

New Orleans: French Quarter Historical Walking Tour

Introduction

Hi. Welcome to iziTRAVEL's Historic French Quarter: New Orleans Walking Tour, presented by ListenUp Audio. We're so glad you'll be joining us today! I'm _____ and I'll be your guide. A few notes before we get started. This tour takes approximately an hour and a half to complete. You can stop at any time and start again at the same spot later. If you'd like, you can put your phone in your pocket and just listen from here. I'll be giving you clear directions and the audio will automatically start playing when you get close to the next point of interest. If a site is closed or your path is blocked, don't worry. Just go around it. The tour will pick up at the next location. And this is important: PLEASE make sure you stay aware of your surroundings at *all* times and obey *all* traffic signals.

(pause)

Welcome to the Historic New Orleans French Quarter. Sitting on a crescent in the Mississippi River and known locally as the "Vieux Carré," this unique and extraordinary blend of Spanish, French, Creole and American styles form the very heart of the city of New Orleans, providing an experience like no other. From the traditional jazz echoing across its streets, to the horse-drawn carriages gliding along cobbled walkways, every step along New Orleans' French Quarter calls back to a time when French exploration and Antebellum sophistication were at their peaks. Join us as we visit one of America's most vibrant artist colonies, New Orleans' oldest neighborhood, and a place where artists, painters, and street performers make their living ensuring tourists (like yourself) feel that every day spent in New Orleans is its own vacation. If you think you're ready, let's get started!

Jackson Square

Starting off our tour, we come to the historic Jackson Square, known originally as "The Place d'Armes," and later renamed in honor of General Andrew Jackson, seventh President of the United States and hero of the Battle of New Orleans. Facing the Mississippi River and flanked by The Presbytère, The Cabildo, and the towering St. Louis Cathedral, Jackson Square is home to some of the finest artists, restaurants, museums, and merchants in all of New Orleans.

Following the Battle of New Orleans in 1815, the Baroness Pontalba, an accomplished businesswoman who would later construct the Parisian-styled Pontalba Apartments still in use today, lobbied for and helped to finance a redesign of the square in which you now stand. These new designs, including the iron fence surrounding the square, the formal gardens with their lush array of brilliant flowers, bushes, and leaves, and the numerous benches and walkways upon which tourists (like yourself) can soak in and enjoy the view, remain an endearing and timeless addition to the already culturally rich landscape, further solidifying the square's reputation as a haven for history, beauty, and artistry.

Taking this into consideration, take a moment to walk the outlying streets of the Square, marveling at the painters, artists, and merchants all around you, many of whom can draw or paint your portrait in as little as one hour as you sit under the glorious shade of the oak trees above. As you look around, try to imagine the square's heritage as a French trading camp, one which has grown from the small, formal colony of its infancy to the bustling open-air artist colony you see before you today. As you walk along the cobbled streets, leading into and around the central part of the square, take a moment to bask in the sights and sounds, from the traditional jazz of New Orleans fame echoing across the pavement, to the horse-drawn carriages gliding past, and even the street performers, many of whom make their living doing their best to ensure that each and every tourist (including you) feels that every day spent in New Orleans is its own vacation. Don't forget to smile, and should you feel so inclined, don't forget to tip. There are open hats aplenty here at Jackson Square. When you're ready, enter the central square and make your way to the statue at its center.

We now come to the premiere attraction of Jackson Square, the statue of General Andrew Jackson upon his rearing horse. Erected in 1856 by the sculptor Clark Mills, this statue, one of four identical statues in the United States, remains the focal point of the square's lush landscape and a monument to his great victory at the Battle of New Orleans. Sitting beneath the towering view of the St. Louis Cathedral, it captures the moment in which General Jackson, reviewing his troops before battle, lifted his plumed hat in salute, hours before he "with a handful of men, would prove himself the savior" of New Orleans. And, at around 20,000 pounds, it remains one of Clark Mills' crowning achievements, having withstood the countless storms and hurricanes of Louisiana's coastline for decades. Just beyond the square, we move now to our next destination on the tour, the St. Louis Cathedral.

St. Louis Cathedral

We move now to the St. Louis Cathedral, one of New Orleans' most notable landmarks and considered by many to be the true "Heart of old New Orleans." Triple-steepled and nestled between the historic Cabildo and Presbytere, it stands as a dedication France's King Louis IX, towering above Jackson Square and its outlying streets.

Erected upon the site of several previous churches, the original design for the cathedral was selected by the French engineer Adrien De Pauger in 1721; himself a visitor to what was then a very "new" New Orleans. As fate would have it however, De Pauger died shortly

before construction upon the church could be completed. As one of his final wishes, he asked to be buried in the unfinished building, a wish that was presumably granted shortly after his death. Adrien De Pauger's construction would ultimately stand for a little over six decades, before a devastating fire in 1788 would all but destroy it. In that time, men and women of all stations, from lowly to highborn, worshiped and were baptized within its walls, including but not limited to prominent governors of France and Spain, and the children of colonists and slaves alike.

In the years following, the St. Louis Cathedral underwent additional construction efforts, with groundwork being laid in 1789 for the new building and ultimately completed in 1794. Christened the Cathedral of the Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas, this second variation was in fact a gift from the wealthy Don Andres Almonester y Roxas, himself a native of Andalusia and an avid collector of properties around New Orleans.

Ultimately, however, the St. Louis Cathedral would undergo its final reconstruction in 1850, foregoing much of the brick and mortar of its previous construction in favor of bringing it to size and form with its surrounding buildings. Under the direction of the Baroness de Pontalba, the finalized cathedral would become the blend of Creole, Parisian and Greek Revival architecture seen today, adopting the large clock and bell of its previous construction into its central tower. The bell, adorned with American eagles, still tolls the hour to this day, and bears the inscription "*Fondue a Paris pour M. Jn. Delachaux de Nouvelle Orleans*" - Cast in Paris for Mr. John Delachaux of New Orleans.

The Presbytère

Flanking alongside the St. Louis cathedral opposite the Cabildo, we come now to the world famous Presbytère. Multi-layered and built in 1791 by the French architect Guilberto Guillemard, it was financed by the Spanish philanthropist Don Andres Almonester y Roxas, and originally designed as a complement and match to the Cabildo, an adjacent structure whose high-arched windows and openings, articulated by pilasters, were a testament to the colonial Spanish architecture favored by Guillemard, Roxas and other philanthropists and engineers of the time. Known originally as the "Casa Curial" (Ecclesiastical House), its name comes from the fact that it was initially intended as a residence for Capuchin monks.

Yet despite its original purposes, The Presbytère has never actually housed clergymen, and has instead been used for numerous other commercial purposes over the years, serving primarily as a courthouse from 1834 to 1911, where it housed the Louisiana State Court. Following this, The Presbytère was again re-commissioned, and in 1911, after being sold to the state, it ultimately became part of the Louisiana State Museum.

After being declared a National Historic Landmark in 1970, it has become known as a haven for and showcase of some of the most elaborate and spectacular collections of Mardi Gras artifacts and memorabilia today. And, for a small fee, visitors to The Presbytère can immerse themselves in the rich origins of New Orleans' Mardi Gras traditions, told through permanent, elaborate, and high-tech exhibits such as the famous "Mardi Gras: It's Carnival Time in Louisiana." Offering parade floats to climb upon, costumes to see, and even glimpses into the secret societies from which modern Mardi Gras traditions have evolved, it's truly a unique experience, one imbued with the very spirit of the city and its residents.

Additional exhibits, such as The Presbytère's "Living With Hurricanes: Katrina and Beyond," explore the lasting effects of the deadly and devastating storm upon the city as a whole, documenting the rescue, relief, and revitalization efforts of the city to rebuild and renew itself to even greater heights.

The 1850 House

We stand now at the famous 1850 House, an antebellum row house constructed to represent the middle and upper-class lifestyle of New Orleans' famous French quarter. Built in the same year by the Baroness Pontalba, daughter of Don Andres Almonester y Roxas, it offers a glimpse into the New Orleans of 150 years ago, arguably the most prosperous chapter in the city's history.

Triple-tiered and inspired by the Parisian architecture favored by the Baroness Pontalba, the 1850 House isn't so much a single house as it is a set of row-houses, stretching along the lower Pontalba apartments lining St. Ann Street. Whereas the lower floor was home to several self-sustaining businesses, including general goods stores, law offices, banks, and even a railroad company, the upper floors served as residences to its wealthy owners, many of whom were merchants with the financial means by which to afford the high rent costs associated with living in what was considered one of New Orleans' most "fashionable" districts.

Indeed, true to the era in which it was built, The 1850 House offers a rare glimpse into the prosperity and daily life of its mid-19th century residents, showcasing an extravagant display of Parisian art, décor, and other furnishings by renowned artists and carpenters alike, many of which were French-trained. To add to this, given many of the residents were slave owners and/or employed servants, The 1850 House offers an additional glimpse into the multi-class lifestyle prevalent to the era, at a time when many wealthy homeowners utilized multiple residences, one for the owners themselves, with a separate wing provided for storage and/or the housing of servants or slaves. Tours by the Louisiana State Museum, which purchased the property in 1927, offer a detailed look into The 1850 House's rich history with a meticulous re-creation of one of the residences, and all visitors to the French quarter are encouraged to make reservations, as such tours are limited.

Café Du Monde

For the next stop on our tour, we take time to visit the renowned Café Du Monde, New Orleans most prestigious and delectable coffee shop. Open 24/7 and filled with an assortment of dark, roasted Coffee, Chicory, Beignets, White and Chocolate milk, and freshly squeezed Orange Juice daily, it remains one of the premiere stops on any tour for a relaxing time with friends and family.

Established in 1862 as a way to introduce all citizens of New Orleans' French Quarter to the Creole-developed, chicory-blended style of coffee, Café Du Monde's menu and its motto of "keeping things the way they've always been" has remained unchanged even to this day. This dedication, dating back to mid-1700s, when the French brought coffee to North America as they explored and settled along the Mississippi River, lies primarily in Café Du Monde's commitment to the history of those coffee techniques (originating due to a coffee *shortage* at the time) in which they café chooses to only serve its coffee in two ways: Black or Au Lait. And, as chicory adds a chocolate-like flavor coffee, the taste itself has become a staple of the region itself.

Yet while the Café Du Monde is known primarily for its coffee, it also remains a place of fine treats as well, most especially its beignets, a hole-less, French style of doughnut cut into large squares and covered in heaps of powdered sugar. Served three at a time with a characterized sweetness, the beignets are usually paired with café au lait, as residents and other tourists often claim they offer the perfect counter-balance to the chicory-flavored coffee's signature bitterness. To top things off, the beignet was even declared Louisiana's official state doughnut in 1986, further solidifying its place in the cultural flavor of the region as a whole.

Due in large part to these signature tastes, Café Du Monde has remained both a staple of New Orleans culture and one of popular culture as well. Featured in novels, TV series, and even movie screens over the years, its signature green and white color scheme, along with its French Quarter architecture can be seen prominently in nearly all forms of entertainment.

The New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park

Up next, we come to The New Orleans Jazz National Park, a home within a home for New Orleans' lush and vibrant history as the birthplace for all things "jazz." Created in 1994 as a commemoration of this musical legacy, the park serves as a venue to preserve resources and information on the origins and progressions of Jazz in New Orleans.

These origins, dating back to as early as the 19th century, tell of a time in which New Orleans, a major seaport even back then, drew immigrants and visitors from nations throughout the globe, each bringing their own musical customs and rituals as they settled within New Orleans' many districts. While the French Creoles, Spanish colonists, and other European settlers made up the initial surge of immigrants to New Orleans' port, bringing their particular style of music to the area, it was African natives, often brought over as

slaves from the French West Indies, who ultimately gave rise to modern day “jazz,” their tribal chants, rituals, and instruments giving it its signature rhythm.

It is because of this history that The New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park, dubbed the NOJNHP for short, seeks to celebrate this melting pot of musical rituals by offering and hosting a wide assortment of jazz performances, lectures, films, and displays commemorating jazz’s rise from the streets of New Orleans to countries the world over. Highlighting key figures in jazz’s history such as Buddy Bolden, often considered the father of jazz, to other jazz pioneers like Freddie Keppard and the great Louie Armstrong, the park seeks to teach jazz enthusiasts and questioners alike of the origins of New Orleans thriving jazz scene, and even remains the starting point for any and all jazz walking tours in the city. As such, according to its website, all events presented at the NOJNHP are free and open to the public.

Archdiocesan Archives

Our next stop of the tour brings us to The Archdiocesan Archives of New Orleans, home to the New Orleans ecclesiastical division of the Roman Catholic Church and the center of a larger ecclesiastical province that encompasses the entire state of Louisiana. Serving as a repository for the records of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, its mission is to “care for the historical records, publications, manuscript collections, and related records documenting the Catholic experience in Louisiana.”

Established in 1793 by Pope Pius VI during a time of Spanish colonial rule, it remains the second-oldest diocese in United States history, preceded only by the establishment of the Diocese of Baltimore in 1789. As a culturally diverse subset of the community already present within the city, the Archdiocese of New Orleans was responsible for seeking out and encouraging much of the city’s slave population to Christianity, ultimately helping to birth and strengthen a generation of future African American Catholics. Over time, immigrants from many other nations, such as Germany, Poland, and even Vietnam, have come to settle the provinces of New Orleans, many finding their way into the various Catholic churches of the area, expanding the city’s Catholic congregation.

This strengthened congregation, which has come to encompass the eight civil parishes in the greater New Orleans area: Jefferson; Orleans; Plaquemines; St. Bernard; St. Charles; St. John, St. Tammany; and Washington respectively, includes the great St. Louis Cathedral seen earlier in the tour, which acts as Mother Church to the Archdiocese itself. Pope Francis remains the current Bishop, with Gregory Michael Aymond acting as Archbishop.

Additionally, given the history of the Archdiocese of New Orleans (as recorded within the Archdiocesan Archives) is predated by the Catholic Church’s presence in New Orleans as far back as 1718, the archives themselves hold surmountable documentation of not only the beginnings of Catholicism in New Orleans but also its survival of several disasters, namely the great fire of 1788 which

destroyed the St. Louis Cathedral, British invasion in 1815 which culminated in the Battle of New Orleans, and even Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Because the Archdiocesan Archives remain the premiere resource for all Roman Catholic documentation in the greater Louisiana territories, access to said documents is limited, governed by federal and state law and multiple church policies, and monitored closely by archival staff.

Beauregard-Keyes House

Following the Archdiocesan Archives, we come now to the Beauregard-Keyes House. Located at 1113 Chartres Street across from the Ursulines Convent, the first thing you may notice about the Beauregard-Keyes house is that it bears little to no resemblance to the houses around it. Painted a pale, almost buttery yellow, its architecture is actually closer to the European styles made popular in Great Britain during the 19th century as opposed to the Parisian/Greek-inspired architecture of its neighbors, providing it a sharp and eye-catching contrast to other sights among the tour.

Given its location, the home's property was originally owned by Ursuline nuns who, having arrived in New Orleans in 1727, shortly after the city's founding, formed New Orleans' first Ursuline convent, an institution of the Catholic Church whose patron Saint Ursula's legend dates all the way back to legend the 4th and 5th centuries. After selling off parcels of the property in 1825, work almost immediately by designer François Corréjolle and builder James Lambert to finish the home for the wealthy auctioneer Joseph LeCarpentier. Completed in 1826 with combined elements of Greek Revival, Creole, and Palladian-style architecture, the finished product quickly became a hallmark of the city, one whose future owners would supply it with an assortment of unique features, including a cabinet gallery, detached outbuildings, and even a brick-walled garden.

Of the many owners of the Beauregard-Keyes house, the two most well-known remain Pierre Gustave Toutant-Beauregard a Confederate General and President of New Orleans from 1866-1868, and American author Frances Parkinson Keyes, whose many books, including *Madame Castel's Lodger* and *The Chess Players*, are still sold in the home's gift shop today. As a special note, Keyes' novel *Madame Castel's Lodger* even features the Beauregard-Keyes house as its setting along with Mr. Beauregard as a character, though it remained the only novel of hers to do so.

Even still, the Beauregard-Keyes House has another layer of history to it, one in which the home, converted to a museum in recent years, is said to play host to a variety of visitors, both living and dead. Now regarded as one of the most haunted locations in all of New Orleans, reports tell of ghastly apparitions of Civil War soldiers, dressed in full uniform, appearing and disappearing within moments, their disfigured faces, mangled limbs, and vacant expressions inciting terror in even the most hardened of skeptics. And, with the distinct sounds of moaning, shouting, or even gunfire permeating the wind around the Beauregard-Keyes house, Ghost

Hunters and tourists alike are encouraged (and likewise warned) to investigate at their own peril. Truly, it is a home with many secrets.

The Gallier House

Up next, we come to the famous Gallier House, home to two of the most famous architects in New Orleans history. Having designed some of the most recognizable landmarks throughout New Orleans, a number of which still stand today, the father and son duo of James and James Jr. Gallier were the minds behind Gallier Hall on St. Charles Avenue, the Pontalba Apartments on Jackson Square, and the Leeds Building to name just a few.

Built in 1857 while the city was undergoing an architectural boom, many of the home's exterior features, from its balcony overlooking Royal Street, to its four wrought-iron archways, provide some of the finest examples of the elaborate, iron latticework for which the French Quarter is so renowned. Boasting wooden, French windows which open to street-level, as well as a restored rear structure to act as an apartment for slaves alongside its lush, private garden, many of the features The Gallier House are as picturesque as the monuments for which its builders are so well regarded.

Yet while the exterior features of The Gallier House provide it with much of its historical prominence, its interior characteristics are truly a sight to behold as well. Featuring magnificent double parlors adorned with elegant Victorian furnishings, the interior of the home is a wide assortment of luxuries rarely seen during the time. From interior bathrooms featuring hot and cold running water, to intricate millwork throughout, and even the addition of an inside kitchen (something rarely, if ever seen in most homes of the time), The Gallier House remains a portrait of Antebellum New Orleans luxury, and a testament to the ingenuity of its owners and engineers.

Lafitte's Blacksmith Shop

Winding our way around to the intersection of New Orleans' St. Philip Street and Bourbon Street, we come now to the infamous Lafitte's Blacksmith Shop, home to perhaps some of the most muddled and argued history of any of New Orleans's landmarks. Built during the early 18th century (circa 1722) when the city was still in its infancy, it holds several titles, the primary of which hails it as the "oldest bar in New Orleans" and, depending upon who you ask, the "oldest bar in the United States."

Named after its esteemed owners, the brothers Jean and Pierre Lafitte (who, interestingly enough, actually spelled their own name "L-a-f-f-i-t-e" as opposed to the spelling circulated today), the shop's storied history is one riddled with tales of smuggling, illegal slave distribution, and even piracy. While the brothers themselves were very real individuals, their birthdates, their birth places, and even some of their business dealings during their time as owners of the shop remain a mystery to this day. Though both brothers are

purported to have been smugglers in their lifetimes, it was Jean Lafitte, arguably the more famous of the two, whose checkered past provides the shop with much of its intrigue. A known privateer, Jean was said to have offered his services to General Andrew Jackson during the Battle of New Orleans in exchange for a full pardon. Likewise, Jean Lafitte's penchant for the "pirate life" was viewed as something of a contradiction to his publicly held title of "Blacksmith Owner," leading many New Orleans residents to wonder if his frequent meetings with clients at the shop were, in fact, nothing more than a front for seedier business. Throw in the fact that both brothers were not only incredibly secretive, but also known to have collaborated with other privateers eager to avoid government fees and taxes, and you have the perfect recipe for myth, legend, and infamy.

Yet while much of the mystery surrounding Lafitte's Blacksmith Shop lies in the alleged dealings of its two owners during their lifetimes, even more seems to have revealed itself in the years following their deaths. According to recent patrons, many of which flock yearly to the tavern for drinks and a taste of New Orleans, the ghosts of Jean Lafitte himself and other apparitions are said to haunt the tavern's hallowed brick walls. Patrons speak of angry, red eyes staring back at them from the tavern's chimney, while others *swear* they have seen the spirit of a woman lurking upstairs or around the tavern's rafters. Though the shop itself is known to stay open from 10 A.M. to "until everybody leaves," many patrons find themselves staying for only as long as needed, lest they too incur the ghostly stares of the infamous "Pirate Lafitte."

The Voodoo Museum

As a city, New Orleans has long had a reputation as a place for the unusual, a place for the odd and otherworldly. Marking the next destination on our tour, we come to perhaps the most exemplary tribute to this fact, the New Orleans Historic Voodoo Museum. Founded in 1972 by resident artist Charles Massicot Gandolfo, himself an avid purveyor, lover, and collector of all things "voodoo," the museum hosts an extraordinary collection of voodoo artifacts and products, ranging from chicken feet and snake skins, to voodoo books and candles, and even the proverbial (and more wildly known) voodoo doll.

Established as a means for Gandolfo (dubbed "Voodoo Charlie" by those closest to him) to share his love of Voodoo with friends, family, and other townspeople alike, much of the museum acts as a repository to Voodoo's storied history, one whose roots can be traced all the way back through three separate time periods: African, Creole, and American. Having heard from his grandmother that the family tree included a "Voodoo Queen," it is reported that Gandolfo simply couldn't resist learning more, and along with his little brother Jerry, he set about seeing to it that others too could relish in his passion.

Whereas some patrons describe the museum as nothing more than a set of dark, dusty rooms literally stuffed with artifacts from floor to ceiling, the conglomeration of which providing an almost claustrophobic overtone to the museum, others describe it as something more spectacular. While some visitors marvel at the rows of skulls, effigies, masks, and strings of garlic strewn across the walls and ceiling, others warily look upon its more discomfiting artifacts, like a piece of wood said to belong to Marie Laveau (regarded as the real “Voodoo Queen” of New Orleans), with a sense of foreboding. Even still, others see the museum as the brothers Gandolfo originally intended: an homage to New Orleans culture and a tribute to its reputation as the “Voodoo Capitol of the World.” No matter one’s opinion on Voodoo or its dark history, all visitors to New Orleans are encouraged to take a few moments to walk its hallowed grounds. Added haunted tours of the nearby St. Louis Cemetery are offered as well, affording guests the opportunity to gaze upon the tomb of the aforementioned “Voodoo Queen” herself, Marie Laveau.

Madame John’s Legacy

Standing just north of Jackson Square, we come now to the historic museum house known as Madame John’s Legacy. Built in 1788 upon the burnt plot of an earlier fire and marked as one of the only houses in the French Quarter to survive the French Quarter’s second Great Fire of 1794, it remains one of the few houses of the district to be also designed and built based upon the older, simpler French Creole architecture rather than the more popular, more ornate Spanish Colonial architecture of the time.

Deriving its name from a short story written by New Orleans author George Washington Cable, published in 1874 and titled “Tite Poulette,” much of the “legacy” of Madame John’s Legacy is attributed to Cable’s use of the property as a setting in conjunction with his explorations of the difficulties faced by Louisiana’s people of mixed racial heritage. Having garnered sympathy and support from his Northern readers, some of which were still doubtful as to the authenticity of Cable’s claims, another author by the name of Lafcadio Hearn read the short story (in which one of the primary characters, a “Monsieur John” bequeaths the property to his mistress Madame John), and the name stuck from that point onward.

Though the property isn’t so much one house as it is a complex of three separate buildings - the main house, the cook’s quarters and kitchen, and a two-story gentlemen’s guest quarters, each section of the property is its own view into Louisiana Creole design. Built high up off the ground in order to provide safety from flooding and other harsh weather conditions native to the region, other characteristics unique to its design include its thick walls protecting it from sun and rain, shuttered windows to provide a sense of privacy, and spacious interior to accommodate guests and furnishings alike. Given this uniqueness, the house has even been featured in a number of motion pictures over the years, most notably 1994’s *Interview with the Vampire* and 2012’s *12 Years A Slave*, both films highlighting the home’s distinguished features in the backdrop. Declared a National Landmark in 1970, tours to the main house of the complex are provided to the public free of charge.

Preservation Hall

Up next on our tour, we take another moment to celebrate New Orleans' heritage as the birthplace of all things "jazz" and visit The Preservation Hall, home to the great Preservation Hall Jazz Band. Established in 1961 by Philadelphia transplants Allan and Sandra Jaffe, Preservation Hall was born from the couple's desire to do one thing and one thing only: keep pure New Orleans jazz alive. During the 1950s and 1960s, as the rise of modern jazz and rock n' roll continued to sweep the nation, many jazz lovers, like the Jaffes, knew there had to be a way to keep traditional jazz, most especially traditional New Orleans jazz, from fading into obscurity or worse, being assimilated altogether into other genres. As luck would have it, other members of the community felt the same way, though it would take a special set of circumstances to occur before both the Jaffe's dream and the dream of other New Orleans jazz lovers could come into fruition.

The first of these was the penchant for a man by the name of E. Lorenz "Larry" Borenstein to host informal jazz lessons in building where Preservation Hall now stands. Seeing it as a clever way to draw patrons into his art gallery, Borenstein's shrewd business sense soon caught the eye of the Jaffes who, sensing further opportunity to turn the space into something more, convinced Borenstein to rent out the space to them monthly. The couple then set about converting the gallery into a concert hall, turning the 31 x 20 ft. room, with its worn, wooden floorboards, a few wooden benches, and some scattered sitting cushions into what they believed would be the best interpretation of their dream.

Yet despite their hard work, times were initially tough, and the hall lost money during its first few months of business. Though Allan Jaffe and his wife were both of keen business sense, their refusal to sell alcohol (a practice which continues to this day) or even to advertise the club almost threatened to sink their business entirely. Allan himself had to seek out aging musicians personally, many of which were African American and suffered greatly from racial discrimination and Jim Crow laws, while his wife did her best to write up the nightly schedules.

But good music travels fast, and good press travels even faster, and soon the couple's business began became the hottest and liveliest Jazz experience in all of New Orleans. Complete with its name engraved upon two instrument cases overhanging the wrought-iron gate marking its entrance, Preservation Hall quickly became known as "hallowed ground" to singers like Tom Waits and Louie Armstrong, and many other musicians, like bluesmen like Charlie Musselwhite came to refer to it as "the holy grail of clubs," joining the host of other touring bands that helped to revitalize the spirit of New Orleans traditional jazz. Even today, bands like The Preservation Hall's very own Preservation Hall Jazz Band, can be heard almost nightly, and jazz enthusiasts and newcomers alike are encouraged to stop by and lose themselves in the music.

Basin St. Station

Leaving the soothing jazz sounds of The Preservation Hall, we move now to New Orleans' Basin St. Station. Known formally as The New Orleans Terminal Company / Southern Railway Freight Office Building, it makes up one of the cornerstones of what was once the transportation crossroads of the city of New Orleans.

Standing at four stories and boasting a visitor information center, a staffed walking tour kiosk, a coffee shop, gift shop, two floors of renovated office space and a fourth roof-level floor overlooking some of the most beautiful parts of the city, the station symbolizes the preservation of a remnant from New Orleans' past, at a time when five railway stations, each with their own corresponding buildings, served greater New Orleans during the early 20th century. Regarded as one of the best stops on any tour to further one's education on all the sights and sounds that New Orleans has to offer, it also offers immediate access to St. Louis Cemetery #1 (resting place of the famed "Voodoo Queen" Marie Laveau and other famous New Orleanians), The French Quarter, Louis Armstrong Park, and a host of other historical sites, making it an ideal starting point for many walking tours throughout the city.

The Hermann-Grima House

Nearing the end of our tour, we come now to the famed Herman-Grima House, located in the heart of historic French Quarter. Designed and built by the engineer William Brand in 1831, its Federal/Georgian style of architecture (named after Britain's line of King George 1-IV) is regarded by many as one of the earliest and finest examples of American architectural design in all of New Orleans, and a hallmark to the city's "Golden Age." Sporting the only remaining horse stable and open-hearth style of kitchen in the French Quarter, the home itself stands as a monument to the wealthy Creole lifestyle of the 1830s-1860s.

Built initially for Samuel Hermann, a native of Rodelheim, Germany who immigrated to Louisiana in the early 1800s to start, manage and expand his brokerage business in the years to come, the lot was home to the Hermann family until the year of 1837 when, faced with financial ruin from the English cotton crash, Samuel Hermann was forced to sell the property to a Mr. Felix Grima.

Grima, himself a native Malta and an avid reader and purveyor of books and assorted culture, lived comfortably on the property with his widowed mother and his two unmarried sisters. As heavily involved members of New Orleans high society, the Grimas became known quickly throughout the city's upper circles and even hosted or participated important groups and events within the St. Louis

Cathedral and St. Augustine Church. Like their former owners however, they were not the last to live within the walls of 820 St. Louis Street, and the house was soon sold to its third and final owner.

Purchased in 1924 by the Christian Woman's Exchange (later re-named The Woman's Exchange), an establishment in New Orleans dating back to 1881 as a place for needy or disadvantaged women to sell their homemade products or family heirlooms, the Hermann-Grima house quickly became a new rooming house for the Exchange and its many women patrons. And, due to the painstaking dedication of its members as to the preservation and restoration of its parlors, bedrooms, and workspaces, the home remains a National Landmark and museum to this day, its authentic decorations, such as its mahogany dining table and delicately etched oversized hurricane shades, kept intact since its conversion in 1975.

Crescent City Cooks

Located right on the Mississippi riverfront at the foot of the Canal, we follow our guide (and our noses) to the famous Riverwalk Marketplace, home to several of New Orleans bigger specialty shops, a food court, and the newly opened Crescent City Cooks: Creole and Cajun Cooking School. Marked by its distinct crescent moon banner hanging over Chartres Street, the school, established in 2009 as a means for visitors the world over to "taste, buy, and bring home some New Orleans culture," has quickly become one of The French Quarter's most popular attractions.

Locally owned and operated, the school's mission to teach its visitors the joys and techniques of creating and preparing authentic Creole and Cajun cuisines, is one laced in the desires of its co-owners, Shelley Ross and Nia Duhe, "to provide an energetic culinary experience." Having grown up in Louisiana kitchens themselves, the passion of the two owners to "keep things fresh and fun" and to "share some of New Orleans' favorite recipes" led the two to establish the one of a kind school in the hopes that residents and visitors alike would come away invigorated and eager to try these recipes with friends and family.

Featuring hands-on demonstrations, both for individual travelers or even those traveling in a group, the school prides itself on granting eager patrons the opportunity to see, smell, and taste the buzz for themselves, with many of the region's most renowned dishes, such jambalaya, red beans and rice, gumbo and crawfish etouffee, on prominent, daily display. Going one step further, the school offers its patrons the chance to purchase the necessary ingredients for their own kitchens, to spread the excitement and experience of New

Orleans flavor wherever they go. Open six days a week from 10 A.M to 6 PM, and Sundays 12-6, visitors to New Orleans' French Quarter are encouraged to stop by and sit in.

Pharmacy Museum

With our minds firmly on food (and our bellies hopefully stuffed with it), we move now to The New Orleans Pharmacy Museum, deep within the quiet Vieux Carre Historic District of New Orleans' French Quarter. Constructed circa 1823 for the first licensed pharmacist in the United States, a Mr. Louis J. Dufilho Jr., the Creole-American townhouse contains a wide assortment of the pharmacist's medicines, instruments, apothecary jars, and even a few surprises.

Recreated in authentic detail, with glass containers housing most of Dufilho's wares, The Pharmacy Museum tells the story of when Dufilho, himself among the many other practicing pharmacists in the area, was subject to new laws and regulations regarding the close examination of pharmacists and their practices throughout the region.

With its Mahogany shelves lined with rows upon rows of concoctions, from elixirs of all kinds and colors, to recognizable sage and rosemary, and even to the horrific and disturbing, like a jar of live, squirming leeches, the museum is reminiscent of an era when many pharmacists, like Dufilho, often treated their patients' ailments with an incredibly diverse and often bizarre array of treatments, from the use alcohol as an antiseptic and sedative, to the implementation of tobacco as a means to "cure" asthma, to the shocking prescription of heroin (yes heroin) to help manage routine pain. Standing in Dufilho's shop gazing at all these strange and otherworldly brews, it's easy to feel like a kid in a candy store, as the store's shelves lined top to bottom with shiny bottles (including an actual "Love Potion No. 9") are eerily similar to the candy shop featured in the 1971 film *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*, its stuffed walls all but impossible to resist exploring.

Yet while the shop offers patrons a glimpse into the more bizarre aspects of early medicine, it nevertheless offers an equal look into the more practical and beneficial contributions to medicine at that time, from its highlight of the original role of the "soda fountain," to its plaques detailing Dufilho's own contributions the public around him during his time as practicing pharmacist for New Orleans. Whatever your reason for visiting, whether to take in some knowledge of early medicine or to bask in its extraordinary beginnings, tours of the museum are offered Tuesday – Saturday, from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M.

The Cabildo

Finishing up our tour of New Orleans' French Quarter, we come finally to the world renowned Cabildo, known as one of the most historically significant buildings in all of North America. Built during the same reconstruction period as The Presbytère by the French architect Guilberto Guillemard, the result of a restoration effort after the Great New Orleans Fire of 1794 all but destroyed its former structure, The Cabildo originally served to house the Spanish colonial government during its period of prominence within the region, deriving its name from the word "cabildo" meaning "council" in Spanish.

As the basis for The Presbytère's architecture (seen earlier in the tour), The Cabildo boasts the same Spanish Colonial construction as its adjacent neighbor, its high-arched windows and openings, articulated by pilasters, a defining characteristic of the Spanish government's building codes requiring sturdier, more fire-resistant building materials following the Great Fires of 1788 and 1794, conflagrations which quickly spread amongst and consumed the earlier wooden, French designs.

Boasting countless rooms of enormous historical significance, The Cabildo acts as a repository for some of America's rarest artifacts, like Napoleon's death mask for instance, of which only four are purported to exist, and even original works of art, such as Eugene Louis Lami's 1839 painting "The Battle of New Orleans," depicting the final, decisive battle of the War of 1812. Additionally, The Cabildo played host to a number of important events in U.S. History, including its Sala Capitular or "Meeting Room" acting as the setting to which the Louisiana Purchase was signed, marking Louisiana's introduction to United States in 1812. Furthermore, during the time the Supreme Court many landmark Louisiana Supreme Court cases were decided in The Cabildo's halls, including but not limited to *Plessy vs. Ferguson* (1896), a case which would one day pave the road for other cases like Topeka's *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) to forever change racial segregation laws in the United States.

Ultimately, while The Cabildo has undergone additional renovations due to other disasters, such as the fire of 1988 which severely damaged its roof and third floor, and slight damage due to Hurricane Katrina in 2005, it remains one of the French Quarter's longest surviving structures still in use today. Towering over Jackson Square and the city beyond, it represents the best and brightest of New Orleans History, making it the perfect bookend to our tour of New Orleans' vibrant French Quarter.