

Cheat Sheet NEW ORLEANS

Despite having one foot firmly rooted in the past as one of the country's oldest major cities, New Orleans has not stood still. The Big Easy is better than ever in this post-pandemic insider's edition.

BY LARRY OLMSTED

STAY

Four Seasons Hotel New Orleans

Opened summer 2021, the Four Seasons' (above) location on the banks of the Mississippi cannot be beat, straddling the lively, famous French Quarter and the Warehouse & Arts District, which has been the emerging hot spot for years and is now home to many of the top museums, galleries, bars, and restaurants. This one-of-a-kind hotel at the foot of Canal Street puts the best of New Orleans within walking distance, and is the terminus for the city's famous streetcars, with direct service to both City Park and the famous above-ground cemeteries. It's an easy stroll to many great restaurants, but guests may not want to leave, as the hotel doubled down with two of the highest-profile new eateries in the city (see Eat & Drink), by chefs Alon Shaya and Donald Link. They are the only ones here to have each won the perfect duo of James Beard Awards for Best Chef in the South and Best New Restaurant in the country. fourseasons.com



Virgin Hotels New Orleans

In the heart of the Warehouse District, with a notable 13th-floor rooftop bar, Dreamboat, serving up live music most nights and sophisticated cocktails, the Virgin also has a Vegas-style outdoor pool club, with tropical "umbrella" drinks and resident DJs. virginhotels.com



Kimpton Hotel Fontenot

The Four Seasons is the most dramatic addition to the lodging scene, but it is hardly the only one. Also in an excellent location, just a couple of blocks away, is the Kimpton Hotel Fontenot with its showpiece: the "eccentrically opulent" Peacock Room, a jewel box of a bar that serves 19th-century punch-bowl cocktails and doubles as a very good restaurant with an impressive menu by Chef Samuel Peery. His offbeat, global gastropub menu also highlights local favorites with creative options such as salt and pepper shrimp and the Peacock burger with bacon jam and white cheddar. The attraction drawing locals every Thursday is live music with acclaimed jazz singer Robin Barnes, "The Songbird of New Orleans." kimptonhotels.com



Higgins Hotel New Orleans

The most unique entrant is also part of the stunning National World War II Museum. Over the past decade the museum has expanded repeatedly to the point of becoming its own mini neighborhood within the Warehouse District. The Higgins, a Hilton Curio Collection property, opened just before the pandemic. For a museum hotel it is surprisingly upscale and carries its theme throughout, including Café Normandie, an excellent and authentic French bistro (left). Rosie's on the Roof is an indoor and outdoor bar celebrating the working women of WWII—Rosie the Riveter—where signature cocktails are served in vintage military thermoses and museum artifacts decorate the space. Among New Orleans' many rooftop venues, it has arguably the best views. higginshotelnola.com

Courtesy Images, From Top: Four Seasons New Orleans/Christian Horan; Kimpton Hotel Fontenot; Virgin Hotel New Orleans; Higgins Hotel NOLA/Chef Virgile Brandel. Opposite, Courtesy Images Clockwise From Top Left: Four Seasons New Orleans/Sam Hanna; Emeril's/Romney Caruso; Saint John Restaurant/Randy Schmidt; Four Seasons New Orleans/Christian Horan