slow-pitch softball league is one of the city's best athletic, outdoor bounding experiences, and a great way to meet locals. You must live within the 225 mile boundary to join the team, but visitors can watch the games and play at the after-parties. We know lots of gay boys who play on the [Southern Sports League](#), too; a mixed league made up of a bunch of local teams playing everything from softball and volleyball to bocce ball and dodgeball.

[Mardi Gras Classic, Volleyball](#)

Every year, around late-January, the Mardis Gras Classic volleyball tournament brings cute, athletic gay locals together for the city's most anticipated volleyball tournament of the year. The games are only slightly more fun than the end-of-tourney awards held at Oz.

[St. Louis Cemetery No. 1](#)

St. Louis Cemetery No. 1 is the oldest and most famous cemetery in the city, more than two centuries old and the burials grounds for some famous New Orleanians. The above ground mausoleums are haunting and gorgeous to walk through during the day (note they are closed at night, so no spooky after-dark walks.)

[Bike Around NOLA](#)

We have a couple favorite bike rental operators in the city. [Buzz NOLA Bike Tours and Rentals](#) on Magazine Street has custom cruisers for when you want to set out on your own, and knowledgeable tour guides. [The American Bicycle Rental Company](#) on Burgundy is a small, family-owned shop that rents one-speed coaster bikes for \$10 an hour (or \$40 for the entire day.)

[Sculpture Garden](#)

We reference this gorgeous sculpture garden adjacent to the New Orleans Museum of Art in our [Arts & Culture section](#) but don't overlook it for an idyllic outdoor adventure on a sunny day.

[Garden District Walking Tour](#)

As seen in our [Architecture section](#), the Garden District is among the most scenic architecture tours in the city and should be high on your list for outdoor activities during the cooler spring and fall months. Put on your walking shoes and check it out.

[Bayou Paddle Sports](#)

The Bayou St. John is one of our favorite neighborhoods, and we celebrate those perfect Spring days by renting paddleboards and spending the afternoons on the water. Whether it's upright paddling or good old-fashioned boogie-boarding, it's a unexpected and fun way to see the area and take it in the sun. At [NOLA Paddleboards](#), you can rent tandems, kayaks and junior kayaks (for the kids!)



NEXT:
[NOLA: ARCHITECTURE](#)



ARCHITECTURE



1109

BRICKS + STORIES

Every building has a story here. New Orleans stands as America's most distinctive city, European by design, and steeped in 300 years of American history. Most of these buildings were built before World War II, and they still stand, post-war, post-Katrina. Maybe more than any other city, New Orleans is proud of its history. That row of French-built Victorians, obscured by wrought iron gates is inhabited by a third-generation family; those Antebellum homes on vast plantations are repositories of Civil War ghost stories; adorable rainbow-colored Creole cottages line quiet Bywater streets; and epic Greek Revivals tower along the affluent Garden District. Crescent City is home to more than 20 National Register historic districts, fifteen local historic districts, and too many local and national Landmark buildings to name. But it's no use just talking about it. The best way to experience the unique architecture of New Orleans is to walk the city's many distinct neighborhoods and see for yourself.

FRENCH QUARTER WALKING TOUR

The architecture in the historic French Quarter is among the most recognizable in the Country, European inspired and full of stories and history. The hotels, restaurants, churches and homes you'll stumble upon are centuries-old and have survived wars and natural disasters. In some instances, the bars may have once been blacksmith shops, or the hotels former slaves quarters. History's ghosts are all over the Quarter and they're as beautiful as they are haunting.

French & Spanish Influences

The famous [Cabildo](#) building is Spanish influenced, built way back in 1795 as a Spanish town hall in modified Baroque style. The adjacent [St. Louis Cathedral](#), built by French architect Jacques Nicolas Bussière de Pouilly in 1849. The flanking [Pontalba Buildings](#) consist of two long rows of Creole townhouses, built by the Baroness Pontalba in 1849 to embellish the square and increase her rents.

One may occasionally find a balcony oddly high upon the façade, as at Bourbon and Bienville ([Old Absinthe House](#)) or Royal and St. Louis ([Vieux Carré Restaurant](#)), or Chartres and St. Louis ([Maspero's](#)). These are examples of the enigmatic, interesting "entresol house," a version of the Creole townhouse. With a short middle level or "entresol" between the shop and the residence that was used for stock and storage, these mezzanine spaces get light and air from extra high, arched and barred, first-story transoms. They were an experiment with full-service vertical living in the growing 18th century city.

The Xiques House at 521 Dauphine, dating back to 1825, is a representation of late Federal or Greek Revival - an American-style construction with heavy granite columns. For newbies to the architectural scene, it's these features that will enrich your French Quarter sightseeing.

GARDEN DISTRICT HOUSE TOUR

The Garden District is a quiet, mostly affluent and walkable neighborhood, accented with corner cafes and coffee shops, and brimming with gorgeous Gothic Revivals, cottages, and Queen Anne-styled mansions, making this residential 'hood an outdoor architectural museum. Among the homes are odes to gay and gothic history, and landmarks that tell stories of the region's French and Antebellum periods.

[Buckner Mansion](#) (1420 Jackson Avenue)

Better known as the American Horror Story house, this beautiful white Queen Anne mansion on Jackson Avenue is known to locals as The Buckner Mansion and was built in 1856 for cotton magnate, Henry Bucker.

[Colonel Short's Villa](#) (1448 Fourth St.)

This house was built by architect Henry Howard for Kentucky Colonel Robert Short. The story goes that Short's wife missed the cornfields of her native Iowa, so he bought her the cornstalk fence. But a revised explanation has the wife requesting it because it was the most expensive, showy fence in the building catalog. The second Civil War occupation governor Nathaniel Banks was quartered here.

[Briggs-Staub House](#) (2605 Prytania St.)

This is the Garden District's only example of Gothic Revival architecture (unpopular among Protestant Americans because it reminded them of their Roman Catholic Creole antagonists). Original owner Charles Briggs built the relatively large adjacent servant quarters for his Irish slaves. Irish immigrants were starting to create the nearby Irish Channel neighborhood across Magazine Street from the Garden District.

[Women's Opera Guild Home](#) (2504 Prytania St.)

Some of the Garden District's most memorable homes incorporate more than one style, as is the case with this 1858 William Freret designed home that combines Greek Revival and Queen Anne styles. It's now owned by the Women's Opera Guild and tours are offered on Mondays from 10am to 12pm and 1 to 4pm; \$7.

[Pritchard-Pigott House](#) (1407 First St.)

This grand, Greek Revival double-galleried townhouse shows how, as fortunes grew, so did Garden District home sizes.

[Morris-Israel House](#) (1331 First St.)

By the 1860s, the Italianate style was popular, as seen in this (reputedly haunted) double-galleried townhouse. Architect Samuel Jamison designed this house and the Carroll-Crawford House on the next corner; note the identical ornate cast-iron galleries.

[Joseph Carroll House](#) (1315 First Street)

A cast-iron masterpiece from 1869; Mark Twain partied hard in this Italianate mansion in 1886. Make sure to turn the corner to see the delightful carriage house.

[Brevard House/Anne Rice's House](#) (1239 First Street)

This 1857 stunner is a mix of Italianate and Greek Revival, with Ionic columns on the first floor and Corinthian columns on the second. The gardens here are particularly lovely.

[Payne-Strachan House](#) (1134 First Street)

The Payne-Strachan House is where the President of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis died while visiting a friend. The stunning 1849 Greek Revival has a plaque on the iron fence to commemorate the event.

ARCHITECTURALLY SIGNIFICANT HOTELS

[The Hotel Monteleone](#), is the largest hotel in the French Quarter, a recently renovated majestic property with stunning views from the higher floors and its rooftop pool.

[The Soniat House](#) on Chartres is a charming French Quarter Hotel, with a genteel aesthetic, famous for its brick layout and fountains throughout the property. We love the authentic charm and decor meant to reflect its two-century history, though it's not to everyone's liking. Make sure to pop into [Soniat House Antiques](#) where Brangelina shopped till they dropped to furnish their amazing French Quarter home.

We have a slight preference for the gorgeous [Ritz-Carlton New Orleans](#), an architectural stunner inside and out. It evokes a genteel charm not unlike what Truman Capote's sitting room must have felt like.

For our complete listing of hotels, check out the [Accommodations section](#) of this guide.



NEXT:
NOLA: FOOD CULTURE



FOOD CULTURE

THE SOUL OF NEW ORLEANS

Few cities are so proud of the food they've given the world — and few are so closely identified with it. While New York has the Empire State Building and Paris the Eiffel Tower, New Orleans has the beignet, the po'boy, gumbo and jambalaya. And just as most tourists never make it beyond Times Square, too few have been exposed to the culturally dynamic, experimental, and pioneering food movement of New Orleans. New Orleans chefs have won over 20 James Beard awards since the program's beginning in 1991, among the most of any city in the U.S.

Leave your expectations at home and let the many facets of New Orleans surprise you. In many ways, this city is a hipster's dream: refurbished warehouses and flooded-houses turned into cozy bars. There's the modern and sleek vibe of upscale haute dining rooms helmed by celebrity chefs. And surprising to many, New Orleans is home to America's most authentic Vietnamese food — a scene that has expanded in a post-Katrina world, from the small Vietnamese enclave to bustling storefronts up-and-down the trendy Magazine Street. And the cultural evolution continues, with Middle Eastern falafel and Slavic street food making their mark.

New Orleans has an almost healing, spiritual relationship with food. For so many years, food has been the constant in the wake of chaos. When Hurricane Katrina hit in 2005, it was local chefs and food purveyors who opened restaurants in the Ninth Ward. When neighborhoods like Treme and Bywater were crime-ridden ganglands, it was the small eateries and comfort food joints that began to infuse love into the neighborhoods that hadn't much of any for decades.

New Orleans' food scene is the heart of the city — a mix of people, history, nature, geography, culture and spirit that has simmered for generations. Perhaps more than any other American city, New Orleans offers a gastronomic experience that's so much more than what's on your plate.



FOOD EXPERIENCES

There's no need to limit your New Orleans food experience to breakfast, lunch and dinner. Feed your continuous foodie cravings with food tours, cooking classes, food halls and a food museum. Too much food and not enough time? We've also listed our favorite food souvenirs, so you can bring the taste of New Orleans home with you.

ST. ROCH MARKET

Welcome to

MAYHAW BAR

Elysian SEAFOOD

Elysian Oyster

Good Bird

DIRTY DISHES

JUICE NOLA

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KOREOLE

King CREOLE

LA MEZCLA

THE P.D.R.

Coast Roast

Bittersweet

St. Roch Forage

ask about the **Saint Box**
our weekly Box of fresh, local Produce

FOOD MUSEUM

[Southern Food and Beverage Museum \(SoFAB\)](#)

Located on Oretha Castle Haley Blvd, SoFAB is an inexpensive museum that you can walk and see in about an hour, but take your time and enjoy the individual displays dedicated to the cuisine of each state of the American South. There are exhibits of 3D artifacts chronicling the culinary contributions of each southern state, and a wall that traces the history of the American cocktail. Take the St. Charles Street streetcar.

FOOD TOURS

[Tastebud Tours](#)

Since 2010, Tastebud Tours have been leaders in traditional French Quarter food tours, hosting three-hour walking tours of quintessential New Orleans cuisine: po'boys, gumbo, jambalaya, you name it. You'll learn the history and stories behind the food from local tour guides. Tours are intimate - rarely more than sixteen people. Tastebud also offers cooking classes. The tours are \$56 per person.

[Bon Moment](#)

Michelle's Bon Moment is the culinary tour new-kid-on-the-block, with a twist: she leads you outside the Quarter and into the nooks and crannies of revitalized 'hoods like Bywater, Treme and OC Haley Boulevard. With Michelle you'll explore the worldliness of New Orleans food, hidden gems, and local food purveyors. She also includes cultural experiences, food museums, and stories to help you better understand the food culture of the city. Her tours are very gay-friendly. Check the website for upcoming tours.

[No Secrets Tours](#)

No Secrets is a small-knit food tour operation run by Mark, James, and Angela, three New Orleans locals who will walk you around Magazine Street (their most popular tour, and the only of its kind) to explore the food and sweets that make this neighborhood famous. They also offer the only oyster tour of the French Quarter; guests can sample eight different preparations of oysters in five locations. All food, but not alcohol, is included in the price-tag. Tours are very intimate with around 8 to 10 people per three-hour tour.

COCKTAIL TOURS

[Elizabeth Pearce](#) is an historian, writer, and about the best guide you could ask for while drinking your way through the French Quarter. Her two-hour tour will enlighten with stories and histories about the birth and evolution of the American cocktail as you stop at historic landmarks such as St. Louis Cathedral and Jackson Square. Drinks are included, groups are small, and Elizabeth is a treasure.

[The Sazerac Tour](#)

So not exactly a tour, but what many consider to be the world's first cocktail originated here in New Orleans. The Sazerac is made with Rye Whiskey and Peychaud's Bitters, poured over a sugar cube in a glass coated with Absinthe and garnished with a lemon peel. There's no better place to experience it than at the classic bar in the Roosevelt Hotel that bears its name, but here are six great places to try it.

COOKING CLASSES

[New Orleans Cooking Experience](#)

This is the ultimate New Orleans cooking school, and an opportunity to be taught by celebrity chefs and local legends: Frank Brigtsen of the famous Brigtsen's (a beloved New Orleans institution and a love letter to upscale southern cuisine), and Poppy Tooker, among others. Inside the residential kitchen of a gorgeous, yellow Antebellum House, the classes come with unlimited wine service, precise recipes and lessons, and a fun, intimate group. Classes are \$165, a bit more than the others we've tried, but worth the price.

[New Orleans School of Cooking](#)

Inside the Louisiana General Store, this cooking class features fun and intimate hands-on classes taught by real, acclaimed New Orleans chefs, both past and present. Guests will chop, season, and fully contribute to a classic New Orleans dish: gumbo, crawfish, and pralines among them. (And, of course, you get to eat your creation afterward.) Classes are \$140 per person and you'll leave with new skills, recipes, and a gift basket of seasoning, mixes and treats.

[St. Roch Market](#)

An eclectic hipster market in the Marigny, St. Roch Market is one of the city's most delightful new additions. Originally opened way back in 1875, the market was recently reborn and renovated as an artisan food hall. Come here to grab the very best in local meats and produce, coffees and wines, and hand-crafted cocktails and snacks.

[Roux Carré](#)

Another creative and bustling place on Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard: a food hall with local, artisan vendors, but here they specialize in African American, Latin and Caribbean cooking styles.

THE RESTAURANTS



So many great options, you may need an extra day. We had a hard time cutting our insiders list down to 50 eateries. You'll find them all plotted out on our [Google Map](#), but here we've grouped them by style and mood: Trendy, Date Night, Classic, Brunch, Special Occasion, Coffee and Unexpected, including our favorite Vietnamese.



TRENDY



DATE NIGHT



CLASSIC



BRUNCH



SPECIAL OCCASION



COFFEE



UNEXPECTED

TRENDY



[Compère Lapin](#)

The chef here, Nina Compton, was reared in St. Lucia and came of age in New Orleans, so she has fused her Caribbean roots with her Creole style. The result? A sophisticated, brick-walled eatery that's among the best in the city.

[Sylvain](#)

You'll find this sexy upscale gastropub down a narrow alleyway. Once inside, the intimate one-room space — formerly a 19th century carriage house — is dark and candlelit, homey and weathered. It's a bustling scene here, popular with the city's cute gay boys for date nights or cocktails with friends, while the light-strewn patio is a bit calmer and just lovely on a cool evening. The pappardelle is terrific, as is the champagne and fries appetizer (because you can't have one without the other in this town.)

[Pêche Seafood Grill](#)

Pêche captured the city's foodie heart three years ago and is still one of the most sought after and talked about tables. It's helmed by Donald Link, a local celeb chef who curated this wide-open rustic space as a love letter to fresh seafood. The whole fish is raved about and best when shared among friends.

[Cochon](#)

French for "pig," Cochon serves locally-raised pork as the cornerstone of its cajun/southern menu. The rustic/contemporary warehouse setting feels a little like a BBQ joint, but the elevated cuisine — seriously, one winner after another on the menu — makes Cochon a local favorite. Be sure to save room for the homestyle desserts, and pick up some house-cured meats-to-go in their store, Cochon Butcher.

[N7](#)

Just off St. Claude's, behind a high wooden fence, you'll find this hidden, offbeat French inspired spot that we love. Named N7 after the highway that takes Parisians to their summer digs, it's one of the city's most creative and eclectic new tables. Inside is warm and charming, a haunt you'd find off Canal St. Martin in Paris, but with an even better spiced calamari.

[Root](#)

Root is the trendy and bustling cornerstone restaurant of the warehouse district, with a seasonal and artistic menu (think scallops smoked in cigar boxes and artisan cheese plates). A lively vibe and great cocktails; perfect for dinner with friends.

[Cane & Table](#)

Cane and Table is one of the Quarter's hottest new spots: a narrow space of exposed brick reminiscent of Old Havana, it's earned raves for their cocktails and Caribbean-inspired menu. It's intimate enough for a date — and has a particularly charming patio — but best for pre-dinner drinks.

[Balise](#)

High-end gastropub fare served in a low-lit townhouse just down the block from the popular new Ace Hotel. Balise is known for their baked rigatoni appetizer and it's far and away their best dish. We'd call this the best neighborhood eatery in the Warehouse district; always delicious and dependable. Chef Justin Devillier just won the James Beard Best Chef, South

[Primitivo](#)

Primitivo opened last summer inside a sleek space on the increasingly gentrifying Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard. It's all about the meat here, but it's not a heavy, butcher-style affair — the meats are lean, paired by peppers and fresh produce, and artfully smoked.

[Paladar 511](#)

Paladar 511 is a year-old upscale pizza spot, chicly cobbled together by brick and weather-wood beams. Before it was a trendy restaurant, this hundred-year old warehouse was a sock factory, an artists retreat, an anarchist hideaway, and luxury condos. Now it belongs to two San Franciscans who made a name making pizza and pastas in California. They've brought their talents down south to rave reviews and lines out the door.

[Red's Chinese](#)

Who would've thought you'd find such creative and authentic Chinese food in NOLA? At Red's Chinese, the chefs put soul food spins on classic Chinese dishes. The no-frills storefront isn't the most inviting, but the food has kept it a local favorite for years.

[Casa Borrega](#)

The 19th century Greek Revival that Casa Borrega inhabits has been renovated and transformed into a fun and colorful Mexican eatery. It's a family-run passion project that cranks out authentic food and a killer tequila list.

DATE NIGHT



DATE NIGHT

[Café Degas](#)

Café Degas is the perfect date spot; an adorable quaint bistro on Esplanade Avenue serving French inspired food. The tree growing through the dining room and the lights strewn about make it all the more romantic. Sit on the patio if you come for brunch.

[Bacchanal Fine Wine & Spirits](#)

You could argue this is the best date spot in New Orleans, period. Bacchanal is the gem of the Bywater, a wine and cheese store with a backyard of lush trees and lights and live music. Order some small plates and sit under the stars with a date or some friends and enjoy a warm Louisiana summer night.

[Boucherie](#)

Tucked away inside a charming shotgun house on an otherwise residential block, Boucherie is a real charmer. The meat-centric menu has some traditional Southern roots and you'll feel as though you're eating a dinner in the dining room of a great friend.

[Restaurant Patois](#)

Patois is a locally spun French spot by Aaron Burgau, nominated for a James Beard award. The fireplace in the intimate upstairs dining room is a nice touch, and the downstairs is airy and inviting, perfect for a casual brunch or a romantic date.

[Irene's Cuisine](#)

Irene's is a local favorite, a white-table cloth haunt famous for their Duck St. Philip. The dining room is homey yet elegant and the piano bar for pre-dinner drinks is the perfect way to start a romantic evening out.

[AVO](#)

A charming and cozy date spot on Magazine, it's AVO's walled-in courtyard, lined with candles, that caused us to fall in love with its romantic vibe. The burrata appetizer is a favorite, as is the lasagna, scallops, and mussels dish. A real understated gem tucked away uptown.

[The Green Goddess](#)

The Green Goddess is particularly charming at night, where you'll find it down a romantic alleyway reminiscent of Paris. Its menu is mostly vegan and vegetarian with creative spins on meatless cuisine. They do serve some fish and duck as well.

[Mona Lisa](#)

A quaint yet funky hiccup restaurant in the French Quarter, Mona Lisa is a fun, romantic date spot with authentic Italian food. The red-checkered tablecloths are a nice throwback touch. The restaurant is unmarked so look for the photo of Mona Lisa on the window.

CLASSIC



[Dooky Chase's](#)

Leah Chase opened this legendary spot in 1941, originally selling sandwiches and lottery tickets. Still family-operated, it serves some of the city's most sought after dishes to Presidents and celebrities. We love the vibrant, art-filled space and equally artful home cooking.

[Arnaud's](#)

Of all the city's "grande dames" this is our favorite for a decadent dinner that will transport us to another time. Throw on a suit jacket and splurge on their prix fixe menu, or come for their legendary Sunday jazz brunch. The waitstaff is among the best in the business and the whole experience is classic New Orleans like few others.

[K-Paul's Louisiana Kitchen](#)

K-paul is the French Quarter restaurant of famed chef Paul Prudhomme, who is well-known for his line of seasonings.

[Elizabeth's](#)

On a Bywater corner stands this paint-chipped hipster house, and inside the friendly-staff serves a killer breakfast, a famous pork chop, and a full menu of good old fashioned Louisiana comfort food.

[Commander's Palace](#)

You'll find Commander's Palace inside a turquoise, castle-fronted house in the serene garden district. Like the city's other fancy and historic restaurants, dining here is an experience - one that men will have to don a jacket for. But Commander's is the most gay-popular of the group, and you might very well find some of our colleagues there for a "business lunch" most notable for its 25¢ weekday martini specials.

[Café Amelie](#)

Café Amelie is a romantic spot for elegant contemporary Louisiana fare. The hidden courtyards of the French Quarter are one of the city's most endearing features, and the lush courtyard here is the main attraction.

[Oxalis](#)

Oxalis has been a Bywater staple for ages, known for its duck liver pate and brimming with local patrons. To call it a great restaurant may be a stretch; it's really more a glorified gastropub with tasty small-plates and a whisky-driven bar. And that's fine by us. It has a cute, verdant patio and a friendly (and helpful) staff and is just wonderfully local.

[Snug Harbor](#)

Snug Harbor is an institution — and with its cramped quarters, it earns its name. More than just a brick-walled Creole house, this place is famous for its live jazz and history going back to the 1800's. You'd be hard-pressed to find a more romantic venue for a date.

BRUNCH



PLEASE
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9

satsuma
Hours
Daily 7am-5pm

ZACAT 2014

BRUNCH

[EAT](#)

Eat is a sunny BYOB-friendly space helmed by a gay chef. You'll find farm-to-table Cajun-Southern meals here, but they're mostly known (and beloved) for their Sunday brunch.

[The Country Club](#)

You may not be able to swim naked in the pool here anymore, but damned if this isn't still the best drag brunch in the city. Good food, singing drag queens, and \$15 bottomless mimosas in the Bywater. Enough said.

[Surrey's Cafe and Juice Bar](#)

A small and adorable eatery with fresh squeezed juices, hot coffee and breakfast comfort foods like Bananas Foster french toast, homemade pastries and egg sandwiches. It's colorful and homey space on Magazine Street; a charmed way to fuel up before touring the neighborhood.

[Apolline](#)

You'll find Apolline Inside a cute uptown cottage and we adore it for its weekend brunch. Get the crawfish omelette or the french toast and cinnamon bacon. Come with friends and take your time on a lazy Sunday inside this quaint charmer.

[Satsuma](#)

Satsuma is a funky little cafe with fresh juice and farm-to-table eats. Run by a local husband-and-wife team, there are now locations in Bywater and Uptown. We love the vibe and people here. Great for a quick breakfast or a tasty lunch.

[Horn's](#)

Named after owner Kappa Horn who serves her mama's Creole recipes, we love this bright and airy Marigny haunt mostly for its breakfast items. Our favorite is the Crabby Wife: two eggs, crab cakes, smothered in crawfish.

[Atchafalaya](#)

Few things are more fun than coming to Atchafalaya with your best friends for a weekend brunch and indulging in their fabulous Bloody Mary bar! Oh, and there's food here, too. Tasty, Louisiana fare: shrimp and grits, fried chicken and gravy. (...but seriously, there's a Bloody Mary bar!) It's a bright, artsy space of high-ceilings and live music on weekends.

SPECIAL OCCASION



[Shaya](#)

Shaya is probably the best restaurant in New Orleans and according to Esquire and others, the best new restaurant in America. A recent James Beard Award winner, this delicious and inventive new spot by Alon Shaya serves delicious Israeli small plates. The hummus, falafel, and lamb kebabs steal the show, served with a master's touch using the freshest ingredients. The atmosphere is bright and intimate. Make your reservations now; we waited months to get in.

[Doris Metropolitan](#)

Doris is the best steakhouse in New Orleans, an upscale romantic spot perfect for a birthday or anniversary. Their fall-off-the-bone short rib and New York strips are both contenders for best we've ever had, but the restaurant has a knack for seafood and market-fresh vegetables, serving a must-try tuna tartare app and a tasty artichoke salad.

[Herbsaint](#)

We love everything about Herbsaint: the charming stretch of St. Charles Street where it resides, the handsome dining room, the warm and attentive staff. The menu is Donald Link's take on French and Italian fare, and his homemade spaghetti and Vietnamese ice cream are worth the trip alone. Link went on to open a myriad of New Orleans favorites (Peche and Cochon among them.) But it's his original, Herbsaint, that remains his best

[August](#)

The lovely and heralded white-table cloth haunt of Celeb-chef John Besh, August is a favorite for a boyfriend's birthday or an anniversary. The atmosphere is elegant, studded with chandeliers, and the menu a celebration of upscale cuisine. The fois gras and truffled gnocci steal the show here.

[Brigtsen's](#)

Brigtsen's is the romantic cornerstone of the classic New Orleans dining scene, and after all these years and so much hype, it still comes through. Famous for its pecan pie, this small cottage was made to celebrate anniversaries and special occasions.

COFFEE



COFFEE

[HiVolt Coffee](#)

A small hipster space just off Magazine street in the Garden District, HiVolt is famous for their Shockproof coffee (espresso, butter, and oil) but also serves a tasty everyday breakfast. A great local spot.

[French Truck](#)

This bright yellow building is as quaint on the inside as it is adorable outside. A narrow space of friendly baristas serving small-batch roasted coffee and fresh pastries.

[The Orange Couch](#)

This gay-popular coffee shop tucked way back in the Marigny is loungy and super local. It's best for a coffee and a sidewalk table for some people watching but they're locally famous for their mochi and Japanese ice cream.

[Stumptown in the ACE](#)

Brooklyn creeps its way into NOLA with the first Stumptown location. Known for their tasty cold brews and baked goods, the shop has a cool Prohibition-era feel and the strongest espresso around.

[Morning Call Coffee Stand](#)

Let the tourists crowd into Cafe du Monde — you can join all our gay friends enjoying their beignets and coffee in this cute charmer overlooking City Park.

UNEXPECTED



The city has a thriving Vietnamese community as a result of a mass immigration to New Orleans in the 1970s. Since then, New Orleans has been a hotbed for crusty banh mi sandwiches and steaming bowls of fragrant pho at spots like Lilly's Cafe and Dong Phuong Oriental Bakery.

[Magasin Kitchen](#)

An upscale, modern Vietnamese bistro on Magazine that's popular with the gay and trendy crowd. The crab rangoon and oxtail pho are incredible, as is the Vietnamese coffee when you need a kick.

[Cafe Minh](#)

Cafe Minh is a famous NOLA staple serving creative and sophisticated Vietnamese-French fare in a space reminiscent of a French bistro. Quaint, with a tasty authentic menu.

[Dong Phuong Oriental Bakery & Restaurant](#)

For decades, Dong Phuong has been inspiring locals with its French bread and Asian sweets, but it's the restaurant's beef soups with rice noodles — particularly the spicy hu tieu sate and pho dac biet— that put it on the map.

[Hoa Hong Nine Roses](#)

The house speciality called Hoa Hong Nine Roses is the grilled beef, chicken, squid, and shrimp — a meat and seafood-lovers cacophony prepared tableside and wrapped in lettuce with herbs. Local Vietnamese will often cite Hoa Hong as their favorite in the city. Two locations including the French Quarter.

[Food trucks](#)

Although the food truck scene isn't big here, this consolidated source offers information about their locations.

[Pop-Ups](#)

With such a vibrant chef culture in New Orleans, pop-ups are a big deal — even bigger than food trucks. By nature, they come and go, sometimes too soon. The team at Eater keeps on top of what's where, when and worthwhile.

[The Joint](#)

A no-frill dive that serves authentic barbeque. They're known for...well, pretty much everything: ribs, chicken, pulled pork, corn, it's all delicious here. Grab a seat at one of their indoor picnic tables and load up on paper towels. It will get messy.

CLASSIC vs MODERN

You can't talk about New Orleans food without mentioning the classics that are inextricably linked to the city. If you've been to New Orleans, you've probably tried most of them, and if you have never been, you'll want to try at least some of them. But even more compelling are some of the modern reinventions of the classics. This is where tradition and modern food sensibilities meet — and the best way to appreciate New Orleans cuisine as a vibrant, living food culture with deep roots and modern sensibilities.

BEIGNETS



Brought to Louisiana by the Acadians, the classic beignet is a light fluffy pillow of deep fried dough, topped with sugar.

Classic: [Café Du Monde](#) serves the most famous beignet in the world, 24 hours a day.

Modern: Sweet Potato and Duck Beignets at [SoBou](#) are served as an appetizer, with foie gras fondue, duck debris, and a chicory coffee grenache. Decadent and delicious.

PO'BOYS



Po'boys have traditionally been big, messy sandwiches loaded with meats, shrimp, and cajun seasonings. A classic and gluttonous New Orleans take on the deli sandwich.

Classic: [Parkway Bakery and Tavern](#): With a history dating back to 1911, and 25 po'boys on the menu, it doesn't get more New Orleans than this.

Modern: [Killer Po Boys](#) has turned the traditional po'boy inside out and rejiggered it with international, vegan, and haute influences. The unorthodox fillings have led to creations like their beloved breakfast po'boy: made with farm-fresh eggs, prosciutto, and local produce.

GUMBO

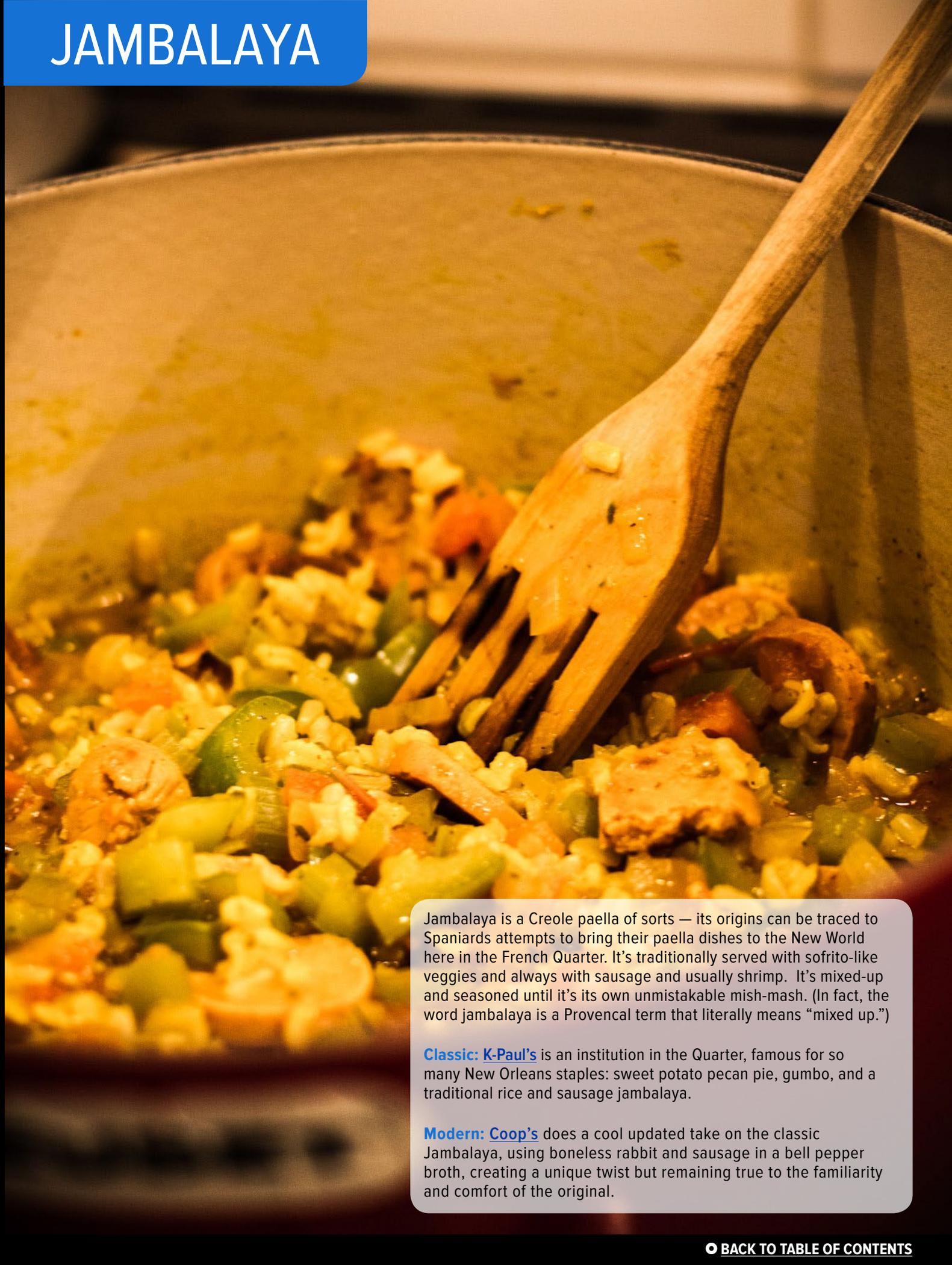


A down-South, homespun stew, spiced with Creole and Caribbean flavors, and hearty enough to stand-alone, Gumbo has been a cornerstone of Louisiana cooking for centuries.

Classic: [Galatoire's](#) serves as perfect a traditional gumbo as you'll ever have, no frills but packed with crab meat, shrimp, onions, celery, and okra.

Modern: The stylish hipster warehouse of [Cochon](#) earned raves for its haute menu and star chef, Donald Link, but it's their Pork and Black Eyed Pea Gumbo that caught our eye. Seasoned to perfection and presented in a small, tasteful serving, this is an elegant, refined twist on the sloppy staple.

JAMBALAYA



Jambalaya is a Creole paella of sorts — its origins can be traced to Spaniards attempts to bring their paella dishes to the New World here in the French Quarter. It's traditionally served with sofrito-like veggies and always with sausage and usually shrimp. It's mixed-up and seasoned until it's its own unmistakable mish-mash. (In fact, the word jambalaya is a Provençal term that literally means “mixed up.”)

Classic: [K-Paul's](#) is an institution in the Quarter, famous for so many New Orleans staples: sweet potato pecan pie, gumbo, and a traditional rice and sausage jambalaya.

Modern: [Coop's](#) does a cool updated take on the classic Jambalaya, using boneless rabbit and sausage in a bell pepper broth, creating a unique twist but remaining true to the familiarity and comfort of the original.

OYSTERS



If you're starting with great fresh oysters, we believe the less done to them the better. But for those who like their Oysters cooked, we have two awesome suggestions.

Classic: [Arnaud's](#) With five baked options in addition to oysters on the half shell, Arnaud's serves every classic Oyster preparation. The sampler includes one of each cooked variety so you can try them all.

Modern: The oysters at [Coquette](#) come fried and dressed in blood orange olive oil and topped with fennel, a fresh and delightful spin on the usual wet and loose texture of this seaside shellfish favorite. You'll get a serving of eight for \$15.

CRAWFISH



Crawfish are freshwater lobsters, known colloquially as mudbugs, and usually prepared in an outdoor boil, served in their shells and all. Here's a [video guide](#) for eating them.

Classic: At [The Bayou Beer Garden](#), twelve bucks will snag you three pounds of crawfish and all the fixins'. This traditional crawfish boil is a city favorite.

Modern: At [Borgne](#), you'll find a unique, haute spin on crawfish, served in a soup with dumplings made from ricotta and Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, spinach and fresh mustard greens.

ALLIGATOR



Alligator isn't an exotic food in New Orleans. When you're living on the Bayou, it's an indigenous, affordable and plentiful protein.

Classic: Fried or blackened. Available almost anywhere, but [Le BAYOU](#) in the French Quarter does it best: marinated, fried and served with a Creole mustard sauce.

Modern: Though [Jacques-Imo's](#) calls it "Alligator and Shrimp Cheesecake," it's not a dessert - more like a crab cake, shaped like a slice of cake, made with alligator shrimp sausage and topped with a mustard tomato cream sauce.

FOOD SOUVENIRS



It's not easy to recreate the New Orleans food experience anywhere else you might call home. There's something about the city's character and rhythm that affects your tastebuds, and it can't be bottled for export. But you can bring home some of the iconic treats, tastes and ingredients to help tide you over until your next visit, or share with your friends and family at home. Here are the things we always fill our suitcase with.

HOT SAUCE

Three of Thrillist's [top ten hot sauces](#) on earth hail from Louisiana. While Tabasco may be the oldest and best known globally, [Crystal](#) is the hometown favorite.

PRALINES

Ask three locals where to get the best Pralines (say: Prah-lins), and you'll get three different answers, but they'll definitely include [Aunt Sally's Pralines](#)

SWEET POTATO COOKIES

[Loretta's Authentic Pralines](#) may be known for her pralines, but we go for the Sweet Potato cookies.

CAJUN SPICES

[Slap Ya Mama Seasoning](#) may have a funny name, but the flavors are serious. Stop there or at [Tony Chachere's](#) to bring home some hot sauce, cajun seasonings, dinner mixes and instant roux mix.

POTATO CHIPS

For 30 years, [Zapps Chips](#) has made New Orleans' home town kettle-cooked chips. They'll ship direct to home, but you'll want a bag or two for the plane ride back.

MUSTARD

[Cochon Abita Beer Whole Grain Mustard](#), a German-style rough mustard, travels easily (checked luggage), and goes well with Couchon Butcher's charcuterie, which can also be securely wrapped for travel.

ABSINTHE & BROWN BUTTER TRUFFLES

[Sucre](#) is beloved for their gourmet chocolates. You'll find everything from semi-sweet ganache to white chocolate and sicilian pistachio, but their unique absinthe and brown butter truffles are the stars here.

ITALIAN OLIVE SALAD

[Boscoli's](#) italian olive salad — green and black olives, capers and pickled vegetables blended with herbs and spices in canola oil — is such an integral part of New Orleans culture, traditionally served on a muffaletta sandwich but can be used as a side or stand-alone appetizer. You can also buy it at [Central Grocery](#) in the French Quarter, where the mufalletta sandwich originated.

COFFEE

Let the tourists fight the crowds at Cafe du Monde while you slip away to this neighborhood gem: [HiVolt Coffee](#) is a specialty brewer revolutionizing the way the city drinks coffee. You can buy their Counter Culture coffee beans by the pound here.

ROUX

Roux is an essential ingredient when making gravies, stews, and gumbos. If you want the flavor without the work, [Rajun Cajun Dark Roux](#) is a classic.

BEIGNET MIX

You can find Café du Monde's Beignet Mix all over town — and beyond: you can order it from [Amazon](#). You don't need to tell your friends it was shipped to you, but be sure to follow these [special tips](#) when you make them for best results.



NEXT:
NOLA: FOOD MAP



FOOD MAP

TAP/CLICK ON MAP

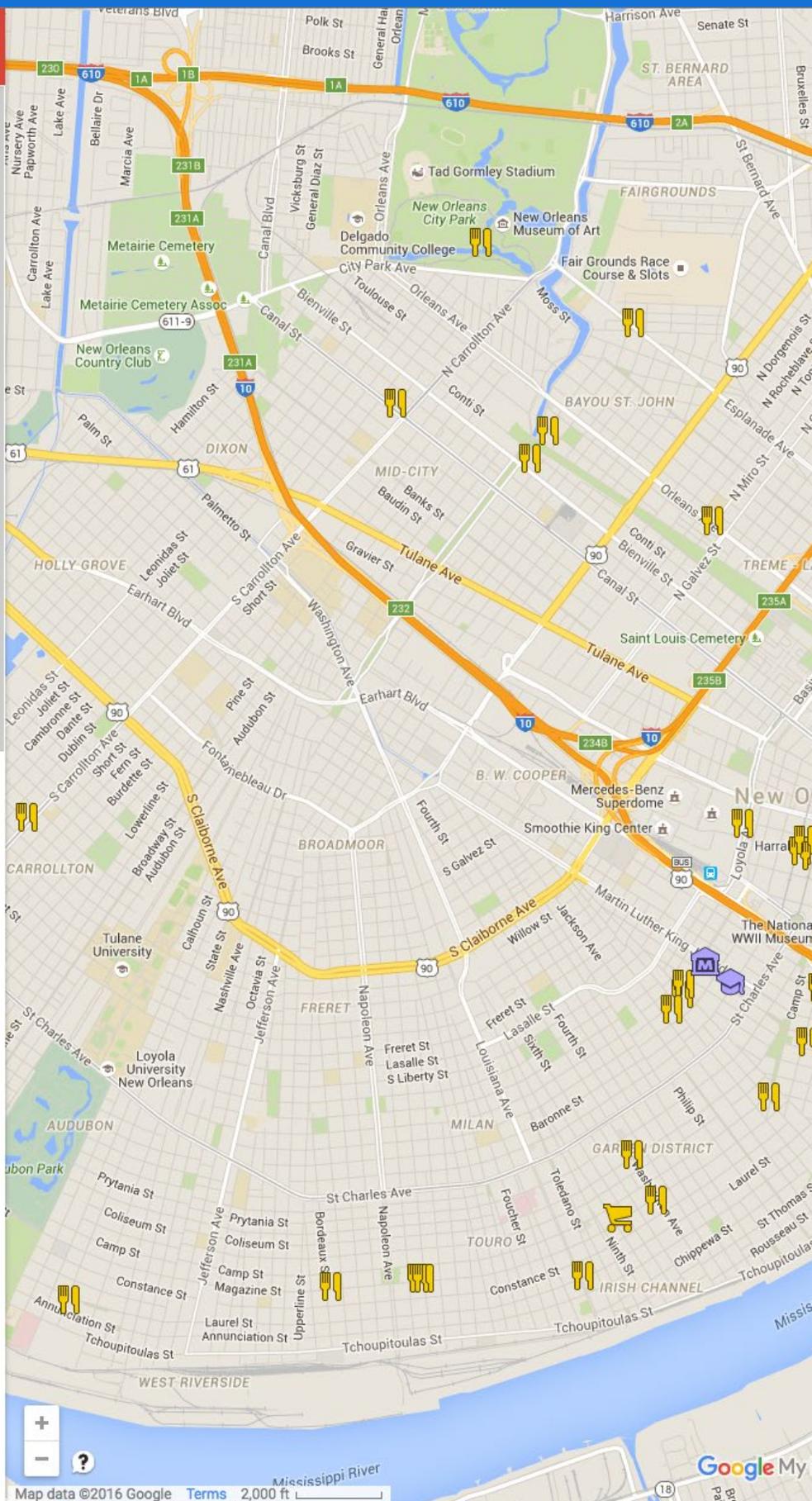
☰ ManAboutWorld New O... 🔍 ⋮

▼ From the editor's of ManAboutWorld Magazine, a map to restaurants, food purveyors and experiences in New Orleans
165 views

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☑ Restaurants, Shops and Classes

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- 🍴 Root
- 🍴 Cane and Table
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- 🍴 Elizabeth's
- 🍴 Commander's Palace
- 🍴 Cafe Amelie
- 🍴 Oxalis
- 🍴 Snug Harbor Jazz Bistro
- 🍴 Eat New Orleans
- 🍴 The Country Club
- 🍴 Surrey's Café & Juice Bar
- 🍴 Apolline



ARTS & CULTURE



BOUNDLESS CREATIVITY

The city of New Orleans is a living museum: centuries of history; art and European architecture, multi-cultural food, and music on every corner. You walk these streets the way you'd walk the hallways of The Met or The Louvre, in awe and delight, learning and listening and leaving enriched.

While the art scene of so many cities — no matter how vast or sophisticated — feels almost exclusively commercial and for-profit, that's not the case in New Orleans. Here, the people make art for art's sake. The music on the corner, the poet and his typewriter: they're here simply because art heals and transcends, and no city knows that better.

New Orleans itself is a living and evolving tribute to its localness; but its newer cultural institutions attempt to bring the city to a more worldly level. The New Orleans Museum of Art showcases international legends like Picasso and Magritte; the National WWII Museum may be the best in its class; and even the Southern Food and Beverage Museum takes on a more regional focus, stepping outside of the city to examine the entirety of the south.

New Orleans, maybe more than any other American city, knows how to reinvent itself without losing sight of its roots. The cultural scene here is a celebration of the hyper-local, but take a step outside of the French Quarter to witness a city stepping proudly onto the global stage to announce its cultural arrival. New Orleans is often called the culture capital of the south, and the long list of [performing arts organizations](#) is why. Our list of favorites below includes some popular places and experiences that are too special to miss, along with some lesser-known choices recommended by our local insiders.

ARTS & CULTURE

[The Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden](#)

The Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden is a magnificent gem of New Orleans. You'll find it just behind the New Orleans Museum of Art, a serene stroll through dozens of stainless steel, chrome, and bronze statues and sculptures. These are some of the most exquisite pieces we've seen in the States, and has quickly become one of the highlights of this city. The garden is free (though they ask for a donation.) Come with your boyfriend and spend an hour walking hand-in-hand before heading off to enjoy the rest of City Park.

[Southern Food and Beverage Museum \(SoFAB\)](#)

You'll find this ode to southern food culture on the revitalized Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard. Inside the large one-room, you walk through the region state-by-state highlighting the culinary traditions of each; it includes antiques, photos, and cooking tools salvaged from the wreckage of Katrina. There are exhibits of 3D artifacts chronicling the culinary contributions of each Southern state, and a wall that traces the history of the American cocktail. Take the Charles Street streetcar.

[Longue Vue House and Garden](#)

The Stein family's Longue Vue house which was built in the forties, is a well-preserved collection of antique furniture and a slew of modern art treasures, including ones by Kandinsky and Picasso. Though the eight acres of sprawling gardens were almost entirely ruined by hurricane Katrina, they have been lovingly re-planted according to the original landscaper's plans, and now play host to daily visitors, educational programs, and a summer camp for little ones.

[New Orleans Museum of Art](#)

A stately art museum with thousands of stunning pieces by masters of the craft like Picasso, Sargent, and Magritte. On Fridays, visitors are invited to stick around past closing for movie screening, poetry slams, and lectures.

[The National WWII Museum](#)

One of the best new museums in the city, the National World War II museum takes you on a journey through the war as you follow a single soldier's path through Tokyo or Berlin. The displays are informative and sometimes immersive. There's also a wonderful film narrated by Tom Hanks and Gary Sinise worth checking out.

[Mask Gallery](#)

The super intricate iterations sold at this Royal Street gallery are nothing short of heirloom quality — a far cry from the flimsy plastic stuff you can find in every run of the mill gift shop. In addition to the leather, feather, and bejeweled stunners handmade by resident artist Dalili, there's also a selection of imported masks from Venice.

[Frenchmen Art Market](#)

New Orleans' only weekly night-time art market features original art, jewelry and crafts by local and regional artists and provides a family friendly cultural experience. Browse art, find gifts and meet local artisans. Take a break from the clubs to hangout in one of the outdoor living rooms and take in the ambiance of the market.

[New Orleans Pharmacy Museum](#)

Located in the apothecary of America's first licensed pharmacist, this museum offers a unique look at the early days of medicine when it wasn't easy to distinguish between pharmacists and Voodoo practitioners.

[Marigny Opera House](#)

One of the world's most unusual opera houses, Marigny is housed in a deconsecrated church, now a "non-denominational neighborhood church of the arts," celebrating art as a common spiritual bond among all people. It has a resident ballet company with a special focus on local choreographers and composers. Beyonce's sister, Solange Knowles had her wedding here.

[Arthur Roger Gallery](#)

Long ahead of his time, Arthur Roger opened his first gallery on Magazine Street in 1978. His gallery has represented some of the most important New Orleans artists, and remains a force in the cultural transformation of the city.

[Julia Street Gallery Row](#)

Julia Street could be called "Gallery Row" for its many boutique art galleries that color this quiet block in the Warehouse District. The Degas Gallery, the Steve Martin gallery, the Alex Beard gallery, Mallory Page, and a host of others are all steps from each other. This a lovely block to stroll and pop into each gallery for a quick browse of local, contemporary art. There is an art walk the first Saturday of each month, 6-9pm.

[Contemporary Arts Centre](#)

Just around the corner from the new National World War II museum, the Contemporary Arts Center (also known as CAC) is a well-curated gallery space for experimental art, motion picture displays, installations and live performances. Admission is \$3 and well-worth a tour. They also offer performances of live chamber music and dance.

[Bevolo](#)

The charming entrance of Bevolo is somewhat mysterious, leading to a partially brick-lined alley where an array of traditional and hand-crafted copper lights light the way. These are the gorgeous light fixtures illuminating the streets of New Orleans, and this is the historic shop, opened in the '40s, that makes them. Take a tour through their workshop and watch these masterful artisans.



NEXT:
NOLA: MEMENTO



MEMENTO



SOUVENIRS AS MEMORABLE AS YOUR TRIP

New Orleans is a city of creators. The people here make things with their hands: they make art and music and jewelry and gumbo. They open small shops in neighborhoods and they know their customers and spiritually they pass a small piece of themselves onto someone traveling through.

In most other cities, shopping has been reduced to a window browsing along a stretch of overpriced fashion boutiques and global brands. New Orleans shatters the boring homogeneity with its Royal Street boutiques, its art galleries, and its French antique shops. The city revels in history — French, Spanish, Caribbean, African-American, and gay, among other traditions — and its history comes to life in pieces of vintage, hand-crafted furniture, first edition books, artisan jewelry, Creole cooking tools, or Mardi Gras memorabilia.

So bring home a handmade mask or a stack of hand-drawn Tarot cards from a Voodoo priestess. Or bring home edible souvenirs from our [Food Souvenirs](#) suggestions. The shops represent the old, the new, and the future, celebrating the culture and the people who make this city unique.

[Frenchmen Art Market](#)

New Orleans' only weekly night-time art market features original art, jewelry and crafts by local and regional artists and provides a family friendly cultural experience. Browse art, find gifts and meet local artisans. Take a break from the clubs to hangout in one of the outdoor living rooms and take in the ambiance of the market.

[Hazelnut](#)

Owned by gay actor and New Orleans native, Bryan Batt, Hazelnut is a quaint and quiet antique shop on Magazine, a lovely place to stop for a calming look at home furnishings. The pieces are curated by Brian and reflect his stylish and offbeat eye.

[Grove Street Press](#)

You'll find this small custom stationery store on a cobblestone street in the warehouse district. They offer specialty letterpress items and classes. Pop in after a day of browsing the nearby museums to pick up a memento or postcard.

[Faulkner House Books](#)

The house of Faulkner, that iconic southern writer, has been transformed into a local book shop selling classic and local interest books. We come more for the experience, to be in the haunted presence of a literary legend, but the selection here is also extensive and well-curated.

[Soniat House Antiques](#)

This is where Brangelina shopped till they dropped to furnish their amazing French Quarter home.

[Roux Royale](#)

You'll find a wide range of packaged local food products here — hot sauces, coffee, sweets and lots of creole and cajun ingredients, along with all kinds of entertaining-kitchen-dining tools and serving dishes and the like.

[Pepper Palace](#)

Although it's a regional chain, Pepper Palace is the place to go for the most extensive collection of hot sauces.

[Lucullus](#)

Lucullus is where we shop for old-school cooking tools, vintage culinary antiques, and assorted pieces of furniture. This is one of the city's best antique shops, unique with a friendly staff. They also offer design services.

[Scriptura](#)

A charming local shop with beautifully designed stationery. There's a calmness that accompanies a browse around Scriptura. They sell a variety of Filofax binders, spiral-bound Kate Spade planners, Heidi Swapp and Sugar Paper accessories. Margaret, the owner and designer, is warm and welcoming.

[Maskarade](#)

Maskarade is an ode to carnavales, its walls adorned with artisanal and Venetian masks created for Mardi Gras (or any grand ball you might be attending.) We love it when we need a mask for a local party, but you can come here to browse and chat with the owners to get a sense of carnavales history.

[Deurty Boys](#)

Handmade local art made by local artists from all over the Greater New Orleans area. The boys here make their art from salvaged and reclaimed materials. A funky, local, one-of-a-kind shop every visitor needs to check out.

[Faubourg-Marigny Art and Books](#)

This gay Marigny book shop is the oldest gay bookstore in the South specializing in the — shall we say, risque? — but is otherwise a treasure trove of semi-organized vintage gay literature art and memorabilia.

[Marie Laveau House of Voodoo](#)

What would a trip to New Orleans be without a stop inside Marie Laveau's house of voodoo. Sure, you can buy a voodoo doll or some quirky dark magic trinket, but that's not only why you come. You can learn the history of this fascinating religion and experience a reading from their resident spiritual advisor.

[Soniart House Antiques](#)

Brangelina shopped till they dropped here to furnish their amazing French Quarter home.



NEXT:
NOLA: GAY



GAY NEW ORLEANS



BEYOND THE BARS

To be gay in most cities is to be confined to a neighborhood, and those neighborhoods invariably become symbols of tolerance, edginess, nightlife, and inclusion. They are often home to the disenfranchised, the queer, the fringe, and all those people who have, for so many decades now, found a respite in the gay 'hoods, because a place welcoming to gays is really a place welcoming to everyone. The rainbow flag isn't just a welcome sign for gays and lesbians, but for the discriminated against of all distinctions.

Although New Orleans has its "fruit loop" of bars in the French Quarter, gay locals and gay life isn't confined just to a neighborhood. And they don't really need one. The entire city is a symbol of tolerance, edginess, art, and inclusion. There's a gay take on almost everything in New Orleans, from brunch to the gym where you work it off. We've uncovered some of NOLA's most important gay influencers to highlight what a lasting impact they've had on this city.

GAY-OWNED B&BS

There are a number of hotels close to gay nightlife but if you're looking to spend your dollars at a gay-owned B&B, [The Burgundy](#) in the Marigny district will get you a cozy room in a historic, restored Victorian and keep you close to the nightlife. Here you'll meet Carl Smith, who along with his German partner, opened this B&B about a decade ago. This B&B has a special serenity about it while remaining in close proximity to the drag bars and shows; and the French Quarter gay bars are within walking distance.

[The 1896 O'Malley House](#) is also gay-owned, dog-friendly, and beautifully restored, and while we have no qualms in recommending it, it is a bit far out in Mid-City and not as nightlife friendly (which may be for the best if you're here for a honeymoon).

[The Green House Inn](#)

Gay-owners Jesse and Frank are among the most hospitable in the city, welcoming you to this cozy, bright, unique bed-and-breakfast. Located in the Garden District, the house is adorned in antique paintings and armoires, and our favorite room — the Royal Ponciana Suite — is a spacious, sun-yellow stunner that opens onto the pool and Jacuzzi (both of which are clothing-optional!) You're a ten-minute walk down Magazine from tons of cafes, shopping and culture.

[La Maison Marigny](#)

La Maison Marigny is a homey B&B owned by John Ramsay and his husband Dewey Donihoo. The baroque-style house can accommodate up to four couples at a time and is one of our favorites when traveling with a group of friends. The rooms are handsome and spacious, the full-kitchen stocked with treats and amenities, and the neighborhood is quiet while only a short walk from the nightlife crazy of Frenchman Street, and the French Quarter just beyond that. (John also happens to make a killer breakfast.)

GAY FOOD FAVORITES

We gays love brunch almost as much as they love Halloween, so it's only fitting gay chef Jarred Zeringue is serving up one of the best brunch menus in the city. Zeringue is from Vacherie, Louisiana and curates special recipes handed down from his grandmother. [EAT](#) is a place locals come, gay, lesbians, straight, to talk about the neighborhood, and share some of Jarred's farm-fresh dishes he grew up with.

Nikki and Shana, the married team behind the [Black Swan Food Experience](#) have done their part to change the culinary game here. Black Swan is a beloved culinary and cultural experience helmed by power lesbians who create, what they call, "defiant street food." They've been at it for well over a decade, specializing in delicious sliders, crawfish pies, and chicken wings. These creatively prepared and uniquely presented Creole classics are favorites. Nikki and Shana pop up all over the city in multiple venues, so best to follow them on Facebook, Twitter, or their blog. And keep an eye out for their soon-to-open food truck, coming Fall 2016.

LOCAL "GAY-LEBRITIES"

Beyond the food and hospitality scene, gays have been revolutionizing the culture circles for decades, and nowhere is that more evident than in the career of Jeffrey Roberson — you may know him better as [Varla Jean Merman](#). Varla Jean has performed all around the world, in the Sydney Opera House, Carnegie Hall, and the New York Public Theater, but Ms. Merman is a proud resident of the Marigny. Check out Varla's take on Crescent City in [this guide](#).

Varla Jean isn't the only gay celeb in town. Fellow gay and actor Bryan Batt (of Mad Men fame) is the proprietor of [Hazelnut](#), a quaint and quiet antique shop on Magazine which is a lovely place to stop for a calming look at home furnishings. The pieces are curated by Brian and reflect his stylish and offbeat eye.

And then there's Otis Fennell, a name that might be new to you, but local NOLA folks know Otis as the Mayor of Frenchman Street. And for good reason. Otis has kept his little gay bookshop alive for decades, even as other, larger chains have closed around it. [Fab on Frenchman](#) is more than a place to buy books; It is the oldest gay-owned bookstore in the south, and was, for decades, a place where LGBT people could find safety and a place to be themselves. There is an eclectic collection of literature, photography, and art books with a focus on the artistic and queer.

If you're looking for an intro into the city's gay history, we recommend a visit with [Glenn de Villier](#). Glenn's been giving tours in New Orleans for 25 years, but recently added "The Twirl," a Gay Heritage walking tour of the French Quarter. His intimate groups (no larger than 12) explore gay-owned businesses (Little Vic's Cafe) and trace the history of gay, literary icons like Tennessee Williams and Truman Capote. The tour also gives the history of gay life in New Orleans, the fire at the UpStairs lounge, and the impact of Stonewall on the city. The tour runs about two hours and costs \$30 (private tours are available for \$200 per group) on Saturdays at 3pm. A complimentary cocktail is included in the cost.

FITNESS

The gayest gym in town happens to be the oldest. [The New Orleans Athletic Club](#) on N. Rampart St. went through a complete renovation after Hurricane Katrina, and now provides a state-of-the-art weight room and a sexy space to accommodate your cruising needs, and a full bar for that much-needed post-workout cocktail. The gay-popular [Prime Fitness](#) is open 24-hours; a clean, sleek space, new equipment ranging from barbells to TRX to private sessions, and day passes for only \$20 (You can also snag week passes for \$50.) Our favorite innovative workout is at [City Surf Fitness](#), a combination of yoga, pilates, and cardio, the work-out is centered around a surf board balanced on Bosu balls to simulate the feeling of being out on the ocean. This is perfect for working those stabilizer muscles you didn't know existed. If you want a handsome gay male instructor and a work-out that feels like a dance party, check out [Romney Ride](#). These work-outs are high-energy cardio set to bass-driven beats. For more cool fitness classes, check out [Fitness for the LGBT traveler](#).



NEXT:
NOLA: NIGHTLIFE



NIGHTLIFE

To see New Orleans at night is to see a city in its element, the coming together of history, music, art, spirits, and sensuality into a wild and inspired phenomenon few cities come close to matching. A tour of the French Quarter, into the Marigny and onward to the outskirts of the Bywater, you'll find historic jazz clubs, defiant poetry slams, classy cocktail lounges and no-frills dive bars, burlesques and drag shows. Forget never sleeping, this city barely rests at all.

You'll find few curfews in the French Quarter and the music wafts from the bars until the earliest hours of the morning. In local 'hoods, the vibe is more low-key, and performance and art take precedence, be it street corner musicians or hipstery beer gardens.

Whether you like your nightlife sophisticated and relaxed, or loud and frisky, there's always a place in this town to enjoy a drink, hear some music, dance and flirt. And if that's just your warm up, there's stumble into the next nearest bar where you'll take your shirt off and sing Bon Jovi at the top of your lungs (...not that we did any of that...who us?..)



THE FRUIT LOOP BAR CRAWL

The gay district in the French Quarter, called “The Fruit Loop” zigzags from Bourbon to St. Ann to Burgundy and back down St. Louis. Its venues are particularly popular for Sunday Tea at 5pm.

[Oz](#) is known for their hunky and pretty dancers;

[Good Friends](#) has a super-friendly, relaxed vibe and kooky Sunday piano sing-alongs; the [Bourbon Pub](#) offers more dancers with a laid-back, neighborhood vibe, a bigger daytime crowd and hilarious video montages; and the legendary [Cafe Lafitte’s in Exile](#), is a 24-hour tavern that’s been helping gays get tipsy since the ‘50s — known for their spontaneous [napkin toss tradition](#). (This Lafitte’s is not to be confused with [Lafitte’s Blacksmith Shop Bar](#), one of the oldest bars in America, a historic watering hole that’s been serving drinks since the 1700’s. Also worth a visit.)

FAVES BEYOND THE FRUIT LOOP

[The 700 Club](#) is a trendy neighborhood gay bar in the Quarter — perhaps the best among them — with high-ceilings and an airy, open floor-plan. We usually drop in late on Sundays after having spent the day drinking with friends: but it’s also a worthwhile stop for the daily specials (Mexican Mondays; Tuesdays with a Twist...) Tasty drinks, fun vibe, and surprisingly delicious food served upstairs.

[Pat O’Brien’s](#)

A beloved local haunt with a sunny patio, friendly neighborhood atmosphere, a dueling piano bar, and a famous Hurricane (rum, fruit juice, and grenadine served in a glass resembling a hurricane lamp.)

[Beachbum Berry’s Latitude 29](#)

Beachbums is a local legend, and its Tiki-style gastropub digs make for a welcomed aesthetic break from the dive bar craziness all around it. It has a fun, off-the-beaten path vibe, filled with regulars, and creative cocktails with fun stories behind their creation.

[Phillip’s](#)

Phillip’s is a straight, uptown bar with a gay Happy Hour on Fridays. A fun and sunny open-air space where you can meet lots of handsome gay locals and enjoy great drinks in an upscale neighborhood. The bar’s been an Uptown staple for more than 80 years.

[Swirl Wine Bar](#)

Lesbian-owned and lesbian-popular, their wine tastings and educational series are a big hit with local boys as well. And it’s always a fun, funky spot to sip a Barolo or Pinot Noir. Small plates from neighbor 1,000 Figs are served Tuesday-Saturday, 11am-7:30pm/8:30 weekends.

DRAG

[The AllWays Lounge and Theater](#)

On Monday nights, a who’s who of cute gay boys pack into this divey alternative lounge in the Marigny to watch RuPaul’s Drag Race and enjoy the fun, diverse, queer hipster vibe (and drink heavily). The venue is known for its plays, burlesques, and indie live music. If you want to be in the local drag scene, put this place high on your radar. [The Golden Lantern](#) is a 24-hour divey spot where locals come to check out hilarious drag performances (Sunday’s Jubilee Dragging for Jesus is particularly fun.) There are local beers on tap and a daily happy hour from 2-8p.m.

BAWDY/NAUGHTY

Every city has that one gay bar that becomes a barometer for just how out-of-control your evening got. [The Corner Pocket](#) is that bar for New Orleans. Located on St. Louis, this is where the twinks and otters and cute-ish jock boys dance unabashedly on the bar in their undies while men tuck crumpled dollar bills in their boxer briefs. The vibe here is definitely more sex-focused but it’s often a fun night out with friends when you need a laugh.

[Raw Hide](#) is a dark and dingy leather bar, with porn on the TVs and slippery floors. The drinks and Happy Hour specials aren’t really the point, as the boys come here to get frisky and there are plenty of dark corners to accommodate them. [The Phoenix/Eagle Bar](#) is home to the city’s leather and bear crowd, with a decent leather and naughty accessory store on site.

JAZZ

You've likely read about Fritzel's European Jazz Pub and The Spotted Cat on Frenchman, and while they are legendary for good reason, they're also uber-crowded with tourists. And we are travelers, remember? For a remarkable and more local experience, we love [Sweet Lorraine's Jazz Club](#) an authentic local spot for slow jazz and truly delicious Creole food, Sweet Lorraine's is a long time favorite. The facade of this small jazz joint is quite austere, and the neighborhood in a state of bohemian flux, but once inside, there's a warmth and hominess to the people, the music, and that food that delights and inspires. [Chickie Wah Wah](#) is a local music bar with an outdoor patio and food service. They are a great supporter of local musicians, with 100% of the cover charge going directly to the artists. [Cafe Istanbul](#) is New Orleans' home for performance art. In addition to Jazz, you'll find theater, comedy and film - a diverse schedule of compelling programming. Founded in 1974, the [Maple Leaf](#) is a local legend, with resident and rotating musicians every night of the week.

CLASSIC COCKTAIL TOUR

[Hermes Bar](#)

Hermes looks and feels like a Prohibition era saloon, a sophisticated speakeasy, that's become our favorite place when we want to get all dressy and have cocktails in an elegant, old-world bar. You can find the bar inside Antoine's restaurant.

[Carousel Bar and Lounge](#)

Inside the classy Hotel Monteleone, the Carousel Lounge is famous for its rotating carousel bar and live jazz. The scene is buttoned-up and not predominantly gay, but fun when you want a more grown up evening out (but still one that has a slight edge and a well-made drink.)

[Galatoire's](#) is one of the city's "grande dame" restaurants, and yes, it's well known, but this is a city that unabashedly celebrates its history, which is why we still come here for a flaming drink. It's called a Cafe Brulot, and it's flaming brandy, cinnamon, cloves, and lemon zest, set on fire and served by a foul-mouthed waitress.



NEXT:

[PERSONIFIED NOLA: MATT & BEAU](#)



PERSONIFIED: NEW ORLEANS



MATT ARMATO & BEAU CIOLINO

Our cover models, Beau Ciolino and Matt Armato met at Loyola University in 2013 and launched their food-focused lifestyle blog, [Probably This](#) two years later. The blog is filled with stunning photography, educating you on how to create delicious treats like Shaken Iced Almond Matcha Latte.

Even though we're both native New Orleanians, we've never stopped being amazed by this city's ability to adapt to the modern era while still keeping a firm foot in its rich historic culture. It's an oasis of social progressiveness in an otherwise fairly conservative state and region. It has always had a lively, prominent, and influential LGBTQ community, which continues to this day as a leading demographic in business, arts, charity, and culture.

We're confident in saying there's no other American city with the same caliber of gorgeous historic architecture as well as a thriving food and beverage scene and strong community bonds. Walking down the streets of historic neighborhoods like the French Quarter and the Marigny, you'll find yourself overwhelmed by the old world charm and kindness of folks you pass on the street. If you need more convincing that this city is amazing, follow us as we document our lives in New Orleans on our Instagram [@probablythis](#)

Discover Matt & Beau's New Orleans



BRUNCH



HOTEL



COCKTAILS



SUNDAY
FUNDAY



OUTDOORS



HIDDEN
GEM

BRUNCH



Sylvain

The courtyard at Sylvain is just flawless, and there is no better spot to grab hearty, filling, Southern-style brunch. Plus, their cocktail game is one of the best in the city. Definitely try the pork shoulder and grits. For drinks, try an Orange Lazarus Spritz or one of their amazing house-made Bloody Mary's.

HOTEL



Ace Hotel New Orleans

We've never stayed in a hotel in this city, but the Ace just opened recently, and it's cute af. We can very highly recommend the rooftop pool along with the accompanying cabana bar Alto; and the house restaurant Josephine Estelle is incredible. We've heard they leave you a fresh bag of Zapp's chips in every room.

COCKTAILS



Cane and Table

Hands down, Cane and Table is the best place to grab drinks. They have a friendly and knowledgeable staff, a gorgeous French Quarter courtyard, and some delicious snacks as an added bonus. Their focus is tiki cocktails, which are generally great boozy refreshments on a hot New Orleans summer day, or really just any hot day since they pretty much happen all year.

SUNDAY FUNDAY



Country Club

We have to go classic with this one; the Country Club is a Bywater restaurant/bar/pool, and yes that was pool. It used to be a clothing-optional situation which was sometimes fun and sometimes weird. Anyway, you can still go for drag brunch and then head on back to the cabana bar for something to drink while you soak up that Sunday sun.

OUTDOORS



Crescent Park

This lovely outdoor space is a gorgeous new development in the Bywater that runs along the riverfront and has great views of the city skyline. It's a convenient and scenic spot for a short bike ride, a run, or a picnic. There's also a small dog run which our little dude Fox "swipes right" for.

HIDDEN GEM



1000 Figs

Located in Esplanade Ridge, 1000 Figs is the cutest café we've ever feasted our eyes upon, and its menu is full of delicious Mediterranean classics. It's the most Instagram-ready little room ever, and it's VERY little. You simply cannot leave this place without trying the smoked chicken salad sandwich and the falafel platter.

PERSONIFIED: NEW ORLEANS



SETH FORNEA

As a Louisiana native, I always love going home and especially visiting New Orleans, one of America's unique cities. New Orleans is the epitome of jazz, food, soul, and history! I hope you get the chance to visit and enjoy my 6 favorite things!

Discover Seth's New Orleans



BRUNCH



HOTEL



COCKTAILS



**SUNDAY
FUNDAY**



OUTDOORS



**HIDDEN
GEM**

BRUNCH



[The Court of Two Sisters](#)

The Court of Two Sisters Jazz Brunch: you can taste all of Louisiana in one brunch in a beautiful courtyard with a live Jazz band! My favorite dish here is the Crawfish Louisiana.

HOTEL



[The Andrew Jackson Hotel](#)

The Andrew Jackson Hotel is on Royal Street between St. Philip and Dumaine St. (perfect location for stumbling home from OZ). It has an old world feel (it's a house with a courtyard) and serves a complimentary breakfast of coffee and croissants.

COCKTAILS



[Carousel Bar](#)

The bar at the Hotel Monteleone is fantastic! It's called the Carousel because the bar rotates just like the carousels you rode as a kid! — and you can have their signature Gin Fizz. It's on Royal Street and very near the gay part of Nola.

SUNDAY FUNDAY



[Oz](#)

I love to go to OZ at the corner of St. Ann and Bourbon. It's the best location for watching the Sunday Funday shows! Also central to all the gay bars in the quarter, it makes for an easy spot to meet friends (as well as being where all the hotties gather).

OUTDOORS



[Royal Street](#)

Listening to the musicians on Royal Street. From Canal to Esplanade... Royal Street is full of wonderful shops and street musicians which makes it delightful to stroll on a sunny day.

HIDDEN GEM



[St. Roch Market](#)

St. Roch Market is a delicious place for lunch with lots of local options including a few vegan and vegetarian.

PERSONIFIED: NEW ORLEANS



TI MARTIN

I truly believe that in some places people just exist. We truly believe in New Orleans that life is meant to be lived! Now, especially post Katrina, we have a work hard/play hard mentality with a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem. But New Orleanians are not ones to go to our grave with lots of regrets about having not enjoyed life to the fullest. And oh yeah, the food and the cocktails are amazing. New Orleans native Ti Adelaide Martin credits her mother, Ella Brennan, the “grande dame” of her family’s restaurant business (which currently includes Commander’s Palace, Café Adelaide and the Swizzle Stick Bar, and SoBou in New Orleans, as well as Brennan’s of Houston) for setting the stage for her love of the restaurant business. “When I was a child, she was always hosting these lavish parties at our house,” she recalls. “There were always lots of interesting people there from around the country, many from the culinary world.”

Discover Ti’s New Orleans



BRUNCH



HOTEL



COCKTAILS



SUNDAY
FUNDAY



OUTDOORS



HIDDEN
GEM

BRUNCH



Commander's Palace

The Commander's Palace family is known for creating "Jazz Brunch" that you now see all over town in New Orleans. Commander's is the classic jazz brunch with a trio that moves around the restaurant and takes requests. Dress up in your favorite, fancy hat (ball caps don't count) and drink complimentary martinis.

HOTEL



Soniat House

For a real charming French Quarter feel, I love Soniat House and The Melrose.

COCKTAILS



Swizzle Stick Bar

I have many favorite places to drink in New Orleans. The Swizzle Stick Bar at Café Adelaide and the long, cool French Quarter bar and beer garden at SoBou.

SUNDAY FUNDAY



Booze Cruise Kayak on Bayou St. John

I love to do a "Booze Cruise" kayak on Bayou St. John. Or you can hit the Lafitte Greenway and bike all the way from the French Quarter to the Lake.

OUTDOORS



City Park

How about a picnic at City Park? I love Big Lake and the Sculpture Garden. Both picturesque picnic spots.

HIDDEN GEM



St. Roch Market

St. Roch Market is still off the beaten path for many visitors. It's a one-stop shop for an array of versatile food vendors and it also has a fabulous cocktail bar.

PERSONIFIED: NEW ORLEANS



VARLA JEAN MERMAN

Varla Jean Merman is a character originated and portrayed by Jeffery Roberson, a performer renowned in the art circles of Provincetown, New Orleans, New York, San Francisco, and London. Varla Jean has been featured in the 2003 independent feature, Girls Will Be Girls, and the HBO documentary, Dragtime.

I grew up all over Louisiana, but always knew I would one day live in New Orleans. Everyone in New Orleans looked like they had more fun, more parties, more booze, more sex, more food, and most importantly more joy than anywhere else I'd ever been. Celebrations and tragedies could equally be the impetus for a party, parade or jazz "Second Line." No one needed any excuse for throwing on a costume, a wig, or a face full of makeup and heading out onto the beautiful streets to overindulge. But even though people in New Orleans are wild, they also faithfully adhere to strict traditions, religion, and pomp and circumstance. There is an order to the madness, even if tourists don't see it. I feel lucky to be a part of that beautiful, debaucherous joy that is New Orleans.

Discover Varla Jean's New Orleans



BRUNCH



HOTEL



COCKTAILS



SUNDAY
FUNDAY



OUTDOORS



HIDDEN
GEM



BRUNCH

Elizabeth's

I love Elizabeth's, not only because it is in the Bywater, my neighborhood, but because only New Orleans would find a way to make bacon more decadent. They take bacon, cover it in syrup and pecans, and make Praline bacon. Trust me, you have to try it.



HOTEL

The Columns Hotel

The Columns Hotel uptown on St. Charles is in a beautiful uptown historic mansion. Sip a cocktail and watch the street car go by. And read Lillian Hellman's "Pentimento" before you go. She lived in New Orleans as a child, and there are many references to The Columns, and many other New Orleans landmarks in her stories.



COCKTAILS

Tableau

I always bring friends to Tableau, right off Jackson Square, for the most amazing cocktails and my favorite Syrah. But matching the libations is the beautiful view of Jackson Square. Also, where the bar is now used to be a dressing room at Le Petit Theatre where I have performed, so the view has a nostalgic joy for me.



SUNDAY FUNDAY

The Bourbon Pub Parade

Every Sunday I plant myself in the middle of The Bourbon Pub Parade, New Orleans' most popular gay bar. Hilarious videos, handsome men, and even more handsome dancers and bartenders make it the place to be. And then, on my way home, I have to have one more at the Phoenix in the Marigny. Technically a leather/fetish bar, but pretty relaxed on Sundays.



OUTDOORS

City Park

City Park is so beautiful and expansive you could spend an entire day just there! Highlights include the beautiful sculpture garden behind New Orleans Museum of Art, City Park the dog park, and the beautiful tree lined roads dripping with Spanish Moss.



HIDDEN GEM

Algiers Point

Walk along the levee on the other side of the river from New Orleans in Algiers Point. A quick ferry ride leaves you in this beautiful historic neighborhood with some breathtaking views of the Quarter, downtown, and the immense bridge over the Mississippi River, the Crescent City Connection.

PERSONIFIED: NEW ORLEANS



JEFF SCHIFFMAN

Jeff Schiffman works at the Interim Director of Admission at Tulane University. When he's not exploring NOLA (or helping promote it!), he's teaching a spin class, cycling through Crescent Park or getting centered at Reyn Yoga.

I suppose the old saying of "the more you live in New Orleans, the more unfit you become to live anywhere else" is greatly applicable to me. I moved to NOLA at 18 and haven't looked back since. I love this place because even after 15 years here, I am still discovering something new every single day. There is something about this place that leaves you wanting to keep exploring and discovering more. And no matter how long you are here, there is always something new. That something will stay with you, even after your visit is over. A friend once told me that New Orleans is the only city you miss like a woman. Or in my case, like a man.

Discover Jeff's New Orleans



BRUNCH



HOTEL



COCKTAILS



**SUNDAY
FUNDAY**



OUTDOORS



**HIDDEN
GEM**

BRUNCH



Slim Goodies

Slim Goodies has the best breakfast in town. The Rays Stack is my favorite -the best chocolate chip pancakes you'll ever try. Get there early though: there can be a wait at prime brunch time.

HOTEL



ACE Hotel

I recommend the brand new Ace Hotel. The vibe is great, the lobby is always bumpin' and you can't beat their rooftop pool. My only fear is that it's getting very popular very quickly. The views from the roof are great, as are their cocktails.

COCKTAILS



Cellar Door

There is this great spot called Cellar Door in the CBD which is quiet, romantic and has some great creative cocktails. My top pick would be the Green Light District cocktail. You can sit in their quaint courtyard or in their gorgeous main bar area. It's a great spot for a date.

SUNDAY FUNDAY



Crescent Park

Rent a bike, ride the bike lanes through the quarter to Crescent Park. Walk Crescent Park to the end, grab a late lunch at Pizza Delicious, head back into the Quarter for Sunday Tea at the Pub and Oz. Don't miss Love is in the Air at Lafitte's in Exile !

OUTDOORS



City Park

City Park is amazing. It's one of the largest urban parks in America and there is so much to see and explore. Rent a boat on the big lake, hike the Couturie Forest, lay out on the Great Lawn. You could spend all day here.

HIDDEN GEM



I am all about health and fitness, so the hidden gems in town are all places to stay healthy. Check out [Reyn Yoga](#), a great place to get centered and workedout while you are in town.

PERSONIFIED: NEW ORLEANS



MARVIN ANDRADE

Marvin Andrade is the Senior Sales Manager for the Windsor Court Hotel, with over 20 years of New Orleans hospitality experience.

Born in Honduras raised in New Orleans and currently residing in Mid-City, Marvin was brought up on a ranch where his love for animals began. As an only child, he loved the companionship pets brought to his life and is presently blessed with three beautiful Dachshunds and a wonderful grandmother who helps to look after them.

Currently the Senior Sales Manager for the Windsor Court Hotel, Marvin brings over 20 years of hospitality experience where his love and knowledge of all things New Orleans makes him a great asset to anyone looking to travel to the Big Easy. During his free time, Marvin enjoys trying out the hottest new restaurants in town and spending time with his Dachshunds. He is a member of the Louisiana Society of Association Executives, Meeting Planners International, is deeply involved with the Louisiana SPCA and has been a member of the Human Rights Campaign since 2002.

Discover Marvin's New Orleans



BRUNCH



HOTEL



COCKTAILS



**SUNDAY
FUNDAY**



OUTDOORS



**HIDDEN
GEM**

BRUNCH



Cane and Table

With a hidden courtyard and funky French Quarter atmosphere, they have a rustic menu that pairs well with their extensive cocktail selection. My go-to for a boozy brunch.

HOTEL



Windsor Court Hotel

Located in the heart of downtown New Orleans, this luxury boutique hotel is within walking distance to the French Quarter, riverfront and Warehouse District. A favorite amongst Hollywood elite, you never know who you'll run into.

COCKTAILS



Oak

I love this intimate and upscale bar on the Riverbend with excellent cocktails and a vast wine selection

SUNDAY FUNDAY



Outdoors

I love walking my dogs around Bayou St. John and City Park.

OUTDOORS



Sunday/Funday

Having a fun brunch with friends at one of my favorite restaurants followed by cocktails and great music at the Bourbon Pub is my idea of a perfect Sunday/Funday.

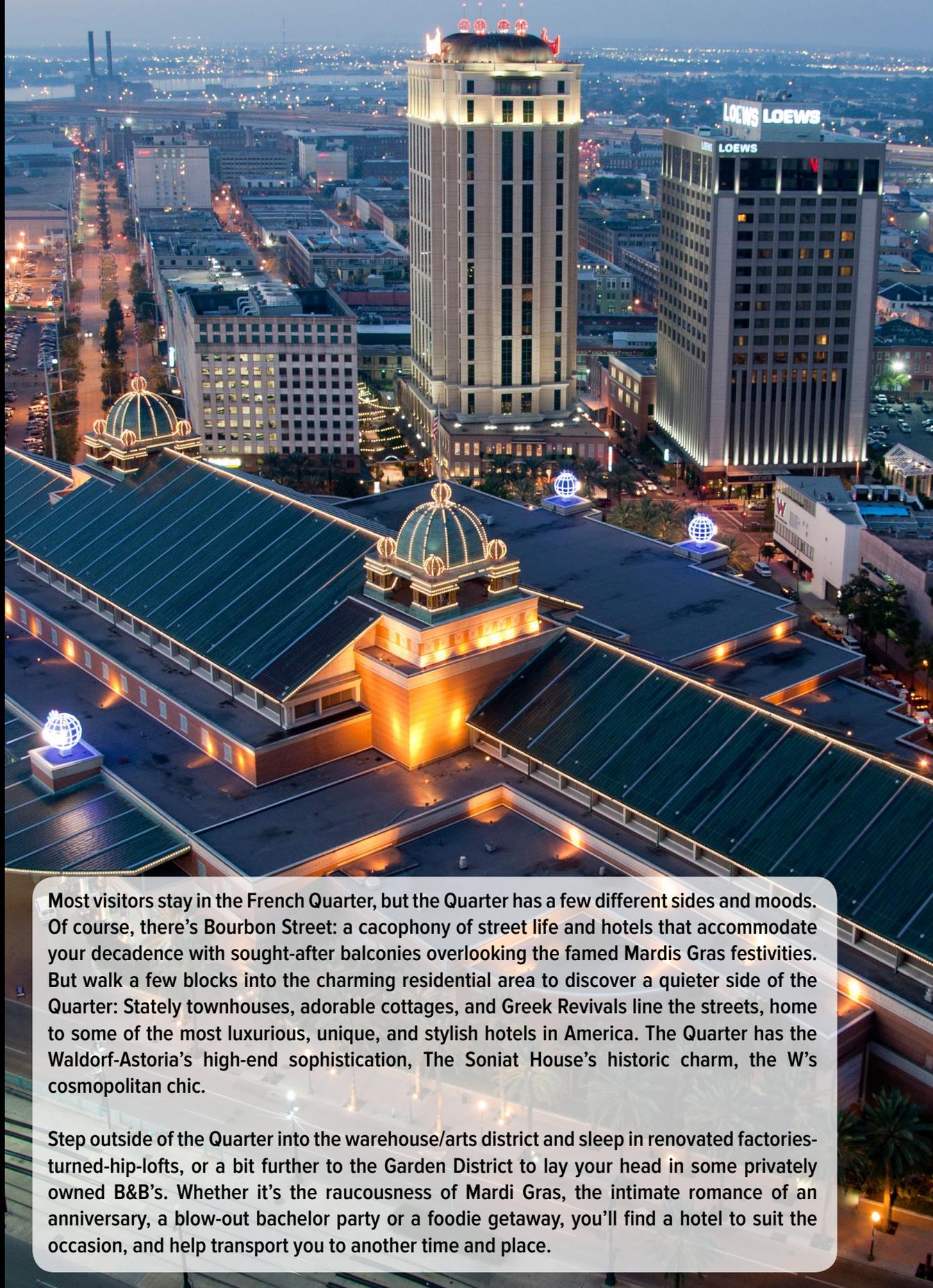
HIDDEN GEM



MoPho

Off the beaten path, but close to my house, this is my go-to weeknight hotspot for Louisiana Cuisine with a Vietnamese flair in a casual and lively environment.

ACCOMMODATIONS



Most visitors stay in the French Quarter, but the Quarter has a few different sides and moods. Of course, there's Bourbon Street: a cacophony of street life and hotels that accommodate your decadence with sought-after balconies overlooking the famed Mardi Gras festivities. But walk a few blocks into the charming residential area to discover a quieter side of the Quarter: Stately townhouses, adorable cottages, and Greek Revivals line the streets, home to some of the most luxurious, unique, and stylish hotels in America. The Quarter has the Waldorf-Astoria's high-end sophistication, The Soniat House's historic charm, the W's cosmopolitan chic.

Step outside of the Quarter into the warehouse/arts district and sleep in renovated factories-turned-hip-lofts, or a bit further to the Garden District to lay your head in some privately owned B&B's. Whether it's the raucousness of Mardi Gras, the intimate romance of an anniversary, a blow-out bachelor party or a foodie getaway, you'll find a hotel to suit the occasion, and help transport you to another time and place.



FAVORITES



FUN & LIVELY



CELEBRATION
FOR TWO



BUSINESS &
PLEASURE



ON A
BUDGET



SOLO
TRAVELERS

FAVORITES



[The International House](#)

The perfect update of a Beaux Arts heritage with minimalist modern design — and all at surprisingly affordable rates. The hip, groovy feel attracts a stylish crowd who hang out in Loa, the trendy cocktail bar in the lobby. Check out their specialty rooms including the Apple King: with AppleTV to watch and two local organic apples to eat, and the Rockstar: quiet, windowless rooms for those who really need their beauty sleep.

[Ritz-Carlton New Orleans](#)

This Ritz-Carlton property is an architectural stunner inside and out. It evokes a genteel charm not unlike what Truman Capote's sitting room must have felt like. The Club Level Maison Orleans rooms offer the best service in town.

[The Windsor Court](#)

The Windsor Court is the town's reigning luxury haunt. The large rooms are bright and sophisticated, joining English country elegance with classic Southern flare — think antiques, museum-quality artwork and afternoon tea. But we love it for their rooftop pool — one of the city's best-kept secrets.

[The Ace Hotel New Orleans](#)

The Ace brings a hot new hipster vibe to the Warehouse district, with a bustling lobby and bar, a live jazz club just off the lobby, the city's first Stumptown Coffee location, and Josephine Estelle, an excellent new restaurant fusing Italian food and southern roots. The spacious (especially by ACE standards) rooms are dressed by Rowan and Williams in greens and browns with throwback furnishings; the minibar gives a thoughtful nod to local life, and the rooftop pool is a fun scene with a bar and great views.

[Hotel Le Marais](#)

Hotel Le Marais is a chic hotel that receives top-marks for its comfortable mix of modern and classic decor, moderate prices and in-the-heart-of-it-all location. Enjoy the included and extensive hot breakfast (grits! eggs! bacon!) in the charming courtyard, and work off the calories in the small but well-equipped fitness room — the outdoor heated saltwater pool is a little tight for laps.

FUN + LIVELY



[W Hotel French Quarter](#)

The W Hotel French Quarter is New York chic meets New Orleans louche, in a just-off-central French Quarter location. If you're a W fan, the New Orleans outpost will not disappoint. If you're not, the heated outdoor pool, elegant courtyard, and well-equipped fitness room still won't be enough to sway you. If you were a W fan but are looking for something more current and stylish, check out The Saint hotel.

[The Saint](#)

The Saint is modern, friendly and hip. The Burgundy Bar is among the more popular live jazz clubs in the city and a great place to grab a meal or a drink. This a good option stay for a group of friends to cut-loose and get a feel for the city's culture and free-spiritedness. And if you're feeling particularly devilish, the Archangel Lucifer Suite features a private stage equipped with a dance pole, stage lighting, music system and a disco ball!

[The Omni Royal Orleans](#)

The history of this palatial hotel predates even the American ownership of the city, extending way back to when the rebellious Creole's were building a French metropolis on disputed land. To see it today is to see a regal mix of marble and crystal, a home for celebrities and presidents, literary greats and musicians — that is conveniently crawling distance from the "fruit loop" of gay bars. The rooms are elegant with handsome woods and muted earth tones — upgrade to one with a terrace overlooking the Quarter's rooftops.

[Loft 523](#)

Unlike anything else in New Orleans, the wide-open, high-ceiling rooms of this former dry goods warehouse have been transformed into artists lofts — complete with Louis XV fabrics and skyline views. The lobby pub, Gravier Street Social, is a cool, hipster take on the British gentleman's club. The low-lit rooms are a bit problematic, but the overall gritty chicness is an undeniable win.

CELEBRATION FOR 2



[The Roosevelt Waldorf-Astoria](#)

The Roosevelt has long been known as the city's grand, glamorous address. Its public areas ooze history and opulence, though we find the rooms a tad staid. There's quite a variation — so if you adore a claw-footed bathtub or a city view, be sure to ask.

[The Soniat House](#)

The Soniat House on Chartres is a charming French Quarter Hotel with unusually great service. The authentic antiques and effusive charm lend themselves to a romantic antebellum escape. The \$12.50 breakfast includes homemade biscuits and fresh-squeezed orange juice, and is delivered to your room or to a table in the courtyard.

[Bienville House](#)

You can almost imagine Jay Gatsby in the drawing rooms of this centuries-old manor. The Bienville is the little sister boutique of Hotel Monteleone, and offers a quaint experience, a chance to escape into the quieter streets of the Quarter without ever being too far from the action. The hotel allows pets with no weight restrictions, only a \$100 cleaning fee and \$25/night surcharge.

[Audubon Cottages](#)

A real gem of the city, the Audubon Cottages is an intimate hideaway of seven one-and-two bedroom suites, rustic and cozy with exposed brick and weathered-wood beams. Rooms come with a complimentary breakfast, which we enjoyed in the shared lush courtyard overlooking the saltwater pool (said to be the oldest pool in the city.) The property recently underwent a multi-million dollar renovation, and each room is appointed with country-chic furnishings.

BUSINESS + PLEASURE



[The Hotel Monteleone](#)

The largest hotel in the French Quarter, the majestic Hotel Monteleone has stunning views from the higher floors and its rooftop pool. The traditionally-decorated rooms vary considerably, so don't be shy about moving to one you like. Whether or not you stay at the hotel, we recommend taking a spin on the Carousel Bar, the only revolving bar in the city. Have a cocktail, nosh on bar bites, meet colorful locals and [check the schedule](#) for live music events.

[AC Hotel Bourbon](#)

Marriott's AC brand touches down in New Orleans — a modern business hotel that's true to the neighborhood's warehouse aesthetic and AC's European roots, with rooms in exposed brick and weathered, refurbished hardwood floors. You're located in a surging neighborhood of art and food and culture, and a short walk from the French Quarter. The price is reasonable, and the hospitality warm and welcoming as we've come to expect from Marriott.

[Hyatt Regency New Orleans](#)

The Hyatt here adds splashy color and a bit of style to its huge business hotel digs, but it's really the location we fell for: just steps from the warehouse district, a short stroll to the Garden district or the French Quarter, it's a top choice when we want to explore. While we usually prefer the style and intimacy of chic boutiques, the enormity of the Hyatt does allow for a certain anonymity if you're, say, bringing new friends back to your room. And if they turn into really good friends, reserve a private cabana at the rooftop pool.

[JW Marriott New Orleans](#)

With contemporary/traditional decor in handsome neutral tones (no flowery belle époque flourishes here), the JW Marriott offers a pleasing combination of old world charm and modern luxury in the heart of the French Quarter. We loved the billiard table in the Executive lounge (in addition to the usual amenities of breakfast and afternoon hors d'oeuvres, and all-day non-alcoholic beverages). The bi-level suites are a nice setup for friends or family traveling together.

[Royal Sonesta New Orleans](#)

If you want Bourbon Street madness without sacrificing swank, the Royal Sonesta is your best bet; a sophisticated hotspot in the middle of an endless parade of parties and tipsy tourists. For a little more privacy, ask for a hushed interior room. The live jazz in the courtyard is a nice touch after a long business meeting, and we've been long time fans of their Sunday Funday pool scene.

[Bourbon Orleans Hotel](#)

Bourbon Orleans is our favorite hotel when we want to be as close as possible to the Oz and the rest of the Bourbon Street gay bars that make up the Fruit Loop. Tucked on a side street between Bourbon and Royal, this haunted southern charmer (some say there's still a ghost that lives here) is steps close to nightlife and the quieter art-gallery scene. Don't miss their delicious Creole restaurant and the outdoor saltwater pool.

[Harrah's New Orleans](#)

Harrah's features large, comfortable, well-appointed rooms and a Casino, only two blocks from the Mississippi River. At 26 stories, the high-floor rooms offer spectacular views of the river and the New Orleans skyline. The hotel is within walking distance to the French Quarter.

FOR SOLO TRAVELERS



[The Burgundy](#)

You'll find this gay-owned B&B in the Faubourg Marigny district, just blocks from the French Quarter in a wonderfully restored historic Victorian offering cozy comfort, a delicious breakfast, and Carl, your host, who is always quick with a stellar recommendation and some conversation.

[Hotel Mazarin](#)

Hotel Mazarin completed a renovation in late 2011 that updated its classic style. Its interior courtyard is one of the most elegant in town, and the rates — which include wifi and bottled water — are below-average for the central location.

[1896 O'Malley House](#)

In Mid-City, this highly-praised and gay-popular B&B is a gorgeous, Regal-esque home, modernized with in-room iPads while maintaining its classic charm. Guests will enjoy the in-room jacuzzi's and gourmet breakfasts served to the room.

ON A BUDGET



Renaissance Pere Marquette

The Renaissance blends edgy style, business travel sensibilities, and Southern voodoo traditions into a sleek, modern hotel. This hotel is just off Canal Street and only 10 minutes from the French Quarter. The rooms are good-sized with standard amenities but are artistically appointed with local art, plush bedding, marble tubs, and devil-red chandeliers.

Moxy New Orleans

Marriott's newest specialty brand makes its US debut in New Orleans. Moxy offers cutting edge technology and style designed for millennials, but fun for all. Moxy eschews desks and closets for a happening lobby and clothes hooks. Proof that for millennials, "furiously fast" WiFi is the new foundation of [Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs](#).

The Hotel Modern

On Lee Circle, The Hotel Modern is an eclectic boutique hotel. While the rooms can be a tad small and a little worn, they are innovatively designed in a boho-industrial style to maximize the space. Be sure to ask for a room away from the bar which sometimes stays open later than its official 2am closing time.

Country Inn & Suites

The Country Inn & Suites is further away on the lodging range, but it's location in the trendy Warehouse District makes it a great choice for the more budget-conscious. In fact, it's a delight of a building, a creative adaptation of an old industrial space that features exposed wooden beams and brick walls throughout. The rooms are surprisingly large and modern. And a free greasy breakfast doesn't hurt after a night of drinking. This French Quarter hotel offers amenities we've never seen before in their [Short Stature Kit](#). But you don't have to be a little person to enjoy the reasonable rates and friendly staff.

TRIP PLANNING



GETTING THERE AND AROUND

To best experience New Orleans, pay attention to the weather and the city's festival schedule. There seems to always be a festival taking over the city here: Mardi Gras consumes the culture from mid-January until early-February (sometimes March); Jazz Fest takes over the weekends of early April; Southern Decadence is a hectic time in August; and then, of course, there's Halloween.

This can be wonderful or problematic. For some, it is common to plan their trips to NOLA around these weekends, as these festivals are among the best in the world. But they also create scarcity of affordable hotel rooms and popular restaurant reservations, and kick Uber into surge pricing. If you want to experience the local, magical side of NOLA, we'd recommend coming during an off-peak time — even midweek. The city is calmer and you'll have it more to yourself.

ABOUT THE WEATHER

The weather in New Orleans can be ideal during May and October months. Summers are hot and humid, while winters can bring rain well into April. Packing can be a challenge given the rapid shifts in seasonal temperature, so we recommend bringing some light clothes you can layer and shed on warm, humid afternoons, an umbrella, waterproof shoes, and maybe a fashionable poncho.

GETTING THERE

[Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport](#) Southwest serves the most cities, with Allegiant Airlines, Spirit and Frontier rounding out the discount carriers. You'll find service on American, United, Delta and JetBlue to all of their hubs, and international service from Panama City and Cancun. New Orleans is a terminus for [Amtrak](#) trains from New York, Chicago and Los Angeles.

GETTING AROUND

Uber and Lyft are a relatively new practice in New Orleans and the city is still working out the kinks. The Uber experience in NOLA isn't quite the black car chic you may be used to in London or LA, but it's still as dependable as anywhere else and is our preferred way of getting around (I mean, who doesn't love being picked up in a red F-150?) The drivers are friendly and know the city well, and since NOLA is manageable in size, the fares shouldn't break the bank, but expect lots of surge pricing during Mardi Gras, Jazz Fest, Southern Decadence, and the occasional downpour. The half-hour ride from the airport will run you \$20-\$30 and is a easy and efficient method of getting to your hotel.

[Limousine Livery](#) is our preferred company for luxury transportation, and the [Airport Shuttle](#) offers transportation between the airport and the city for \$24; \$44 round trip.

Given the walkable nature of so many of the neighborhoods here, we don't think renting a car is necessary. You'll see [pedicabs](#) around the French Quarter and beyond, small two-person carriages powered by a bike-pedaled driver, these little cabs are perfect when it's too far to walk but just not far enough to justify driving. Pedicabs are best for the late-night after-bar crowd when you're just going a few blocks. Prices start at \$5 for the first six blocks, and then \$1 per block after. You can call to have one dispatched. If you want to ride your own bike, the [American Bicycle Rental Company](#) offers rentals by the day or hour, and [Crescent City Bike Tours](#) offers rentals and three different tours of 2.5-3 hours each.

There was a time when a [horse and carriage](#) was the only way to get around New Orleans; now it's a scenic tourist activity, not transportation. The famous [New Orleans streetcars](#) are also historic, but offer affordable and scenic routes around the city. The St. Charles streetcar is the most famous — the oldest operating streetcar in America — and transports you into residential uptown, to Audubon Park. Visitors should familiarize themselves with St. Charles, Canal, and Riverfront stops. Just try to time it so you're not on the streetcar during rush hour. Locals use it to get around as well, and the cars get crowded while the crowds get cranky.

CRUISES

New Orleans is one of [the top ten cruise ports](#) in the U.S. with two Caribbean cruise lines and three river cruise lines sailing from the city.

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