

## Things to do in New Orleans

List provided by Lanie Dornier

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I will start by saying if you ask 10 people from New Orleans about the best things to do you will get at least 9 different answers, so go explore and do a little homework before you arrive to research all of the great tourist things to do. If you are a foody, the city is packed with great restaurants and several James Beard Award winners so be sure to check out the list online. If you like a great drink in a beautiful bar (or dive bar) we have plenty of that. And if you like beautiful architecture in an eclectic environment-we have that also. But here are a few of my favorites, and most are walkable from Canal Street (where the hotel is located).

1. **Café Du Monde for Beignets** (French doughnuts) and a café au Lait (Chicory coffee with warmed milk). It's the New Orleans thing to do and besides there is likely a local band playing outside of the open air restaurant. There is usually a line but it moves quickly. And if you want it to go there is a "to go" line on the other side of the restaurant from Decatur street, nearer the river. While there go for a stroll on the river—its only steps away.
2. **Explore the French Quarter.** And go beyond Bourbon Street. Bourbon Street is fine for day watching but nighttime is sketchy (my opinion). Royal Street is full of high end shopping, art galleries and great restaurants. There is even a place to get Beignets on Royal (Café Beignet). The Quarter is beautiful and amazing just to walk around and people watch. And yes, you can have open containers in New Orleans-its encouraged. Grab a drink and walk around. Be sure to check out Jackson Square where you will find lots of artists selling their art, some of it really good. Also take a walk from Jackson Square to the river—there is a spot at the top of the steps overlooking the square that is THE iconic picture of New Orleans overlooking Jackson Square with the St Louis Cathedral in the background. Also be sure to check out the [Pontalba Buildings](#) that are on either side of Jackson Square- The oldest continuously rented apartments in the United States. Built by Baroness Pontalba in the mid 1850's.
3. **Places to get a drink**—well that's about every block in the city, but some favorites and tourist spots. And if you do not drink alcohol you can get a mocktail and still enjoy the experience.
  - a. **Lafittes Blacksmith shop-** Get a drink at the oldest structure to be used as a bar—and it looks like it. Its downriver from Canal Street on Bourbon St.
  - b. **Carousel Bar at Hotel Monteleone-** The bar rotates like a (very slow) carousel. Drinks are expensive here but the experience is nice.
  - c. **Roosevelt Hotel-** Get a Sazerac at the Sazerac bar inside of the Roosevelt Hotel. It's a super fancy hotel so no shorts or flip flops allowed. No coat and tie needed either. Check out the art deco murals by 1930s artist Paul Ninas.
  - d. **Pat O'Briens-** Its in the Quarter, tourists love it, locals rarely go there. Home of the Hurricane drink.
  - e. **Columns-** A historic hotel and bar on St. Charles-right on the streetcar route
  - f. **Chandelier Bar-** Located on Canal past Harrahs near the river

- g. **Rooftop bar at NOPSI Hotel**- There is also a very nice Gin Bar and Restaurant
  - h. **Hot Tin**- Rooftop bar at Pontchartrain Hotel- This is on the Streetcar route up St. Charles Ave
  - i. And really most bars (and we have LOTS of them) will be fun. And best of all, you can take your drink to go, or order one to go.
4. [Preservation Hall](#)- If you like Jazz you are gonna LOVE Pres Hall. Traditional Jazz in a great atmosphere; small room where you sit right up next to the band. They have been doing Jazz here since 1961. You need to get tickets ahead of time for this and its worth it. Pat O'Briens is next door so you can get a drink while you wait in line for the doors to open, and there is always a line. A real New Orleans Jazz experience like no other. Get tickets early if this is of interest.
  5. **Live music** – One of the many great features of New Orleans is our worldclass live music. Music bubbles up from the streets here so you are likely to see and hear it everywhere. Enjoy. A couple of music suggestions.
    - a. Frenchman Street. There are several music establishments on Frenchman (Snug Harbor, The Spotted Cat, d.b.a, Blue Nile, and Café Negril, Three Muses, Bamboula's, The Maison). Walk down Frenchman and enjoy the music. Most of the live music is later in the evening and Frenchman street gets going about 9pm. There are some earlier shows but the real buzz is later in the evening.
    - b. Best live music on a Thursday night is Corey Henry and the Treme Funktet at Vaughans lounge in Bywater (about 2 miles from Canal street) \*my local hangout. Music does not start till 10:30 so rest up early. It's a great dive bar in a funky neighborhood that has lots to see and do, so go walk around Bywater or Marigny for a feel of the city outside of the Quarter. Both neighborhoods are walkable from the Quarter (1 mile).
    - c. Royal street on the weekends has live music on several corners, so if walking around the Quarter be sure to walk down Royal Street.
    - d. Here is a link to [New Orleans Live Music Calendar](#) that will show where live music is every night.
  6. [World War II museum](#)- I am not a war buff, at all, but this is amazing. If you are a WWII buff this is a must see.
  7. There are lots of family friendly things to do also, here are a few suggestions (and these



are great for all, not just families )

- a. Audubon Zoo, Aquarium and Insectarium. The Aquarium and Insectarium are located in the same place at the base of Canal street on the river. The Zoo is uptown, but you can get here by riding the street car and do a little walk to the Zoo from St. Charles Ave. And if you do take the street car, you get off at Tulane Univeristy. Audubon park is across the street, and the zoo is on the other side of the park—a ½ mile walk. A really beautiful walk.
- b. City Park (1300 acres and 50% larger than Central Park in New York)- There is a free walking scupture garden, a paid botanical garden, a kids train that takes you around the park, Storyland with climbing activities for

kids, a world class museum with a great (small) restaurant. It is also one of the best places to bird in the city (Couture Forrest), for those birders. There are “duck canoes” you can rent to ride around the large lake.

- c. Riding the streetcar- It goes up Canal, up St. Charles and Carrollton. It’s a slow ride but does allow one to see the city from a streetcar and you can get off at any point to walk around or grab a bite to eat along the path.
  - d. Bayou St. John- A large waterway that runs through the city near City Park. It has canoeing, kayaking, and bird watching.
  - e. Steamboat Cruise- There are two steamboats with tours on the river. [Natchez](#) and [Creole Queen](#)
  - f. [Lake Ponchartrain](#)- there are restaurants, boating and a great place to watch the sunset.
8. Food- The list is way too long for this one so here is a link to the [NY times](#) from October 2023—and it is spot on. There are a few others that are favorites but why confuse....the eating is really good here, so eat local and often.

And last but not least, we have a great bike share program with “[blue bikes](#)” a city supported bike rental. The bikes are pedal assist (electric) and are a GREAT way to see the city. You do need to download the app. There are also other bike shops that will rent a bike, so if that is your preference you can search for bike rentals (there are several). We have dedicated bike lanes around the city, here is a link to [Bike Easy](#) that has maps and information for biking around New Orleans.