



viva le bébé

Exploring the kid-friendly French Quarter!

So, you imagine the quarter is all about Bourbon Street, booze and brew-ha-ha? Well, for tourists and 20-somethings, that might be true. But here, dear friend, we'll let you in on a secret.... it is a *fabulous* place to take your little ones.

We're always on the lookout for our readers: the best family-friendly restaurants, best beat-the-heat activities, best birthday bash options—you get the picture we're painting. Now it's time to explore the legions of fun in your own backyard. The Quarter.

First, we'll give an idea of the myriad of activities that, if planned well, could entertain you and your 'littles' for a month of Sundays.

oh the places you'll go

Natchez Steamboat Mississippi River Cruise

The Natchez—the only steamboat still operating from New Orleans—will take you on a two-hour tour up and down the Mississippi. It's a little pricey (a typical family of four will run about \$125), but a full day can be made of this fun and educational adventure.

Hermann Grima House

Built in 1831, this Federal mansion boasts the only stable and functional outdoor kitchen in the French Quarter. Creole cooking classes are taught in the outdoor kitchen and are a fascinating way to learn the aspects of preparing an authentic 19th century Creole meal. 820 St. Louis St.

Jackson Square

A wonderful time can be had just walking about, watching the artists (get your children's portraits painted!). Sit in the middle of the park beneath Andrew Jackson, or take them to St Louis Cathedral (watch out for weddings and other services). When you need a little refreshment, world-famous **Café Du Monde** is just right there!

Tai Deselle, age 4, runs in Jackson Square.

French Market

America's oldest public market always has something going on. Music, shopping, food. And the flea market can be a great first 'shopping' experience for young children with a selection of clothing, antiques, art, jewelry and crafts.

Horse and buggy ride

Well, actually... mule and buggy. Hop on at Jackson Square. This is not only an exciting adventure around the Quarter for kids and adults alike, but you'll learn some very interesting (if not always entirely accurate) history as well.

French Quarter Festival

This free music festival (April 17-19) can't be missed. Normally, we wouldn't add festivals to this list, as there are *so* many good ones. But this one garners special mention, as it free, fun and very kid-friendly! This year they plan to expand their children's area. Visit www.fqfi.org for the lowdown.

Musee Conti Wax Museum

The museum uses life-size wax figures to tell the incredible history of our city. Kids that love a scare shouldn't miss the Haunted Dungeon. 917 Conti St.

The Presbytere

The Mardi Gras museum here traces five major themes of the celebration: History, Masking, Parades, Balls, and the Courir du Mardi Gras. Children of all ages can experience the excitement of watching a parade or the exhilaration of riding a float by climbing aboard a huge, interactive display created by Blaine Kern, New Orleans' most famous float maker.

Audubon Aquarium of the Americas

Walk beneath the vivid Caribbean Reef, marvel at the lush beauty of the Amazon Rainforest and journey the Mississippi River where penguins, sting rays, sharks and other deep sea creatures await your visit. 1 Canal Place



Torin Desselle, 20 months, gets a balloon.

Entergy Imax Theatre

Located next door to the Aquarium, this is another activity that is perfect for a hot or rainy day. Always featuring entertaining — and educational — movies.

Audubon Insectarium

The Audubon Insectarium showcases the largest group of animals on the planet: insects! Since prehistoric times, insects have played invaluable roles, including pollinating crops, decomposing waste and adding intrigue, color, texture and majesty to our world. Located in the old U.S. Custom House on Canal.



Glenn Marerro, III, age 3, enjoys a beignet at Cafe Du Monde.

N.O. School of Cooking

Located in a renovated molasses warehouse built in the 1800, this is the perfect place to bring a group of kids for their hands-on kids' parties. 524 St Louis.

Street Entertainment

Just stroll around Jackson Square or on Royal Street. There are street performers everywhere you turn: tapping jazz, clowns making balloon animals, mimes, and of course, see how long 'silver man' can hold a pose.

Oh the places you'll shop

Kulture Vulture Kids 'Clothing for Tiny Terrors' The name says it all! For your bad-ass rocker tots. 521 Dumaine Street.

Southern Candymakers Fresh hand-dipped treats and kids can watch the candymaking. 1010 Decatur St

Little Toy Shops 513 St. Ann Street.

Santa's Quarters Where it's Christmas all year long. 1025 Decatur Street.

Idea Factory Fine, selective collection of American woodcraft — heirloom quality toys for kids of all ages. 838 Chartres Street.

New Orleans Original Lulu Dolls Each doll is unique and one-of-kind. Mystical experience included! 638 St. Peter at Royal.

The Kite Shop A huge collection of kites as well as banners, flags and windsocks. 542 St. Peter (Jackson Square).

Oh, Susannah A large and high-quality selection of collectible dolls. 518 St. Peter (Jackson Square). 🌸