

NEW ORLEANS & CAJUN COUNTRY

October 21, 2019 - 10 Days



a world to experience



Fares Per Person:

\$3945 double/twin

\$4720 single

\$3730 triple



- > Tour is exempt from GST.
- > **Early Bookers:** \$200 discount on first 15 seats; \$100 on next 10
- > **Experience Points:** Earn 88 points from this tour.
Redeem **88 points** if you book by **July 11**.

Includes

- Transportation to Seattle Airport and return
- 9 nights of accommodation and hotel taxes
- Non-stop flight Seattle to New Orleans return
- Current air taxes and security fees
- Locally-guided walking tour of French Quarter
- Locally-guided driving tour of New Orleans
- Maison Bourbon Dixieland Club with drink
- Mississippi River cruise on Sternwheeler Natchez
- Mardi Gras World
- New Orleans School of Cooking class
- Historic tours of Laura and Oak Alley Plantations
- Swamp and wildlife tour on a pontoon boat
- Locally-guided tour for 2 days in Cajun Country
- Evangeline Oak & Longfellow Center
- Vermilionville & Rip Van Winkle Gardens
- Jungle Gardens & Tabasco Factory tour
- Konriko Rice Mill
- Martin's Accordions
- Locally-guided tour of Baton Rouge
- Rural Life Museum
- Gratuities for Louisiana guides and drivers
- Knowledgeable tour director
- Luggage handling at hotels
- **12 meals:** 6 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 3 dinners

Fall in Love with New Orleans and Louisiana

The state of Louisiana is divided into five distinct regions, and you experience three on this vacation. New Orleans is one of the great cities in the western world, not a place you simply visit, but one you fall in love with. The cultural riches, sensual indulgences, and unparalleled service that define the New Orleans experience still flourishes. History comes to life in Plantation Country. Wind along the Great River Road as you travel back to the 1800s to the days of sprawling antebellum plantations, glimpsing the lives of both master and slave. Cajun Country, along the peaceful bayous, is where the first French Canadians settled and forever changed the landscape and culture of the state. Resourceful, stoic and inventive, these were the people who turned soup into gumbo and washboards into musical instruments.

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Itinerary

Monday, October 21:

Transportation is provided to Seattle and we stay overnight at Embassy Suites Hotel near the airport. Meet your fellow travellers during a cocktail reception this evening.

Tuesday, October 22:

Meals: B

Our Alaska Airlines flight to **New Orleans** is non-stop and arrives in early evening. Welcome to Louisiana! Our coach meets us at the airport. We stay three nights at the Wyndham Hotel, located in the French Quarter on Royal Street and a block off Canal Street. It has a restaurant, free wi-fi, indoor pool, and fitness centre.

Wednesday, October 23:

Meals: D

This morning, a local guide takes us on a walking tour of the **French Quarter** where we hear the fascinating 300-year history of characters who built this city. Some highlights are the Cabildo Museum, the Spanish Quarter, St. Louis Cathedral in Jackson Square (where the original Louisiana Purchase is housed), Louis Armstrong Park, and **Bourbon Street**. After this walk, everyone gets a voucher to enjoy, at your leisure, a New Orleans tradition of coffee and beignets at Café Du Monde. There is free time for lunch at the Historic French Market. Then we board the coach for a driving tour of the city: the Lower Ninth Ward where most of the damage occurred during Hurricane Katrina; **St. Louis Cemetery**, an above-ground cemetery known for its voodoo history; Audubon Park; Tulane and Loyola Universities; elegant **St. Charles Avenue**, lined with gracious mansions and trees; and the central business district beside the Mississippi River. Our Welcome Dinner is at **Court of Two Sisters**, a New Orleans institution with the largest courtyard in the French Quarter. The two sisters, Emma and Bertha Camors, born in 1858 and 1860, belonged to a proud and aristocratic Creole family. Their "rabais" or notions outfitted many of the city's elite women with formal gowns, lace, and perfumes imported from Paris. After an elegant dinner, we cross Bourbon Street to the **Maison Bourbon Dixieland Club** for an after dinner drink and jazz show.

Thursday, October 24:

Meals: L,D

At 11 am, we board the **Natchez Riverboat**, one of the few sternwheeler vessels left on the Mississippi River. There is a jazz band on board, calliope music, and a buffet lunch. During the two-hour cruise around the Crescent Bend of the Mississippi, we pass downtown highrises, the Domino Sugar Refinery, and the site of the Battle of New Orleans

during the War of 1812. This afternoon, we visit **Mardi Gras World**, the famous float-making studio where 90% of the floats used in New Orleans' Mardi Gras parades are built. We tour the many carnival dens and observe artists and sculptors as they create the world's largest fleet of floats, and you can try on elaborate costumes. Tonight, enjoy a unique experience at the **New Orleans School of Cooking**. We learn how to prepare the taste of Louisiana, Cajun and Creole with recipes provided. After a full meal from our culinary prowess, we are entertained with history, trivia, and tall tales. The general store has lots of Louisiana products.

Friday, October 25:

Meals: L

Today is devoted to learning about life in rural Louisiana, from the perspectives of both the wealthy and the workers. Step back in time as we enter **Plantation Country** which borders the Mississippi River and features splendid plantation homes and sugar cane fields at every turn. Our first stop is **Laura Plantation**, once owned by one of the early Creole settlers. The house was built in 1805 and is surrounded by 12 Historic Register buildings. West African folktales of Br'er Rabbit were first recorded in the slave cabins. **Oak Alley Plantation**, the Grand Dame of the River Road, is next. A 400 metre long canopy of giant live oak trees, believed to be 300 years old, forms an impressive avenue leading to the classic Greek-revival style antebellum home. Lunch is included on the grounds, followed by the house tour. Nearby Thibodaux is in the **Bayou Lafourche** area and we stay at the Carmel Inn.

Saturday, October 26:

Meals: B

We take a pontoon boat trip through a **cypress swamp**. Floating among trees draped with Spanish Moss, we watch for fat alligators, turtles, egrets, and many other native bird and animal species. Our drive continues to **Lafayette** where we stay three nights at Comfort Suites.

Sunday, October 27:

Meals: B,D

A local guide joins us for the next two days while we tour **Cajun Country**. The Acadians or Cajuns settled in Louisiana after their deportation from Nova Scotia and retain a unique dialect of the French language and other traits that make them a distinct ethnic group. Here they joined exiled French aristocrats fleeing the French Revolution and their Louisiana born, called Creoles. The meeting of these cultures was made famous by the Longfellow poem *Evangeline*, and we visit the **Longfellow-Evangeline Center** in St. Martinville.

Other local highlights are Rip Van Winkle Gardens, the beautiful stained-glass windows of St. John's Cathedral, and the 500-year old Evangeline Mighty Oak. At **Vermillionville**, we go back in time to an Acadian village of living history with seven restored buildings dating to 1765. Tonight, we go to **Randol's Cajun Restaurant and Dance Hall** to eat delicious Cajun food, hear live Cajun music, and dance to lively tunes.

Monday, October 28: *Meals: B,L*

Today's focus is on the New Iberia area. We visit the **Tabasco Factory** which makes the famous hot sauce. When Ned McIlhenny took over his father's Tabasco company in 1898, he was an Arctic explorer, naturalist and conservationist, and he set aside a bird sanctuary on Avery Island to protect the endangered snowy egret. He created **Jungle Gardens** in 1935 and today we can marvel at a vast collection of 400 varieties of camellias, 100 varieties of azaleas, 50 kinds of juniper, and over 1,000 varieties of iris. Next, we visit the Konriko Rice

Mill, now a century old and oldest in the USA. Later, we tour **Martin's Accordions**, noted for their Cajun squeeze boxes.

Tuesday, October 29: *Meals: B*

We head east via I-10 on the 30-km long bridge across the Atchafalaya Swamp. In **Baton Rouge**, a local guide meets us for a driving tour that includes the soaring state capitol and tales of crooked Louisiana politicians. We visit the **Rural Life Museum** which has 24 buildings displaying folk architecture, tools, furniture, and farming equipment of the diverse cultures that settled and farmed pre-industrial Louisiana. From there, it is a little over an hour's drive to New Orleans Airport. Our Alaska flight leaves this evening and is non-stop to Seattle. We stay overnight at the Embassy Suites near the airport.

Wednesday, October 30: *Meals: B*

Transportation is provided back to your pickup point in Victoria.

Tour Policies

Payments: A deposit of \$500 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due July 11, 2019. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined.

Discounts: Early bookers receive \$200 discount on first 15 seats and \$100 on next 10 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after July 11.

Cancellation Policy: Up to June 11, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$100 per person. From June 12 to July 11, the cancellation charge is \$300 per person. From July 12 to August 9, the cancellation charge is 50% of the tour fare. From August 10 to September 11, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After September 11, there is no refund.

Fare Changes: Changes to currency exchange rates and taxes, and surcharges from the airline and other tour suppliers can occur at any time and are beyond the control of Wells Gray Tours, therefore Wells Gray Tours reserves the right to increase fares due to such changes up until departure.

Airline luggage fee: Please note that this fee of US\$30 each way is not included as the airline requires payment individually at airport check-in.

Travel Insurance: A Comprehensive Insurance policy is available through Wells Gray Tours and coverage is provided by Travel Guard. Policies purchased at deposit include a waiver of the pre-existing condition clause for medical and cancellation claims, otherwise policies can be purchased no later than at final payment. Please contact us for details.

Photo Credit: Oak Alley Plantation



Activity Level: Moderate activity including walking tours of the French Quarter and walking to attractions on uneven pavement on October 23 and 24, maximum 6 blocks or less than 1 km. Coaches are not allowed in the French Quarter except for arrival and departure days with luggage, so there is a one block walk to/from the coach. Touring the historic mansions usually requires some stairs and standing. There can be longer walks in Seattle and New Orleans airports; please request a cart or wheelchair at the airline check-in if this could be an issue for you. There are many stops during this tour and you must be able to get on and off the coach by yourself without delaying your fellow travellers. The coaches cannot carry a scooter. If you are not able to participate in Activity Level 2, Wells Gray Tours recommends that you bring a companion to assist you. The tour director and driver have many responsibilities, so please do not expect them, or your fellow travellers, to provide ongoing assistance. If you are not capable of keeping up with the group or require frequent assistance, the tour director may stop you from participating in some activities or some days of the tour. In extreme situations, you may be required to leave the tour and travel home at your own expense; travel insurance will probably not cover you.

E-points: This tour earns 88 e-points. Each time you travel on a Wells Gray tour, you earn Experience Points, or e-points. One e-point equals \$1. Redeem your points on select tours or accumulate enough points to earn a free tour! Redemptions offered until July 11.

Consumer Protection BC Licence: #65842