

# Welcome to New Orleans

*The things that make life worth living – eating, drinking and the making of merriment – are the air that New Orleans breathes.*

## Epicurean Appetite

When it comes to food, New Orleans does not fool around. Well, OK, it does: its playful attitude to ingredients and recipes mixes (for example) alligator sausage and cheese-cake into a dessert fit for the gods. But it creates this mind-bendingly rich food with enterprise, innovation and a dedication to perfecting one of the USA's great indigenous cuisines; it's a culinary aesthetic that will have you snoring in the happiest of food comas afterwards.

## Celebration Seasons

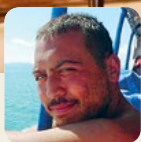
We're not exaggerating when we say there is either a festival or a parade every week of the year in New Orleans. Sometimes, such as during Mardi Gras or Jazz Fest, it feels like there's a new party for every hour of the day. At almost any celebration in town, people engage in masking – donning a new appearance via some form of costuming – while acting out the satyric side of human behavior. But the celebrations and rituals of New Orleans are as much about history as hedonism, and every dance is as much an expression of tradition and community spirit as it is of joy.

## Unceasing Song

New Orleans is the hometown of jazz, but neither the city nor the genre she birthed are musical museum pieces. Jazz is the root of American popular music, the daddy of rock, brother of the blues and not-too-distant ancestor of hip-hop – all styles of music that have defined the beat of global pop for decades. Music – all these varieties plus a few you may never have heard of – are practiced and played here on every corner, in any bar, every night of the week. Live music isn't an event: it's as crucial to the city soundscape as the streetcar bells.

## Candid Culture

There aren't many places in the USA that wear their history as openly on their sleeves as New Orleans. This city's very facade is an architectural study par excellence. And while Boston and Charleston can boast beautiful buildings, New Orleans has a lived-in, cozy feeling that's easily accessible. As a result of its visible history you'll find a constant, often painful, dialogue with the past, stretching back hundreds of years. It's a history that for all its controversy has produced a street culture that can be observed and grasped in a very visceral way.



## Why I Love New Orleans

By Adam Karlin, Author

New Orleans is all about beauty and experiencing the divine through mortal senses. There's joy here, from great food to the best concert of your life, and serenity, found in the shade between live oaks or while watching fireflies on Bayou St John. Whichever way of being I choose for the day, New Orleans indulges me. Basically, I like traveling with soft eyes – eyes that see as a child, with wonder. This town gives me soft eyes the moment I step out the door.

**For more about our authors, see p256.**