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[www.NewOrleansOnline.com](http://www.NewOrleansOnline.com) - The City of New Orleans' Official Tourism Web Site

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## NEW ORLEANS: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

First-time visitors are often struck by the European flavor of New Orleans, and little wonder. Louisiana was claimed for French king Louis XIV in 1699 and is the only state that was once a French royal colony. *La Nouvelle Orleans* was founded in 1718 and ruled by France and then Spain for nearly 100 years. It is the only U.S. city where French was the predominant language for over a century.

The city has more than 35,000 buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places, more than other U.S. city. Washington, D.C., the closest contender, has just over 20,000. Many are located in the 10-square-block area known as the French Quarter. St. Louis Cathedral, the oldest active cathedral in the United States, was originally built in 1724 and rebuilt twice after a hurricane and a fire. The present church overlooking Jackson Square in the heart of the French Quarter was dedicated in 1794. The Old Ursuline Convent, also in the Quarter, dates to 1745 and is the oldest building in the Mississippi River Valley.

As Americans settled here, they built beautiful antebellum mansions in the Garden District and Uptown, and a streetcar line that is the oldest continuously operating rail system in the world.

New Orleans is also known as the birthplace of jazz. Early jazz greats like Louis Armstrong, Buddy Bolden, Jelly Roll Morton and King Oliver got their start in the nightclubs of Storyville, a red-light district that flourished from 1897 to 1917. The city's musical tradition remains strong as New Orleanians like Harry Connick Jr., the Neville Brothers, and Wynton and Branford Marsalis, and events like the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival and French Quarter Festival, share these gifts with the rest of the world.

The city has a well-deserved reputation for food as well. Chefs at the city's more than 3,000 restaurants combine abundant natural resources such as seafood with Creole, Cajun and other cooking styles to create a unique cuisine scene. In 2003, *Travel & Leisure* readers rated New Orleans among the three best "Top Cities for Food," along with Paris and New York City.

For a FREE copy of the "Official New Orleans Visitors Guide," complete with a lodging guide and \$2,400 in coupons for shopping, dining, attractions and more, call toll free 1-800-474-8167. To see and hear all about the food, fun and excitement that is New Orleans, visit us at [www.NewOrleansOnline.com](http://www.NewOrleansOnline.com), the official tourism website of the city of New Orleans.

The New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation promotes the city as a leisure tourism destination throughout the year and places special emphasis on developing visitation during the traditionally slow travel periods of summer and the weeks between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day. Annually, NOTMC's marketing campaigns include strategic print, broadcast, and Internet advertising and public relations. For more information, please call 504-524-4784, or visit our websites – [www.NewOrleansOnline.com](http://www.NewOrleansOnline.com); [www.NewOrleansMuseums.com](http://www.NewOrleansMuseums.com); [www.HearNewOrleansMusic.com](http://www.HearNewOrleansMusic.com); and [www.NOLAFunGuide.com](http://www.NOLAFunGuide.com).

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