

# NEW ORLEANS & CAJUN COUNTRY

October 17, 2022 – 10 Days

*Fall in Love with New Orleans & 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 during three nights staying in the vibrant French Quarter. The cultural riches, sensual indulgences, and unparalleled service that define the New Orleans experience still flourish. History comes to life in Plantation Country as you travel back to the 1800s and the days of sprawling antebellum plantations. Visit Laura and Oak Alley, two of the most famous plantation mansions. During two days exploring Cajun Country, experience the peaceful bayous where the first French Canadians settled and forever changed the landscape and culture of the state.

Activity Level: 2



15 Meals Included:

9 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 3 dinners

Fares per person:

\$4,235 double/twin; \$4,995 single; \$4,045 triple  
Tour is exempt from GST.

Early Bookers:

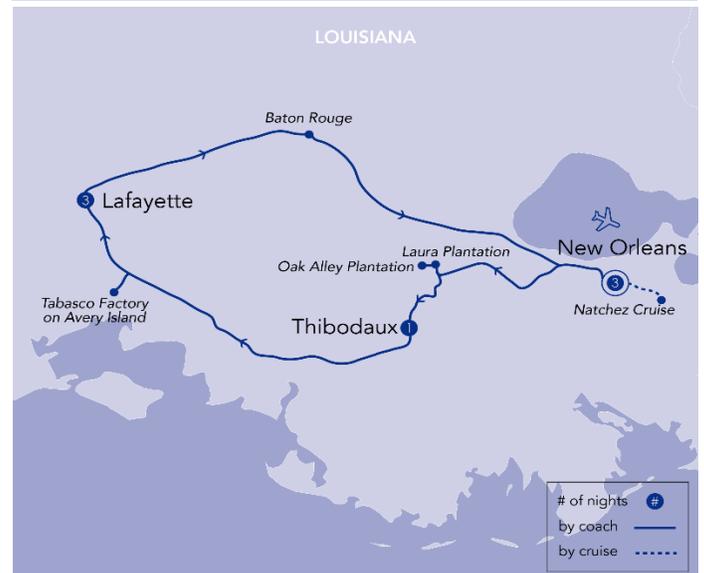
\$200 discount on first 15 seats; \$100 on next 10

Experience Points:

Earn 95 points on this tour.

Redeem 95 points if you book by August 11, 2022.

Departure from: Victoria



## ITINERARY

### Day 1: Monday, October 17

We cross the USA border and travel through Seattle for an overnight stay at the Embassy Suites Hotel near the airport. Meet your fellow travellers during tonight's reception.

**Accommodation:** Embassy Suites Sea-Tac

### Day 2: Tuesday, October 18

We fly with Alaska Airlines to **New Orleans**, arriving in late afternoon. 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.

**Meals included:** Breakfast

**Accommodation:** Wyndham Hotel

### Day 3: Wednesday, October 19

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 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: Audubon Park; **St. Louis Cemetery**, an above-ground cemetery known for its voodoo history; elegant **St. Charles Avenue**, lined with gracious mansions and trees; Tulane and Loyola Universities; and the central business district beside the Mississippi River. An elegant dinner is planned at the **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.

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Dinner

**Accommodation:** Wyndham Hotel

### Day 4: Thursday, October 20

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. The mighty Mississippi rises in northern Minnesota and flows generally south for 3,730 km to the Gulf of Mexico. With its many tributaries, the Mississippi's watershed drains all or parts of 32 states and two provinces, and is the second longest river in North America. Next, 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, and recipes are provided. Our host entertains us with history, tall tales, and trivia. The general store has lots of products made in Louisiana.

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Accommodation:** Wyndham Hotel



## Day 5: Friday October 21

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. We stay in Thibodaux in the **Bayou Lafourche** area.

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch

**Accommodation:** Hampton Inn

## Day 6: Saturday, October 22

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. We learn more about the Acadians (or Cajuns) at the Acadian Cultural Center. They settled in Louisiana after their deportation from Nova Scotia and retain a unique dialect of the French language. Here they joined exiled French aristocrats fleeing the French Revolution and their Louisiana born, called Creoles. We stay three nights in **Lafayette**.

**Meals included:** Breakfast

**Accommodation:** Comfort Suites

## Day 7: Sunday, October 23

A local guide joins us for the next two days while we tour **Cajun Country**. The meeting of Acadian and Creole cultures was made famous by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem *Evangeline*, and we visit the **Longfellow-Evangeline Historic Site** in St. Martinville. Other local highlights are Rip Van Winkle Gardens, the beautiful stained-glass windows of St. John's Cathedral, and 500-year old Evangeline Mighty Oak. At **Vermilionville**, we

explore an Acadian village of living history with seven restored buildings dating to 1765. This evening, we go to **Randol's Cajun Restaurant and Dance Hall** to eat delicious Cajun food, hear live Cajun music, and dance to lively tunes.

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Dinner

**Accommodation:** Comfort Suites

## Day 8: Monday, October 24

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 types of azaleas, 50 kinds of juniper, and 1,000 varieties of iris. Later, we visit the Konriko Rice Mill, now a century old and the oldest rice mill in the USA, and **Martin's Accordions**, noted for their Cajun squeeze boxes.



**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch

**Accommodation:** Comfort Suites

## Day 9: Tuesday, October 25

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, the original 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. It is an hour's drive to New Orleans Airport, then we fly in late afternoon to Seattle.

**Meals included:** Breakfast

**Accommodation:** Embassy Suites Sea-Tac

## Day 10: Wednesday October 26

Stops are made at Bellis Fair Mall and the Duty Free store, then we cross the border and take an afternoon ferry to the Island.

**Meals included:** Breakfast

## FALL IN LOVE WITH NEW ORLEANS AND LOUISIANA

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 beside the mighty Mississippi as you travel back to the 1800s to the days of sprawling antebellum plantations, glimpsing the lives of both master and slave. Cajun Country surrounds the peaceful bayous 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.



Natchez sternwheeler

### WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Transportation to Seattle airport and return
- 9 nights of accommodation and hotel taxes
- Flight from Seattle to New Orleans and return
- Current air taxes and security fees
- Airline luggage fees for 1 suitcase per person
- Locally-guided walking tour of French Quarter
- Locally-guided driving tour of New Orleans
- Mississippi River cruise on Sternwheeler *Natchez* with lunch and music
- Mardi Gras World
- New Orleans School of Cooking class
- Historic tour of Laura Plantation
- Historic tour of Oak Alley Plantation
- Swamp and wildlife tour on pontoon boat
- Acadian Cultural Center
- Locally-guided tour for 2 days in Cajun Country
- Evangeline Oak
- Longfellow-Evangeline Historic Site
- Vermilionville Acadian Village
- Rip Van Winkle Gardens
- Randol's with Cajun music and dancing
- Tabasco Factory tour
- Jungle Gardens
- 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
- **15 meals:** 9 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 3 dinners



French Quarter



School of Cooking

## TOUR NOTES



**Activity Level 2:** Moderate activity including walking tours of the French Quarter and walking to attractions on uneven pavement on October 19 and 20, 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 in advance or at 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 or motorized wheelchair. If Activity Level 2 could be challenging, you are urged to 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.

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## TOUR POLICIES

**Payments:** A deposit of \$300 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due August 11, 2022. 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 August 11, 2022.

**Cancellation Policy:** Up to July 11, 2022, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$100 per person. From July 12 to August 11, the cancellation charge is \$300 per person (your deposit). From August 12 to September 9, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After September 9, 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.

**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, otherwise policies can be purchased no later than at final payment. Please contact us for details.

**Food Allergies:** You must notify us no later than at final payment if you have a food allergy.

**Home pickups** may be offered in Greater Victoria, depending on the number of people booked and coach size. Decision is made about 2 weeks before departure and you will be contacted about your pickup point and time.

**Photo Credits:** Adobe Stock (Oak Alley, jazz player), Pixabay (Mardi Gras World), McIlhenny (Tabasco), Wikimedia Commons (Natchez), Roland Neave (French Quarter), New Orleans School of Cooking

**Experience Points:** This tour earns 95 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 August 11, 2022.

**Consumer Protection BC Licences:** Kamloops 178, Vernon 655, Kelowna 588, Penticton 924, Victoria 65842

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