

TRIP TO NEW ORLEANS

PROLOGUE

New Orleans is an American city about which everyone has an opinion, both positive and negative. When the City of New Orleans comes up in a conversation, most people mention the French Quarter, great food, flooding from hurricanes, government corruption, and crime, not necessarily in that order. Hollywood also has shaped the opinion for the city: Hollywood has filmed a lot of movies there, and many actors and actresses call the city home.

So, when I had an opportunity to visit New Orleans, I was excited to explore and experience the city firsthand. I love to explore new cities.

Before I describe my experience, here is some historical information about New Orleans.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, in 1682, René-Robert Cavelier, sieur de La Salle led an expedition down the Illinois and Mississippi rivers and claimed all the region watered by the Mississippi and its tributaries for Louis XIV of France, naming the region "Louisiana."

Close to the mouth of the Mississippi river, La Nouvelle-Orleans was founded by Jean Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville in 1718. It was named for the Duke of Orleans, Phillippe II.

In 1763, the French colony of Louisiana was ceded to Spain. Spanish rule lasted until 1803, when it reverted to French rule. Also in 1803, the French

sold the Louisiana territory to the United States; the sale is historically referred as the Louisiana Purchase.

I had 3 days to explore. Here is my experience in New Orleans.

River Walk/Mississippi River

Riverwalk is an area along the riverfront of the Mississippi river. This area is known for shipping. In 1984, a portion of this area was used for the World Fair.



On the Riverwalk, I saw an aquarium, the Paddle wheeler Creole Queen, and Spanish plaza. There is also a shopping mall for

the ones that like to shop. There was a lot of construction near the shopping area and the aquarium.



River looked majestic at night



Creole Queen.

Spanish Square, originally known as Eads Plaza, was decreed to the City of



New Orleans by Spain in 1996 in honor of the Spanish government of New Orleans from 1763 to 1803. The seals of each Spanish province are embedded in the fountain and are set in a tiled mosaic.

The plaza also honors James Buchanan Eads, who

created a jetty system to improve navigability from New Orleans to Gulf of Mexico.

I walked to the Riverwalk each day, coming from different directions.

The first day, I walked southbound on **Canal Street** towards Riverwalk. Canal Street has a lot of different businesses on it, such as hotels,

restaurants, cafes, and office buildings. Canal Street is heavily used, as it had lot of people walking around.

One of the cafes I walked by is *Café Beignet*. You can tell it is good because the waiting line was out the door. I also walked by a Brazilian restaurant called *Fogo de Chao*. I didn't stop to eat.

In the middle median you can catch the New Orleans trolley cars.

The next day, I walked westbound on **Poydras Street** to reach the Riverwalk. Poydras Street is in the Central Business district and has restaurants, hotels, and banks. The Superdome is located on this street.

L' Pavillon Hotel, a historic hotel, is also known for being haunted.



Nicknamed the "Belle of New Orleans," Le Pavillon



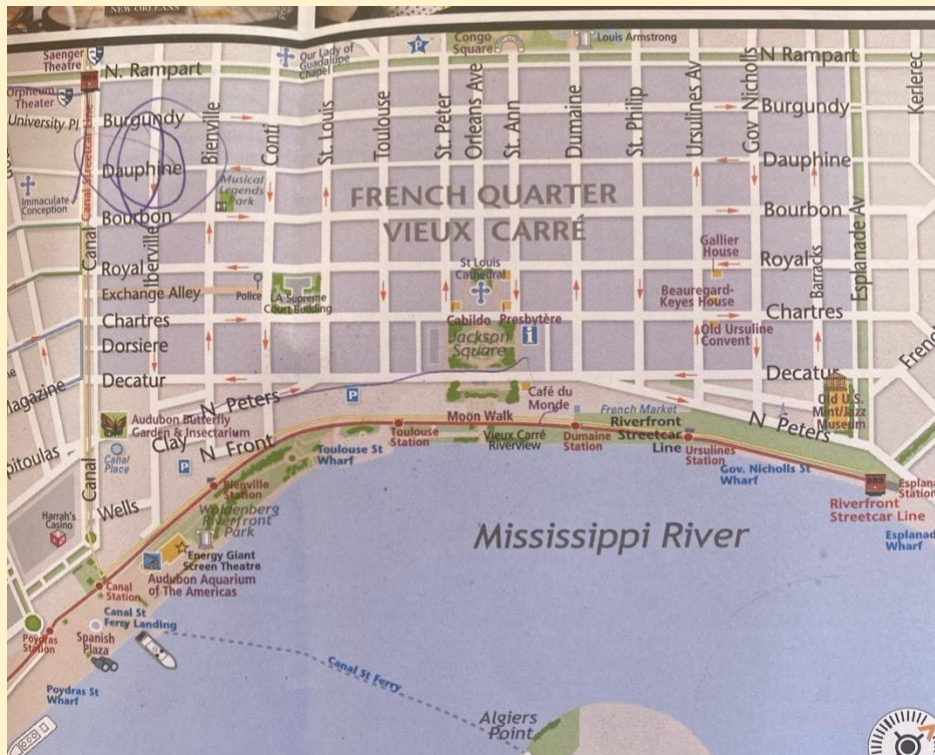
Immaculate Conception church (Jesuit Church)

On my last day in New Orleans, we walked northbound on **Magazine Street** from the Garden District. We walked through the lower Garden District and the warehouse/art district. Magazine Street has a lot of small businesses and houses converted into duplexes. We also walked by the World War II Museum. It looks very nice and has hotels around it.

Close to the Riverwalk, there is a casino. **Manning's Sports Bar and Grill**, owned by former New Orleans Saints quarterback Archie Manning, is in the casino complex. Unfortunately, the restaurant was closed for that day. We will come back next time we are in town.

French Quarter, Vieux Carre

French Quarter, or Vieux Carre in French, is the oldest neighborhood of New Orleans. The street layout was designed by Adrien de Pauger in 1721. He named the streets for French royalty and Catholic saints. De Pauger named Bourbon Street in honor of the French royalty - House of Bourbon.



I walked in the Quarter and saw St. Louis Cathedral, Jackson Square, and Old Ursuline Convent (oldest building in New Orleans and from the French period). An interesting fact is that there are tile mosaics on streets in the Quarter giving what the street names were

when it was under Spanish rule. The Quarter was a beehive of activity. I had great experience eating in the Quarter. The food was good, and the people were really nice.

I had a couple of experiences worth mentioning. The first one is that I ended up having lunch next to Kathleen Turner. I heard her voice, and I couldn't place where I had heard it before. We chatted a little. When I was leaving, the staff asked if I knew who she was, my response was no, and they told me who she was.

The second experience was at the Court of Two Sisters. Queen Isabella of Spain had given Charm Gate to the owners of the property. According to legend, the Queen had them blessed so that their charm would pass on to anyone who touched them. I touched them twice to get extra charm.



Charters Street



Scenes from Bourbon Street



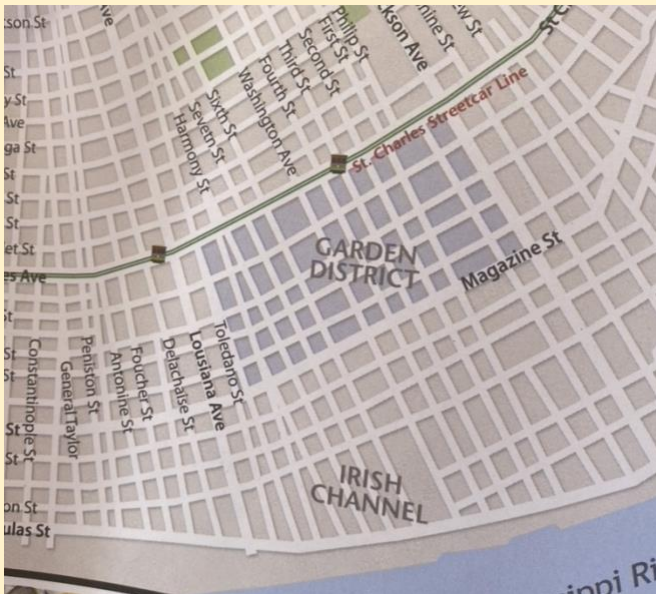
Fountain located at the courtyard of Court of Two Sisters restaurant. The Fountain is also known as Devil's Wishing Well

Garden District

Garden District is about three miles southwest of the French Quarter and was developed in the 1820s by Americans moving to New Orleans after the Louisiana Purchase. Before residential development, the Garden District was the Livaudais plantation.

I walked to it a couple of times. A route I took was **Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard**. The Boulevard and its surrounding streets are undergoing lot of new construction and/or renovation.

I also walked St. Charles Street to the Garden District. **St. Charles Street**



is a major road and has tree lined medians. The famous St. Charles Streetcar line runs along the street. It is the oldest continuous running streetcar in the world. St. Charles street has apartments, houses, and restaurants.

In the Garden District, the style of housing is large plantation-style houses with gardens, and the streets are lined with shady trees. I walked around to take

in the sight of the great mansions. I ate at **Magazine Street**, which is the commerce center of the Garden District with shops and some restaurants. Below are some of the sights that I saw.



Mardi Gras decorations on a house



Actress Sandra Bullock's house



House where "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button" was filmed



Commaders Place Restaurant



Lafayette Cemetery No. 1



Singer Beyoncé's house

Ex-Saints Quarterback Archie Manning's house. The house below is where Payton and Eli grew up in. Both boys grew up to be NFL quarterbacks, and each won two Super Bowls. Eli's team beat Tom Brady's team in two Super Bowls. Tom Brady is married to Gisele Bündchen, who is from Rio Grande do Sul.



Manning House

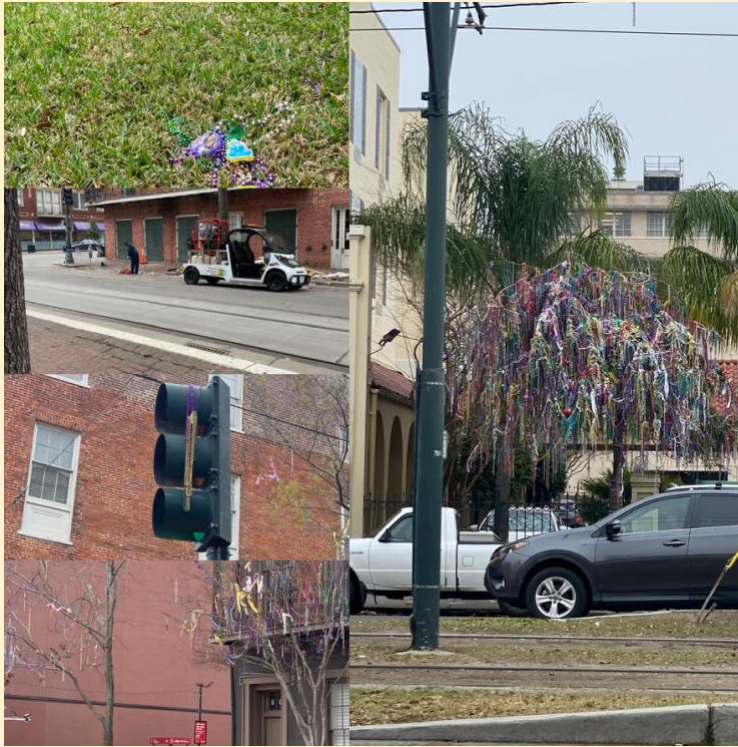
"Downtown of Garden District" – Magazine Street



Magazine Street

After the good times

Mardi Gras as we know it with parades began in 1857 with the first secret society to host a parade. A Mardi Gras tradition is to hand out beads to parade followers, and this tradition started in the 1920s. The official colors are purple, green, and gold. These colors were selected by the Rex krewe in 1872 to honor the visiting Russian Grand Duke, Alexis Alexandrovich Romanoff, whose house colors were purple for justice, gold for power and green for faith.



We arrived in New Orleans a couple of days after Mardi Gras. There were beads left around the City after Mardi Gras.

Superdome

Superdome was built in 1975 and hosts professional football, college football, basketball, soccer, and other sports.





Basketball arena home of New Orleans Pelicans.



Mixture of French and English... where the French suffix *-eaux* is a substitute for the English letter *o*. For example, the English word "go" becomes "GEAUX". The picture above is a sign around the Superdome that uses the word.

Final thoughts

From what I saw and experienced, New Orleans is a vibrant city that blends American, French, and Spanish cultures and architecture. It is a beautiful historic city with very warm and generous people.

Walking around seeing the various sites brought me peace and tranquility. Now, I understand why people fall in love with New Orleans and want to live here. I would love to go back.

Thank you for reading my travel journal. Bon voyage.

Restaurants we enjoyed:

- [Brennans](#)
- [Copper Vine](#)
- [SoBou](#)
- [The Court of Two Sisters](#)
- [The Vintage Restaurant](#)