



celebrate new orleans

**WITH 300 YEARS OF HISTORY, THE BIG
EASY OFFERS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE
DURING HER BIRTHDAY YEAR**

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EW ORLEANS SITS at a precarious turn of the Mississippi River, a sharp curving bend that shaped the adjacent land into a crescent. For centuries, this stretch of earth along the river provided high ground during storms and spring floods, and gave Native Americans ample views of approaching enemies.

When Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne, Sieur de Bienville, arrived in 1718 at this high ground 100 miles from the Gulf of Mexico, he deemed it the ideal spot to build a city. He named it La Nouvelle Orléans, for Philippe II, the Duke of Orléans, who was Regent of France at the time.

Since that rustic founding in 1718, New Orleans has seen numerous nations plant their flags on the site. Immigrants from around the world made their way to Louisiana over the past 300 years, creating a gumbo culture that exists today and drives the city's tourism.

It's one reason why the *New York Times* put New Orleans at the top of its "52 places to visit in 2018," list.

"There is no city in the world like New Orleans," the *Times* reported. "Influences from Europe, the Caribbean, Latin America, Africa and indigenous

peoples have made it the ultimate melting pot. And that diversity expresses itself in a multitude of ways that define New Orleans in the American imagination: music, food, language, and on and on. Though [it has] been a long recovery from Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans isn't just back on its feet, it is as vibrant as ever — particularly impressive for a 300-year old."

Three hundred years is no small feat for a city located in such an unpredictable location. That's why there's much to celebrate this year.

by
cheré
coen



New Orleans is a world-renowned culinary hub so it's a given that restaurants will be tapping into Tricentennial fever. Several restaurants have announced specialty menus and more in honor of the big year.

Even though New Orleans began as a French city, the city's culinary scene reflects its diverse heritage over 300 years. This month, for instance, the **Top Taco Festival NOLA** (toptaconola.com) returns for its second year on March 15, pairing restaurants with tequila brands and serving up gourmet tacos and tequila cocktails in Woldenberg Park to benefit One Heart NOLA. New this year from festival organizers is **Agave Week**, a six-day celebration of tequila and mesquite that includes "The World's Largest Bloody Maria Brunch" on March 11, pairing dinners, a margarita mix-off and more.



DO

Don't just learn about history, experience it. Visit the Louisiana State Museums, which house numerous artifacts from the city's diverse and vibrant centuries, from Carnival floats in the Presbytere to Louis Armstrong's first cornet in the New Orleans Jazz Museum at the Old U.S. Mint. The 1850 House and Madame John's Legacy allows visitors inside homes used in bygone eras and for something truly unique, the Cabildo offers one of only four Napoleon Bonaparte death masks in the world, created by Dr. Francesco Antommarchi, Napoleon's physician at the time of his death.

learn

The Historic New Orleans Collection (hnoc.org) has an amazing array of historical artifacts and documents and will be utilizing many of these for its exhibit, "New Orleans, the Founding Era," from now until May 27. But the free exhibit will also include items culled from French, Spanish and Canadian collections, such as drawings of original buildings and the first plan for the city. Complementing the exhibit is a bilingual catalog with essays from curators, historians, authors and Gérard Araud, the French ambassador to the United States.

The New Orleans Archdiocese presents **"The Church in the Crescent: 300 Years of Catholicism in New Orleans,"** through June 30 at the Old Ursuline Convent Museum located inside the convent, built in 1745 and considered the oldest building in the Mississippi Valley. In addition to the exhibit will be a lecture series in the spring and fall and the Tricentennial Interfaith Prayer Service on April 17 at the St. Louis Cathedral, the city's most famous landmark and the second oldest basilica in the U.S.

TRICENTENNIAL EVENTS

"Making New Orleans Home: A Tricentennial Symposium" exploring the city's 300-year history and its diverse population is March 8 to 11. Open to the public, the symposium will feature lectures and panel discussions at locations throughout the city, including Tulane and Xavier universities and the Hotel Monteleone. Evening events are at The Historic New Orleans Collection and the New Orleans Jazz Museum.

The Tricentennial celebration lasts all year but major events center around April, since it's believed that Bienville landed on the shores of the Mississippi River in the spring of 1718, said Mark Romig, CEO of the New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation. In addition to the regular festivities planned each year in New Orleans — **French Quarter Festival** and **Jazz Fest**, to name two — the city has planned the **Tricentennial NOLA Navy Week** April 19 through 25 with **Tall Ships New Orleans 2018** (tallshipsnola2018.com) arriving April 19 to 22. The first features naval ships from the U.S., Canada and France

parking at the Woldenberg Park for free ship tours and a culinary cook-off between visiting and Louisiana chefs. The Tall Ships will also allow guests on board after sailing up the Mississippi River.

Philippe II, the French Duke of Orléans at the time of the founding of New Orleans, was a patron of the arts, collecting 772 paintings until his death in 1723. The massive collection remained in his family until the French Revolution, but its dispersal contributed to the formation of public museums in Europe, according to Vanessa Schmid, New Orleans Museum of Art's senior research curator for European art.

In honor of the city's Tricentennial, NOMA will host **"The Orléans Collection,"** featuring pieces from Philippe's holdings culled from the Uffizi Gallery, the Louvre and the Rijksmuseum, among others. The exhibit will run Oct. 26 through Jan. 27, 2019. There will be related programs such as curator-led talks, gallery tours, seminars, film screenings, a two-day symposium and more. Turn to page 18 for additional tricentennial art exhibitions and events

For more Tricentennial event details, visit 2018nola.com/events.



PHOTOS BY CHERYL GERBER

SEE

One of the goals of the city's Tricentennial committee was to restore historic **Gallier Hall**, a Greek Revival building created by architect James Gallier Sr. between 1845 and 1853. The elegant building served as City Hall until 1956 when the New Orleans municipal government moved to Duncan Plaza. The restoration is expected to be completed by March, open to the public and include several paintings, including ones of George Washington, Andrew Jackson and the Marquis de Lafayette, as well as numerous decorative objects.

drink

Ralph's on the Park at the edge of New Orleans' City Park will celebrate the 300th anniversary with "Our History Told in Cocktails," serving up concoctions that not only honor the city's history but the restaurant's as well. The building that houses Ralph's on the Park began as an 1860 coffeehouse and was known for a time as City Park Tavern and Tavern on the Park. Look for drinks that recognize former owners, the turn-of-the-century red light district known as Storyville and the 19th-century gentlemen who dueled under the nearby live oak trees.

DTB on Oak Street, abbreviated for Down the Bayou, will serve up specialty cocktails all year long with nods to those delicious libations created in the city. DTB will create modern interpretations of classic cocktails such as brandy milk punch, the Ramos Gin Fizz and the Pimm's Cup, all of which originated or were enhanced in New Orleans.

Bourbon enthusiasts may enjoy the **New Orleans Bourbon Festival** (nobourbonfest.com) March 8 through 10 at the Contemporary Arts Center and Le Meridien hotel. There will be pairing dinners, seminars with bourbon experts, an outdoor marketplace and the Stave and Thief Society Executive Bourbon Steward Class on March 12, plus more. The theme this year is "Bourbon Generations," and will honor families of master distillers, including Fred and Freddie Noe of Jim Beam and Eddie and Bruce Russell of Wild Turkey. Tickets for the second annual event range from \$59 to \$490.

