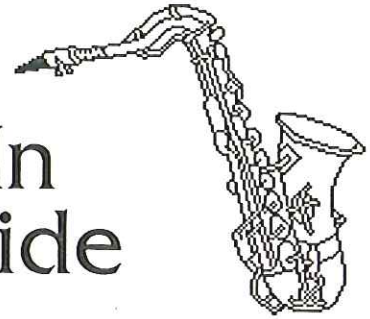


# HERB'S

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## Incredible Fun In New Orleans Guide



Since I have lived in New Orleans for only two years and since I am really and always will be a Californian, I am still a tourist in this state. That gives me the right to claim to be an expert. This newsletter is dedicated to the many friends, relatives, and associates who flatter me by traveling all the way to New Orleans just to visit me. So as a good host, I have prepared a list of my recommendations of things to do in New Orleans.

These recommendations come first hand. I have personally visited every establishment, taken every tour, and participated in every activity. These are my favorites and I enjoy them time and time again. (I hope that I run out of friends and relatives before I begin to hate being a tourist.)

### Sightseeing

**Audubon Zoo.** I studied Zoology for 4 years at the University of California. (Lot of good it did me.) Since I still feel guilty that my Dad spent all that money on teaching me about monkeys, rats, and rabbits, I visit zoos when I travel. The Audubon Zoo is among the top 5 in the country. The highlights for me were the White Tiger (the only other one in captivity is at the National Zoo in Washington), the Swamp Exhibit, and the new Reptile House. The Audubon Zoo is located in Audubon Park which faces Loyola's

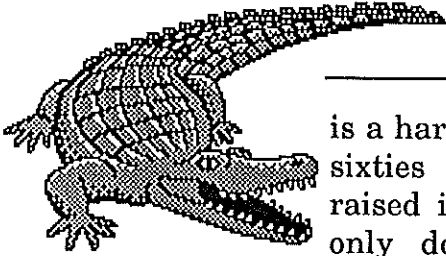


campus. A shuttle bus runs from the streetcar stop in front of Loyola to the Zoo entrance.

**St. Charles Streetcar.** You haven't experienced New Orleans until you have ridden the St. Charles Streetcar through Uptown and the Garden District on a hot and humid night. If it weren't for the modern cars, you would swear you were living a Tennessee Williams novel. Despite the nostalgia, a trip down St. Charles Avenue on the streetcar is a must, but much safer during the daylight. The route travels from Canal Street downtown through the Garden District, Uptown, the University District, then on to Carrollton. The street is lined with huge trees dripping with Spanish moss and magnificent antibellum and Victorian era homes. Along the way you can stop off for a side trip to the Audubon Zoo, a walk in Audubon Park, or lunch at the Camillia Grill.

**River Road Plantations.** If you have an entire day and a rental car, this is a great adventure. River Road runs alongside the Mississippi River from New Orleans to Baton Rouge. Located en route are plantation homes that Ret and Scarlet would write home about. Many are open for tours and some allow guests (bed and breakfast). The narrow road winds its way back and forth across the Mississippi via several small ferries which offer a unique perspective of rural Louisiana life.

**Swamp Tours.** Several companies offer swamp tours in the area. The trip I took was with Annie Miller in Houma, Louisiana. She

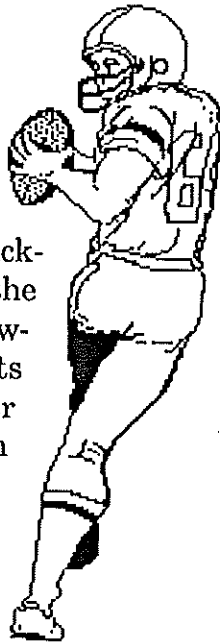


is a hardened woman in her sixties who was born and raised in the swamp. Not only does she know the swamp, but the gators as well. She calls by name to her boat and hand feeds them (watch your fingers). The best time to take a tour according to Annie is in the late afternoon.

**Beaches.** When I was planning to move to Louisiana, I looked at the Auto Club map and saw hundreds of miles of coastline. "There must be beaches," the California kid thought to himself. Well, I was wrong — not a single one! But, one hour away is twenty miles of public beaches stretching from Waveland, Mississippi (don't bother to bring your surfboard, there are no waves in Waveland) to Biloxi. The white-sand beaches are nice, but the water is clouded by the silt and ??? from the "mighty Mississipp." A few hours farther east are Gulf Shores, Alabama, Pensacola, and Destin, Florida. The Destin and Ft. Walton beaches have pure white sand and crystal clear blue water (still no waves).

## Sports

The most popular sport in New Orleans is sitting inside an air conditioned room, drinking Dixie long necks, sucking heads and pinching tails (the proper etiquette for eating crawfish), and watching the Saints lose on TV. (Check out the beer bellies and you'll know I'm right about this one.) The climate makes active participation in outdoor athletics uncomfortable to say the least.



**The Saints.** A trip to the Superdome to see the Saints is truly an experience. Every home

game is sold out to 70,000 Saints fanatics who thrive on this sport. This is good because all sold-out games are shown on TV so that the rest of us don't have to waste our money to see them lose! But to be there in person, at least once, is worth it. The fans are outrageous and the Superdome is an incredible structure. It's also real cool inside and there is lots of beer (the real reason the fans are there)!

**Fishing.** Louisiana is called the Sportsman's Paradise... not that they are good sports... but because there is (or was) lots of wildlife to plunder. Fishing here requires a boat, an experienced guide (or you may never return from the swamps), and a knowledge of local tackle. My advice is to forget the fishing here and take a fishing trip to the California Sierras, Colorado Rockies, or Alaska.

## Shopping

The most popular sport for women in Louisiana is not opening Dixie



long necks for their couch-potato husbands, but shopping! I only shop when I want to buy something and then I don't enjoy it because I can never find what I want. Consequently, I am probably not the expert on shopping in New Orleans. However, I have explored a little and here are my recommendations:

**The French Market.** This outdoor market located at Ursuline Street and the River (i.e. Mississippi) is filled with fresh fruits and vegetables, crafts, and other bargains.

**Royal Street.** A wide assortment of unique shops line Royal Street in the French Quarter. Tin soldiers, civil war memorabilia, antiques, art, glassware, china, clothing and more will drain your pocketbook.

**Jackson Brewery.** Home of Jax Beer, the

Jackson Brewery was converted into an indoor shopping mall (that means it's air conditioned). Nice shops fill the historic building at the base of Toulouse Street.

**Canal Place, River Walk, and New Orleans Center.** These three shopping centers in the downtown area are easily reached from Downtown and French Quarter hotels. The prices are high, but you can probably find anything or everything that you don't really need here.

**Julia Street.** The art community in New Orleans is centered around Julia Street in the Warehouse District. Several galleries display the works of local and international artists. This area of the city is undergoing renovation with many old warehouses being converted into luxury apartments and condominiums.

**Magazine Street.** Magazine runs parallel to St. Charles Avenue through Uptown. There are many used furniture and antique stores up and down the street. This is the place for antique bargains not Royal Street!

## Food

It has been said that New Orleanians don't eat to live, but live to eat. There are more fine restaurants here than anywhere in the country and the service is always excellent. (Competition is the reason. Locals eat out and eat out frequently. The restaurants must cater to more than tourists if they want to stay in business.)

Dinning out is an evening's activity. Dinner can easily take three hours or more and you will never be rushed. I have listed my favor-

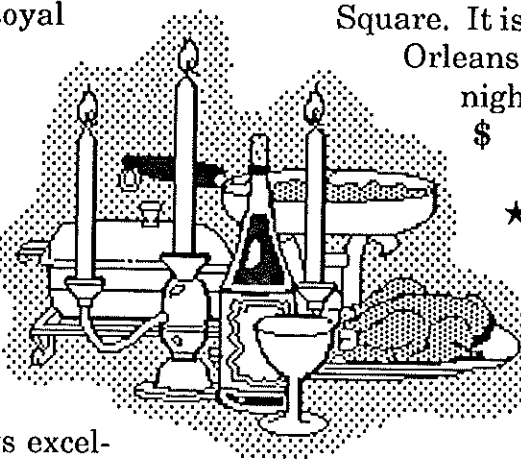
ites below. Most establishments require coats and ties and reservations. Bon Appétit!

[About my ratings: ★ is low; ★★★★★ is high; \$ is cheap; \$\$ is moderately priced; and \$\$\$ is expensive. Listings are alphabetical.]

★★★★ **Andrea's.** If you like Northern Italian food (it always reminds me of San Francisco), Andrea's is the place. It is rated five stars by many of the world's best food critics. If you tell Roberto, the Maître d' and co-owner, that I sent you, he will be sure to give you a good table and service. If you bring a beautiful woman, Andrea, the chef and other co-owner, will join you at your table and kiss the hand that is making him wealthy. \$\$\$

★★★ **Brigtsen's.** This excellent Uptown restaurant is owned by the understudy of Paul Prudhomme. Personally, I think he has surpassed his mentor. \$\$\$

★★ **Cafe Du Mond.** This French Quarter coffee house is located across from Jackson Square. It is famous for beignets, a New Orleans doughnut. Great for late night sobering up in the Quarter. \$



★★ **Camillia Grill.** This famous grill is right out of the 40's. No tables here, only counter service. They also serve no liquor. But the food is great... sandwiches, burgers, fries, onion rings, homemade pies, and chocolate freezes. This is one of the many late-night spots frequented by locals. No reservations, expect to wait anytime, day or night. Easily reached via the St. Charles Streetcar. \$

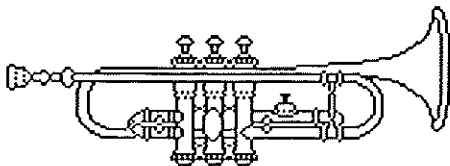
★★ **Central Grocery.** If you like sandwiches, Central Grocery is the home of the Muffuletta. It's hard to describe, but it is very Italian. Central Grocery has been operated by the same family for over 100 years and is located across from the French Market. Take-out only. \$

★ **The Columns Hotel.** For God's sake, don't eat here! But it is a great place to stop for a late-night drink on the verandah. The hotel is an antibellum plantation home and was used as the brothel in the film "Pretty Baby" (Brook Shields at her best). The Columns Hotel is located in the Garden District on St. Charles Ave. and can be reached via the streetcar. Wonderful Southern atmosphere (my memorable first night in New Orleans was spent here). \$

★★★★★ **Commander's Palace.** One of the most famous restaurants in New Orleans, Commander's has a big local following. The food is always good, service excellent, and rooms crowded. Be sure to have a reservation. \$\$\$

★★ **Copeland's.** Al Copeland, founder of Popeye's Chicken, has put together a traditional Cajun and Creole menu with a Yuppie bar atmosphere. Sounds awful, but the food is delicious, inexpensive, and consistent. Copeland's is also reached via the St. Charles Streetcar. Warning: the food is real spicy! \$\$

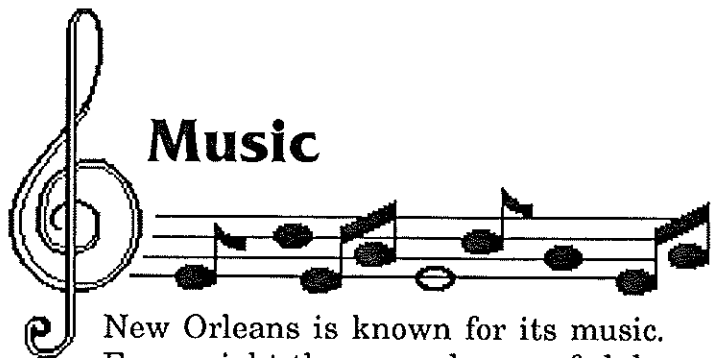
★★★ **El Patio.** Coming from California, I grew up with Mexican food. Besides beaches, Louisiana lacks good Mexican restaurants. El Patio is a family restaurant with original recipes. The dishes are a mixture of Cuban and Central American. El Patio is located on



Williams Blvd. in Kenner (near the airport). It is a great stop for dinner before your flight home. \$\$

★★★★ **Mr. B's.** There are lots of French Quarter restaurants but Mr. B's is one of my favorites. I love the duck! \$\$\$

★★★ **Upperline.** New Orleans is filled with neighborhood restaurants. None is better than Upperline in Uptown. The cuisine is what I call cajun-light. Eugene, the chef, has captured the local flavor but without the heavy sauces, cholesterol, and fats. They also serve Sterling Cabernet Blanc (only a Californian will appreciate that) but I recommend it highly. \$\$



New Orleans is known for its music. Every night there are dozens of clubs with live entertainment. My best suggestion is to pick up a copy of Friday's newspaper and check out the Lagniappe (yes, it is spelled correctly) section or pick up a free guide called The Gambit for current happenings. If you are not that organized, here are two places that you can't go wrong with:

**Tipitina's.** Located in Uptown at the corner of Napoleon and Tchoupitoulas (yes, it's spelled correctly too), Tipitina's has good local bands and performers nightly. Tipitina's was made famous in the movie Big Easy.

**Storyville.** Located on Decatur Street in the French Quarter, the New Storyville Jazz Club is usually alive with good Jazz any night of the week.