

Five New Orleans Activities under Five Dollars

Five New Orleans Activities under Five Dollars? Yes, you bet and most of them are free. New Orleans is a wonderful, yet expensive city to visit. The hotel prices are relatively high especially during events such as Mardi Gras, Essence Festival, Jazz fest, and the Voodoo festival. Save your money for the excellent Creole and Cajun cooking by spending your day or evening checking out the following five New Orleans activities under five dollars.



New Orleans streetcar, ©
NewOrleansOnline.com

St. Charles Streetcar – Using the streetcar in New Orleans is an affordable and unique way to get around and experience the city. Riding the old rumbling streetcars is as charming and romantic as it was 150 years ago when they first ran. Not much has changed since then, you'll still pay the driver cash, sit on really hard mahogany seats as you dazzle at the brass fittings and exposed ceiling light bulbs, figuring out how the seat backs reverse, so you can ride facing your companions.

Don't expect air conditioning, flat screens displaying the daily news, or automated announcements on the forest green streetcars that ride on neutral ground (New Orleans word for the median in the middle of a street). Just remember to keep your head and limbs inside the car at all times, otherwise you may get knocked in the head by a telephone pole or trees.

There are three different lines, St. Charles, Canal Street, and the Riverfront, each of which originates from downtown but take you to different parts of the Crescent City. I love the St. Charles line which runs through the tunnel of oaks on St. Charles Avenue in the Garden District making frequent stops near sites such as, Audubon Park, historic monuments, antebellum mansions, quaint B&Bs, restaurants, and local shops.

Most conductors call out the stops if you tell them where you want to go. If not, to stop the streetcar, simply pull the overhead wire.

Price: \$1.25 per ride.

Cafe du Monde – The original Cafe Du Monde in the New Orleans French Market has been around since 1862. Open 24/7 except for Christmas Day, it's the perfect place to enjoy Cafe Au Lait using chicory coffee which was developed by the French during wartime. During those years coffee was hard to come by so chicory, the root of the endive plant was roasted and ground–this enhanced the flavor dramatically reducing the bitterness.



Beignets and chicory coffee
at Cafe du Monde ©
NewOrleansOnline.com, photo
by David Richmond

The perfect complement to a Cafe Du Monde Cafe Au Lait is a plate of hot beignets (French-style doughnuts) that are served in threes and piled high with powdered sugar.

Cafe Du Monde Cafe Insider Tips: Never wear black, expect to pay cash upfront for your order, wipe your seat before you sit down, and do not under any circumstances breath while eating a beignet. Otherwise, you'll have powdered sugar over you and your table guests.

The lines at the French Market location are long, but move fast and you'll enjoy the time resting your feet between sightseeing in America's most fascinating historic city while listening to Dixie jazz from the nearby pavilion. <http://www.cafedumonde.com>

Price: About \$5 per person

Magazine Street – No need to empty your wallet while on vacation. Just walk along the historic Magazine Street. For six miles you pass by a mix of Victorian cottages and Greek Revival architectural wonders that house antique shops, art galleries, outdoor cafes, and quirky boutiques. Better yet, you'll be tempted to shop, so just leave your wallet at home.



Magazine Street. ©

NewOrleansOnline.com, photo
by Jean-Paul Gisclair

Magazine Street is an eclectic, family area of New Orleans and the perfect place to watch the eight parades that will roll down Magazine Street for Mardi Gras as you attempt to catch the free beads, cups, toys, and doubloons.

Price: Free (to window shop) ☐

Global Green House Homes – Go green and take a healthy walk or bike ride to the first Global Green House home, finished in May 2008. The sample home is currently a building for developers, contractors, and residents to learn how to rebuild green.



Global Green house in New Orleans. ©Global Green USA

The [Global Green House](#) project began after Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans, especially the Lower Ninth Ward. Global Green, in partnership with Brad Pitt, sponsored an international design contest in 2006. The Holy Cross Project was designed for five single-family homes, an 18-unit apartment building which will include views of the Mississippi River and downtown New Orleans, 75% to 90% lower energy bills.

Price: FREE

The French Quarter

Every time a friend or family member comes to New Orleans for the first time, I take them to Bourbon Street. I do forewarn them that they should go with an open mind and expect to see just about anything since that section of the French Quarter can be pretty raw and outright raunchy. Nonetheless, one really must visit it at least once while in New Orleans.



Mardi Gras French Quarter scenes

My favorite time to visit Bourbon Street is near *Heure bleue* (twilight). During the magical hour I capture the backdrop of a brilliant blue sky for perfect photos—but mainly I want to avoid drunken party-goers. No worries though, the New Orleans police officers don't tolerate nonsense.

Along Mardi Gras' most famous parade route and beyond the bars, strip clubs, a walk on Bourbon and Royal street provides visitors with an up-close look at 18th century New Orleans. Namely the amazing architecture including the rod-iron-lace balconies and hidden outdoor patios found on Bourbon Street extending 13 blocks from Canal Street to Esplanade Avenue.

On nearly every corner or beyond every patio, you hear live jazz at it greatest during the day and evening as well. It's touristy, charming, heavenly, and a definite must do while in New Orleans.

Price: FREE