



Fodor's Choice New Orleans

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The city of New Orleans is riding higher these days on a several-year rebound spurred by a Saints Super Bowl victory, an HBO TV series, extensive recent and ongoing renovations of parks and streets, and, lately, honors and designations as a top travel destination in the U.S. The Morial Convention Center is conveniently located downtown in the Central Business District, bordering both the French Quarter and the Warehouse District. Below you'll find full coverage of sights and restaurants in the CBD and Warehouse District, and our Fodor's Choice picks—the best of the best—for what to see and where to eat across the rest of this compact city. As New Orleanians say, “*Laissez les bon temps roulez!*” or, “Let the good times roll!”

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

The Central Business District (CBD) lies between Canal Street and Poydras Avenue, with some spill-over into the Warehouse District's official territory. The neighborhood includes many iconic buildings, including the Louisiana Superdome, the World Trade Center, the convention center, and Harrah's Casino. There are also beautiful old government and office buildings, particularly around central Lafayette Square. Canal Street is the CBD's main artery and the official dividing line between the business district and the French Quarter; street names change from American to French as they cross Canal into the Quarter. Served by the Canal Street streetcar, the palm tree-lined grand avenue is regaining some of its former elegance, particularly as it nears the river.

Top Attractions

Harrah's New Orleans. The only land-based casino in the New Orleans area, Harrah's contains 115,000 square feet of gaming space divided into five areas, each with a New Orleans theme: Jazz Court, Court of Good Fortune, Smugglers Court, Mardi Gras Court, and Court of the Mansion. There are 100 table games, 2,100-plus slots, and live entertainment at Masquerade, which includes an ice bar, lounge, video tower, and dancing show. Check the website for seasonal productions, including music, theater, and comedy. Dining and libation choices include the extensive Harrah's buffet, Cafés on Canal food court, Besh Steak House, Bamboo Court, Gordon Biersch, Grand Isle, and Ruth's Chris Steak House. The last three are part of Harrah's newly developed

Fulton Street Mall, a pedestrian promenade that attracts casual strollers, club goers, and diners. ☒ 8 Canal St., CBD ☎ 504/533-6000 or 800/427-7247 🌐 www.harrahs.com ☺ Daily 24 hrs.

Louisiana Superdome. Home to the NFL's New Orleans Saints, the Louisiana Superdome has been the site of many Sugar Bowls, several NCAA Final Four basketball tournaments, the BCS championship game, a record nine Super Bowls (with the tenth happening in 2013), and the 1998 Republican National Convention. The Superdome was badly damaged during Katrina and in its aftermath, when it served as a refuge of last resort for evacuees. The stadium underwent extensive renovations in the year that followed and reopened for football in September 2006, when the Saints beat the Atlanta Falcons, setting a record for the largest television audience in ESPN history.

Built in 1975, the Superdome currently seats up to 71,000 people, has a 166,000-square-foot main arena, and a roof that covers almost 10 acres at a height of 27 stories. Since the Saints' Super Bowl victory in 2010, the Superdome has been covered in gold siding and given a brand-new outdoor festival space, appropriately named Champions Square. Enhancements to the “Dome” underway in 2011 promise 3,100 new seats, enhanced sight lines, additional premium club lounges, and expansions of the Plaza Concourse and Champions Square. The **New Orleans Arena**, behind the Superdome, is home to the NBA New Orleans Hornets, whose 2011 play-off season sparked the popular citywide “I'm In” campaign. The bronze statue on the Poydras Street

FODOR'S PARTNERSHIP WITH KIPP CENTRAL CITY CHARTER SCHOOL

"I live in New Orleans so I know everything about New Orleans," begins a letter by one of the more than 100 sixth graders at the KIPP Central City middle school who wrote to Fodor's. As a lesson in nonfiction writing, the students read the guidebook to their hometown and were asked to write a compelling letter detailing the changes they'd like to see in *Fodor's New Orleans 2012*. The result? Invaluable insights into the real New Orleans—several of which will be incorporated into the next guidebook edition—from the perspective of a 12-year-old inner-city student. You'll find their take on what to see, do, and eat throughout this PDF, so if you get the chance to tour the city, you might want to take a moment to see your surroundings from a student's eyes.

side of the Superdome is the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Across from it is a large abstract sculpture called the *Krewe of Poydras*, which evokes the frivolity and zany spirit of Mardi Gras. A couple of blocks down Poydras Street from the Superdome is the Bloch Cancer Survivors Monument, a block-long walkway of whimsical columns, figures, and a triumphal arch in the median of Loyola Avenue. ■ **TIP**→

The streets around the Superdome and Arena are usually busy during business hours, but at night and on weekends, except during a game, this area should not be explored alone. ✉ 1 Sugar Bowl Dr., CBD ☎ 504/587-3663 🌐 www.superdome.com.

Worth Noting

Gallier Hall. This Greek Revival building, modeled on the Erechtheum of Athens, was built in 1845 by architect James Gallier, Sr. It served as City Hall in the mid-20th century. Today it hosts special events and is the mayor's official perch during Mardi Gras parades; the kings and queens of many parades stop here to be toasted by the mayor and dignitaries. The grand rooms inside the hall are adorned with portraits and decorative details ordered by Gallier from Paris. ✉ 545 St. Charles Ave. (entrance on the side at 705 Lafayette St.), CBD ☎ 504/565-7457; 504/658-3623 for appointment ☺ Weekdays 9-5; visits by appointment.

John Minor Wisdom United States Court of Appeals Building. New York architect James Gamble Rogers was summoned to design this three-story granite structure as a post office and court building in 1909. By the 1960s the post office had moved to larger digs, and McDonough No. 35 High School found refuge here after Hurricane Betsy in 1965. Today the Renaissance Revival building houses the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in an elaborately paneled and ornamented series of courtrooms. The dark, cool corridors of the ground floor have an arcaded, bronzed ceiling. As you enter the building and pass security, turn left and continue around the corner to find the library, where you can pick up information on the courthouse. Outside, a repeating sculpture of four women stands atop each corner of the building: the four ladies represent History, Agriculture, Industry, and the Arts. The building is named for Judge John Minor Wisdom, the New Orleans native who was instrumental in dismantling the segregation laws of the South. Judge Wisdom received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1993. ✉ 600 Camp St., CBD ☎ 504/310-7777 ☺ Weekdays 8-5.

Riverwalk Marketplace. This three-block-long shopping center contains several retail chains, local specialty shops, and a food court. Plaques along the river walkway relate bits of the Mississippi River's history and folklore. Nearby at the Poydras Street streetcar stop is a 200-foot-long mural in tropical motifs that was a gift to the city by Mexican artist Julio Quintanilla. Various cruise ships leave from the Julia Street Wharf slightly upriver; you can often see them from the front of the Riverwalk. ✉ 1 Poydras St., CBD



Kim Weisheit, fodor.com member

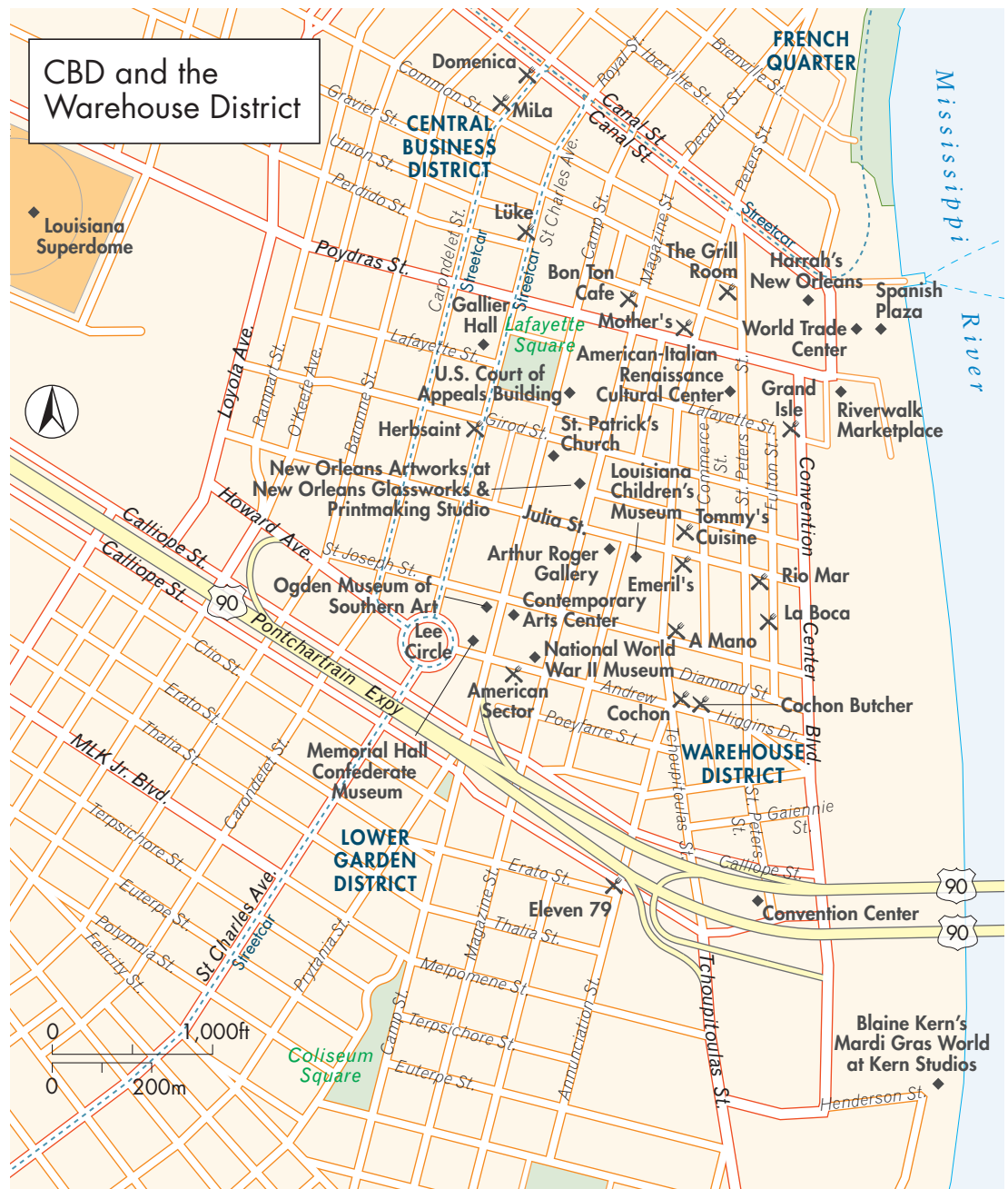
☎ 504/522-1555 🌐 www.riverwalkmarketplace.com ☺ Mon.-Sat. 10-7, Sun. noon-6.

Southern Food and Beverage Museum. This small museum in the Riverwalk Marketplace educates visitors on a variety of subjects surrounding two favorite southern pastimes: eating and drinking. Learn about the fishers and farmers, the chefs and inventors, and the widely varying cultures that contribute to the region's tradition of cocktails and cuisine. There's a tasting room with chef demonstrations, and a food gift shop. ☎ 504/569-0405 🌐 www.southernfood.org 🍷 \$10.

Spanish Plaza. For a terrific view of the river and a place to relax, go behind the **World Trade Center** at 2 Canal Street to Spanish Plaza, a large, sunken space with beautiful inlaid tiles and a fountain. The plaza was a gift from Spain in the mid-1970s; you can hear occasional live music here and purchase tickets for riverboat cruises in the offices that face the river.

WAREHOUSE DISTRICT

Bordered by the river, St. Charles Avenue, Poydras Street, and Interstate 10, and filled with former factories and cotton warehouses, the Warehouse District began its renaissance when the city hosted the World's Fair here in 1984. Structures that housed the international pavilions during the fair now make up the New Orleans Morial Convention Center and a number of hotels, restaurants, bars, and music clubs.



New Orleanians will always remain sensitive to the plight of the many citizens who suffered in the days following Katrina as they sought refuge in and around the battered Convention Center. However, in the year following the hurricane, the center underwent an extensive renovation, and the surrounding neighborhood has since regained its former charm and vibrancy. Today the Warehouse District is one of the trendiest residential and arts-and-nightlife areas of the city, dotted with modern renovations of historic buildings, upscale loft residences, excellent eateries, and a number of bars and music venues. Julia Street, the main thoroughfare, is headquarters for the city's gallery district.

Top Attractions



Blaine Kern's Mardi Gras World at Kern Studios.

Mardi Gras World's entertainment complex moved from Algiers Point to join Blaine Kern Studios and private-event venues on the east bank of New Orleans in early 2009. The massive 400,000-square-foot complex, just upriver from the New Orleans Convention Center, has an enhanced guided tour through a maze of video presentations, decorative sculptures, and favorite Mardi Gras megafloats from Bacchus, Rex, and Endymion. Visitors enter through a plantation alley that is part Cajun swamp-shack village, part antebellum Disneyworld (Kern was a friend of, and inspired by, Walt Disney). If you're not here for the real thing, Mardi Gras World is a fun (and family-friendly) backstage

look at the history and artistry of Carnival. Admission includes king cake and coffee. ☎ 1380 Port of New Orleans Pl., Warehouse District ☎ 504/361-7821 or 800/362-8213 🌐 www.mardigrasworld.com 🎫 \$19.95 🕒 Daily 9:30-4:30.

Contemporary Arts Center. Founded in 1976, the center endured long, hard years of economic and cultural stagnation to finally emerge as a keystone of the now vibrant Warehouse District arts scene. Today the center hosts cutting-edge exhibits, featuring both local artists and the work of national and international talent. Two theaters present jazz productions, films, dance, plays, lectures, and experimental and conventional concerts, including a New Orleans music series. Hours vary during concerts, performances, lectures, and special events; call or check the website for details. ☎ 900 Camp St., Warehouse District ☎ 504/528-3805, 504/528-3800 theater box office 🌐 www.cacno.org 🎫 Gallery admission \$5 🕒 Thurs.-Sun. 11-4.

Julia Street. Contemporary-art dealers have adopted this strip in the Warehouse District as their own. The street is lined with galleries, specialty shops, and modern apartment buildings, with the greatest concentration stretching from South Peters Street to Carrollton Avenue. The first Saturday evening of each month gallery owners throw open their doors to show off new exhibits, to the accompaniment of wine, music, and general merriment. White Linen Night in August and Art for Art's Sake in October also find the galleries welcoming visitors with artist receptions and live entertainment.

Louisiana Children's Museum. An invaluable resource for anyone traveling with kids, the top-notch Children's Museum is 30,000 square feet of hands-on educational fun. Favorite activities include a mini grocery store (with both carts and registers manned by visitors), a role-play café, Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood, and a giant bubble station. A welcoming environment is provided for children with disabilities: most exhibits are accessible, and some are aimed directly at increasing children's awareness of disabilities. Art teachers lead classes daily; theatrical storytelling takes place every morning and afternoon; and special activities such as jewelry making, face painting, and scavenger hunts are held each week. An indoor playground is reserved for toddlers ages three and under, and Toddler Time activities are held at 10 am on Tuesday and Thursday. There's also a mini fitness center with a kid-size stationary bicycle and rock-climbing wall. ☎ 420 Julia St., Warehouse District ☎ 504/523-1357 🌐 www.lcm.org 🎫 \$8 🕒 Tues.-Sat. 9:30-4:30, Sun. noon-4:30 (last ticket sold at 4).



National World War II Museum. The brainchild of historian and writer Dr. Stephen Ambrose, who taught for many years at the University of New Orleans until his death in 2002, this moving, well-executed examination of World War II covers far more ground than simply D-Day. The seminal moments are re-created through propaganda

posters and radio clips from the period; biographical sketches of the military personnel involved; a number of short documentary films (including one bitterly sad film on the Holocaust, featuring interviews with survivors); and collections of weapons, personal items, and other artifacts from the war. The exhibits occupy a series of galleries spread through the interior of a huge warehouse space. One spotlighted exhibit, in a large, open portion of the warehouse near the entrance, is a replica of a Higgins boat troop landing craft, which were manufactured in New Orleans. In 2009 the museum unveiled the first phase of its \$300 million expansion, which will eventually quadruple the size of the facility. Across the street from the current facility, there's a 4-D theater experience produced by Tom Hanks, and a canteen featuring the food of celebrity chef John Besh. This is the first of six new pavilions proposed for the expanded campus, due to be completed in 2015. The next, slated to open in Fall 2012, is a large exhibition space entitled the United States Freedom Pavilion: Land, Sea and Air, honoring all service branches and including a restored Boeing B-17 and an immersive submarine experience. Check the website for updates on the expansion and a list of current movies, lectures, events, and programs. ☎ 945 Magazine St. (main entrance on Andrew Higgins Dr.), Warehouse District ☎ 504/528-1944 🌐 www.nationalww2museum.org 🎫 \$18 🕒 Daily 9-5.



Ogden Museum of Southern Art. Art by Southerners, art made in the South, art about the South, artistic explorations of Southern themes, and more fill this Smithsonian affiliate's elegant building. More than 1,200 works collected by local developer Roger Ogden since the 1960s are on permanent display, along with pieces from Washington, D.C., and 15 Southern states spanning the 18th to 21st centuries, plus featured exhibits. A central stair hall filters natural light through the series of galleries, and a rooftop patio affords lovely views of the surrounding area. The gift shop sells logo items, crafts by local artists, and books and movies celebrating the South. Thursday nights (6-8 pm) come alive with "Ogden After Hours," featuring live music, artist interviews, refreshments, children's activities, and special gallery exhibits. ☎ 925 Camp St., Warehouse District ☎ 504/539-9600 🌐 www.ogdenmuseum.org 🎫 \$10 🕒 Wed.-Mon. 11-5, additional hours Thurs. 6-8 pm.

Worth Noting

American-Italian Renaissance Cultural Center. Italian-New Orleans customs are explained and artifacts exhibited in this small, thoughtful museum. ☎ 537 S. Peters St., Warehouse District ☎ 504/522-7294 🌐 www.americanitalianculturalcenter.com 🎫 \$8 🕒 Tues.-Fri. 10-4.

Piazza d'Italia. This modern plaza by architect Charles Moore is a secret oasis tucked in the center of the block bounded by Tchoupitoulas, South Peters, Lafayette, and Poydras streets, behind the American-Italian Renaissance Cultural Center. Its

KIPP PICKS: LOUISIANA SUPERDOME

By far the most frequent appeal from the students was for inclusion of the Superdome and their favorite sports team. “I like your book about New Orleans. I would have like it more if you would have put the Saints in there.” Of the Superdome, one child writes, “One, the Saints play football games there. Two, they have special concerts and events there. Three, it was the only place to go during Hurricane Katrina. Please add the Superdome and Arena in your next book.” And another student chimes in, “The Superdome is ecstatic, fun-delicious, and fun-tertaining. Once you leave the Superdome, you will feel like you were just in heaven.”



kattenorandi, fodor.com member

postmodern style is reminiscent of a Roman ruin. The park is a gathering place for the large Italian community on St. Joseph's Day and Columbus Day.

Arthur Roger Gallery. A highlight of Julia Street, this gallery showcases quality contemporary art, primarily by local and regional artists. There is also a satellite gallery at 730 Tchoupitoulas in the Renaissance Arts Hotel, two blocks from the main gallery. ☎ 432 Julia St., Warehouse District ☎ 504/522-1999 🌐 www.arthurrogergallery.com ☺ Tues.–Sat. 10–5.

Lee Circle. At the northern edge of the Warehouse District, a bronze statue of Civil War general Robert E. Lee stands high above the city on a white marble column in a traffic circle. Lee faces due north, and New Orleanians say it's because you can never turn your back on a Yankee. Developments over the past several years have greatly improved the area immediately around the circle, which now includes the Contemporary Arts Center, the Ogden Museum of Southern Art, the National World War II Museum, and the Memorial Hall Confederate Museum.

Memorial Hall Confederate Museum. This ponderous stone building at Lee Circle was built in 1891 to house a collection of artifacts from the Civil War, making it the oldest museum in the state. The displays include uniforms, flags, and soldiers' personal effects, which thankfully survived Hurricane Katrina intact. ☎ 929 Camp St., Warehouse District ☎ 504/523-4522 🌐 www.confederatemuseum.com 💰 \$7 ☺ Wed.–Sat. 10–4.

New Orleans Artworks at New Orleans Glassworks and Printmaking Studio. New Orleans Artworks gives daily free demonstrations of all stages of glassmaking and design, printmaking, and silver alchemy in a 25,000-square-foot warehouse space. Special “make

and take” exhibits for youngsters are popular, as are a variety of group and individual classes. E-mail or call in advance to make reservations for hands-on instruction in the studio. A shop and gallery up front displays and sells the finished products. ☎ 727 Magazine St., Warehouse District ☎ 504/529-7279 🌐 www.neworleansglassworks.com ☺ Daily 10–5.

St. Patrick's Church. A stark exterior gives way to a far more ornate, richly painted interior in this first church built in the American sector of New Orleans, intended to provide the city's Irish Catholics with a place of worship as distinguished as the French St. Louis Cathedral. The vaulted interior was completed in 1838 by local architect James Gallier, who moved here from Ireland in 1834 to work on the cathedral. High stained-glass windows and huge murals, painted in 1841, enrich the interior. ☎ 724 Camp St., Warehouse District ☎ 504/525-4413.

OTHER FODOR'S CHOICE SIGHTS AROUND NEW ORLEANS

Audubon Park. Formerly the plantation of Etienne de Boré, the father of the granulated-sugar industry in Louisiana, Audubon Park is a large, lush stretch of green between St. Charles Avenue and Magazine Street, continuing across Magazine Street to the river. Designed by John Charles Olmsted, nephew of Frederick Law Olmsted (who laid out New York City's Central Park), it contains the world-class Audubon Zoo; a 1.7-mile track for running, walking, and biking; picnic and play areas; Audubon Park Golf Course; tennis courts; a swimming pool; horse stables; and a river view. Calm lagoons wind through the park, harboring egrets, catfish, and other indigenous species. The park and zoo were

KIPP PICKS: NATIONAL WORLD WAR II MUSEUM

One student writes, "It gives you flash backs of history, you explore all ships and machines, and you will learn about the past...the staff describes to you in a way you can picture and understand history. The tour guide will guide you through all the ships and weapons every army man used to stop Adolph Hitler and the Nazis. You should tell the people...that you will be amazed when you leave because your mind will be amazed on how much you learned."

named for the famous ornithologist and painter John James Audubon, who spent many years working in and around New Orleans. ☒ 6500 Magazine St., Uptown ☎ 504/581-4629 🌐 www.auduboninstitute.org 📄 Free.

Audubon Zoo. Consistently ranked since its redevelopment as one of the top zoos in the nation, the Audubon Zoo presents a wide array of animals in exhibits that mimic their natural habitats. The Louisiana Swamp exhibit re-creates the natural habitat of alligators, including rare albinos, nutria (large swamp rodents), and catfish; alligator-feeding time is always well attended. New attractions include the Cool Zoo, a splash park featuring a 28-foot white alligator slide, bubbling fountains, and splash zones set aside for toddlers and young children. Other highlights include the Reptile Encounter, Komodo Dragon exhibit, and white Bengal tigers. Several new attractions are available for additional ticket fees: a zoo-train tour that departs every 30 minutes from the swamp exhibit; the children's zoo area; and the Safari Simulator Ride. ☒ 6500 Magazine St., Uptown ☎ 504/581-4629 🌐 www.auduboninstitute.org 📄 \$14.95; combination ticket for zoo, Aquarium of the Americas, and Audubon Insectarium \$39.95 ☺ Tues.–Sun. 10–5.

City Park. This 150-year-old, 1,500-acre expanse of moss-draped oaks and gentle lagoons is just 2 miles from the French Quarter but feels like it could be another world. With the largest mature grove of live oaks in the nation, including trees that are more than 600 years old, the park offers a natural majesty that's difficult to find in urban areas. The art-deco benches, fountains, bridges, and ironwork are remnants of a 1930s Works Progress Administration refurbishment and add to the dreamy scenery that visitors enjoy boating and biking through. Top activities include the New Orleans Museum of Art, the Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden, the New Orleans Botanical Garden, the kid-friendly Carousel Gardens Amusement Park, a golf course, equestrian stable, sports facilities, and picnic areas. Check the park's website for seasonal activities and special events, such as music festivals, the annual Easter egg hunt, and the eye-popping wonderland that is Celebration in the Oaks, around Christmas. Most of the park's offerings are free, but several venues inside City Park charge separate admission fees. ☒ Bordered by City Park Ave., Robert E. Lee Blvd., Marconi Dr., and Bayou St. John Mid-City ☎ 504/482-4888 🌐 www.neworleanscitypark.com.

Carousel Gardens. This small amusement park, open seasonally, has a New Orleans treasure as its centerpiece—a carousel from 1906 that is on the National Register of Historic Places. The rides here are geared to younger children, not thrill seekers. But adults and kids alike enjoy the miniature train that takes passengers on a gentle sightseeing tour through City Park. ☒ Victory Ave., City Park, Bayou St. John ☎ 504/482-4888 🌐 www.neworleanscitypark.com 📄 \$3 ☺ Weekends 11–6; Celebration in the Oaks



Ellen_Scheer_Feld, fodoros.com member

Nov. 27–29 and Dec. 4–30, Sun.–Thurs. 6–10, Fri. and Sat. 6–11.

New Orleans Botanical Garden. The botanical garden has recovered dramatically from the Katrina floodwaters that damaged much of its indigenous flora. Though the garden is still recovering, you can stroll its peaceful 10 acres and enjoy statuary by noted local artist Enrique Alferez. In the Train Garden, open on weekends, baguette-size cars roll through a miniature New Orleans village. ☒ Victory Ave., City Park, Bayou St. John ☎ 504/483-9386 🌐 www.neworleanscitypark.com 📄 \$6 ☺ Tues.–Sun. 10–4:30.

Storyland. This whimsical park adjacent to the botanical garden has been a favorite romping ground for generations of New Orleans kids. The park's figures and settings are culled from children's literature and created by some of the city's premiere Mardi Gras float builders. With more than 25 larger-than-life storybook exhibits, kids can climb aboard Captain Hook's pirate ship, visit the old lady who lived in a shoe, and journey with Pinocchio into the mouth of a whale. ☒ Victory Ave., City Park, Mid-City ☎ 504/482-9432 📄 \$3 ☺ Tues.–Fri. 10–3, weekends 11–6.

Frenchmen Street. The street's three-block stretch closest to the French Quarter is where it's at, complete with cafés, boutiques, and music clubs. While the true magic happens come nightfall—when live music spills from the doorways of clubs and crowds gather for street performers (now rivaling Bourbon Street)—it is still a great daytime destination. ☒ Frenchmen St. between Decatur and Dauphine Sts., Faubourg Marigny.

Jackson Square. Surrounded by historic buildings and plenty of the city's atmospheric street life, the heart of the French Quarter is this beautifully landscaped park. Among the notable buildings around the square are St. Louis Cathedral and Faulkner House. Two Spanish colonial-style buildings, the Cabildo and the Presbytère, flank the cathedral. The handsome rows of brick apartments on each side of the square are the Pontalba Buildings. The park is landscaped in a sun pattern, with walkways set like rays streaming out from the center, a popular



garden design in the royal court of King Louis XIV, the Sun King. In the daytime, dozens of artists hang their paintings on the park fence and set up outdoor studios where they work on canvases or offer to draw portraits of passersby. These artists are easy to engage in conversation and are knowledgeable about many aspects of the Quarter and New Orleans. You can also be entertained by musicians, mimes, tarot-card readers, and magicians who perform on the flagstone pedestrian mall surrounding the square, many of them day and night.

Originally called the Place d'Armes, the square was founded in 1718 as a military parade ground. It was also the site of public executions carried out in various styles, including burning at the stake, beheading, breaking on the wheel, and hanging. A **statue of Andrew Jackson**, victorious leader of the Battle of New Orleans in the War of 1812, commands the center of the square; the park was renamed for him in the 1850s. The words carved in the base on the cathedral side of the statue—"The Union must and shall be preserved"—are a lasting reminder of the federal troops who occupied New Orleans during the Civil War and who inscribed them. ☒ *French Quarter* ☺ *Park daily 8 am–dusk, flagstone paths on park's periphery open 24 hrs.*

New Orleans Museum of Art (NOMA). Gracing the main entrance to City Park is this traditional fine arts museum, built in 1911. Modern wings, added to the original structure in the 1990s, bring light and space into the grand old building, which has an elegant central staircase and many formal rooms used as galleries. The jeweled treasures, particularly some of the famous eggs by Peter Carl Fabergé, are a favorite exhibit, along with European and American paintings, sculpture, drawings, prints, and photography.

The museum holds one of the largest glass collections in the country and has developed a unique Art of the Americas collection that includes a range of Latin American and Native American works. Several period-room installations feature 18th- and 19th-century American furniture and decorative arts. The comprehensive Asian art wing includes a good selection of Japanese paintings of the Edo period; African, Oceanic, pre-Columbian, and Louisiana art are also represented. Temporary exhibits often favor local topics, such as Louis Armstrong or Edgar Degas (Degas's mother's family was from New Orleans, and Degas visited and painted here).

☒ *1 Collins Diboll Circle, City Park, Bayou St. John* ☎ *504/658-4100* 🌐 *www.noma.org* 💰 *\$8; free to Louisiana residents* ☺ *Thurs.–Tues. 10–4:45, Wed. 10–dusk.*

Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden. Henry Moore's handsome *Reclining Mother and Child* greets visitors at the entrance of the Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden. Most of the garden's 57 sculptures, representing some of the biggest names in modern art, were donated by local pharmacy magnate and avid collector Sydney Besthoff. After Katrina, the garden suspended its daily guided tours, but you don't really need one to enjoy the collection which includes major pieces by Jacques Lipchitz, Barbara Hepworth, and Joel Shapiro or a stroll along the indigenously landscaped bayou that meanders through the park. ☎ *504/658-4100* 🌐 *www.noma.org* 💰 *Free* ☺ *Wed.–Sun. 10–4:45.*

The Presbytère. One of twin Spanish colonial-style buildings flanking St. Louis Cathedral, it was designed to house the priests of the cathedral; instead, it served as a courthouse under the Spanish and later under the Americans. It is now a museum showcasing a spectacular collection of Mardi Gras memorabilia, and displays highlight both the little-known and popular traditions associated with New Orleans's most famous festival. Opened in October 2010, "Living with Hurricanes: Katrina and Beyond" is a \$7.5 million exhibition exploring the history, science, and powerful human drama of one of nature's most destructive forces. The building's cupola, destroyed by a hurricane in 1915, was restored in 2005 to match the one atop its twin, the Cabildo. ☒ *751 Chartres St. on Jackson Sq., French Quarter* ☎ *504/568-6968* 🌐 *lsm.crt.state.la.us* 💰 *\$6* ☺ *Tues.–Sun. 10–4:30.* Last tickets sold at 4 pm.

CBD AND WAREHOUSE DISTRICT RESTAURANTS

✂ **A Mano.** Chef Adolfo García proved his mastery of Spanish cooking at Rio Mar, and at this lively venture he shows equal ability with the flavors of Italy. In New Orleans, most Italian restaurants serve a crowd-pleasing Creole version of red sauce, or "red gravy" as it's known here, and local seafood. This Warehouse District trattoria went back to the source and created an authentic taste of Italy with options like house-cured meats, homemade pasta,



Stephen1130, fodor.com member

and Mississippi rabbit, the latter roasted with olives and thyme or fried with caperberries and lemon. After dessert, linger with a glass of Italian amaro or a homemade liqueur.

✉ 870 Tchoupitoulas St., CBD ☎ 504/208-9280
 🌐 www.amanonola.com ☺ Closed Sun. No lunch Sat.–Thurs. \$21.

✂ **American Sector.** Celebrity chef John Besh has dazzled the culinary world with his prowess on the plate and Southern-boy charm, but his most impressive feat might be this restaurant inside the National World War II Museum that is worth visiting even if you're skipping the exhibits. The menu updates comfort fare like chicken-fried steak, heirloom tomato soup served in a can, or a sloppy Joe made from short ribs. The efficient staff in period garb knows how to take care of the next generation, with kids' meals served in lunch pails. End with a seasonal milkshake or, if you're of age, a well-made retro cocktail like a Pink Squirrel or Singapore Sling. ✉ National World War II Museum, 945 Magazine St., CBD ☎ 504/528-1940 🌐 www.nationalww2museum.org/american-sector. \$18.

★ **Fodor's Choice** ✂ **August.** If the Gilded Age is long gone, someone forgot to tell the folks at August, whose main dining room shimmers with masses of chandelier prisms, thick brocade, and glossy wood. Service is anything but stuffy, however, and chef John Besh's modern technique adorns every plate. Nothing is mundane here on the seasonally changing menu, which might include handmade gnocchi

with blue crab and winter truffle or rabbit cassoulet with andouille sausage. Expect the unexpected—like slow-roasted Kobe beef short ribs with Jerusalem artichokes. The sommelier is happy to confer with you on the surprisingly affordable wine list. ✉ 301 Tchoupitoulas St., CBD ☎ 504/299-9777 🌐 www.restaurantaugust.com 🐾 Reservations essential ☺ No lunch on weekends. \$35.

✂ **Bon Ton Café.** The Bon Ton's opening in 1953 marked the first appearance of a significant Cajun restaurant in New Orleans, and its crawfish dishes, gumbo, jambalaya, and oyster omelet have retained their strong following ever since. The bustle in the dining room peaks at lunchtime on weekdays, when businesspeople come in droves for turtle soup, eggplant with shrimp-and-crab étouffée, and warm, sugary bread pudding. If you can sacrifice the afternoon for pleasure, try a Rum Ramsey cocktail. The veteran servers are knowledgeable and fleet-footed. ✉ 401 Magazine St., CBD ☎ 504/524-3386 🌐 www.thebontoncafe.com ☺ Closed weekends. \$28.

★ **Fodor's Choice** ✂ **Cochon.** Chef-owned restaurants are common in New Orleans, but this one builds on the owner's family heritage. Chef Donald Link prepares Cajun dishes he learned to cook at his grandfather's knee. The interior may be a bit too rustic and noisy for some patrons, but the food makes up for it. Try the fried boudin with pickled peppers—trust us on this one. Then move on to black-eyed-pea and pork gumbo, and a hearty Louisiana cochon (pork) with turnips, cracklings, and cabbage. If you want to

experience true regional cuisine, this is the place. ☒ 930 Tchoupitoulas St., Warehouse District ☎ 504/588-2123 🌐 www.cochonrestaurant.com 🍷 Reservations essential ☺ Closed Sun. No lunch Sat. \$20.



✂ **Cochon Butcher.** Around the corner from its big brother Cochon, Butcher packs its own Cajun punch with a sandwich menu that dials up the flavor on local classics. With house-cured meats and olive salad, the muffaletta reveals exactly how delicious Creole-Italian can be, while the hot dog, with homemade weiner, bun, and condiments, elevates the all-American favorite to something divine. This self-proclaimed “sWine Bar” offers meaty small plates and a rotating selection of wines, beers, and well-made cocktails. Before leaving, stock up on boudin, bacon pralines, and other to-go Cajun delicacies—all much better souvenirs than anything for sale on Bourbon Street. ☒ 930 Tchoupitoulas St., Warehouse District ☎ 504/588-7675 🌐 www.cochonbutcher.com 🍷 Reservations not accepted ☺ No dinner Sun. \$10.

✂ **Domenica.** Local celebrity chef John Besh has done it again with his new restaurant, but this time it’s rustic Italian cooking, a rarity in the New Orleans culinary landscape. Located in the newly renovated 19th-century landmark hotel the Roosevelt, the restaurant departs from the hotel lobby’s stuffy, gilded decor. Sleek black walls and chain-link curtains are warmed by jewel-box displays of house-cured meats. Friendly and knowledgeable waiters happily help patrons with lesser-known ingredients, but it doesn’t take a lengthy explanation to know that the fresh pastas and wood-fired pizzas are a must. ☒ 123 Baronne St., CBD ☎ 504/648-6020 🌐 www.domenicarestaurant.com. \$21.

✂ **Eleven 79.** If the Rat Pack boys were alive today, they’d grab a corner table in this tiny, softly lighted Italian eatery, where garlic rules and red wine is revered. Dean Martin music adds a soft ambience, and candlelit tables are the perfect platform for tender pastas bathed in perfectly seasoned sauces. Start every meal with the house Italian salad, and be good to yourself with *panéed* (breaded) veal with asparagus, buffalo mozzarella, roasted red peppers, and lemon sauce. Every dish is full of flavor, and the chef has an even hand with seasonings. There is no such thing as a bad meal at Eleven 79. ☒ 1179 Annunciation St., Warehouse District ☎ 504/229-1179 ☺ Closed Sun. No lunch Wed.–Sat. \$27.

✂ **Emeril’s.** Celebrity-chef Emeril Lagasse’s urban-chic flagship restaurant is always jammed. A wood ceiling in a basket-weave pattern muffles much of the clatter and chatter. The ambitious menu gives equal emphasis to Creole and modern American cooking—try the rabbit *rémoulade* with fried green tomatoes or the barbecue shrimp, which is one of the darkest, richest versions of that local specialty. Desserts, such as the renowned banana cream pie, verge on the gargantuan. Service is meticulous, and the wine list’s depth and range should soothe even the most persnickety imbibers. ☒ 800 Tchoupitoulas

St., Warehouse District ☎ 504/528-9393 🌐 www.emerils.com 🍷 Reservations essential ☺ No lunch on weekends. \$30.

✂ **Grand Isle.** This Louisiana fish camp–theme restaurant gave a significant boost to the emerging entertainment district surrounding the Fulton Street corridor and Harrah’s Casino. The rustic interior, reminiscent of 1920s and ‘30s Louisiana, is the perfect backdrop for turtle stew, spicy boiled shrimp, lobster with roasted shrimp sauce, fresh gulf fish, and a lemon icebox pie that will make you fall in love with New Orleans all over again. Except for freshwater catfish, all the seafood comes straight and unfrozen from the Gulf of Mexico. The place is generally packed, but it’s worth the wait (which gives you an excuse to spend time at the elegant mahogany bar). ☒ 575 Convention Center Blvd., CBD ☎ 504/520-8530 🌐 www.grandislerestaurant.com. \$20.

✂ **The Grill Room.** These dazzling dining spaces are furnished with body-hugging chairs and canvases depicting the lives of the British nobility. The equally dazzling menu, which changes daily, is filled with smart modern American specialties. The flavors are exemplified by risotto with black truffles, grilled tenderloin with potato puree, and Maine scallops with red quinoa. Just when you think the best is behind, out comes the city’s best cheese plate, followed by soothing cordials. The wine cellar, with its collection of vintage Bordeaux reds, remains awesome. ☒ Windsor Court Hotel, 2nd level, 300 Gravier St., CBD ☎ 504/522-1994 🌐 www.windsorcourthotel.com 🍷 Reservations essential. \$33.



✂ **Herbsaint.** Upscale food and moderate prices are among Herbsaint’s assets. Chef Donald Link turns out food that sparkles with robust flavors and top-grade ingredients. Small plates and starters such as a daily gumbo, charcuterie, and house-made pastas are mainstays. Don’t overlook the rich and flavorful Louisiana shrimp and grits with tasso and okra. Also irresistible: muscovy duck-leg confit with dirty rice and citrus gastrique. For dessert, banana brown-butter tart will ensure return trips. The plates provide most of the color in the lighthearted, often noisy, rooms. The wine list is expertly compiled and reasonably priced. ☒ 701 St. Charles Ave., CBD ☎ 504/524-4114 🌐 www.herbsaint.com 🍷 Reservations essential ☺ Closed Sun. No lunch Sat. \$27.

✂ **La Boca.** If you need a break from the bounties of the sea after devouring your weight in shrimp, oysters, and Gulf fish, book a table at this classic Argentine steakhouse. While most steakhouses are clubby, masculine, and hard on the wallet, this Warehouse District eatery feels more like a party. The kitchen excels at coaxing flavor from less expensive cuts, like flank and hanger steaks. Sides include empanadas, thick rounds of provolone grilled and sprinkled with oregano, and house-made pasta, a nod to Argentina’s large Italian population. A group of four or more can order a five-course feast served family style

KIPP PICKS: RESTAURANTS

"The first reason why you should have included **Café Beignet** is because the food is wonderful and cheap. Also it is located exactly on Bourbon St. so if someone visits they'll have a place to eat. They also have awesome beignets and many other options to choose from. Café Beignet also have an exquisite sitting area, and customers are well served too. In the next New Orleans travel book you should include Café Beignet," writes a KIPP Central City sixth grader. 311 Bourbon St., French Quarter, www.cafebeignet.com.

"The place is called the **Voodoo BBQ & Grill**. They have wonderful food. They have New Orleans culture like crawfish. Also they have amazing pork, it is real good, it makes you drule. If you taste this food you would want to live here. They

are not so high in price. They always have a good amount of people because they price is low." 1501 St. Charles Ave., 504/522-4647, www.voodoobbq.com.

Feeling thirsty and looking for an authentic NOLA experience? One KIPP student wrote about her favorite Crescent City quencher: "What is **Big Shot**? you ask, well Big Shot is New Orleans' own soda. It's only sold in New Orleans. Big Shot is important in New Orleans because that is mostly all we drink here. They have different types of flavors. They have peach, my favorite of course, and they also have any kind you think of. They have cream, strawberry, watermelon, and peach. It's very sacred to us and special. So not having Big Shot is like not living in New Orleans."

for \$50 each. After dinner at La Boca, you'll walk outside and be surprised to discover that you're not in Buenos Aires. ☎ 857 Fulton St., CBD ☎ 504/525-8205 🌐 www.labocasteaks.com ☺ Closed Sun. No lunch. \$27.

✂ **Lüke**. Chef John Besh's Lüke is a love letter to the old Alsatian brasseries that once reigned in New Orleans, when rattan bistro chairs, blackboard specials, and newspaper racks were de rigueur. Start your meal with a Sazerac (a locally popular cocktail of rye whiskey, absinthe, and Peychaud's bitters) or a mint julep, and work your way into rabbit and duck liver pâté, followed by a fried oyster, bacon, and avocado salad. French and Louisiana influences produce distinctive entrées, including stuffed jumbo Louisiana shrimp and a pressed sandwich of roasted *cochon de lait*, or suckling pig, that will remind you why New Orleans is revered as a culinary destination. Lüke is a Besh restaurant, but the quality is subpar compared to his other properties. ☎ 333 St. Charles Ave., CBD ☎ 504/378-2840 🌐 www.luke-neworleans.com. \$19.

✂ **MiLa**. Chefs Slade Rushing and Allison Vines-Rushing, from Mississippi and Louisiana, respectively, merged the names and cuisines of their home states to produce MiLa. The restaurant defines a new Southern elegance with its comfy-chic atmosphere and its culinary tributes to each chef's childhood memories of Southern cooking. The results on the seasonally updated menu are dishes like sweet tea-brined rotisserie duck and hickory-smoked lamb rack. For the true insider experience, take a seat at the bar and try the hot deer sausage and cheddar biscuits. Much of the restaurant's produce comes from a farm in Mount Hermon, Louisiana. ☎ 817 Common St., CBD ☎ 504/412-2580 🌐 www.milaneurorleans.com ☺ Closed Sun. No lunch Sat. \$30.

✂ **Mother's**. Tourists and locals line up for down-home eats at this island of blue-collar sincerity amid downtown's glittery hotels. Mother's dispenses delicious baked ham and roast beef po'boys (ask for "debris" on the beef sandwich and the bread will be slathered with meat juices and shreds of meat), home-style biscuits and jambalaya, and a very good chicken-and-sausage gumbo in a couple of

bare-bones—yet charming—dining rooms. Breakfast service is a bit slow, but that doesn't seem to repel the hordes fighting for seats at peak mealtimes. Service is cafeteria style, with a counter or two augmenting the tables. ☎ 401 Poydras St., CBD ☎ 504/523-9656 🌐 www.mothersrestaurant.net 🍷 Reservations not accepted. \$10.

✂ **Rio Mar**. Chef Adolfo García's largely seafood menu reflects his Spanish style and Panamanian heritage. Each of his several ceviches has its own distinct marinade and combination of superfresh seafood. For entrées, try the stewlike zarzuela of seafood, with chunks of fish and shellfish in a peppery red broth. It's all tapas at lunch, when you tick off your selections on a small menu card: salty Spanish ham, roasted peppers, Manchego cheese, marinated seafood. The dining room's low ceiling and tiled floor don't make for great acoustics, but the gold-hue walls with their rustic iron ornamentation would not be out of place in Barcelona. ☎ 800 S. Peters St., Warehouse District ☎ 504/525-3474 🌐 www.riomarseafood.com ☺ Closed Sun. No lunch Sat. \$21.

✂ **Tommy's Cuisine**. The dining rooms here are clubby and festive, and the crowd is always interesting. Don't overlook the *panéed* oysters and grilled shrimp appetizer; the lamb chops blanketed with a rosemary port-wine demi-glace; or the roasted half chicken saturated with rosemary and garlic. Service is gentlemanly, the chef's dinner specials are imaginative, and the wines span all of Italy. After dinner, head next door to the cushy Tommy's Wine Bar. ☎ 746 Tchoupitoulas St., Warehouse District ☎ 504/581-1103 🌐 www.tommynsneworleans.com 🍷 Reservations essential ☺ No lunch. \$22.

OTHER FODOR'S CHOICE RESTAURANTS AROUND NEW ORLEANS

✂ **Antoine's**. If Antoine's wasn't already a culinary deity, Frances Parkinson Keyes made it one with her 1948 novel *Dinner at Antoine's*. Though some people believe Antoine's heyday passed before the turn of the 20th century, others wouldn't leave New Orleans without at least one order of oysters Rockefeller, a dish invented here. Other notables on the



Stephen11.30, fodor.com member

bilingual menu include *pommes de terre soufflées* (fried potato puffs), pompano *en papillote* (baked in parchment), and baked Alaska. Tourists generally sit in the front room, but walking through the grand labyrinth is a must. Be prepared for lackluster service. A jacket is preferred, but casually dressed diners can order most of the classic menu at the adjoining Hermes Bar. ☒ 713 St. Louis St., French Quarter ☎ 504/581-4422 🌐 www.antoines.com 📅 Reservations essential ☺ No dinner Sun. \$36.

✂ **Bayona.** “New World” is the label Louisiana native Susan Spicer applies to her cooking style, which results in such delicious dishes as goat-cheese crouton with mushroom, one of the Bayona’s specialities, or the Caribbean pumpkin soup with coconut. The lunch favorite of smoked duck, cashew butter, and pepper-jelly sandwich is legend. ■ **TIP** → A three-course small-plate lunch is available on Saturday for \$25. These and other imaginative dishes on an ever-changing menu are served in an early-19th-century Creole cottage that glows with flower arrangements, elegant photographs, and trompe l’oeil murals suggesting Mediterranean landscapes. Don’t skip the sweets, such as a maple-semolina cake with golden-raisin compote and pomegranate sauce. ☒ 430 Dauphine St., French Quarter ☎ 504/525-4455 🌐 www.bayona.com ☺ Closed Sun. No lunch Mon. or Tues. \$28.

✂ **Boucherie.** Nathaniel Zimet’s gutsy, down-home cooking fits right in at its cozy location in a converted Uptown home. Locals first got a taste of his unique blend of Louisiana and contemporary Southern styles with the Que Crawl “barbecue truck” that used to pop up late night at music venues in the Faubourg Marigny and Tipitina’s. Dressier than his street-food fare but just as delicious, the monthly

updated menu here kicks off with small plates, including every iteration of grits imaginable—fries, cakes, even crackers. Large plates pack big flavors—smoked scallops, Wagyu brisket, and pulled-pork cakes all deliver. No entrée costs more than \$15. Try the Krispy Kreme bread pudding, even if you haven’t saved room for it. ☒ 8115 Jeannette St., Uptown ☎ 504/862-5514 🌐 www.boucherie-nola.com ☺ Closed Sun. and Mon. \$13.

✂ **Bistro at Maison de Ville.** “The Bistro,” as locals refer to it, is a charming, European-inspired hide-away with an intimate dining room that seats 34 and a kitchen so tiny it would fit in the average utility closet. Still, chef Greg Picolo’s seasonal offerings, like fine sautéed fish, osso buco, bouillabaisse, and bacon-wrapped filet mignon, are so well conceived that one might picture an operation much larger and more sophisticated. The wine list is legendary in these parts, and the ambience is as well suited to a marriage proposal as it is to a power lunch. The Bistro may just be the best-kept secret in the French Quarter. ☒ 727 Toulouse St., French Quarter ☎ 504/528-9206 🌐 www.hotelmaisondeville.com/dining ☺ Closed Mon. and Tues. \$31.

✂ **Brigtsen’s.** Chef Frank Brigtsen’s fusion of Creole refinement and Acadian earthiness reflects his years as a Paul Prudhomme protégé. His dishes represent some of the best south Louisiana cooking you’ll find anywhere. Everything is fresh and filled with deep, complex tastes. The butternut shrimp bisque defines comfort food. Rabbit and duck dishes, usually presented in rich sauces and gravies, are full of robust flavor. But Brigtsen really gets to unleash his creativity on the “Shell Beach Diet,” a nightly changing seafood platter where nothing is fried. Trompe l’oeil murals add whimsy to the intimate spaces of this

turn-of-the-20th-century frame cottage. Ask for a table on the enclosed front sun porch. ☎ 723 Dante St., Uptown ☎ 504/861-7610 🌐 www.brigtsens.com 🍷 Reservations essential ☺ Closed Sun. and Mon. No lunch. \$29.

✂ **Commander's Palace.** No restaurant captures New Orleans's gastronomic heritage and celebratory spirit as well as this one, long considered the grande dame of New Orleans fine dining. The recent renovation has added new life, especially upstairs, where the Garden Room's glass walls have marvelous views of the giant oak trees on the patio below; other rooms promote conviviality with their bright pastels. The menu's classics include a spicy and meaty turtle soup; shrimp and tasso Henican; a wonderful griddle-seared Gulf fish; and poached oysters in absinthe cream sauce under a pastry dome. Among the addictive desserts is bread pudding soufflé. The weekend brunch is a not-to-be-missed New Orleans tradition. Jackets are preferred at dinner. ☎ 1403 Washington Ave., Garden District ☎ 504/899-8221 🌐 www.commanderspalace.com 🍷 Reservations essential. \$35.

✂ **Emeril's Delmonico.** Chef Emeril Lagasse bought the traditional, unpretentious, century-old Delmonico and converted it to a large, extravagantly appointed restaurant with the most ambitious revamping of classic Creole dishes in town. The walls of the high-ceiling dining spaces are swathed in upholstery and superthick window fabrics. House-cured charcuterie is a reliable option, as are crab cakes, rabbit crêpes, and sautéed fish meunière. Prime dry-aged steaks with traditional sauces have emerged as a specialty in recent years, but the menu gets more ambitious by the month. Plush and polish are the bywords here, and the service is exemplary. ☎ 1300 St. Charles Ave., Garden District ☎ 504/525-4937 🌐 www.emerils.com 🍷 Reservations essential ☺ No lunch. \$34.

✂ **Galatoire's.** Galatoire's has always epitomized the old-style French-Creole bistro. Many of the recipes date to 1905. Fried oysters and bacon en brochette are worth every calorie, and the brick-red rémoulade sauce sets a high standard. Other winners include veal chops with optional béarnaise sauce, and seafood-stuffed eggplant. The setting downstairs is a single, narrow dining room lighted with glistening brass chandeliers; bentwood chairs and white tablecloths add to its timelessness. You can reserve a table only in the renovated upstairs rooms, but the action is on the first floor, where partying regulars inhibit conversation but make for good people-watching. Friday lunch starts early and continues well into early evening. A jacket is required for dinner. ☎ 209 Bourbon St., French Quarter ☎ 504/525-2021 🌐 www.galatoires.com ☺ Closed Mon. \$27.

✂ **Mahony's Po-Boy Shop.** What happens when a fine-dining chef opens a po'boy joint? The shrimp are local, the french fries are cut by hand, and the menu includes nontraditional spins like chicken livers with coleslaw or fried oysters "dressed" with rémoulade sauce. Despite the ambitions in the kitchen, this



Kelli Glaser, fodor.com member

restaurant still feels like a low-key neighborhood hangout. The crowds are equal parts working class and professional, with a good number of families. The po'boy is New Orleans's own version of fast food, but here the waits can sometimes stretch to half an hour. It's wise to avoid peak meal times, or if you're not in a hurry, order an Abita beer and settle into a seat on the patio. ☎ 3454 Magazine St., Uptown ☎ 504/899-3374 🌐 www.mahonyspoboy.com 🍷 Reservations not accepted ☺ Closed Sun. \$8.

✂ **Patois.** Hidden away on a quiet residential corner, this bustling bistro looks like it was transported directly from Provence. The menu supports the French theme, although chef Aaron Burgau approaches classic dishes with a Louisiana attitude. Mussels arrive in a fragrant tomato broth, sautéed sweetbreads are bathed in a country ham reduction, and the meunière sauce on the Gulf fish gets a bright burst from local citrus. Burgau developed close connections with growers and fishermen while managing a local farmers' market. He knows what New Orleanians like to eat, and his Uptown neighbors, an affluent mix of young and older couples, have rewarded him with a full house nearly every night. ☎ 6078 Laurel St., Uptown ☎ 504/895-9441 🌐 www.patoisnola.com ☺ Closed Mon., Tues., or Sat. No lunch Wed. or Thurs. \$26.

✂ **Stella!** Stella! chef Scott Boswell has evolved into one of the city's most innovative and daring culinarians. To start, try the spicy Asian chili prawns. The duck five ways, which includes foie gras wontons, is mind blowing, and the grilled cheese with dark chocolate ganache offers a playful ending to any meal. Stella! now sits comfortably among New Orleans's best fine-dining restaurants. ☎ 1032 Chartres St., French Quarter ☎ 504/587-0091 🌐 www.restaurantstella.com 🍷 Reservations essential ☺ No lunch. \$36.