

Frequently Asked Questions for Visitors to New Orleans
Revised January 4, 2008

I have not visited New Orleans in a few years. What can I expect?

There has never been a better time to visit New Orleans, for business or pleasure. The French Quarter is cleaner than ever before, we have a fresher hotel product, more restaurants, millions of dollars in improvements to the Convention Center and Superdome, and better hospitality, blended with the same culturally authentic, sensory experience visitors have loved for decades.

We have successfully hosted major events with millions of visitors, such as the Allstate Sugar Bowl, State Farm Bayou Classic, Voodoo Music Experience, Southern Decadence, ESSENCE Festival, Jazz Fest, Mardi Gras and major conventions are happening everyday.

In the next first half of 2008, New Orleans will host a series of major city-wide conventions, nationally televised sporting events and world-renown music and cultural festivals, welcoming hundreds of thousands of visitors.

What is the media reporting about New Orleans as a visitor destination?

New Orleans was honored on NBC's *The Today Show* as the Second Most Beautiful Place in America. *The Today Show's* "America the Beautiful" series September 6, 2007 featured New Orleans and the Gulf Coast as number two on its list of 10. New Orleans was also chosen as one of the top 10 places to go in 2008 by Sherman's Travel and StudentUniverse.com, an online travel agency specializing in trips for college students, chose New Orleans as one of its top 10 domestic spring break destinations of 2008. In October 2007, New Orleans was featured in CNN and *Travel + Leisure* magazine's "America's Favorite Cities" survey results. New Orleans placed in the top three of the country's best in many categories, including best live music, friendliest people and food/dining.

What are my hotel choices?

There are 32,000 hotel rooms available in New Orleans, including small boutique treasures in the French Quarter, charming bed and breakfast properties, major downtown hotel towers and much more. Thanks to practically citywide hotel refurbishments and upgrades, New Orleans has one of the freshest hotel products of any major city. According to Greater New Orleans Inc., \$400 million has been spent on hotel upgrades and renovations in the metro New Orleans area.

What are my restaurant choices?

There are more restaurants open in New Orleans today than ever before. All of your favorites such as Mr. B's, Camellia Grill, Emeril's, Galatoire's and Commander's Palace are ready to indulge your senses, in addition to several new restaurants, including Riche, by Todd English, Iris, Cochon and Lüke, a John Besh restaurant.

What are my options for shopping?

Our shops and boutiques - from the French Quarter to Magazine Street - offer the finest and most eclectic shopping options in the U.S. Options include The Shops at Canal Place, Saks Fifth Avenue, The Riverwalk, Jax Brewery, as well as hundreds of boutiques, art galleries and antique stores throughout the city. Tax-free shopping is available for international visitors.

What are my options for attractions and museums?

The arts scene is exploding and our galleries are among the finest in North America. The Contemporary Arts Center celebrated the annual Whitney White Linen Night in August 2007, an event that celebrates the arts scene in New Orleans' Warehouse District, which welcomed thousands. There are many cultural attractions, such as: plantation homes, riverboat cruises, city tours, Mardi Gras World, Café Du Monde, Cabildo State Museum, New Orleans Historic Collection, Ogden Museum of Southern Art, Audubon Zoo, National World War II Museum, Harrah's Casino and its entertainment-filled Fulton Street Promenade, New Orleans Museum of Art, Bestoff Sculpture Garden, National World War II Museum, Contemporary Arts Center, Louisiana Children's Museum, Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, the New Orleans Ballet and much more.

What are my options for family activities?

New Orleans is rich in family attractions, including the Aquarium of the Americas, Audubon Zoo Louisiana State Museum, the Children's Museum and much more. There also are many tours, ranging from walking tours of the French Quarter to swamp, cemetery, and ghost tours.

Will it be difficult to get flights to and from New Orleans?

No. Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport, as of January 2008, reports 132 flights serving 37 cities. New service from Southwest Airlines added 1,000 daily seats (eight daily nonstop roundtrip flights) to New Orleans in November 2007.

The New Orleans CVB and the Armstrong International Airport continue to work with national airlines to insure that groups with large numbers of arrivals can travel to and from the city in a convenient and timely fashion. Through dialogue with the airlines, additional flights have been added and larger planes have been used when airlift is a concern for a particular event.

Airlines operating out of the Armstrong International Airport include: Air Tran, American Airlines, Continental, Delta Air Lines, ExpressJet, Jet Blue, Northwest, Southwest Airlines, United Airlines, and U.S. Airways. ExpressJet offers non-stop service to Austin, San Antonio, Kansas City, Mo., Jacksonville and Raleigh-Durham with 10 flights per day.

The Armstrong International Airport has been busy making several enhancements to its facility. To improve customer service, the airport has been making external terminal improvements that improve the exterior of the terminal building including the paving, lighting, and replacement of terminal roadway signage. There will also be increased walkways areas near the curbside check-in locations. Inside the terminals, the public areas, including ticket lobbies, baggage claim and terminal concourses are also being refurbished, in addition to lighting and door and window units. Construction is scheduled to be complete next year. Late last year, the airport launched an unprecedented maintenance campaign to clean and improve the environment at the region's premier international airport for guests arriving and departing the New Orleans region.

Dubbed "Music to Your Eyes", the campaign is designed to transform the environment of the Airport into an even fresher and more visitor-friendly facility.

Airport Shuttle, Inc., is the official ground transportation for Armstrong International Airport, with service to and from New Orleans' hotels and other designated locations. Fare is \$13.00 each way. No reservations are required.

What are my options for taxis, buses and streetcars?

There are thousands of taxis available on New Orleans streets and at major hotels. Taxi rates are \$2.50 plus \$1.60 per mile (.20 per one-eighth mile) thereafter. There is also an additional charge of \$1.00 per passenger after the first passenger. During peak visitor times (including Mardi Gras and Jazz Fest) taxi rates are \$4 per person or the meter rate, whichever is higher. A fixed rate of \$28 (one to two people) is charged from the airport to most areas of New Orleans. For parties of more than two, the fare is \$12 per person.

RTA services are \$1.25, including bus transportation and the streetcar. Twenty-nine bus lines are running, providing 25,000 rides daily. Bus service allows transportation throughout the city's major corridor, extending from the Faubourg Marigny to Riverbend.

The New Orleans **Streetcar** line is back in service, including the leg traveling on Canal Street from the Mississippi River to Mid-City, and from Canal Street north on Carrollton Avenue to City Park at Wisner Boulevard. The Riverfront line is also running. A leg from Canal Street runs down historic St. Charles Avenue and extends through the Garden District, to Carrollton Avenue.

Does Amtrak service New Orleans?

Yes. The City of New Orleans train is running to Memphis and Chicago, while the Crescent runs to Atlanta and New York.

What are my options for cruises?

The Norwegian Cruise Lines, Carnival Cruise Lines, RiverBarge Excursion Lines and the Majestic American (American Queen) are sailing from New Orleans.

How is the Convention Center?

With \$62 million in renovations completed, the Morial Convention Center is sporting a brand new look and level of comfort. Renovations include new flooring and furnishings on all three levels, hotel-like finishes, and a brighter, more engaging environment. The same great service and amenities that made the Morial an industry leader are better than ever: 3.1 million total square feet of space; high speed wi-fi, 4,000-seat Conference Auditorium, 12 separate/combinable exhibit halls, 140 meeting rooms and a team of seasoned industry professionals. The Center did brisk business in 2007---hosting 94 major conventions, tradeshow and meetings.

What convention groups has New Orleans recently hosted?

- Pennwell Corporation's POWER-GEN International was held in New Orleans December 11-13, with approximately 17,000 attendees.
- The American Society of Agronomy (ASA), the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO), National League of Cities (NLC) and Diversified Business Communications' International Workboat Show all enjoyed successful meetings and conventions in New Orleans during November 2007. AAO welcomed approximately 22,000 attendees and NLC's final attendance was 4,742. The Workboat Show, which announced during their visit that they will return to New Orleans in 2008, had a 10 percent increase in exhibit space and a 7.5 percent increase in attendance over 2006.

What convention groups has New Orleans recently hosted? continued

- The American College of Surgeons met in New Orleans October 6-10, 2007 with an approximate attendance of 11,000.
- The American College of Cardiology met in New Orleans March 24-27, 2007 for its 56th Annual Scientific Session and i2 Summit. With 26,250 attendees, the meeting was New Orleans' largest since 2005. The conference received rave reviews from ACC leadership and members.
- Corporate America is re-discovering New Orleans as a meeting destination, bringing new, shorter-term meetings business to the city in 2007. Whirlpool, Coca-Cola, Konica Minolta, Sherwin Williams and many others have been drawn to New Orleans for the wealth of "voluntourism" community service opportunities available to expand corporate philanthropic efforts. (For example: Habitat for Humanity projects are being added to corporate meeting agendas.)

What groups are holding meetings in New Orleans in early 2008?

Future meetings (3,000 or more in attendance) in early 2008 include:

Event/Date/Projected Attendance

American Economic Association/Jan. 3-6/8,000
 American Farm Bureau/Jan. 12-15/5,000
 American Traffic Safety Services Association/Feb. 8-12/3,200
 National Basketball Association/Feb. 14-17/10,000
 American Stroke Association/Feb. 20-22/5,500
 Pittsburgh Conference & Expo/Mar. 1-6/24,000
 The Minerals Metals Materials Society/Mar. 8-12/3,000
 American Physical Society/Mar. 9-13/7,300
 Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development/Mar. 14-17/12,500
 NACE, International/Mar. 16-20/5,500
 American Chemical Society/Apr. 6-9/14,000
 National Cable & Telecommunications Association/May 17-20/17,000

Is New Orleans a safe place for visitors?

Yes. Tourist areas are as safe as those in any big city.

The ratio of police to citizens is actually higher today:

Pre-Katrina Police Force	Post Katrina Police Force
Number of Officers – 1,680	Number of Officers – 1,406
Number of Citizens – 455,000	Number of Citizens – 300,000
Ratio Police/Citizens – 1:270	Ratio Police/Citizens – 1:213

In 2007, New Orleans safely hosted millions of visitors for State Farm Bayou Classic, Voodoo Music Experience, Southern Decadence, ESSENCE Festival, Mardi Gras celebrations, the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, major sporting events, cultural festivals, and large conventions with tens of thousands of attendees.

Is New Orleans a safe place for visitors? continued

By the end of next month, New Orleans will have hosted over a million visitors through such events as the Allstate Sugar Bowl and BCS National Championship Game, Mardi Gras and the NBA All-Star Game.

Testimonials from leisure visitors and travel industry professionals are available here: www.neworleanscvb.com/static/index.cfm/contentID/752/sectionID/2/subsectionID/752

Testimonials from business travelers and convention visitors are available here: www.neworleanscvb.com/static/index.cfm/contentID/744/sectionID/3/subsectionID/744

New Orleans' popular tourist areas such as the French Quarter, Downtown/Central Business District, Uptown, Garden District, Magazine Street, Warehouse/Arts District and Convention Center Boulevard continue to maintain a record as one of the safest and most walkable places for visitors of any city in America.

Unfortunately--as in any major city--crime does exist, and in New Orleans, the vast majority of violent crime is criminal-on-criminal acts which occur in areas of the city not frequented by tourists.

The New Orleans Police Department is known nationally for its record in making New Orleans a safe place to visit, ranging from large-scale crowd control events such as Mardi Gras, to four or five individuals enjoying a weekend getaway. Today the citizen-to-police ratio is much higher than it was pre-Katrina and we have backup from a new police recruit class, the National Guard and state police troopers to maintain a visible and serious law-enforcement presence.

As with any destination, we recommend that vacationers and convention attendees practice common sense and stay in well-populated tourist areas when they are here. New Orleans remains a national treasure and we want everyone who visits it to have a safe and enjoyable time.

How has the New Orleans Convention & Visitors Bureau prepared for hurricane season?

The **New Orleans CVB Tourism Crisis Management Plan**, along with diligent and thorough preparation with an emphasis on safety, will assist visitors in responding appropriately to emergencies. The City of New Orleans and State of Louisiana have implemented a unified emergency communications plan to ensure the timely flow of information across the region in emergency situations. A comprehensive and effective citywide emergency communications plan for the Greater New Orleans tourism industry has been developed for visitors.

What are my options should I need medical care while visiting?

Hospitals convenient to tourist areas are:

- Touro Infirmary, 1404 Foucher St., 504-897-7011, www.touro.com
- Tulane University Hospital and Clinic, 1415 Tulane Ave., 504-988-5800, www.tuhc.com
- Ochsner Clinic Foundation and Hospital, 1514 Jefferson Highway, 800-874-8984, www.ochsner.org/frontpage/default.htm
- Children's Hospital, 200 Henry Clay Ave., 504-899-9511, www.chnola.org

How's the Superdome?

The Louisiana Superdome, one of America's most recognizable landmarks, has a spectacular schedule of big-time football this fall.

The Superdome will be the site of the Allstate BCS National Championship Game-college football's national championship-on Monday, January 7, 2008. That will make New Orleans the first city to host three major college post-season games after the same season. The R+L Carriers New Orleans Bowl was in the Dome on Friday, December 21, 2007, and the Allstate Sugar Bowl Football Classic was played Tuesday, January 1, 2008.

At the neighboring New Orleans Arena, the New Orleans Hornets have returned full-time to the city for the 2007-2008 season, and the Arena will be the site of the NBA All-Star Game Sunday, Feb. 17, 2008.

How is the city advertising and marketing to tourists?

The New Orleans CVB launched an aggressive, strategic marketing, public relations and direct sales campaign, designed to celebrate its authentic culture. "Forever New Orleans," a 30-minute travel television show, showcasing the eclectic nature and vibrant culture of the city, is now airing in 51 countries in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, reaching 119 million homes.

On July 9, 2007, the New Orleans CVB launched the new Web site, **24NOLA**, an interactive Web site and itinerary planning tool for visitors who want to experience New Orleans culture as locals do.

"Forever New Orleans" is an international branding campaign that celebrates a spirit of swagger. It uses headlines such as *"New Orleans is Open. To Just About Anything."*, *"Soul is Waterproof"* and *"Old World, New Promise,"* which are appearing on billboards and magazines throughout the US.

What is the population of New Orleans? Will there be workers to staff the hotels and restaurants?

Yes. Orleans Parish currently has approximately 300,000 residents. Pre-Katrina, this number was 455,000. Post-Katrina, the metropolitan New Orleans area has 1.1 million residents. Pre-Katrina, this number was 1.3 million.

What options are available to volunteer to help a neighborhood that was affected by Hurricane Katrina?

From convention visitors to leisure travelers, church groups to high school and college students, people have shown incredible generosity in giving of their time and talent, and a great deal of elbow grease, helping the city of New Orleans in its recovery and restoration. Governor Kathleen Blanco and Lt. Gov. Mitch Landrieu have formed an official organization that matches volunteer opportunities with volunteers, called Volunteer Louisiana. Visit www.volunteerlouisiana.gov to get started.

I continue to see and read so many negative stories about New Orleans in the national press that it makes me question whether it is ok for me to visit.

Since Hurricane Katrina nearly three years ago, New Orleans has remained under intense media scrutiny, particularly on the outlying neighborhoods that are still rebuilding. These areas are completely unrelated to popular tourist areas and our ability to successfully host major meetings and welcome visitors. To read some of our positive news stories, please visit <http://www.neworleanscvb.com/articles/index.cfm/action/articles/typeID/2>.

Seeing is Believing!

Now is the perfect opportunity to rediscover New Orleans ... the most authentic, walkable, historic, soulful destination in America. For visitor testimonials or more information, please visit www.foreverneworleans.com.

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