

Noshing in NOLA

While visitors can easily get lost in the sights and sounds of New Orleans' French Quarter, there's plenty to see—and eat—outside of the city's most storied neighborhood

By Parker Diakite



A close-up of savory sustenance, including the treasured oxtail, found at Jamaican Jerk House.

Very few places in the world can compete with the festive atmosphere of New Orleans. The energy felt across the city is hard to describe to people who have never been. When someone tries to explain it, the conversation likely turns to having an unforgettable experience in the French Quarter—drinking too many hand grenades and dancing to a random brass band playing on a street corner. One thing is for sure: There's always talk about great food.

While a trip to the city is often considered complete only if it includes a visit to this historic district, it's important to note that some of the best food can actually be found outside the Quarter. As you make your way to NOLA for this year's ESSENCE Festival of Culture® presented by Coca-Cola®, here are few restaurants to try in the surrounding areas that will ensure you experience the best of the Big Easy, beyond the French Quarter.

Jamaican Jerk House

4017 St. Claude Avenue

The ride to Jamaican Jerk House will take you through vibrant neighborhoods—including Faubourg Marigny and the Bywater, which contain some of the city's most colorful homes and street art. Once inside, order the oxtails (the meat falls off the bones) with a side of Caribbean mac and cheese. Vegans can eat here, too: The Jerk Impossible Burger quickly sells out, because meat eaters love it as well.

Dee's Xquisite Seafood

1401 St. Bernard Avenue and 8700 Lake Forest Boulevard

The feeling of euphoria you get from one bite at Dee's Xquisite Seafood is enough to keep you returning to this restaurant time and again. Get there early to order a char-grilled crab plate. All dishes include corn, potatoes, smoked sausage and a side of liquid love: Xquisite garlic-butter sauce. Also, the answer is no: You can't order a bottle of garlic-butter sauce to take home—yet.

Nice Guys Nola

7910 Earhart Blvd

Nice Guys Nola is a must for weekend brunch. At this eatery, located in the heart of Gert Town, there's always a line »

COURTESY OF JAMAICAN JERK HOUSE NEW ORLEANS

wrapped around the building—so along with your appetite, bring your patience. Remember, good things come to those who wait. For something both sweet and savory, order the Praline Chicken & Waffles—and thank us later.

Tsunami Sushi

601 Poydras Street
Tsunami Sushi gets overlooked by tourists, because the exterior doesn't readily stand out—but it's an excellent break from typical New Orleans fare. You can enjoy traditional rolls or creations that pay homage to the city, like the Black & Gold Roll.

Parkway Bakery & Tavern

538 Hagan Avenue
It would be sacrilegious to visit New Orleans and not chow down on a po' boy. Parkway Bakery & Tavern's "Poor Boys" are next-level—thanks to their bread and toppings, including the rich gravy on the signature roast beef Poor Boy. Order the Golden Fried Gulf Oysters if

you stop by this community staple on a Wednesday or Thursday.

Peewee's Crabcakes NOLA

4500 Old Gentilly Road
You'll find Peewee's Crabcakes only in Louisiana and Texas. These delicious bites give Maryland crab cakes a run for their money. Enjoy yours with a seafood-stuffed potato, and worry about calorie counting another day.

Flour Moon Bagels

457 N Dorgenois Street
The new kid on the block is already making its name as a must-visit spot for a morning meal. The bagels here are made with love, as the bakers put a spin on the breakfast favorite by turning it into a sandwich with unique flavors. The rosemary sea salt bagel is among the first to sell out. Pair your bagel of choice with smoked salmon, house-made cream cheese and herbs for a tartine.

Bearcat

2521 Jena Street and 845 Carondelet Street
Bearcat takes breakfast and lunch classics and transforms them in a way that only a restaurant in New Orleans can. Case in point: the Lobster Daddy Biscuit, which belongs in Louisiana's Culinary Hall of Fame. There's also a chicken Cat Daddy, if you're allergic to shellfish or just want a change. Try either with one of Bearcat's several housemade lemonades.

Brown Butter Southern Kitchen & Bar

231 N Carrollton Ave Suite C
Located in Mid-City, Brown Butter is one of a select few places in the city offering bottomless mimosas and great food while also allowing you to make a reservation beforehand. Have your mimosa with a Brunch Burger: It comes with an eight-ounce rib and ground patty with brie onion jam, baby greens, egg, and garlic aioli sauce on a brioche bun.

A view of Gert Town's Nice Guy Nola, before the crowds descend.

