

# Garden, Lower Garden & Central City

## Neighborhood Top Five

- 1 Sipping 25¢ martinis and savoring bread pudding soufflé at ever-stylish **Commander's Palace** (p118) is one of the most enjoyable ways to live like a local. Walk off the meal with a sidewalk stroll past lush lawns and stately mansions.
- 2 Learning about the past at **Lafayette Cemetery No 1** (p115) where above-ground crypts hold tragic tales.
- 3 Popping into clothing boutiques, art galleries, music shops and day spas on **Magazine Street** (p123).
- 4 Wandering past paintings of local musicians and Mardi Gras at the **McKenna Museum of African American Art** (p117).
- 5 Celebrating like an Irishman at a neighborhood bar in the **Irish Channel** (p116).



## Lonely Planet's Top Tip

Avoid parking hassles on Magazine St by using public transportation. From the French Quarter and CBD, hop on the St Charles Ave streetcar at Canal St in the morning, then catch Bus 11 on Magazine St to return to your hotel in the afternoon.

### Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Commander's Palace (p118)
- ➔ Coquette (p118)
- ➔ Surrey's Juice Bar (p118)
- ➔ Slice (p118)
- ➔ Sucré (p121)

For reviews, see p118 ➔

### Best Places to Drink

- ➔ Bridge Lounge (p122)
- ➔ Tracey's (p121)
- ➔ Bulldog (p122)
- ➔ Rendezvous (p122)

For reviews, see p122 ➔

### Best Places to Shop

- ➔ Thomas Mann Gallery I/O (p124)
- ➔ Gogo Jewelry (p124)
- ➔ Aidan Gill for Men (p123)
- ➔ Fleurty Girl (p125)
- ➔ Funky Monkey (p125)

For reviews, see p123 ➔

## Explore Garden, Lower Garden & Central City

The Garden District, Lower Garden District and Central City are three distinct neighborhoods, each offering a different experience. Two days is enough time to explore all three.

The Garden District exudes Old Southern excess with its historic mansions, lush greenery, chichi bistros and upscale boutiques. Your first morning, soak up the mixture of tropical fecund beauty and white-columned old-money elegance on a walking tour (p119) where stately homes and colorful gardens shimmer beside sidewalks bursting with Banyan roots. The Garden District is a rectangular grid bounded by St Charles Ave, Jackson Ave, Magazine St and Louisiana Ave. Magazine St and St Charles Ave are the main commercial thoroughfares; Prytania St is the most scenic (and the quickest).

Between the CBD and the Garden District, the Lower Garden District is somewhat like the Garden District but not quite as posh. Here the houses are pleasant, not palatial. There's a student vibe about, and plenty of bars and restaurants for those with university-stunted wallets and university-sized appetites for fun. The Lower Garden District is upriver (in this case, south) from the CBD. Magazine St is the main thoroughfare.

Central City, which lies between the CBD and Lower Garden District, is very much in transition. While there are large stretches of blight here, there is also a wonderful concentration of community activist organizations rebuilding what was once one of the most important African American neighborhoods in the city.

## Local Life

- ➔ **Breakfast Joints** At Surrey's Juice Bar (p118), everything's seriously good, from the boudin to the shrimp and grits. At Slim Goodie's Diner (p121), the hip décor ain't sweet like mama's kitchen, but nobody minds at this always-crowded joint.
- ➔ **Pampering** Massages and lotions lure ladies to Beladonna Day Spa (p116) while men settle in for a shave at Aidan Gill (p123), a metrosexual's man-cave.
- ➔ **Neighborhood Bars** Saints football games are the draw at Tracey's (p121). Bringing your dog is A-OK at the canine-friendly Bridge Lounge (p122).

## Getting There & Away

- ➔ **Bus** Bus 11 runs along Magazine St from Canal St to Audubon Park.
- ➔ **Streetcar** The St Charles Ave streetcar travels through the CBD, the Garden District and Uptown.