YEARLY CALENDAR
of events and festivals

FEB & MAR
Tennessee Williams/Literary Festival
St. Patrick’s Day Parades
Louisiana Crawfish Festival

MARDI GRAS
Future Mardi Gras Day dates:
• February 9, 2016
• February 28, 2017
• February 13, 2018
• March 5, 2019
Parades begin 10 days before Mardi Gras Day. Mardi Gras officially ends at midnight on Mardi Gras Day.

APRIL
French Quarter Festival
Zurich Classic
New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival

MAY
New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival
New Orleans Greek Festival
New Orleans Wine & Food Experience

JUNE
FestiGals
French Market Creole Tomato Festival
Louisiana Cajun-Zydeco Festival

JULY
Go 4th on the River
Essence Festival
Tales of the Cocktail

AUGUST
Satchmo Summerfest
White Linen Night
COOLinary Restaurant Month

OCTOBER
Crescent City Blues & BBQ Fest
New Orleans Film Festival
Art for Art’s Sake
Voodoo Art + Music Experience
Halloween in New Orleans

NOVEMBER
Bayou Classic
Oak Street Po-Boy Festival

DECEMBER
Christmas New Orleans Style
R+L Carriers New Orleans Bowl
Celebration in the Oaks
New Year’s Eve Countdown

WHAT’S ONLINE
Check out our website for loads of information on the best New Orleans has to offer: www.neworleanscvb.com

GET OUR E-NEWSLETTER
Stay up to date with the latest festivals and events, and get inspired with ideas of what to do around the city such as free attractions, cocktails to taste, and much more.

LET’S GET SOCIAL

NEW ORLEANS
CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

CONTACT US
2020 St. Charles Avenue
New Orleans, LA 70130
504.566.5011 | 800.672.6124
www.neworleanscvb.com

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Where do you go when it is time to get away? What if you knew of a place where the scenery isn’t all that changes? A place where centuries old architecture is the backdrop for a culture so invigorating, it’ll rouse your spirit. Welcome to the most fun and authentic city in America: New Orleans. We are a magical place with a unique culture and way of life. Explore our suggestions below to learn more about the city, and experience a trip of a lifetime!

1. **Step Back in Time.** Rest assured that history isn’t boring in New Orleans. Great fires, rapscallion characters, culture clashes: the city’s colorful past is evidenced right in front of you in New Orleans—if you just know where to look. That’s where a tour comes in handy. Knowledgeable guides will reveal the stories you’d never suspect existed beyond the curves of a wrought-iron fence, a bubbling courtyard fountain or a hard-to-pronounce street name.

2. **Eat Your Heart Out.** New Orleanians will find a way to bring food into any activity—and tours are no exception. One of our culinary tours will have you indulging in fare from classic New Orleans restaurants while learning the history behind the cuisine. Looking to actually get in
the kitchen? Try a hands-on approach at one of the city’s many cooking schools, where you will discover the secrets behind New Orleans’ most famous dishes like barbecued shrimp, jambalaya, and Gumbo. Hungry?

3. Sip and stroll. New Orleans has a long lineage of libations, from the Sazerac to the French 75. Learn about the local cocktail culture and heritage on a walking tour, where you’ll taste alcoholic creations from the French Quarter’s best watering holes. (Simply ask your bartender for a “go cup” and saunter along to your next destination.) Or go right to the source with a tour and tasting at Celebration Distillation, the oldest premium rum distillery in the United States.

4. Ride in Style. Ever wanted to ride with Aretha Franklin through one of America’s greatest music cities? Now’s your chance! Oh, did we mention Aretha Franklin is one of the beloved mules that draw the recognizable open-sided carriages throughout town? Still, you are bound to enjoy the clip-clopping of hooves while meandering down old cobblestone alleys as your driver narrates the sights of the French Quarter. Arrange for a pick-up at your hotel or head to the Decatur Street side of Jackson Square, where the carriages gather, and hop in!

5. Choose to Cruise. Step aboard the regal Creole Queen or the Steamboat Natchez for an enchanting paddle-wheel ride up the mighty Mississippi River. Choose from a romantic dinner and jazz cruise, or experience riverfront history with the Chalmette cruise, which disembarks at the site of the 1815 Battle of New Orleans and tours historical combat sites.
6. Spook Yourself Silly. Get the chills with a nighttime adventure, where you’ll hear about the ghost stories and explore French Quarter locations known for their paranormal activity. Trying to find a genuine haunted house? Take a night time ghost tour.

7. Walk Among the Dead. Take a guided tour through the historic cemeteries, where the city’s unique aboveground tombs, stone sarcophagi and massive headstones mark burial sites for New Orleans’ deceased. Visit their graves and learn about the supernatural craft of voodoo, including its West African origins, Catholic influences and modern-day practices.

8. Life on New Orleans’ Antebellum Plantations. This was not just about Southern belles covered in lace and the feather-hatted gentlemen who wooed them. Hear the stories of all the residents of the area’s sugarcane plantations, and peek into this important era in American history at several beautiful, 200+ -year-old mansions within a short drive of New Orleans. You’re sure to get a lesson on
the issues surrounding slavery and the complex cultural relations of the time. Once you’ve had a mint julep or two, spend some time with the guides dressed in the clothes of the mansion’s heyday. It won’t be hard to imagine yourself living the genteel style amid the massive homes’ Greek Revival architectural details, traipsing beneath canopies of centuries-old live oak trees and wandering around carefully manicured gardens. And you might even come into contact with a few of the plantations’ Civil War ghosts.

9. Take a snapshot. There is a photo everyone should have on his or her Facebook page: you grasping the tail and neck of a teeny-tiny alligator. Your mouth is open way too wide, and you’re shrieking with delight at the bravery you’ve displayed in corralling this miniature beast. To achieve this composition, book a tour of the swamplands located about an hour outside of New Orleans. Amid moss-laden cypress trees, thick marsh reeds and brackish watery avenues, the Louisiana bayou lurks with local critters: alligators, nutria, gar, turtles, fish and bird life. You can meet these Southern ladies and gentlemen of leisure on an exhilarating airboat ride, which will whisk you away at 35 to 50 miles per hour into the bayou’s intricate network of shadowy riverways. For those who prefer not to have their carefully quaffed hair blown askew, there are also gently covered tour boats with cushioned seats. Whichever you choose, be sure to wear your best outfit to see these ancient creatures up close.
If you end up at some boring chain restaurant, eating bland hamburgers while you are in New Orleans, we'll simply never forgive you. More importantly, you will never forgive yourself. Avoid such shame by familiarizing yourself with the dishes below—and be well prepared to savor forkfuls of the culture, tradition, flavor and recipe perfection that have earned New Orleans its culinary legacy.

Gumbo. A trip to New Orleans is not complete without a steamy helping of gumbo. Treat yourself to a culinary carnival created by a mix of West European, African, Caribbean and Native American Indian influences. Classic gumbo recipes call for okra simmered for hours in a rich stock, starting with a roux and the “trinity”—onions, bell peppers and celery. Served over rice, variations include seafood gumbo with shrimp, oysters and crabmeat, or chicken gumbo with andouille sausage.

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 is deep fried and forms a slightly crispy pillow and is covered with powdered sugar. There are other savory versions, with crawfish or shrimp fillings, also seen on numerous menus around New Orleans.

Andouille. This spiced, heavily smoked pork sausage is a key flavor in main dishes served all over the city. Originally brought to Louisiana by French colonists, today’s Cajun andouille is the best-known variety in the United States—and the spiciest. The sausage is seasoned with salt, cracked black pepper and garlic, and is smoked over pecan wood and sugarcane for up to eight hours.

Muffuletta. This famous sandwich was born in New Orleans and is filled with classic Italian flavors such as salami, ham, provolone and the piquant olive spread that gives it a distinctive taste. Restaurants all over the city have their own version, but for a taste of the original, visit Central Grocery on Decatur Street, which invented the sandwich in 1903.

Crawfish Etouffee. A local favorite, crawfish etouffee could be called gumbo’s spiced-up, savory cousin. Stemming from the French word for “smothered,” this
thicker Cajun creation employs hot spices, including cayenne pepper, a melange of onion and green pepper and a hint of garlic. With loads of fresh crawfish, this tantalizing Southern treat is typically enjoyed over rice.

**Shrimp Creole.** As time-honored as shrimping is in Louisiana, this coveted culinary delight showcases fresh peeled shrimp, chopped onions, green pepper, green onions and chopped tomato. Satisfy your Southern spice craving while keeping the calorie factor low—this tomato-based dish is said to be a healthy, light and flavorful creole dish.

**Oysters Rockefeller.** Oysters Rockefeller can be ordered all over the city, but the New Orleans institution Antoine’s holds the title of creator, serving the original dish since 1889. Though the exact recipe remains a secret, chefs describe the dish as a combination of oysters, capers, parsley and parmesan cheese. (Some versions also include a rich white sauce on top made with butter, flour, and milk.)

**Red Beans and Rice.** The Creole classic is a staple on menus across the city and many feature it as a Monday special—that’s because New Orleanians traditionally made the dish with leftover pork from Sunday dinner. Try a modern version at the Napoleon House and Gumbo Shop, which serves red beans and rice with smoked sausage.

**Bananas Foster.** This distinctive dessert, made with bananas, ice cream, dark rum, sugar and spices, was famously invented at Brennan’s Restaurant, right here in New Orleans. The flamed treat remains Brennan’s most popular item, requiring 35,000 pounds of bananas per year!

**Jambalaya.** A meal in itself, this simple yet flavorful classic dish consists of sausage, vegetables and a variety of seafood. The final touch—adding raw long-grain rice to absorb flavors from the stock—is what sets this one-pot wonder apart from similar ethnic dishes. Variations include chicken or shrimp jambalaya.
CAJUN MUSIC
The Instruments: Fiddles, accordion and triangle (traditional); guitars and keyboard (contemporary).
The Sound: Cajun music, emblematic of Louisiana, is rooted in the ballads of the French-speaking Acadians of Canada. With a basic rhythm and staccato-style notes, this dance music often lends itself to waltzes and two-steps and is commonly heard at festivals and dance halls.

BRASS BAND
The Instruments: Trumpet, trombone, drums, tuba and saxophone.
The Sound: A blend of classic, European-style military music infused with funky, African influence, brass can easily slip from traditional jazz standards to Michael Jackson in no time flat. You’re likely to see locals break into a style of dance with bouncy, intricate footwork called “buck jumpin’.”

DIXIELAND
The Instruments: Trumpet, trombone, clarinet, tuba, guitar or banjo, and drums.
The Sound: Considered the first form of jazz music, this genre combines ragtime and brass band marches with the free-spirited component of improvisation.
ZYDECO
The Instruments: Accordion, piano, rub board, guitar, bass guitar, fiddle and drums.
The Sound: This America-roots folksy genre originated in southwest Louisiana in the early 19th century. It was born as a blend of Cajun music and two other “new” American music styles, blues and rhythm & blues. In rural areas, the lyrics are still sung in Louisiana Cajun French.

RAG TIME
The Instruments: Piano, sometimes with the addition of brass instruments.
The Sound: With its jingly piano and springy rhythm, this lively music may evoke mental images of old-time saloons or Charlie Chaplin’s comedic antics, but it’s actually considered the first American musical genre.

GYPSY JAZZ
The Instruments: Violins, acoustic guitar, rhythm guitars and bass.
The Sound: This fast-paced music has a lilting feeling, which comes from a special form of rhythmic guitar strumming called “la pompe.”
Say you’re strolling through New Orleans, discussing the merits of beignets versus doughnuts with your companions, and to the left is a stunning example of traditional Southern building design. Rather than risk mistaking a classic American townhouse for a Creole townhouse, take a few notes from our architecture primer and demonstrate (or at least fake) your architectural expertise.

**CREOLE COTTAGE**
*Where you’ll see it:* French Quarter. You’ll recognize these one-and-a-half story homes by their pitched roofs and front stoops set along the sidewalk.
*What you should say:* “The design of this home is similar to the cottages built in France around the same time, in the mid-18th and 19th centuries.”

**CREOLE TOWNHOUSE**
*Where you’ll see it:* French Quarter. With shops below and homes above, these buildings are the perfect arrangement for the thriving urban center. Arched windows and a full third story distinguish them from American townhouses.
*What you should say:* “After the great fires of 1788 and 1974 torched most freestanding homes in this area, these brick and stuccoed-brick structures emerged with strong Spanish influences.”
DOUBLE GALLERY HOUSE
Where you’ll see it: Lower Garden District, Garden District, Uptown or Esplanade Ridge. Tell-tale elements include stacked and covered front porches, stately box columns and a front door off to one side.
What you should say: “Although they look similar to the townhouse styles, these homes, built in New Orleans’ early suburbs, are set back much farther from the sidewalk.”

SHOTGUN HOUSE
Where you’ll see it: Throughout the city. Plentiful and easy to spot, they range in style from Victorian to Craftsman. They are long and narrow single-story homes, usually no more than 12 feet wide, with lacy Victorian embellishment beneath the large front eave.
What you should say: “The term ‘shotgun’ originates from the hypothetical theory that if all the interior doors are open and aligned, you can shoot clear through the house even though there is no hallway.”

RAISED CENTER HALL COTTAGE
Where you’ll see it: Garden District, Uptown or Carrollton. Keep an eye out for the one-and-a-half-story homes with columned porches across the front. Inside they have one room on either side of a long center hallway.
What you should say: “You can see from the columned porch that these homes are similar to French Colonial plantations.”
NEIGHBORHOODS to see in new orleans

FRENCH QUARTER
The Gist of it: As the cultural epicenter and oldest neighborhood in New Orleans, the French Quarter is home to historic landmarks, colorful architecture, bustling bars and live music venues. Stroll through this vibrant district and experience all the hallmarks of Louisiana culture, from soulful jazz performances to mouthwatering Creole cuisine. And as an added bonus, with New Orleans' open-container law, you can always take your drink along with you as you explore.

GARDEN DISTRICT
The Gist of it: With its well-preserved collection of antebellum mansions, pristine gardens and Southern charm, the Garden District stands out as on one of the country’s loveliest residential areas, earning a place among Travel and Leisure’s list of America’s Most Beautiful Landmarks. Originally laid out in 1832, this became the neighborhood for nouveau riche Americans, who built homes on generous plots that allowed for the magnificent gardens for which the area is named.

FAUBOURG MARIGNY/BYWATER
The Gist of it: Nestled just downriver from the French Quarter are two of New Orleans’ most distinct and well-kept secrets: the Faubourg Marigny and Bywater neighborhoods, which combine old-time New Orleans culture with a hip, contemporary bohemianism.
DOWNTOWN / ARTS / WAREHOUSE DISTRICT
The Gist of it: Downtown and the Warehouse District were once only areas of commerce and industry, but throughout the years, these two areas have become bustling with arts and culture. Enjoy art galleries, museums, bars, and restaurants. Free concerts at Lafayette Square during the spring and fall and performances in small theaters and cabarets are available too.

TREMÉ
The Gist of it: Tremé celebrates its rich history and heritage with museums and landmarks dedicated to preserving one of the nation’s oldest African American neighborhoods. Guided tours are recommended to fully appreciate the history of the neighborhood, which was the setting for the popular “Tremé” HBO television series.

ST. CHARLES AVENUE
The Gist of it: Stretching all the way from Downtown to Uptown, St. Charles Avenue is a great way to see many different sides of the city, all along one gorgeous avenue. Take a ride on the streetcar to travel though the Garden District and past Audubon Park. Many visitors choose to exit at the entrance to Audubon Park. There you can hop on the Audubon Zoo shuttle and walk through the beautiful park with its magnificent oak trees on your way to the Zoo.
MAGAZINE STREET
The Gist of it: Best known as a destination for shopping, this six-mile street is also home to museums, art galleries and restaurants. And with its small-town, main street charm, it’s hard to believe that you are only minutes from Downtown. Dense retail begins at the intersection of Magazine and Felicity, known as “Lower Magazine,” picks up again at Washington Avenue and Magazine, and again at Jefferson Street and Magazine.

FRENCHMEN STREET
The Gist of it: Known as the locals’ version of Bourbon Street, Frenchmen Street is an entertainment district located within walking distance of the French Quarter, offering lively performances both inside and out of the clubs. Music fills the street as bluegrass and gypsy jazz pick-up bands nestle into stoops along the strip. Catch a performance by the brass bands commonly occupying the corner of Chartres and Frenchmen—just don’t forget to throw a couple bucks into the tip jar to show your appreciation!