

## Dining & Bars

The people of New Orleans are passionate about eating. Any visitor to the city should experience the regional flavor, but there are important differences between the countrified Cajun, refined Creole, and classic Southern styles of cooking that make up New Orleans cuisine. There also exists a unifying principle: "Fat is flavor." Cream, butter, and oil abound. With this in mind, pace yourself! Hot weather and heavy food can limit your visit to the confines of your hotel room. Stay on the safe side and try to limit yourself to one big meal a day.

### Downtown/French Quarter

Tourists are always at risk of getting an expensive, average-tasting meal in the Quarter. The tourist industry spawned many mediocre restaurants that prioritize location over taste. On the plus side, a truly bad meal is difficult to find anywhere in New Orleans. Avoid the handful of chain restaurants in favor of the little holes in the wall.

To start your morning off, how about an order of pipping hot beignets loaded with powdered sugar from [Cafe Du Monde](#), a New Orleans institution.

Quality service usually comes at a high price in the Quarter, but you are also paying for a slice of history - a seat in some of the oldest fine dining establishments in the country. In any of the classic Creole-French restaurants, like [Arnaud's](#) and [Brennan's](#), you will have a satisfying experience laden with such traditional delicacies as Oysters Rockefeller, Trout Meuniere, Turtle Soup, and Banana's Foster. For the full-on Southern buffet, check out [Court of the Two Sisters](#). Locals like to put this granddaddy of buffets down, but it has its merits, including solid bread pudding, Dixieland jazz, and a beautiful view of the Quarter.

For those in search of something more nouveau and intimate, the Quarter also offers the acclaimed [Bayona](#) (a four-star bargain), the gorgeous Gamay, the Italian-Creole [Bacco](#), and the romantic Bella Luna, which overlooks the Mississippi River.

There are many places to have a casual lunch. Briny oyster shooters can be had at [ACME Oyster House](#), or a mixed-meat Muffuletta sandwich from the [Central Grocery](#) always hits the spot. After lunch, or even better for breakfast, move on to the sticky French pastry at La Marquise.

A scattering of miscellaneous downtown restaurants represent just about everything that New Orleans has to offer. The downtown area has everything from old-school grease joints to cutting-edge bistros. For old-time favorites that never cease to please, New Orleanians go to the no-nonsense [Mandina's](#) or the BBQ shrimp palace, [Pascal's Manale](#).

Many people flock to New Orleans for the simple truth that alcohol is everywhere: in the bars, on the sidewalks, in the streets. From the impressive wine lists of the elite [New Orleans' Grill Room](#) in the [Windsor Court Hotel](#) to the many to-go Daiquiri shops on festive Bourbon Street, folks in New Orleans like to drink and they don't like to wait until the weekend to partake of the spirits. Whether it's to kick off your evening or to wrap it up, no trip to the French Quarter is complete without a [Pat O'Brien's](#) cocktail. Try the house special, the "hurricane."

### Central Business District

For a sampling of a New Orleans staple, stop by [Mother's](#) for a good ol' fashioned po' boy sandwich. For a slightly more upscale example of traditional Creole food, [The Veranda Restaurant](#) will serve up an

unforgettable meal. If all the Southern cooking has you hurting, the [Apple Seed Shoppe](#), is an excellent, tasty and healthy lunch spot to keep your day going. When the time comes to quench your thirst, [Gordon Biersch Brewery Restaurant](#) serves up quality beers with quality food.

### **Garden District**

The Garden District is full of all kinds of good eats. For classic cuisine and service, Emeril Lagasse's [Delmonico Restaurant & Bar](#) is a Big Easy favorite. [Cafe Atchafalaya](#) is another classic Creole eatery where you can sample goods from the Bayou. And if you're serious about your oysters, [Casamento's](#) is the place for you, but be aware as they close when oysters aren't in season.

Sundays can be difficult for dining as many of New Orleans' better restaurants close for the day. Fortunately, glorious options still exist, most especially the Brennan family's famous [Commander's Palace](#), the former stomping-ground of celebrity chefs Emeril Lagasse and Paul Prudhomme. If you're hankering for a taste of the far east down south, [Five Happiness Restaurant](#) can satisfy, while [The Delachaise](#) serves up a variety of tapas and wines.

The heart and soul of the city's drinking culture lies in its low-key bars. Laid-back hang-outs with names like [Le Bon Temps Roule](#) attract an interesting mix of students, celebrities, faded intellectuals, and serious barflies. In short, these are marvelous places to blend in and be entertained.

### **Warehouse District/Arts District**

For an evening of sophistication, try the eponymous [Emeril's New Orleans](#) or [7 On Fulton](#) for a fancy, filling meal.

No visit to the south would be complete without some down-home barbeque, so head to [Ugly Dog Saloon and Bar-B-Que](#) for brisket or ribs and a game of pool. Cochon serves up spicy Cajun cuisine and the requisite glass of Bourbon.

The Warehouse District offers up quite a bit in the way of ethnic foods as well, such as the Asian-Fusion restaurant [Hipstix](#), or [Rock-n-Sake](#) for sushi and sake bombs.