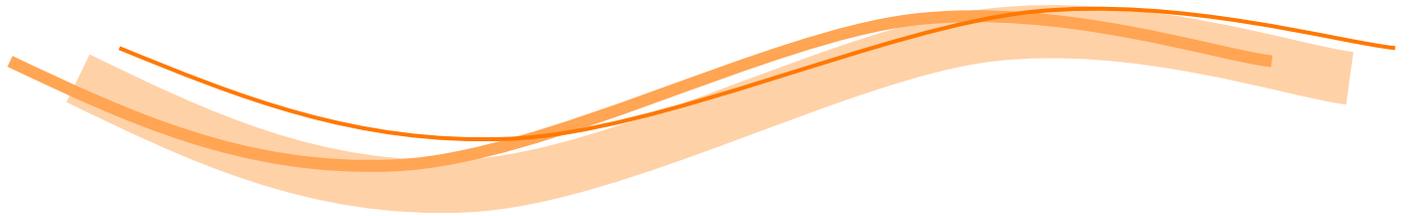




NEW ORLEANS with [HOTELS.COM](https://www.hotels.com)





NEW ORLEANS

Established by the French in 1718, and chosen for its strategic position along the Mississippi River, the city of New Orleans was named “La nouvelle Orleans” in honour of Philippe, Duc d'Orleans. The French Quarter is the oldest neighborhood in New Orleans.

In 1762, either because he lost a bet, or because the royal coffers were exhausted, Louis XV gave Louisiana to his Spanish cousin, King Charles III. During the Spanish rule two fires devastated New Orleans and most of the buildings you see nowadays in the French Quarter were actually constructed by the Spanish. Today the district is a National Historic Landmark.

Under French, Spanish and American flags, Creole society coalesced into a unique melting pot as Islanders, West Africans, slaves, free people of color and indentured servants poured into the city along with a mix of French and Spanish aristocrats, merchants, farmers, soldiers, freed prisoners and nuns. The Haitian Revolution of 1804 meant that for years to come thousands of Afro-Caribbean descent would come to call New Orleans home. The traditions of Voodoo arrived with these African peoples and still form part of the unique New Orleans culture today.

In combination the contributions of Africans, Caribbean peoples, the French, Spanish, Italians, Germans, Irish, Sicilians and more have created a society unlike any other.

The stunning architecture of New Orleans's famous French Quarter's is the dominant feature likely to first catch your eye. Balconies adorned with intricate ironwork and courtyards filled with lush greenery and fountains showcase the French Quarter's European roots. Many buildings carry ceramic plaques informing visitors of street names such as Calle de Borbon dating back to Spanish rule.

Life in the Quarter centres on New Orleans' most famous landmark, Jackson Square. Originally known as the Place d'Armes, the square was renamed to honor Andrew Jackson, the hero of the Battle of New Orleans that took place at the culmination of the war of 1812. The square is flanked by historic structures such as the St. Louis Cathedral and the Pontalba Apartments (the oldest apartment buildings in the U.S.).

Walk the beautiful gardens inside the square, make a wish as you toss a coin into the fountain and take that iconic New Orleans photograph. Every street in the French Quarter has something to offer from classic

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	<p>restaurants, music venues, boutique shopping to voodoo temples. And no trip to the Quarter is complete without a trip to the historic French Market for souvenirs.</p> <p>Many visitors choose to explore the French Quarter using the neighborhood's original mode of transportation - the mule-drawn carriage. But New Orleans is a very walkable city as the downtown area is only just over 3 km by 1.5 km in size</p> <p>New Orleans neighborhoods are where the city's culture and creativity come to life. From the historic French Quarter to the elegant Garden District to the music-filled Marigny - there is great food, music and more to be found all across the city.</p>
Location	New Orleans is located in southeastern Louisiana, straddling the Mississippi River. Lake Pontchartrain, part of which is included in the city limits, lies to the north and Lake Borgne lies to the east.
Geography	The city is located in the Mississippi River Delta on the east and west banks of the Mississippi River and south of Lake Pontchartrain. The area along the river is characterized by ridges and hollows. New Orleans was originally settled on the natural levees or high ground, along the Mississippi River. Only 51% of the city is above sea level.
Name	The city is named after the Duke of Orleans, who reigned as Regent for Louis XV from 1715 to 1723, as it was established by French colonists.
Population	The population of the city was 344,000 as of the 2010 U.S. Census. The New Orleans metropolitan area (New Orleans–Metairie–Kenner Metropolitan Statistical Area) had a population of 1.2 million and was the 46th largest in the United States.
Language	English
Currency	US Dollar (the Canadian Dollar stands at 92 cents US as at August 2014)
Tipping	Tipping is expected: 10% - 15% where appropriate
Government	Democracy
Documentation	Passports are required for Canadian citizens
Time zone	CST: Central Standard Time – so New Orleans is one hour behind Toronto and Montreal
Health	Fine medical facilities - but take travel insurance as medical treatment is the US can be very expensive.
Safety tips	Crime has been recognized as an ongoing problem for New Orleans, although the issue is outside the view of most visitors to the city: as in other cities in the United States of comparable size, the incidence of homicide and other violent crimes is highly concentrated in certain impoverished neighbourhoods which visitors are unlikely to see.

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CLIMATE	
General climate	The climate of New Orleans is humid subtropical with short, generally mild winters and hot, humid summers. The monthly daily average temperature ranges from 12 °C in January to 29 °C in July and August. The average precipitation is 1,590 mm annually; the summer months are the wettest, while October is the driest month
Today's weather	Sunny with chance of rain and 34C (as at August 16, 2014)
Best time to visit	Spring and fall are the most favoured months, but as a city break destination, almost any time works here! Hurricane season June to November is something to be aware of – Hurricane Katrina in 2005 had a major impact on the city.

GETTING AROUND	
Getting There	The metropolitan area is served by the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport, located in the suburb of Kenner. It's a 20 minute cab ride from downtown at an approx. cost of \$35. Air Canada has direct flights from Toronto and the major US airlines fly via their respective hubs.
City Streets	Here are just 5 "not to be missed" streets that you should stroll along and soak up the unique New Orleans vibe. <p>Bourbon Street - when the French engineer Adrien de Pauger laid out the streets of New Orleans in 1721, he chose one to carry the name of the French Royal Family ruling at the time - Rue Bourbon. Since then, Bourbon Street has become one of the most recognizable party destinations in the world.</p> <p>St Charles Avenue - stretching all the way from Downtown to Uptown, St. Charles is a great way to see many different sides of the city, all along one gorgeous avenue. A streetcar ride along St. Charles Avenue is a journey into the history of New Orleans. There have been streetcars there since 1835, and the current cars with overhead electricity date back to 1893. The line is a National Historic Mechanical Engineering Landmark.</p> <p>Canal Street - with two streetcar lines running down the middle of the street and three traffic lanes on either side, Canal has been cited as the widest "street" in America and acts as an anchor thoroughfare for the city.</p> <p>Frenchmen Street - if it's music that you crave, or just a peek into the New Orleans way-of-nightlife, then Frenchmen Street is a must see. Known as the "locals' version of Bourbon", Frenchmen is an entertainment district located within walking distance of the French</p>

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	<p>Quarter and offers an amazing variety of venue styles and music all week long ranging from traditional jazz to blues to reggae to rock.</p> <p>Magazine Street - best known as a destination for shopping, this popular street is also home to museums, art galleries, bars and restaurants. Starting at Canal Street in the Central Business District and extending all the way upriver through the Garden District and Uptown, Magazine Street takes you through some of New Orleans' most vibrant neighbourhoods peppered with delightfully diverse shopping.</p>
Distances	New Orleans is 2,000 kms south of Toronto.
Ferries	<p>New Orleans has had continuous ferry service since 1827, with three routes in current operation. The Canal Street Ferry (or Algiers Ferry) connects downtown New Orleans at the foot of Canal Street with the National Historic Landmark District of Algiers Point on the other side of the Mississippi River ("West Bank" in local parlance) and is popular with tourists and locals alike. This downtown ferry terminal also serves the Canal Street/Gretna Ferry, connecting Gretna, Louisiana. The Gretna Ferry serves pedestrians and bicyclists only. The Canal Street Ferry services passenger vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians, as does a third ferry downriver, connecting Chalmette, Louisiana and Lower Algiers. The Canal Street Ferry costs \$2 each way and you need exact change. It's well worth the ride for the views of the city alone and the chance to sail on the Mississippi River!</p>
Trains	<p>The city is served by rail via Amtrak. The New Orleans Union Passenger Terminal is the central rail depot, and is served by three trains: the Crescent, operating between New Orleans and New York City; the City of New Orleans, operating between New Orleans and Chicago; and the Sunset Limited, operating through New Orleans between Orlando and Los Angeles.</p>
Car Rental	All major car rental companies have outlets in the city and at the airport.
Buses	Public transportation in the city is operated by the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority. There are many bus routes connecting the city and suburban areas.
Passes	<p>New Orleans has four active streetcar lines:</p> <p>The St. Charles Streetcar Line is the oldest continuously operating streetcar line in America and each car is a historic landmark. It runs from Canal Street all the way to the other end of St. Charles Avenue, then turns right into South Carrollton Avenue to its terminal at Carrollton and Claiborne.</p> <p>The Riverfront Streetcar Line runs parallel to the river from Esplanade Street through the French Quarter to Canal Street to the Convention Center above Julia Street in the Arts District.</p> <p>The Canal Streetcar Line uses the Riverfront line tracks from the intersection of Canal Street and Poydras Street, down Canal Street,</p>

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	<p>then branches off and ends at the cemeteries at City Park Avenue, with a spur running from the intersection of Canal and Carrollton Avenue to the entrance of City Park at Esplanade, near the entrance to the New Orleans Museum of Art.</p> <p>The Loyola-UPT Streetcar Line, opened in 2013, runs along Loyola Avenue from New Orleans Union Passenger Terminal to Canal Street, then continues along Canal Street to the river, and on weekends on the Riverfront line tracks to French Market.</p>
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ACCOMMODATION	<p>Hotels.com will make it easy for you to find the perfect place in New Orleans. Here are just four examples of the huge choice available – from a small boutique 14 room hotel in a gorgeous historic Victorian mansion – to a contemporary 117 room hotel packed with local artistry – to an historic Beaux Arts hotel offering outstanding levels of service - to the 254 room Hyatt French Quarter with all the facilities you associate with the Hyatt name.</p> <p>Le Pavillon (Hotels.com rating: Outstanding 4.6 out of 5) This historic Beaux Arts hotel in the heart of downtown New Orleans is one kilometer from the Mercedes-Benz Superdome. The National World War II Museum, Harrah's Casino and the historic French Quarter are all within a short walking distance of the hotel.</p> <p>Le Pavillon Hotel is an architectural landmark originally constructed in 1907 and a member of the Historic Hotels of America and the Leading Hotels of the World. The hotel has a rooftop terrace and the lobby exudes opulence with Parisian woodwork, Italian-marble floors and 5 Czech crystal chandeliers. The hotel's fine-dining restaurant, The Crystal Room, features high ceilings, a fireplace and portraits of famous New Orleanians. Le Gallery Lounge displays an extremely rare Sienna-marble balustrade constructed of green onyx and bronze.</p> <p>The 10-story Le Pavillon Hotel offers 226 guestrooms decorated with antique-style furnishings that include armoires that conceal TVs. Tables are paired with Victorian-style chairs. All rooms have hand-painted ceilings, original artwork, ceiling fans and custom-woven draperies. Beds feature 250-thread count linens and custom bedspreads. Bathrooms have black-marble floors, walls and vanities. All accommodations include 46-inch flat-screen TVs, minibars and coffeemakers. Wireless and wired Internet access and in-room safes are complimentary.</p> <p>The hotel offers a complimentary 24-hour fitness centre containing an elliptical machine, 2 treadmills, free weights and yoga mats. Guests can also enjoy the outdoor swimming pool on the roof top patio.</p> <p>This is where I stayed on my recent trip and I can heartily recommend it – including the peanut butter and jelly sandwiches they serve each</p>
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evening! The place is also reputed to be haunted by a number of ghosts...

Cornstalk Hotel (Hotels.com rating: Excellent 4.5 out of 5)

The Cornstalk Hotel is in New Orleans' French Quarter and close to the Historic Voodoo Museum, Basin St. Station Visitor Information Cultural Center, and the French Market. Also nearby are Jackson Square and New Orleans Jazz Park.

The Cornstalk continues to be one of the hotels with the highest Guest Satisfaction records in New Orleans. A gorgeous French Quarter Victorian building that is on the National Register of Historic Places, it is equally as famous as a tourist attraction as it is a Hotel. The 'cornstalk' fence was erected in 1840 by the owner, recently married, who wanted to ease his bride's homesickness for her home state of Iowa.

The Cornstalk Hotel has attracted many famous guests that include; Bill & Hillary Clinton, and even the "King" himself...Elvis graced the halls of The Cornstalk.

The Cornstalk features 14 beautifully appointed historic and welcoming guest rooms with comfortable furnishings that will send you back in time. Rooms open to patios and are air-conditioned. Beds have Select Comfort mattresses and premium bedding. Guests can use the in-room complimentary wireless high-speed Internet access. 20-inch LCD TVs are equipped with cable channels. All accommodations provide phones along with free local calls. In addition, amenities available on request include refrigerators, hair dryers, and irons/ironing boards. Turndown service is offered nightly and housekeeping is available daily.

International House (Hotels.com rating: Excellent 4.3 out of 5)

The International House is located in New Orleans, two blocks from the French Quarter and Bourbon Street. This property stands within 1.5 kms of the Convention Center, the Riverwalk, Harrah's Casino and Jackson Square.

Alive with the energy of contemporary New Orleans, the lobby displays 23-foot high ceilings, ornate pilasters and intimate groupings of furniture handcrafted by local artisans. The lobby's handmade chandeliers, a candle-lit bar, and inviting mosaic-designed elevator cabs exude a welcoming and artistic environment. The International House is home to the mood-evoking Loa bar, named after the voodoo term for "divine spirit."

The 12-story International Hotel offers 117 individually configured, contemporary guestrooms. Original black-and-white photographs of New Orleans jazz greats bedeck the walls. Local touches include fresh Louisiana wildflowers, packaged bags of nuts, chocolates and jellybeans, and distressed armoires crafted by New Orleans artisans.

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	<p>Beds are draped with 800-thread-count linens. Bathrooms include glass-blown soap dishes, Aveda toiletries, bathrobes and slippers. Select rooms feature CD players stocked with local artists' CDs. Suites feature flat-panel televisions and room service.</p> <p>The hotel's locally inspired, artistic themes extend to the complimentary 24-hour fitness room, where art students' faces were used as moulds for glass, wall-mounted images seemingly supported by weight-training cables. The fitness room contains cardiovascular equipment, weight-training machines, exercise balls, a punching bag, free weights, and yoga available for in-room use. A complimentary light and healthy breakfast consisting of coffee, tea, granola, bananas, oranges, and organic green apples is also available to guests.</p> <p>Hyatt French Quarter (Hotels.com rating: Excellent 4.4 out of 5) The Hyatt French Quarter is adjacent to Bourbon Street in New Orleans. Jackson Square and Café du Monde are located about one km from this property.</p> <p>Recently renovated, the Hyatt French Quarter maintains links to its pre-Civil War origins. At one point in its history the building was a department store and the hotel retains alabaster pillars salvaged from the department store's original soda fountain, marble floors, exposed cypress beams in the courtyard and a famous clock, which still hangs from its perch on Canal Street.</p> <p>The hotel offers 254 guestrooms with 12-foot ceilings, oversized windows and an eclectic mix of antique-style furniture. Select accommodations feature columns and beams from the hotel's former days as a department store. Some rooms include balconies that overlook the French Quarter, tropical gardens, or Bourbon Street. Beds are draped with 300-thread count sheets and colourful throws. All rooms offer wireless and wired Internet access for a fee, an iPod docking station, and 32-inch HDTV.</p> <p>The hotel is home to one of the city's most popular restaurants, Ralph Brennan's Red Fish Grill, which serves signature dishes such as coconut-crusting shrimp. Recreational amenities include a health club and a courtyard-enclosed outdoor pool surrounded by terra cotta-colored stones and jar fountains.</p>
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LIFESTYLES	
Kids	<p>When it comes to kid-friendly fun, a trip to New Orleans is a lot like a choose-your-own-adventure story. Kids and families have plenty of options for experiencing the city, so whether you have a house full of aspiring artists, action-loving daredevils or curious future scientists, just choose an interest and get ready for a day of exploration and discovery.</p>

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Engineers in Training

From bellowing, steam-powered whistles to clanging trolley bells, you'll know you're set for an adventure once you step aboard one of New Orleans' historic methods of transportation. The Steamboat Natchez is New Orleans' only steamboat, and its elegant furnishings and antique accents transport passengers to a bygone era. Visit the steam engine room to see the riverboat's inner-workings, and listen to melodic tunes from the authentic steam-powered calliope, which even can be heard from the banks of the mighty Mississippi River. For a ride through the city, hop aboard one of New Orleans' vintage streetcars, outfitted with brass accents and mahogany wooden seats. The St. Charles line is the world's oldest continuously operating street railway and passes by notable areas such as Audubon Park and the Garden District.

Budding Scientist

The world is a fascinating place, and for inquisitive kids with an eye for science, there's plenty to see and do in New Orleans. For one stop to satisfy them all, the Audubon Nature Institute has everything a curious kid could want—from insects to dinosaurs to underwater creatures. Visit the Audubon Zoo to see exotic animals, play in a water park, go on a dinosaur adventure and ride a colourful carousel. At the Audubon Aquarium of the Americas, you can walk through an underwater reef tunnel, feel the fear at the tropical shark exhibit, watch penguins play and get a hands-on experience with hundreds of exotic birds. And don't forget the Audubon Insectarium for an up-close glimpse of creepy crawlers, butterflies and edible insects.

Aspiring Artist

Little artists can turn to the greats for inspiration when they visit the New Orleans Museum of Art. From Degas to Picasso, this cultural institution showcases more than 40,000 pieces, as well as a beautifully landscaped sculpture garden for little ones to frolic in. Check the education schedule for upcoming workshops and age-appropriate art classes offered at the museum.

Nature Lover

If gardens, flowers and the great outdoors sound exciting, take your kids to visit New Orleans City Park. This 1,300-acre green space has sprawling moss covered oak trees, lagoons, walking trails through Couturie Forest and plenty of opportunities to spot birds and wildlife. City Park also is home to the New Orleans Botanical Garden, a lush urban sanctuary filled with blooming flowers and exotic plants.

The Carousel Gardens Amusement Park is open with extended hours

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	<p>for the summer. Located in New Orleans City Park on Victory Drive, City Park invites your family out to enjoy the fun. With one of the oldest antique, wooden Carousels in the country, a Ferris Wheel, miniature Train, Musik Express and Bumper Cars, there is so much for the family to enjoy!</p> <p>Spend some time in Storyland, a Mother Goose themed playground for children inside beautiful New Orleans City Park. Visit the Three Little Pigs, Cinderella's Pumpkin, the Cheshire Cat and Snow White. Or try boating at Big Lake. City Park offers paddleboat and canoe rentals on beautiful Big Lake near the New Orleans Museum of Art on Lelong Drive. Or try hourly or day long bike rentals to enjoy the beautiful, scenic park with the largest collection of historic, live oaks in the United States.</p> <p>Prospective Chef For the aspiring chef, or anyone with a sweet tooth, Aunt Sally's Praline Tasting tour is not to be missed. This unique tour gives insight into the history and creation of the original praline as well as how it is made today. As part of the tour, everyone in the family can taste all of the flavors that Aunt Sally's has to offer and select their own six-pack to take home at the end!</p> <p>Adventurer For kids who like to stay active, New Orleans has a number of activities to keep the excitement level high. Take a tour specifically designed for kids with French Quartour Kids. This tour through the historic French Quarter is for kids ages 6-13 years to teach them what life was like in the New Orleans in 1830's. Or how about a game of laser tag at Adventure Quest Laser Tag? This massive facility features a 6,000-square-foot laser tag arena with a Mayan ruins theme, as well as arcade games, bumper cars and black-light miniature golf.</p>
<p>Teens</p>	<p>There is certainly a reason New Orleans has been coined "the most haunted city in America." It could have something to do with Anne Rice's vampires or possibly the disturbing tales of the horrors that occurred within the confines of the Lalaurie Mansion. From the historical buildings to the unique cemeteries, walking the streets of New Orleans at night can be a creepy experience. The best tours in New Orleans will help you discover all the terror that has befallen the city since the very beginning.</p> <p>Haunted History Tours This company claims to be the original business in guided tours around the haunted French Quarter. They have even published a bestselling book called "New Orleans Ghosts, Voodoo & Vampires" as well as a</p>

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	<p>documentary titled “Journey into Darkness.” Not only is this tour spectacularly theatrical, but it is also held during the day and night. Guests will have a chance to see the legendary Vieux Carre and sites of well-documented hauntings.</p> <p>Bloody Mary’s Tours This is a local favorite. From the French Quarter to the Garden District, the tour guide, a local historian, reveals the city’s haunted history. Bloody Mary offers insider perspective on local cases as the group explores cities of the dead, including St. Louis Cemetery No. 2, Holt Metarie Cemetery and St. Louis Cemetery No. 1. The French Quarter Tour of the Undead also offers a glimpse of an 1800’s vampire lair.</p> <p>Free Tours By Foot Free Tours By Foot offers a French Quarter tour under the cloak of darkness. Not only will guests hear spooky stories about the area, but they will also learn about the morgue, pharmacy museum, Pirate’s Alley, octoroon mistress, yellow fever and Hotel Montelone.</p> <p>French Quarter Phantoms This is where your ghost hunting dreams can come true. Held by the Paranormal Society of New Orleans, this tour is fun with a hint of serious history. The group explores destinations like the Andrew Jackson Hotel. If you aren’t quite in the mood to hunt for ghosts, you can just learn about them with the New Orleans Ghost Tour or New Orleans Vampire Tour. The stories are historically accurate and include local hauntings and lore. The small group sizes make for an intimate, conversational style tour.</p>
<p>Romance</p>	<p>New Orleans is a romantic city at heart. It is only natural to explore New Orleans with your significant other. Not only is the city a wonderful place to be with your loved one, but it is also a fabulous place to vacation in general. This is a city rich with history, mystique and romance. From the delicious Creole meals to romantic hotels like the Maison St. Charles Hotel & Suites, there is nothing quite like a romantic trip to New Orleans.</p> <p>Restaurants New Orleans is full of romantic dining spots. If you are Uptown near the Garden District, check out Barcelona Tapas. The Spanish tapas dishes are delicious and the atmosphere is casual and fun. If you are looking for fresh ingredients, check out La Crepe Nanou. Here, you will feast on crepes, grilled lamb or succulent roasted chicken. If you are a bit more adventurous, head over to the French Quarter for some fine dining. Napoleon House offers Italian dishes and flavourful</p>

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	<p>wines. Of course, Café du Monde is the best place to visit for breakfast – beignets and café au lait are a must-try!</p> <p>Take a Romantic Stroll The warm New Orleans evening is perfect for enjoying a walk and a sunset. Woldenberg Park is among the best places to catch a glimpse of the picturesque Mississippi. Take a walk along the river, right along Jackson Square. After that, why not enjoy a classic ride on a horse-drawn carriage? This is just one of many ways to enjoy the magical French quarter. Browsing the shops in the French Quarter is a great way to spend the evening as well. Explore the art galleries on Royal Street, enjoying the enveloping hanging gardens as you do. Stop in for a romantic palm reading or speak to locals who have plenty of stories to share.</p> <p>Picnic in the Park New Orleans is a fabulous place to picnic with the one you love. City Park offers a canopy of trees and a gorgeous sculpture garden. However, you can also try sitting out at the waterfront, enjoying the lake. After dining outside, you can rent a pedal boat or go for a sweet gondola ride. You might also consider hiking through Couturie Forest, which is also a part of City Park. Here, you might catch a glimpse of some beautiful wildlife. Jean Lafitte National Park is also a great place to look for wildlife – including alligators!</p> <p>Jazz It Up New Orleans is notorious for more than good food and majestic scenery. The city is also well-known for its eclectic jazz clubs. Frenchman Street in particular offers a bohemian vibe that attracts many to its Snug Harbor or Three Muses. Pop in for a dance and a drink with your significant other.</p>
<p>Zoomers</p>	<p>Here are some suggested experiences particularly suitable for Zoomers perhaps:</p> <p>St. Charles Ave Streetcar ride - Nestle into polished wooden seats and admire the sights on New Orleans most famous avenue.</p> <p>Garden District - Tour beautiful mansions, and relive the elegance of a simpler time in New Orleans.</p> <p>Jackson Square - View the work of local artisans, visit St. Louis Cathedral and make a wish in the park's famous fountain.</p> <p>Peruse Art Galleries on Julia Street - Discover authentic Louisiana art, both modern and historic in New Orleans arts district.</p> <p>Take a cooking class - Learn how to cook like a local with a New Orleans-style cooking class.</p> <p>Experience Sunrise at the river - Nothing is more peaceful than the</p>

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	reflecting colours of a New Orleans sunrise on the Mississippi after an unforgettable night in the French Quarter. Get an order of beignets to-go from Café du Monde and head to the water.
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UNIQUES	<p>New Orleans is famous for its cemetery tours. Most deceased in New Orleans are interred above ground because of the city's high water table and below sea-level elevation.</p> <p>There are 42 cemeteries in the metropolitan New Orleans area featuring family-built tombs capable of interring as many as a dozen bodies. The largest cemetery is Lake Lawn Metairie Cemetery and it is definitely worth a visit to view incredibly beautiful tombs set in lovely garden areas and topped with handsome sculpture. Hear stories of snubbed millionaires, mausoleums so large and complex they bankrupted the contractors creating them and the sad tale of the Woman with the Lantern.</p> <p>The St Louis Cemetery No 1 was the fourth cemetery in New Orleans and was laid out in two squares. A third square was set aside for the burial of African-American Catholics. Such notable African-Americans as "voodoo queen" Marie Laveau are buried here.</p>
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Surprising	<p>The history of New Orleans is intertwined with that of Voodoo, an ancient folk religion that traces its roots back to Africa. For hundreds of years, many residents of New Orleans have feared the dreaded Voodoo curse and its malevolent magic, which some believe can destroy their enemies and alter the course of their lives. Veiled in mysticism and superstition, Voodoo legends have influenced the city's culture and inspired songs, books and movies.</p> <p>The History of Voodoo in New Orleans</p> <p>When large numbers of Haitians migrated to the Crescent City from Cuba in the early 1800's, they brought their Voodoo religion with them. In addition to the belief in a supreme being, the religion has less powerful intercessor spirits known as loas. Each spirit serves a purpose and can enter a practitioner to ward off illness and misfortune. New Orleans folklore is also filled with tales of Voodoo practitioners transforming into animals or causing animal spirits to dwell in others. The Code Noir enabled slaves to freely gather in Armstrong Park, then known as Congo Square, to practice their religion. Saint Dede, a slave from Santo Domingo who bought her freedom while residing in New Orleans, was the city's first Voodoo Queen. She held her rituals near the St. Louis Cathedral.</p> <p>Another famous practitioner was Marie Laveau. Considered by many to be a Queen of Voodoo as well, Ms. Laveau incorporated "holy water" and candles into Voodoo rituals. Her pact with a parish priest and the</p>
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	<p>practice of encouraging customers to attend Mass formed a permanent bond between Voodoo and Catholicism in the city.</p> <p>Voodoo Tours of New Orleans</p> <p>Commonly regarded as a superstition or cult, Voodoo rites and traditions are still practiced in the city. Local shops sell candles, herbs, powders and oils related to the religious rituals as well as gris-gris amulets and Voodoo dolls that can be used during rituals to bring good luck, ward off evil and settle conflicts. Some of the best tours in New Orleans explore the mystical world of Voodoo. Guests can visit Voodoo altars, shops, Congo Square and the grave of Ms. Laveau in St. Louis Cemetery No. 1. Tour guides weave chilling tales about zombies and explain religious rituals with tales that blend history, facts, myths and folklore. Discover how Voodoo hides in plain sight, its connection with Mardi Gras and the creation of jazz. Learn about the fusion of Voodoo and Catholicism in New Orleans, present-day practices and the reason for jazz funerals. The Crescent City also has a Voodoo museum that displays artifacts, which chronicle the history of Voodoo in New Orleans.</p>
<p>History</p>	<p>The history of New Orleans reads like a fantastic novel. Here are a few of the highlights to help you better understand the historical dynamics that have shaped this utterly unique city.</p> <p>FRENCH FOUNDERS: 1718 In 1718, the Frenchmen Sieur de Bienville founded a strategic port city five feet below sea level, near the juncture of the Mississippi and the Gulf of Mexico. The new city, or ville, was named La nouvelle Orleans for Philippe, Duc d'Orleans, and centered around the Place d'Arms (later to be known as Jackson Square. The original city was confined to the area we now call the French Quarter or Vieux Carre (Old Square).</p> <p>SPANISH RULE: 1762-1801 In 1762, Louis XV gave Louisiana to his Spanish cousin, King Charles III. Spanish rule was relatively short - lasting until 1801 - but Spain left a lasting imprint on the city. In 1788, the city went up in flames, incinerating over 800 buildings. New Orleans was still recovering when a second fire in 1794 destroyed 200 structures. One of the only French structures to survive these fires is the Old Ursuline Convent (1100 Chartres). Completed in 1752, it is the oldest building in the Mississippi River Valley. This means that most of the buildings you see in the French Quarter were actually constructed by the Spanish.</p>

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LOUISIANA PURCHASE: 1803

In 1801 Louisiana ceded back to France, but only two years later Napoleon sold the territory to the United States in the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, effectively doubling the size of the U.S.A. At a cost of only \$15 million, it was considered one of the greatest real estate bargains in history.

THE AMERICAN SECTOR AND HAITIAN IMMIGRATION

After the Louisiana Purchase, Americans arrived en masse as did European immigrants from Germany, Ireland and Sicily.

Tension existed between the European Creoles concentrated in the French Quarter and the new American residents. As a result the Americans settled across Canal Street in what was known then as the American Sector, known today as The Central Business District. The two factions skirmished often, and the Canal Street median became neutral area where the two groups could come together to do business without invading the other's territory. Ever since, all city medians have been called neutral grounds.

And the Haitian Revolution of 1804 meant that for years to come thousands of Afro-Caribbean descent would come to call New Orleans home. These immigrants further diversified the population of New Orleans and made colorful contributions to the city's culture.

THE WAR OF 1812 AND THE BATTLE OF NEW ORLEANS

The war of 1812 began, and culminated in the Battle of New Orleans three years later. In January of 1815, 8,000 British troops were poised to attack and overtake the City of New Orleans. The American forces lead by General Andrew Jackson were grossly outnumbered. And due to the circumstances an unusual union formed - the notorious pirate Jean Lafitte and his men joined the American forces to defend New Orleans. On January 8, a polyglot band of 4,000 militia, frontiersmen, former Haitian slaves, and Lafitte's pirates defeated the British at the Chalmette battlefield, just a few kilometres east of the French Quarter. The battlefield remains a place worthy of a visit. Little did the combatants know, but the war was already over – the news just hadn't reached them from the peace talks in Europe!

THE NEW PARIS

By the mid-1800s, the city in the bend of the river became the fourth largest in the U.S. and one of the richest, dazzling visitors with chic Parisian couture, fabulous restaurants and sophisticated culture. Society centred around the French Opera House, where professional opera and theatre companies played to full houses. In fact, opera was performed in New Orleans seven years before the Louisiana Purchase,

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	<p>and more than 400 operas premiered in the Crescent City during the 19th century.</p> <p>A CULTURAL GUMBO Under French, Spanish and American flags, Creole society coalesced as Islanders, West Africans, slaves, free people of colour and indentured servants poured into the city along with a mix of French and Spanish aristocrats, merchants, farmers, soldiers, freed prisoners and nuns.</p> <p>New Orleans was, for its time, a permissive society, that resulted an intermingling of peoples unseen in other communities. And it is New Orleans' diverse heritage that is the driving force behind this unique and exotic city. The contributions of Africans, Caribbean peoples, the French, Spanish, Germans, Irish Sicilians and more created a society unlike any other.</p>
<p>Recommended Reading</p>	<p>Frommer's remain the best guides around. The New Orleans CVB also produce an excellent – and free – guide to the city.</p>
<p>1000 Places to See Before You Die</p>	<p>New Orleans has five entries – that's more than many entire countries!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The French Quarter The Garden District Mardi Gras The Music Scene The Restaurant Scene
<p>Must Sees</p>	<p>Frenchmen Street If it's music that you crave or just a peek into the New Orleans way of life, then Frenchmen Street is a must-see. Known as the "locals' version of Bourbon," Frenchmen is an entertainment district located within walking distance of the French Quarter. It offers an amazing variety of venue styles and music ranging from traditional jazz to blues to reggae to rock all week long. Many clubs along the strip don't even charge a cover. But in true New Orleans fashion, do give a cheer after a great trombone solo and throw a few bucks in the tip jar to show your appreciation.</p> <p>Frenchmen offers a lively street culture that means the fun spills out from the bars and music venues. Sketch artists and poets line the sidewalk and bluegrass and gypsy jazz pick-up bands nestle into stoops along the strip. Brass bands are commonly found on the corner of Chartres and Frenchmen, and before you know it, you'll be dancing in the streets like a local.</p> <p>Grab a bite or cocktails or both at one of the many restaurants and cafes that line the street. Traditional Creole, world fusion, Mexican, sushi and vegetarian options are all just steps away.</p> <p>A visit to the Spotted Cat Music Club (623 Frenchmen St.) will</p>

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	transport you back in time as traditional jazz takes centre stage at this cozy venue that is a favorite with locals. Regularly featured bands include the New Orleans Jazz Vipers, Cotton Mouth Kings and the New Orleans Moonshiners. Seating is limited and dancing is the preferred way to take in the show. In fact, the club hosts a free introductory swing dance lesson every Wednesday at 5pm, taught by the NOLA Jitterbugs. The Spotted Cat is the perfect place to begin an evening on Frenchmen due to their early evening shows.
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SPORTS ACTIVITIES	New Orleans' professional sports teams include the 2009 Super Bowl champion New Orleans Saints
Golf	Take advantage of New Orleans' warm climate and enjoy one of the many scenic golf courses, which are open year-round. From high-end public courses to serene, resort-owned grounds, golf enthusiasts will love the proximity and variety of these peaceful retreats. This golf-centric destination also is home to one of the oldest PGA Tour stops, the Zurich Classic of New Orleans, which has been played annually since 1958.
Fishing	"Gone catchin'" might not mean much to folks outside the South, but here it means a mellow day on the beautiful in- or off-shore waters, waiting for the redfish, flounder, largemouth bass and speckled trout to tug on your line.
Horse riding	Pretend the expression is "hair of the horse" and head for green pastures. Take a guided four kilometre ride around Audubon Park, gallop around a working ranch or saunter through Louisiana's lush countryside.
Hiking	The city is very walkable, the core being less than 4kms by 2kms. You can also try the start of the mighty Mississippi Trail!
Cycling	The city's flat landscape, simple street grid, and mild winters, facilitate bicycle ridership, helping to make New Orleans eighth among U.S. cities in its rate of bicycle and pedestrian transportation. The city's bicyclists benefit from being located at the start of the Mississippi River Trail, a 4,800 km bicycle path that stretches from the city's Audubon Park to Minnesota. The first 40 km of the path, through Destrehan, is paved with a smooth macadam surface. Bicyclists looking to cross the river have access to the city's ferries.

CULTURE	<p>THE NEW ORLEANS OPERA ASSOCIATION This opera association carries on a performing arts tradition dating back to 1796, when the first opera in North America was performed in New Orleans. www.neworleansopera.org</p> <p>THE LOUISIANA PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA The only musician-owned orchestra in North America is led by musical</p>
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	<p>director Carlos Miguel Prieto. www.lpomusic.com</p> <p>NEW ORLEANS BALLET ASSOCIATION The ballet association is the region's premiere presenting and service organization dedicated solely to the art of dance. NOBA's dynamic season features stellar performances from a variety of world-class dance companies. www.nobadance.com</p> <p>SOUTHERN REPERTORY THEATRE New Orleans' professional theatre, focuses on bold new-world and regional premiers by American playwrights. www.southernrep.com</p>
Arts	<p>New Orleans' Old World roots have created a strong foundation and long-standing appreciation for the arts. Early residents of the city often traveled back to Europe for musical instruction or training in the visual arts. And operatic performances took place in the city as early as 1796. Today the scene thrives via countless galleries, performance spaces and museums. Embodying the joie de vivre so prevalent in New Orleans – the unique culture and love of food, music and fun blends perfectly with a vibrant arts scene creating experiences you can't find anywhere else.</p> <p>And top of your cultural list in New Orleans has to be Jazz! They say that Jazz music was born in New Orleans in the 1890's when Buddy Bolden put his cornet to his lips and blew a few hot notes to a cool tune. Just that simple and Jazz was created - an American original and a world favorite. Jazz mixes African and Creole rhythms with African American and European styles. And the Irish, Germans and Italians contributed the presence of brass bands - Jazz could only have been created in the cultural melting pot that is New Orleans!</p>
Music	<p>New Orleans has always been a significant centre for music, showcasing its intertwined European, Latin American, and African cultures. New Orleans' unique musical heritage was born in its pre-American and early American days from a unique blending of European instruments with African rhythms. As the only North American city to allow slaves to gather in public and play their native music (largely in Congo Square, now located within Louis Armstrong Park), New Orleans gave birth to an indigenous music: jazz. Soon, brass bands formed, gaining popular attraction that still holds today. The city's music was later significantly influenced by Acadiana, home of Cajun and Zydeco music, and Delta blues.</p> <p>New Orleans' unique musical culture is further evident in its funerals. A spin on the tradition of military brass band funerals, traditional New Orleans funerals feature sad music (mostly dirges and hymns) on the way to the cemetery and happier music (hot jazz) on the way back.</p>

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	<p>Such traditional musical funerals still take place when a local musician, a member of a club, krewe, or benevolent society, or a noted dignitary has passed. Until the 1990s, most locals preferred to call these "funerals with music", but visitors to the city have long dubbed them "jazz funerals".</p> <p>Much later in its musical development, New Orleans was home to a distinctive brand of rhythm and blues that contributed greatly to the growth of rock and roll.</p>
<p>Film</p>	<p>New Orleans' nickname Hollywood South is a reference to the large number of films, big and small, shot in the city since 2002. Spend a few hours with The Original New Orleans Movie Tours and experience the city through its filmmaking legacy. Visit New Orleans' historic landmarks and other locations beloved by filmmakers in neighbourhoods across the city. You'll get the inside scoop on productions such as David Simon's "Treme" and "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button" starring Brad Pitt. Maybe you'll get to see a movie being filmed right before your very eyes!</p>
<p>Museums</p>	<p>THE HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION Located in the French Quarter, this collection is the best introduction to New Orleans history you can get. www.hnoc.org</p> <p>THE CABILDO This flagship building of The Louisiana State Museum is the site of the Louisiana Purchase. Today it houses exhibitions on the Purchase and on Louisiana history. http://www.crt.state.la.us/museum/</p> <p>MADAME JOHN'S LEGACY Located at 632 Dumain Street in the French Quarter, Madame John's is an excellent example of Louisiana Creole residential design at the end of the 18th century. The architectural complex consists of three buildings: the main house, kitchen with cooks quarters and two-story garconniere. It too, is part of The Louisiana State Museum. http://www.crt.state.la.us/museum/</p> <p>THE OLD U.S. MINT The Old U.S. Mint is the only building in America to have served as both a U.S. and Confederate Mint. In 1981, the Greek Revival-style National Historic Landmark opened to the public as a museum. http://www.crt.state.la.us/museum/</p> <p>THE NEW ORLEANS AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM OF ART, CULTURE AND HISTORY Located in the historic Faubourg Tremé, one of America's oldest black neighborhoods, the museum is comprised of 7 historic buildings and is</p>

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	<p>anchored by the lovely Tremé Villa. The museum features rotating exhibits as well as a fine collection of African artwork and crafts. The museum acts as a gateway the Tremé neighborhood and offers walking and bus tours of the neighbourhood. www.noaam.org</p> <p>THE NATIONAL WORLD WAR II MUSEUM This historical gem transports you to a time when victory hung in the balance. Guaranteed to move and educate, The National WWII Museum features a 4D cinematic experience, interactive exhibits, soaring aircraft, personal histories and more. www.Nationalww2museum.org</p> <p>THE NEW ORLEANS MUSEUM OF ART The premier art museum of the Gulf South is world-renowned for its photography, decorative glass collection and its collections of French, Asian, African and American art. www.noma.org</p> <p>THE OGDEN MUSEUM OF SOUTHERN ART The University of New Orleans museum is an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution and home to the largest and most comprehensive collection of Southern art in the world. www.ogdenmuseum.org</p>
<p>Festivals</p>	<p>It is said that New Orleans residents should have five good costumes ready to go at any given time. Celebration is at the core of the New Orleans' experience and each year a season of New Orleans festivals kicks off with the biggest of them all in Mardi Gras. While Mardi Gras undoubtedly has pagan, pre-Christian origins, the Catholic Church legitimized the festival as a brief celebration before the penitential season of Lent. The date of Mardi Gras is set to occur 46 days before Easter and can fall as early as February 3 or as late as March 9.</p> <p>The largest of the city's many music festivals is the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival. Commonly referred to simply as "Jazz Fest", it is one of the largest music festivals in the nation, featuring crowds of people from all over the world, coming to experience music, food, arts, and crafts. Despite the name, it features not only jazz but a large variety of music, including both native Louisiana music and international artists. Along with Jazz Fest, New Orleans' Voodoo Experience ("Voodoo Fest") and the Essence Music Festival are both large music festivals featuring local and international artists.</p> <p>When I was in New Orleans the Red Dress Run was taking place. This festival of hilarity attracts thousands of runners to a two mile race where</p>

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	the only rule appears to be that you have to be in a red dress...male or female. In fact it's just another excuse to have a good time in NO and it has aptly been described as "a drinking club with a running problem"!
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ATTRACTIONS	
Beaches	Jefferson Parish, home of the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport, the shopping capital of Louisiana, historic districts, coastal adventures in the Barataria Preserve of Jean Lafitte also features the beaches of Grand Isle. Further afield the Gulf Coast beaches of Alabama and the Florida Panhandle are an easy drive away from the city on a day trip.
Nature	Swamp Tours Venture into the untamed Louisiana bayous, where moss-covered cypress trees cascade into brackish waters, and floating lily pads spread across the water's murky surface. Bring a camera and get ready to capture images of marshland birds such as white egrets and great blue herons, as well as scaly predators like alligators and snakes. For a family-friendly tour through the marshlands, a swamp boat tour is your best bet. These pontoon boats meander through the bayous and ensure a relaxing trip with ample opportunities for sightseeing. On my tour, I came face-to-snout with a number of alligators. I travelled with Cajun Encounters who transported me from the city delights of New Orleans to one of Louisiana's untouched wetlands – Honey Island Swamp. Captain Sonny guided the boat expertly around the bayous and backwaters of the Pearl River to where the gators hung out in the muddy waters. We came to within inches of these prehistoric throwbacks – an awesome experience! www.CajunEncounters.com For adventurous explorers, spring for an airboat tour, which promises an exciting, high-speed ride through the wetlands. The tour guide will take you to places that are accessible only with an airboat, giving you an unrivaled glimpse of the Deep South's natural ecosystems, as well as up-close encounters with gators and other swamp critters.
Parks	For a bit of wholesome fun, there's no better bet. Have a picnic beneath live oak trees, rent a paddleboat or bicycle, smell the blooms in the botanical garden, stroll the five-acre sculpture garden and browse the New Orleans Museum of Art.
Gardens	The gardens at Longue Vue House and Gardens offer a tranquil escape from the hustle and bustle of the city. Pack a picnic and casually dine with family and friends on the magnificent Spanish Court; take a stroll through several "garden rooms" and view plant collections of camellia, the Louisiana iris, native plants and other horticultural delights; or bring the kids out for interactive and educational fun-in-the-sun as

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	they play, learn and grow in the Lucy C. Roussel Discovery Garden for children.
Historical Sites	<p>Explore Louisiana's plantations with the help of professional tour guides/historians who will guide you through these pre-war estates and their iconic architectural features such as intricate, wrought iron balconies, colourful facades and wraparound verandas. Or create your own tour by selecting a few you'd like to visit. You'll be able to choose from several spectacular properties that sweep you back in time with period furnishings, folk art and craft demonstrations, lush gardens and landscapes and more.</p> <p>Locally, River Road is an easy jaunt from New Orleans. Here you'll find several majestic plantations including Oak Alley, San Francisco, Laura, Destrehan, Houmas House and other plantations.</p> <p>Complete your visit with an overnight stay in a cozy B&B or historic guesthouse.</p>

OTHER ACTIVITIES	
Shopping	New Orleans shopping — from the French Quarter to Magazine Street – offers an array of retail choices. Options include The Shops at Canal Place, Saks Fifth Avenue, The Riverwalk, Jax Brewery, as well as hundreds of boutiques, art galleries and antique stores throughout the city. Tax-free shopping offers international visitors even more reasons to experience New Orleans.
Markets	<p>The French Market District encompasses six blocks on the riverside of the Lower French Quarter. The district includes over 20 unique retail shops, performance venues, restaurants, cafes, a flea market and a farmers market. In addition to the recreational shopping opportunities and ongoing free special events, the District boasts historical monuments such as Washington Artillery Park (across from Jackson Square) and New Place de France (home of the Joan of Arc statue), public art, scenic walkways, and convenient riverside parking. The RTA's red streetcars can also be taken to reach various sections of the District.</p> <p>The French Market hosts annual festivals and events like The Creole Tomato Festival, French Market Christmas Tree Lighting, and Boo Carré Halloween and Harvest Festival. The recently renovated farmers market is home to a diversity of food vendors serving prepared foods as well as fresh produce stands.</p>
Nightlife	The night never has to end in New Orleans since bars and clubs are not required to close. In fact, many say the city is at its best under the glow of a French Quarter street lamp. But to suggest the party starts and ends on Bourbon Street sells the rest of the city short. New Orleans has many distinct neighbourhoods that offer nightlife options from incredible

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	live music on Frenchmen Street to intimate cocktails just a neighbourhood away.
Casinos	Harrah's Casino is situated by the river at the foot of Canal Street.

CUISINE	With French, Creole, Cajun and other cuisines mingling together, the Big Easy is a melting pot of culinary influences and regional ingredients. Choose a tour where you can indulge in fare from classic New Orleans restaurants while learning the history behind the cuisine. Looking to actually get into the kitchen? Try a hands-on approach at one of the city's cooking schools where you can discover the secrets behind New Orleans' most famous dishes like barbecued shrimp, jambalaya, and corn-and-crab bisque.
Food	<p>Here are just a few of the culinary dishes for which New Orleans is famous:</p> <p>Gumbo - a culinary carnival created by a mix of West European, African, Caribbean and native Indian influences. Classic gumbo recipes call for okra simmered for hours in a stock made as rich as possible using a variety of meats, onions, celery and bell peppers. Served over rice, variations include seafood gumbo with shrimp, oysters and crabmeat, or chicken gumbo with andouille sausage.</p> <p>Andouille Sausage - a spiced, heavily smoked pork sausage is a key flavor in many New Orleans dishes.</p> <p>Jambalaya - a meal in itself, this classic New Orleans dish consists of sausage, vegetables and a variety of meats and/or seafood. The final touch is adding raw long-grain rice to absorb flavours from the stock. Variations can include chicken, turkey, shrimp, alligator meat and more!</p> <p>Shrimp Creole - as time-honoured as shrimping is to Louisiana, this culinary delight offers fresh peeled shrimp, chopped onion, green pepper, green onion and chopped tomato.</p> <p>Po-boy - there are many variations of the classic New Orleans sandwich. Po-boys usually are piled high with meat such as roast beef and topped in debris (a tasty version of gravy), turkey or smoked sausage. They can also be filled with fried seafood such as shrimp, catfish or oysters mixed with a specialty white sauce that is a more flavourful version of tartar sauce.</p> <p>Beignets - sometimes called a "French doughnut". These decadent treats were brought to Louisiana by the Acadians. A beignet is a square piece of dough that, upon being deep fried, forms a slightly doughy yet</p>

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	slightly crispy pillow. Most often, they are covered with powdered sugar, but savoury versions, with fillings such as crawfish or shrimp, are also served as appetizers.
Drink	In New Orleans, a great drink is just as important as a great meal (and great music for that matter). New Orleans knows how to mix a cocktail – for instance enjoy a “Hurricane” where it was invented at Pat O'Brien's pub. This sweet, juice-filled rum drink is the most famous cocktail on Bourbon Street. But beware: for most of us mere mortals, one is enough!
Restaurants	So many to choose from... Here are a few personal recommendations from those I enjoyed on my trip: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arnaud’s Jazz Bistro: a perfect combination of music, creole food and people-watching! When I was there, a talented jazz trio entertained diners and my table overlooked Bourbon Street for further entertainment! www.arnauds.com - Le Foret: a stylish restaurant for special occasions (I took my wife there for her birthday), the food here is excellent with local touches and warm service. Just off Canal Street. www.leforetneworleans.com - Marti’s: a new restaurant with a tapas twist in the north of the French Quarter with great local fish dishes. www.martisnola.com - Luke: a John Besh restaurant, this lovely place plays homage to the brasserie traditions of the city and is conveniently situated on Charles Street www.lukeneworleans.com - Café at the Square: fresh, bright and with friendly service, this is a good lunch or dinner spot in the business district www.cafeatthesquare.com - Café du Monde: Share a plate of fried dough heaven lavished in powdered sugar. The café is open 24-7 and is close to the river, at the foot of the French Quarter, just across from Jackson Square. www.cafedumonde.com

FOR MORE INFO	Website: http://www.neworleanscvb.com To request a Visitors Guide: http://www.neworleanscvb.com/visit/request-vg/
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CURRENT DEALS	http://www.neworleanscvb.com/visit/specials-coupons/
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CHRIS’ PERSONAL EXPERIENCES	I recorded my Travel Show in August 2014 on location in New Orleans. For my Travel Blog of the trip, check out: http://www.chrisrobinsontravelshow.ca/Blog.aspx For photos from my trip, see the Travel Show Pinterest site at http://www.pinterest.com/TravelShow/
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<p>Booking</p>	<p>It's easy to book It's easy! You can book online, by calling the multi-lingual Hotels.com reservation centre or on the go via the mobile app. The Hotels.com reservation centre is there for you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and once you create an account with Hotels.com you can also access your reservation and hotel details online. Many hotels allow you to make changes and cancellations online.</p>
<p>Guarantees</p>	<p>Book with Confidence In business for over 20 years and with one of the largest, most experienced hotel contracting teams in the industry, Hotels.com gets you the very best rates and frequent special offers. Choose the Canadian flag icon on Hotels.com for the Canadian site with prices displayed in Canadian dollars. Book with confidence as Hotels.com gives detailed information about each property and there are more than seven million verified guest reviews on the site from users who have actually stayed in the hotels. The website is super easy to use - and it will also compare hotels side by side, facility by facility, to help you make the right choice for you. Hotels.com does not charge you an additional fee for the reservation, or a change or cancellation fee - so only the stated hotel charges and terms and conditions apply to your booking. With Hotels.com you have peace of mind because of the price match guarantee. Avoid the hassle of long searches with little (if any) reward! If there is a lower rate publicly available (including on Hotels.com) for the same dates, hotel or vacation rental, room type, and cancellation policy, just let Hotels.com know before check-in. And if you are a Silver or Gold Member of the Welcome Rewards program, you also benefit from a Hassle-Free Travel Guarantee. It's simple. If you need to change your reservation for any reason, or if you have any problem with your stay, Hotels.com agents will help you make new travel plans right away. Hotels.com is an affiliate of Expedia</p>
<p>Deals</p>	<p>Get the Best Deals Sign up at Hotels.com to get regular online newsletters with exclusive offers and advance notice of upcoming sales.</p>

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	<p>Just in time for summer travel, right now Hotels.com has several great destination sales underway like a “deal of the day”, special summer sales, exclusive city sales, and bonus offers (book a stay and receive vouchers for excursions, tours and extras).</p> <p>Currently (August 2014) they have a wide range of special deals. Save up to 30% or more on weekend getaways, road trips, family vacations, and more.</p>																								
<p>Hotels.com in numbers as at August 2014</p>	<p>25 million Hotels.com mobile apps downloaded 11 million Customer reviews from guests staying in the hotels 10 million Welcome Rewards members 290,000 Bookable properties available on the site 35 Languages</p>																								
<p>Loyalty Program</p>	<p>Make your Hotel stay more rewarding Every booking adds up with the Hotels.com Welcome Rewards program. For every ten nights stayed you earn one free night at more than 85,000 participating hotels. There are no date restrictions and you accumulate nights across every hotel booking that you make from one night stays on business to longer vacations. It’s a simplified loyalty program that makes earning credits easy - and you are not tied to any one particular brand of hotel. Here's how it works:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sign up for a Hotels.com account and join Welcome Rewards™. Then make sure you sign in to your account every time you book. - Once you complete 10 nights staying at any qualifying Welcome Rewards™ hotel, you will automatically get a free night that you can use towards your next booking. - And the more you book and stay, the bigger the benefits like the Hassle-Free Travel Guarantee, Priority Customer Service and more. After 30 or more nights in a year you will enjoy Welcome Rewards™ Gold access to the most exclusive deals like special offers to top destinations and opportunities to win free vacations. <table border="1" data-bbox="483 1459 1485 1822"> <thead> <tr> <th style="background-color: #800000; color: white;">Welcome Rewards™ Nights/Year</th> <th style="background-color: #800000; color: white;">< 10</th> <th style="background-color: #800000; color: white;">10-29</th> <th style="background-color: #800000; color: white;">> 30</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>For every 10 nights get 1 free</td> <td>Yes</td> <td>Yes</td> <td>Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Priority Customer Service</td> <td></td> <td>Yes</td> <td>Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hassle-Free Travel Guarantee</td> <td></td> <td>Yes</td> <td>Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Early access to promotions and deals</td> <td></td> <td>Yes</td> <td>Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Exclusive deals and promos</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Yes</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Welcome Rewards™ Nights/Year	< 10	10-29	> 30	For every 10 nights get 1 free	Yes	Yes	Yes	Priority Customer Service		Yes	Yes	Hassle-Free Travel Guarantee		Yes	Yes	Early access to promotions and deals		Yes	Yes	Exclusive deals and promos			Yes
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<p>Mobile App</p>	<p>Book On The Go Hotels.com has a mobile website and a Hotels.com mobile booking app is available on web-enabled mobile devices and tablets - you can download the apps from the Hotels.com website and at mobile app stores. This means that you can choose to book on the go with access to thousands of last minute deals. You can also access your reservations even when offline and save hotels to your shortlist for viewing later. Plus the mobile GPS functionality allows the app to find the closest hotels with the best deals, based on the user's current location. No wonder it is the winner of "Best hotel booking app" by About.com users.</p>
<p>Cancellation Policies</p>	<p>Hotels.com does not charge fees for changes or cancellations. However, each hotel has its own change and cancellation policy which they are required to pass on. Hotels.com provide the policy for each hotel in several places throughout the site. While booking, the easiest way to find the cancellation policy is to click on your preferred hotel in the search results. Once the hotel description displays, scroll down to the room types available. Hover over "Free Cancellation" and the hotel cancellation policy will be displayed. You can also find the change and cancellation policy while making your reservation and in your email confirmation. In order to offer the most competitive rates, some bookings are non-refundable. If you have booked a non-refundable rate, then you will not be eligible for a refund in the event of cancellation. To cancel without incurring hotel penalties, you need to complete your hotel cancellation prior to the hotel's cancellation deadline, which is listed in your itinerary. Cancellations made after the deadline will be charged the hotel penalty to change or cancel, regardless of when you booked the reservation. If you need to make a change after you have booked a reservation, you can view your hotel's change and cancellation policy in your confirmation email or in your online reservation confirmation. You can find the policy at the bottom of the page.</p>
<p>Reviews</p>	<p>Qualified guest reviews Only guests who have booked with Hotels.com and completed their stay may post reviews to the site. People viewing guest content on Hotels.com therefore know they are reading relevant, qualified feedback that can help them make a more informed property choice. The site now features over 10 million reviews.</p>
<p>Travel Guides</p>	<p>The Hotels.com website has a rich library of Travel Guides to most of the destinations that they feature. Everything from the practicalities of getting around to a series of Top Ten's...just like the Travel Show website! http://www.hotels.com/articles</p>

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Timeline	Hotels.com Timeline
	<p>1991: Hotel Reservations Network (the predecessor to hotels.com) is founded by David Litman and Robert Deiner. Company focuses on offering discount prices for hotels in major U.S. cities via a toll-free phone service.</p> <p>1996 HRN begins offering booking services on the Internet.</p> <p>1999 HRN is acquired by USA Networks, Inc. (USAI).</p> <p>2001 HRN acquires TravelNow, an online travel service based in Springfield, Missouri. The company offers hotel, car, air and cruise booking services. HRN purchases TravelNow for its extensive affiliate network and cutting-edge affiliate technology platform.</p> <p>2002 USAI acquires a controlling interest in Expedia. HRN launches the hotels.com brand and website, and changes the company name to hotels.com. hotels.com announces call centre alliance with Continental Airlines, enabling Continental reservations agents to transfer customers requesting lodging to hotels.com call centres. The company offers accommodations at more than 5,300 properties.</p> <p>2003 USAI company is renamed InterActiveCorp. hotels.com offers its first gas rebate program, offering customers up to \$20 to fill their tank to help them reduce their travel expenses for spring travel. The company notes that gas prices “are at their highest levels, even topping \$2 in some states.” hotels.com announces call centre alliance with US Airways. The number of properties offered increases to 7,700.</p> <p>2004 hotels.com launches its new “experts” brand advertising campaign, featuring staff traveling to various properties to test the food, try out the beds, inspect the bathtub and more. The campaign drives home the point that hotels.com does the research and offers the details customers need to book the right property for their stay. hotels.com announces affiliate partnership with Amtrak, offering Amtrak customers the full hotels.com property selection. The number of properties offered increases to 15,000.</p> <p>2005 IAC/InterActiveCorp completes the spin-off of its travel businesses under the name Expedia, Inc. hotels.com becomes an operating company of Expedia, Inc.</p>

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hotels.com enhances its site with the industry's first side-by-side property comparison tool, as well as virtual tours, guest ratings, and expanded details on hotel amenities.

hotels.com receives its first qualified guest review. In writing about his experience at an Atlanta property, the hotels.com guest notes, "my only complaint was the high speed internet... they charge \$10/day and it's not very high speed... The bed was extremely comfortable."

hotels.com adds the tagline, "we know hotels inside and out" to reflect its industry leading expertise.

hotels.com announces affiliate partnership with Entertainment.com, offering the full hotels.com property selection on the entertainment.com site.

The Partner Services Group is formed, providing a centralized organization for hoteliers and other suppliers to work with hotels.com and other brands within the Expedia, Inc. family.

The number of properties offered increases to 20,000.

2006 hotels.com enhances group travel planning process by updating its site to enable a more streamlined booking experience for anyone needing more than nine rooms. The number of properties offered increases to 70,000.

2007 hotels.com institutes Flexible Booking, eliminating hotels.com fees for changes and cancellations.

hotels.com launches hotels.com en espanol, a new site designed for Spanish-speaking individuals in the United States. The site offers all the functionality of the hotels.com site, along with dedicated phone service in Spanish.

hotels.com launches its online rate calendar, enabling travelers to view and compare price ranges and actual rates for thousands of properties, up to six months in advance.

hotels.com continues to build its specialty lodging offerings, adding its 1,000th bed and breakfast to the site.

2008 hotels.com relaunches its brand with a new logo and new advertising focusing on the guest experience and hotels.com advocating for guests before, during and after the stay.

Conde Nast Traveler names hotels.com the best site for booking hotels in the United States and Europe.

hotels.com launches its iPhone application, enabling travelers to plan, research and book their travel using the popular Apple device.

hotels.com introduces welcome rewards, an industry-leading loyalty program offering unrivaled flexibility, ease of use and a simple way to earn free nights quickly: book 10 rooms, get one free.

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Budget Travel magazine names hotels.com an Extra Mile Award Winner for 2008 for the welcome rewards program.
hotels.com signs agreement with Air Canada, enabling Air Canada customers to access the full hotel property selection on aircanada.com, and earn Aeroplan miles for qualified bookings.
The number of properties offered increases to nearly 80,000.

2009 hotels.com surpasses one million reviews on the site. All reviews are authentic, posted by travelers who have actually booked and stayed with hotels.com.

The company launches its 24 hour sale on a weekly basis. Every Tuesday, hundreds of partner properties are deeply discounted to encourage more travelers to plan and book their stays during this limited time.

hotels.com introduces the first U.S. edition of the Hotel Price Index. The global report, now published in 11 countries, tracks prices paid by hotels.com guests in more than 12,500 destinations. According to the study, released in March, hotel prices around the world fell an average of 12 percent in the fourth quarter of 2008.

A new advertising campaign launches introducing SMART, a claymation character who demonstrates why hotels.com provides a smarter way for guests to book.

The number of properties offered exceeds 85,000.

2010 The SMART campaign earns the coveted bronze marketing communications award from The EFFIE Worldwide Organization in the Travel, Tourism and Destination category.

hotels.com launches the welcome rewards program in Canada.

The number of properties offered exceeds 130,000.

2011 hotels.com is named “Best Overall Customer Experience” according to a study by Keynote Competitive Research, which examines nine of the top online travel sites in the U.S. The company is also considered most “convenient” and “friendly” and named most “flexible & accommodating to customer requests” based on responses from 1,800 real users.

The company launches an interactive “Clay Yourself” contest and micro site, allowing users to create a digital clay avatar of themselves. The grand prize winner’s avatar is made into an actual clay figurine and stars along-side the hotels.com spokesperson, SMART, in an ad.

The number of properties offered reaches nearly 145,000.

2014 The number of hotels bookable on the site now exceeds 290,000 with more being added every day.

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<p>Hotel Price Index</p>	<p>The Hotels.com Hotel Price Index (HPI) is a regular survey of hotel prices in major city destinations across the world and is an invaluable tool for travelers http://www.hotel-price-index.com/2014/spring/</p>
<p>Connect with Hotels.com</p>	<p>Website: www.hotels.com</p> <p>Tel: 1-800-CA-Hotel (1-800-224-6835)</p> <p>Ask for more information: http://service.hotels.com/app/ask</p> <p>Welcome Rewards: https://ssl.hotels.com/profile/summary.html</p> <p>Mobile App: http://www.hotels.com/deals/mobile_ca</p> <p>Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/Hotels.comCA</p>
<p><u>Who is Hotels.com?</u></p>	<p>Hotels.com is one of the leading travel online booking websites. Offering you the choice of over 290,000 properties in more than 60 countries, from international hotel chains and all-inclusive resorts to local favorites and bed & breakfasts.</p> <p><u>How do you book?</u> It's easy! You can book online, by calling the multi-lingual Hotels.com reservation centre or on the go via the mobile app. The Hotels.com reservation centre is there for you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and once you create an account with Hotels.com you can also access your reservation and hotel details online. Many hotels allow you to make changes and cancellations online.</p> <p><u>Is it safe to book?</u> Hotels.com has been in business for over 20 years and with one of the largest, most experienced hotel contracting teams in the industry, Hotels.com gets you the very best rates and frequent special offers.</p> <p>Book with confidence as Hotels.com gives detailed information about each property and there are more than seven million verified guest reviews on the site from users who have actually stayed in the hotels. They also publish research information to guide you – such as the The Hotel Price Index – so you know what to expect to pay in each city.</p> <p>The website is super easy to use - and it will also compare hotels side by side, facility by facility, to help you make the right choice for you.</p>

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Hotels.com does not charge you an additional fee for the reservation, or a change or cancellation fee - so only the stated hotel charges and terms and conditions apply to your booking.

Will I get a good deal?

With Hotels.com you have peace of mind because of the price match guarantee. Avoid the hassle of long searches with little (if any) reward! If there is a lower rate publicly available (including on Hotels.com) for the same dates, hotel or vacation rental, room type, and cancellation policy, just let Hotels.com know before check-in.

How do I get the Best Deals?

Sign up at Hotels.com to get regular online newsletters with exclusive offers and advance notice of upcoming sales.

Right now Hotels.com has several great destination sales underway like a “deal of the day”, “Summer of Savings”, exclusive city sales, “casino sale” and bonus offers (book a stay and receive vouchers for excursions, tours and extras).

Any other reasons to book with Hotels.com?

Welcome Rewards - Every booking adds up - for every ten nights stayed you earn one free night at more than 85,000 participating hotels. There are no date restrictions and you accumulate nights across every hotel booking that you make from one night stays on business to longer vacations. It’s a simplified loyalty program that makes earning credits easy - and **you are not tied to any one particular brand of hotel.**

Can you Book On The Go?

Hotels.com has a mobile website and a Hotels.com mobile booking app is available on web-enabled mobile devices and tablets - you can download the apps from the Hotels.com website and at mobile app stores.

This means that you can choose to book on the go with access to 20,000 last minute deals. You can also access your reservations even when offline and save hotels to your shortlist for viewing later. **Plus the mobile GPS functionality allows the app to find the closest hotels with the best deals, based on the user’s current location.**

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