



Erin Nicholas's Guide to New Orleans



This is all just MY opinion, of course! I fell in love with New Orleans on my very first trip back in 2014! I've been back several times since then and my husband has fallen in love as well! It's now become an annual trip for us!

There is so much to see and do in New Orleans! Certainly, there are lots of locals that can tell you how to see the "authentic" New Orleans, but something I love best about the city is that it feels pretty authentic all the time. New Orleans has a very "come as you are" vibe and they don't put on airs. What you see when you're there as a guest is pretty much the true New Orleans, I think. The food, the music, the history, the architecture, the culture is there, all around, in everything.

Yes, some of this list is very touristy! And yes, I'm sure some locals might disagree with what I consider amazing Pimm's cups or red beans and rice! Lol! But, I also think that getting a feel for "must sees" can be great from another guest to the city. After all, I came and fell in love with this city and I want you to too! I want you to have fun and to get a real feel for what makes New Orleans special from an 'outsiders' perspective.

So, here is my own list of things I love in New Orleans that I go back to, that make me smile, and that I think can give another newcomer a fun, memorable, there's-no-place-like-NOLA experience. I hope that's true and would love to hear about any place you ate, any tour, museum, show, or other experience you had when you were in New Orleans that made your trip amazing for us to try the next time we're there!

Laissez le bon temps rouler!

First and foremost, FOOD! Lol!

We spend most of our time in the French Quarter when we're in New Orleans because the place we always stay is right there and there's so much to do and so much great food! There are *lots* of other awesome restaurants and areas of town, of course, but most of my experience is in the Quarter.

Our Favorite Restaurant

The Original Pierre Maspero's: 440 Chartres St

<https://originalpierremasperos.com/>

This is the bar I based the interior of Trahan's Tavern and a lot of the menu on! When I picture Trahan's inside, this is what I picture!

Their chef has changed since the first time we were there, but their hurricanes are still my husband's favorites and their fried green tomatoes are amazing! This is a great place to try fried alligator if you've never had it! My husband highly recommends the Crescent City Sampler here so you get a taste of jambalaya, etouffee, gumbo, and red beans and rice (theirs is some of the best!) and I LOVE their seafood pot pie!



Our Favorite Bar

Bourbon O. 730 Bourbon St.

Yes, it's on Bourbon Street, but it's at the end and away from most of the craziness! Not FAR away, so you'll still get a great taste of Bourbon Street, but it's not quite as crazy :)

We love the drinks and the vibe here! They often have live music and a great drink menu with lots of New Orleans classics! This is the bar from My Best Friend's Mardi Gras Wedding! Where Tori and Josh met and where they both went back to that next year!

Hint: it also has some of the nicest restrooms! :) Kind of a nice tip when you're walking around the Quarter! Lol!

If you go in, let them know you're there because of a romance novel that was partially set there! I want the owner to start hearing this! lol!

Other restaurants we love:

Tableau: 616 St. Peter Street

This one is Trahan's on the outside and location! :) Inside it's a very pretty restaurant (with good food!) but THIS is where Trahan's is in the books and how the outside looks in my mind!

Muriel's Jackson Square: 801 Chartres Street

Muriel's is right on Jackson Square and is a gorgeous building with a rich history you have to read about before you go to fully appreciate! Fine dining and great food!

And yes, this is the one where Logan took Grace in Taking It Easy :)

<https://muriels.com/>

Napoleon House: 500 Chartres St.

Right across the street from Pierre Masperor's. Another amazing bar and restaurant in the Quarter. Love the ambiance! They have the *best* Pimm's Cups (my favorite New Orleans drink!)

Court of the Two Sisters: 613 Royal St.

<https://www.courtoftwosisters.com/>

Really love this place. Great food and very cool courtyard that you just have to see! Hard to describe it! Their fried boudin balls are *amazing*!

We also really love Royal Street for the art galleries! :)

Ruby Slipper Café: 200 Magazine St.

<https://www.therubyslippercafe.net/>

The BEST place for breakfast/ brunch! You'll probably have to wait to get in, but it's worth it! LOVE their Eggs Cochon (eggs benedict with pulled pork)

Coterie Restaurant & Oyster Bar: 135 Decatur St

Depending on where you're staying this may or may not be that easy/ close to get to, but really great food and service!

Daisy Duke's- French Quarter: 121 Chartres St

Great, classic food. Only open for breakfast and lunch, but great breakfasts, awesome grits, and great burgers when you're in the mood for something more basic :)

The Italian Barrel: 1240 Decatur Street

If you're in the mood for something a little nicer, pricier, and Italian, this place is great. Gorgeous restaurant and great food.

Best Pralines... and more!**Southern Candymakers 334 Decatur St.**

<https://southerncandymakers.com/>

You are going to see pralines for sale everywhere and yes, Aunt Sally's are *good*! BUT, we found the best pralines (in our opinion) (and in multiple flavors!!) at Southern Candymakers! The store looks like a little hole in the wall when you walk past, and you might even miss it, but you will be glad you went inside!! And get some tortues while you're there too! YUM!

Beignets!

Café Du Monde 800 Decatur Street

The place to go for beignets!! Yes, it's touristy and yes, at certain times of the day you'll have to wait in line! But that's part of the experience! It's truly something everyone should do, in my opinion, and their beignets really are worthy of the hype.

There are several locations but the one in the French Market... across from Jackson Square on Decatur Street is probably the most famous.

This is the one where Gabe and Addison had beignets in Going Down Easy!



Café Beignet 334 Royal St

Cafe Beignet on Royal Street is a close second to Cafe Du Monde though! I think you should probably try them both! ;)

Honestly, in New Orleans, you can basically close your eyes and point and find great food 😊 We've found some of our favorite places by "accident" by simply getting hungry and walking into someplace that looked good at the time! Lol!

TOURS!

It's probably impossible to do ALL of these things in one trip (unless you're there for a very long time!) BUT... here are some things I've loved and that I recommend!



Swamp Boat Tours—Of course!! :) Ultimate Swamp Adventures out of Westwego, LA is the one I've done several times. Love it! That is the one I based the Boys of the Bayou off of :) and highly recommend them but any swamp boat tour is a must!

<https://www.ultimateswamptour.com/>

Ghost Tours in the French Quarter—My husband and I really enjoyed this! We've done a couple. They are not just ghost stories, but also a great history tour of the Quarter and New Orleans in general.

<https://ghostcitytours.com/ghost-tours/new-orleans-ghost-tours/>

We enjoyed the Haunted Pub Crawl— every building in the French Quarter is haunted, I swear, and lots of them are now bars and restaurants. On this tour you get the ghost stories AND drinks! Lol!

We did the Ghost and Vampire Walking Tour as well, but didn't like it as much. <https://www.frenchquarterphantoms.com/ghost-and-vampire-tour>

But there are lots of different tours to choose from and in general they are a fun way to see the Quarter and get a history lesson!



Cemetery Tour— we did one during the day so it wasn't so spooky ;) and it was wonderful. We went to several cemeteries and it was really more like a walking history tour, honestly! Highly recommend. But the nighttime ones could be cool too if you're into the spookier stuff!

Garden District Walking Tour— first... take the streetcar up there! Just ride the Charles Streetcar and check out the city as you ride! I love the streetcar up St. Charles!! Then get off at stop #21 (3636 St Charles Ave) and have lunch at Superior Grill... .amazing Mexican Food! Then take a walking tour of the Garden District! Check out the beautiful old mansions and tree lined streets. You can take a tour or do a self-guided one! Then take the streetcar back to the Quarter, or order an Uber or Lyft! :)



OTHER STUFF we love!!

Honestly, if it's your first visit to the city, I would recommend one of the city bus tours on your first day. Yes, very touristy. But, what a great way to see the city and get an overview from a local tour guide! I think it's a great way to kick off your trip and then spend time going back to places that sounded or looked interesting! Also tour guides are awesome for recommendations or tips about things you've heard about or wondered about. Like the list below :)

Uber is a great way to get around the city without worrying about traffic!

WWII museum: Amazing. Just amazing. But be warned, this can take you a whole day. There is so much to see!



Audubon Zoo: I LOVE the zoo in New Orleans!! Absolutely go! And yes, this is the zoo in Nice and Easy that Caleb and Lexi took the kids to!

Mardi Gras World: Learn all about Mardi Gras, check out the floats and how they're made, and taste King Cake! I really thought this would be silly but I enjoyed it enough to take my husband back the next year! It's a quick tour and leaves plenty of time for other things that day but fun!



Frenchman's Street: If you love jazz, you have to go to Frenchman's Street! This is where all the live jazz clubs are and you'll probably even hear some out on the street corners! Be aware that it's a bit of a walk from any of the hotels on Canal or even in the Quarter and at night you might walk through areas that might not be the safest. Go in a group or, better yet, take an Uber. Yes, this is where James played jazz piano in *Getting Off Easy*!

Preservation Hall: Another place for jazz and worth the wait to get in. It's a historic live venue and you'll have to line up early! Ask your concierge for tips on how early to get there. We showed up about an hour early! It was worth it!



Jackson Square: I honestly could just sit on a bench with a coffee and people watch for hours. You'll see local artists, street performers, locals who work in the shops and restaurants, and tourists. It's such a fun mix of people and vibe.

Riverboat Jazz Dinner Cruise: This was fun too. A trip up and down the river on an old steamboat with dinner and live jazz :)

<https://www.steamboatnatchez.com/cruises/evening-jazz-cruise-with-dinner-option>