

Touring the Western Caribbean

We are off to visit the Western Caribbean. This trip was delayed from last year as Tom had an auto accident 10 days before we were to leave. He had three broken ribs and a cracked sternum, so it would not have been a good idea to go on the trip.

So, the trip is on for this December 2018. What makes the Caribbean most interesting is that Tom and Diana enjoy history and studying architecture from the time this country was being formed. They also enjoy hiking-seeing the sites and the beautiful plants and trees and taking a close look at the creatures of the sea while snorkeling. We have become somewhat of art experts in that we enjoy painting of various artists. We won one painting last year and bought another on a cruise of the Eastern Caribbean.

A few weeks before our trip to the Western Caribbean Diana got tangled up with the dog leash and tumbled down a paved arroyo. She broke her pelvic bone, so we were not sure how much hiking we could do. Diana promised to rest and be ready for the trip. She did a fantastic job on letting herself heal.

We also did the necessary things that are needed to hike/travel outside the US like finding our passports, locating hiking poles and packing our clothes. Diana is a systematic packer while Tom waits till the last day and throws his stuff in the suitcase. Diana method is more logical but both systems work.

We leave Albuquerque on December 6, 2018 on Southwest airlines via Dallas and landing in New Orleans where we transfer to the ship Norwegian Breakaway.

We leave on Southwest from Albuquerque and transfer to the ship in New Orleans. After the cruise we will spend a few days in New Orleans seeing the sites

| Date | Port | Arrive | Depart |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|---------|
| Thursday, December 6, 2018 | Albuquerque, NM | | 6:15 AM |
| Thursday, December 6, 2018 | New Orleans | 11:25 AM | 4:00 PM |
| Friday, December 7, 2018 | At Sea | | |
| Saturday, December 8, 2018 | Cozumel | 8:00 AM | 5:00 PM |
| Sunday, December 9, 2018 | Roatan, Bay Islands, Honduras | 10:00 AM | 6:00 PM |
| Monday, December 10, 2018 | Harvest Caye, Belize | 8:00 AM | 5:00 PM |
| Tuesday, December 11, 2018 | Costa Maya, Mexico | 7:00 AM | 3:00 PM |
| Wednesday, December 12, 2018 | George Town, Grand Cayman | 11:00 AM | 7:00 PM |
| Thursday, December 13, 2018 | Ocho Rios, Jamaica | 10:00 AM | 6:00 PM |
| Friday, December 14, 2018 | At Sea | | |
| Saturday, December 15, 2018 | At Sea | | |
| Sunday, December 16, 2018 | New Orleans, Louisiana | 7:00 AM | |
| Monday, December 17, 2018 | New Orleans, Louisiana | | |
| Tuesday, December 18, 2018 | New Orleans, Louisiana | | |
| Wednesday, December 19, 2018 | New Orleans, Louisiana | | |
| Thursday, December 20, 2018 | New Orleans, Louisiana | | 8:00 PM |



December 4, 2018 (T-2 and before)

Located passports and we reviewed airline schedules and excursions we have planned at each port. Counted pills and vitamins and packaged per day so as not to miss anything each day as we traveled.

December 5, 2018 (T-1 day)

Up early so we can get on the Southwest airline web site and reserve our seats 24 hours before we take flight. Got A 59 & A 60 for first leg and A 57 & A 58.

We reviewed schedule for getting to cruise ship from Albuquerque:

- Southwest airlines ABQ to Dallas (Love Field) then Dallas to New Orleans
- Boarding Cruise ship about 1:30 PM The cruise terminal is located near the center of the city, near downtown and the French Quarter. It is **about 15 miles** from the airport — a 25-minute ride.
- Cruise ship sails at 4 PM but then need time to process us on-board.

Day 1: (December 6, 2018) - Travel



We are up at 2 AM as we are excited. We got ready, said goodbye to Flash (our dog) and leave notes for the house/dog sitter. We arrived at the ticket counter at 5 AM so we had plenty of time as the plane did not leave till 6:15 AM. We are whisked through the air in a new Boeing 737 -8 Max jet on our way to Dallas. This is the same type of jet that experienced problems a few weeks ago with an unknown feature, to the pilots, that prevents stalls. The issue is resolved so our flight was uneventful.

Had some time to look around in Dallas (Love Field) and board the next flight to New Orleans. Our good friend Mike likes the Dallas football team, so we found the “pink” suitcase with the Dallas logo that he would like-Not.

On our uneventful flight to New Orleans we had plenty of room, so it was time to relax and enjoy the flight and nap on and off as we fly through the air.

Arrived New Orleans and found our bags we went outside the terminal to find Uber for a ride to the ship (Norwegian Breakaway). The signs were not clear, so we wandered around asked a lot of questions and finally found the Uber pickup location.

No matter how much we plan our trips there are some minor things that we don't remember. Diana being the expert on Uber brings up her app on her phone and orders a ride. It rejects the credit card. Well crap as we have not used Uber since Last March when we attended the Mountain West basketball tournament in Las Vegas and our credit card number has changed. No big deal just a pain in the butt to enter a new credit card number from a cell phone but the task was completed.

We watched for our driver and the Uber app shows him almost to our location and then it says now about 5 minutes away-so much for technology. We watch for the license plate and we found the driver. Yea...

The freeways were crowded but we left the driving to the Uber driver. We passed the Superdome and it dawned on me I have been here before with my family long ago and we toured the Superdome (about 1992). I texted my sons and my youngest son Mike texted back with the details of where we stayed etc. Dang I hardly remember any of that.

The Uber driver decided to take some back roads to avoid traffic and get us to the pier. When we were about two blocks from the ship the traffic is dead still, so we elect to pay the driver and walk the remaining block, so he can get onto his next fare.

What in the world, the line is long and slow. We learn later that this is the biggest cruise ship that comes to this pier and the capabilities of handling people is limited to smaller ships. This ship has 1650+ crew

and 3,963 guests. Some guy come up and offered to check our bags as we wait in line. Lucky, we trust people as the bags were at our cabin door soon after we got on-board.

Getting on-board and to the cabin was a process as we waited in line (1 hour 20 minutes), filled out some useless paper work and went through security (x-rays, search just like boarding an airplane) and then presented our passports and walked up some ramps and onto the ship.



Once on board we must do the safety drills and report to our muster station, just in case we have an emergency. Did notice that Transportation Security Administration inspected my luggage and left me their calling card-No big deal.

Our Guest Freestyle Card is used to turn the lights/electricity/AC on in your room. If a card is not inserted in the slot next to the entrance door, the lights/electricity/AC will not turn on. In addition, if you are in a balcony room and your balcony door is left open, ajar, or not fully closed, the AC in the room will shut off.



Our Cabin on Board

Our onboard issued cards gave us access to the world in that we have the Ultimate Beverage Package (UDP) option where we present the card and get a drink for no additional charge. We got this option as we are repeat customers on Norwegian Cruise lines. After figuring out the cabin and layout of the ship-kind of, we head for the dinner on the fifteenth floor of the ship. There are only 16 floors on this ship. We have not left port, but we are hungry (Free style dining so we can eat when we want to), so we feed ourselves very well.

We then walk to one of the 22 bars and order a glass of wine. As we are still within the United States, we must pay (River Sales tax 10%) on the liquor even though the drink is included in the Unlimited liquor package. Ah, didn't know that. Once in international waters the ship will open gambling and the drinks are no longer taxed.

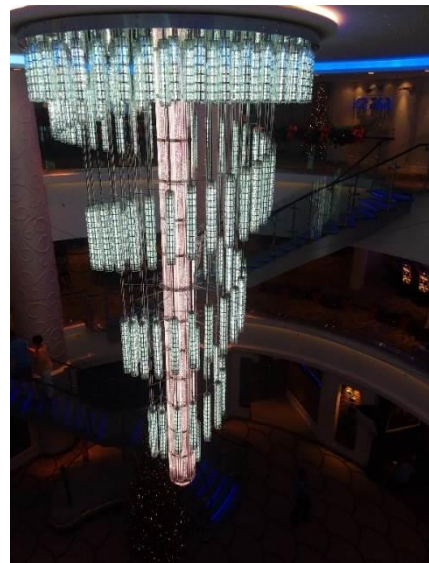
We like Freestyle Dining, we can dine whenever and wherever we want -no seating assignments or set times. Complimentary restaurants have no charges. Specialty restaurants incur nominal charges.

We are scheduled to leave port at 7 PM so Diana and I watch the sites from our balcony as we depart.

[Video – Leaving the Port of New Orleans](#)



river side of the Mississippi as we left New Orleans



The chandelier in the main atrium on the ship.

Notes about the ship: Norwegian Cruise Line accepted delivery of its most innovative ship to date, Norwegian Breakaway, from MEYER WERFT, Bremerhaven, Germany on April 25th, 2013. Its Maiden voyage was on April 30th, 2013 out of Southampton, U.K. The Norwegian Breakaway was christened by World Famous Rockettes on May 8th, 2013.

Here are some fun Breakaway facts:

- Known as New York's ship, Norwegian Breakaway is the largest vessel to homeport year-round in the city
- It has a Rock-Climbing Wall is 33 feet
- The Freefall Slide is the fastest at sea and is completed in only 6 seconds
- There are 16 Passenger elevators & 14 services elevators for Crew
- Approximately 1650+ Crew representing over 70 Nationalities work on board
- Ship's Registry: Nassau, Bahamas
- Ship's Call Sign: C6ZJ3
- Gross Tonnage: 145,655 GRT
- Auxiliary Power: Diesel Electric

[More Pictures](#)

Day 2 (December 7, 2018) – Open Sea

We left New Orleans Port last evening and it took the ship 6 to 9 hours (depending on the person we talked to) to get to the Gulf of Mexico. I always thought that New Orleans was at the mouth of the Mississippi.

It's a day of leisure as we head for our first port of call Cozumel. We sleep late and ate a huge breakfast as they offer everything in a cafeteria setup. You just walk along and pick what you want to eat. You can go back for seconds and thirds etc. As Diana said more than once "This is great, I don't have to cook". We did a short workout on the bikes as we looked out over the open sea (Gulf of Mexico).

We were reminded that the ship implemented eastern standard time as part of the cruise in the Eastern time zone of the United States...

We continued to study the various aspects of the ship. There are 16 passenger elevators and 14 service elevators. Some located the forward part of the ship some in the middle and some in the aft part of the ship. Aft means the back of the ship. Our room is 12220 which meant we were on the 12 deck of 18. The top deck has the basketball court, the slide, hot tubs, pools etc.

The ship was delivered on April 25th, 2013 and was built by Meyer Werft, Bremerhaven Germany. Its maiden voyage was on April 30, 2013 from Southampton, U.K.

The ship's interior decoration can be called "the classic New York style" with dark wood panels, dark leather, twenties-style lamps. There, Manhattan lovers will feel at home, as the designers of the legendary ship were inspired by the New York City, which is unlikely to leave indifferent even the most inveterate opponents of urbanization.

In the late morning we attended an art auction. We had time to walk around the paintings and if we liked one, we could put a sticker that we were interested. There were some that we liked but nothing that fit our decor. During the auction there was one gentleman, in the audience, that thought he was hot stuff and he left his cowboy hat on. His hat blocked our view of the proceedings. If my mother had been around, she would have jerked that man's hat off and said some kind words about a person should consider other people. During the auction we saw a painting for \$100 and bid and won it. Later when we went to pick it up and looked at it up close the frame was damaged, the pictures in places were scratched. We asked and got our money back and somewhat of a schooling about bidding and response but if they would offer quality painting, we would be happy to follow through on the bid.

That evening we attended a show called "Burn the Floor". "Burn the Floor" is the ultimate high-voltage theatrical dance experience exploding with jaw-dropping choreography, heart-pounding music and breath-taking moves. From seriously sexy to irresistibly charming, the talented ensemble of dancers joins forces with two sensational singers and a live band in an electrifying production that 'will have you leaping out of your seat to join in' Heat Magazine. Breathing new life into traditional dances such as the Viennese Waltz and Foxtrot, "Burn the Floor" sears with the passion of the Tango and Paso Doble,



and revels in the sheer energy of the Cha Cha, the Samba, Rumba and Jive. If I could dance like that the energy used by the dancers would make me way 5 pounds. Before the show a brief introduction of the senior officers was given including the captain Dan Svensson.

After the show we had snacks and a glass of wine before heading for bed and getting ready for the Mayan ruins tomorrow outside of Cozumel.

A few facts on our ship's engine and propulsion:

Captain Dan Svensson

- Main Engines: MAN 48/60CR, 2x 14400KW and 2x 16800KW total 62400KW/83679h
- Propulsion power: 2 x Azipod X02100, total 35000KW/46935hp
- Propellers: Propellers 5.6 m diameter
- Stabilizers: Fincantieri SRO 5-215, total area/fin 21.5 m²
- Bow thrusters: Brunvoll, 3x 3000kw, total 9000/12060hpKW

Navigation Instruments (My favorite topic)

- 12 Multi-function Displays with Radar, ECDIS with ENC & ARPA functions integrated with Auto Pilot, Position and speed sensor.
- Napa Power Speed-Pilot (optimizing speed for less Fuel Consumption)
- Sperry Auto-Pilot
- 1 Weather station Equipped with wind sensor, temperature sensor and humidity
- Radar – (Radio Detection and Ranging). There are 5 onboard, 3 on the mast, 1 on the bow, 1 on the stern, which give the navigator a picture of the coastline, islands, beacons, other ships, and similar objects on the surface.
- DGPS Navigator - The DGPS (Differential Global Positioning System) consists of twenty-four satellites in orbit around the Earth. By receiving the signal from at least 4 of these satellites we can maintain continuous tracking of the ship's position, exact speed, and accurate time.
- Gyro Compass: An electronic instrument that indicates true direction based on true North.
- Magnetic Compass: The direction is determined by Earth's magnetic field (Magnetic North).
- Inmarsat C Telex with IRIT (Long Range Identification Tracking device)
- Navtex receives navigational warnings and weather forecasts.

[More Pictures](#)

Day 3 (Saturday - December 8th, 2018) - Cozumel

The name Cozumel was derived from the Mayan "Cuzamil" or "Ah Cuzamil Peten" in full, which means "the island of swallows". The island is in the Caribbean Sea along the eastern side of the Yucatan Peninsula about 51 miles south of Cancún and 12 miles from the mainland. The island is about 30 mi long and 9.9 mi wide. With a total area of 184.542 sq. miles, it is Mexico's largest Caribbean island, largest permanently inhabited island, and Mexico's third-largest island, following Tiburón Island and Isla Ángel de la Guarda.

Most of the island's population lives in the town of San Miguel (pop. 77,236 in 2010), which is on the island's western shore. The municipality, which includes two small areas on the mainland enclaved within the Municipality of Solidaridad with a land area of 4.024 square miles, has a total land area of 249.93 square miles.

The island is covered with mangrove forest which has many endemic animal species. Cozumel is a flat island based on limestone, resulting in a karst topography. The highest natural point on the island is less than 49 ft above sea level. The cenotes are deep water filled sinkholes formed by water percolating through the soft limestone soil for thousands of years.



The ship docked at **Cozumel** and we took a 30-minute ride on a fast ferry (see picture to the left) to the mainland (Plaza Del Carmen, Mexico) on our way to the first of the Mayan ruins we have planned to see. As we got off the ferry a small very young black dog sniffed our bags for contraband. The dog failed to find our cookies we had illegally carried off the ship. We then took a 19-passenger van which was made for very short people for 1 1/2-hour trip to the place called Chuchen Itsa

(Chicken pizza). The ride was safe but people with long legs are very uncomfortable. The tour guide gave us a semi informal Spanish lesson which I found to be boring, but I was sure he would ask for a tip after the trip. They provided us lunch bag which consisted of a gummy sandwich and fruit (not supposed to eat fruit from Mexico as there is a nasty stomach) so we ate very little.

Note: "Chuchen Itsa is a World Heritage Site, a landmark or area which is selected by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as having cultural, historical, scientific or other form of significance, and is legally protected by international treaties. The sites are judged important to the collective interests of humanity".

After the long drive we arrived at Chuchen Itsa which a large pre-Columbian city is built by the Maya people of the Terminal Classic period (c. AD 800-900). This archaeological site is in Tinúm Municipality, Yucatán State, Mexico.

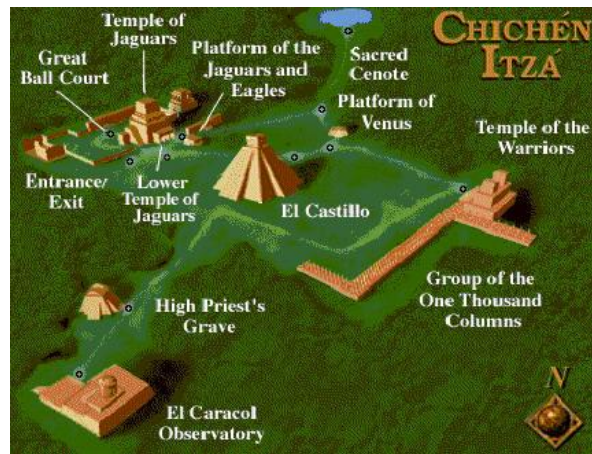


Chuchen Itza was a major focal point in the Northern Maya Lowlands from the Late Classic (c. AD 600–900) through the Terminal Classic and into the early portion of the Postclassic period (c. AD 900–1200). The site exhibits a multitude of architectural styles, reminiscent of styles seen in central Mexico and of the Puuc and Chenes styles of the Northern Maya lowlands. The presence of central Mexican styles was once thought to have been representative of direct migration or even conquest from

central Mexico, but most contemporary interpretations view the presence of these non-Maya styles more as the result of cultural diffusion.

Chuchen Itza was one of the largest Maya cities and it was likely to have been one of the mythical great cities, or Tollans, referred to in later Mesoamerican literature. The city may have had the most diverse population in the Maya world, a factor that could have contributed to the variety of architectural styles at the site.

The ruins of Chuchen Itza is maintained by Mexico's National Institute of Anthropology and History. The land under the monuments had been privately owned until 29 March 2010, when it was purchased by the state of Yucatán.



Map of Chuchen Itza

Chuchen Itza is one of the most visited archaeological sites in Mexico with over 2.6 million tourists in 2017. Believe me there we lots of people here this day.

Name and orthography:

A feathered serpent sculpture is at the base of one of the stairways of El Castillo.

The Maya name " Chuchen Itza " means "At the mouth of the well of the Itza." This derives from chi', meaning "mouth" or "edge," and ch'en or ch'e'en, meaning "well." Itzá is the name of an ethnic-lineage group that gained political and economic dominance of the northern peninsula. One possible translation for Itza is "enchanter (or enchantment) of the water," from its, "sorcerer," and ha, "water."

Chuchen Itza is in the eastern portion of Yucatán state in Mexico. The northern Yucatán Peninsula is arid, and the rivers in the interior all run underground. There are four visible, natural sink holes, called cenotes, that could have provided plentiful water year-round at Chuchen Itza, making it attractive for settlement. Of these cenotes.

According to post-Conquest sources (Maya and Spanish), pre-Columbian Maya sacrificed objects and human beings into the cenote as a form of worship to the Maya rain god Chaac. Edward Herbert Thompson dredged the Cenote Sagrado from 1904 to 1910, and recovered artifacts of gold, jade, pottery and incense, as well as human remains. A study of human remains taken from the Cenote Sagrado found that they had wounds consistent with human sacrifice.

Dominating the North Platform of Chuchén Itzá is the *Temple of Kukulcán* (a Maya feathered serpent deity similar to the Aztec *Quetzalcoatl*), usually referred to as *El Castillo* ("the castle"). This step pyramid stands about 398 ft high and consists of a series of nine square terraces, each approximately 8.4 ft high, with a 6-metre (20 ft) high temple upon the summit.



The sides of the pyramid are approximately 55.3 metres (181 ft) at the base and rise at an angle of 53°, although that varies slightly for each side. The four faces of the pyramid have protruding stairways that rise at an angle of 45°. The *talud*walls of each terrace slant at an angle of between 72° and 74°. At the base of the balustrades of the northeastern staircase are carved heads of a serpent.

Mesoamerican cultures periodically superimposed larger structures over older ones, and El Castillo is one such example. In the mid-1930s, the Mexican government sponsored an excavation of El Castillo. After several false

starts, they discovered a staircase under the north side of the pyramid. By digging from the top, they found another temple buried below the current one.

Inside the temple chamber was a Chac Mool statue and a throne in the shape of Jaguar, painted red and with spots made of inlaid jade. The Mexican government excavated a tunnel from the base of the north staircase, up the earlier pyramid's stairway to the hidden temple, and opened it to tourists. In 2006, INAH closed the throne room to the public.

Around the *Spring* and *Autumn equinoxes*, in the late afternoon, the northwest corner of the pyramid casts a series of triangular shadows against the western balustrade on the north side that evokes the appearance of a serpent wriggling down the staircase, which some scholars have suggested is a representation of the feathered-serpent god Kukulcán. It is a widespread belief that this light-and-shadow effect was achieved on purpose to record the equinoxes, but the idea is highly unlikely: it has been shown that the phenomenon can be observed, without major changes, during several weeks around the equinoxes, making impossible to determine any date by observing this effect alone.

Mesoamerica refers to the diverse civilizations that shared similar cultural characteristics in the geographic areas comprising the modern-day countries of Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Belize, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica. Archaeologists have identified thirteen ballcourts for playing the Mesoamerican ballgame in Chichén Itzá, but the Great Ball Court about 490 ft to the north-west of the Castillo is by far the most impressive. It is the largest and best-preserved ball court in ancient Mesoamerica. It measures 551 by 230 ft. The parallel platforms flanking the main playing area are each 312 ft long. The walls of these platforms stand 26 ft high; set high up in the center of each of these walls are rings carved with intertwined feathered serpents.

At the base of the high interior walls are slanted benches with sculpted panels of teams of ball players. In one panel, one of the players has been decapitated; the wound emits streams of blood in the form of wriggling snakes.



Chichén Itzá Ball Court Exterior

There are over 1,300 ball courts in Mesoamerica. They are a large rectangular playfield with two parallel sloping walls on the longest side. In later years, ball courts were completed with end zone wall which forms an "I." The ball courts were built for many purposes including as an indication of city and individual wealth. Though primarily used as a location for the ball games, archeological evidence also indicates that they were likely used in other spectator sports such as wrestling as well as feasts.

The game was an important part of the social fabric in the Mayan world. Part judge and jury, part religious center, the ball courts were strategically placed in the ceremonial centers of ancient Mayan cities.

There were many different ball games played but they were generally played with solid rubber balls. Just as the size and shape of the court differed from town to town, city to city, the size of balls varied from about the size of a softball to a much larger soccer ball.

The most popular game was called Pitz and because of the large stone rings at Chichén Itza was likely the game of choice for Chichén residents. The object of the game was to propel the rubber ball through the hoop without the use of hands. The balls would bounce down the slanted sides of the court and bounce to the field of play below.

The players would wear different but numerous protective pads on their hips, arms and legs. A wooden or leather yoke often protected their shoulders and torso. Solid rubber balls are extremely heavy and can



weigh up to 20lbs. The players costume was topped off with animal headdresses believed to be associated with the player.



Chichen Itza Ball court

The games were serious affairs and were used to settle political and social disputes. A disagreement between two parties or towns could be settled by the recruitment of teams that would play for the parties. Losing a game would often mean decapitation. In many archeological sites, a skull rack is used to display the heads of the victims.

The Chichén Itza Ball Court is by far the largest field in Mesoamerica. Measuring 168 by 79 meters (551 by 230 ft) the playing field is 2.2 times the size of an American Football field. The parallel walls are each 95 meters (312 ft) long and 8 meters (26 ft) high. The inverted hoops placed in the center of the walls are carved with into decorative feathers. There are incredible panels of ball players along the interior walls.

The court is acoustically perfect. If you talk to the northern wall for example, you can hear it clearly at the southern wall.

There has been some current dispute as to whether this ball court was ever used for the game or if it was a gigantic monument to the game and sacrificial victims.

At one end of the Great Ball Court is the North Temple, also known as the Temple of the Bearded Man (Templo del Hombre Barbado). This small masonry building has detailed bas relief carving on the inner walls, including a center figure that has carving under his chin that resembles facial hair. At the south end is another, much bigger temple, but in ruins.

Built into the east wall are the Temples of the Jaguar. The Upper Temple of the Jaguar overlooks the ball court and has an entrance guarded by two, large columns carved in the familiar feathered serpent motif. Inside there is a large mural, much destroyed, which depicts a battle scene.

In the entrance to the Lower Temple of the Jaguar, which opens behind the ball court, is another Jaguar throne, like the one in the inner temple of El Castillo, except that it is well worn and missing paint or other decoration. The outer columns and the walls inside the temple are covered with elaborate bas-relief carvings.

According to our tour guide the team captain of the winning team was killed and be-headed and the likeness was carved in the Skull platform. It was an honor to be killed as a better way to make it to their Gods in the afterlife.



Chichén Itzá; Skull Platform the Tzompantli, or Skull Platform, shows the clear cultural influence of the central Mexican Plateau. Unlike the tzompantli of the highlands, however, the skulls were impaled vertically rather than horizontally as at Tenochtitlan.



The Platform of the Eagles and the Jaguars is immediately to the east of the Great Ballcourt. It is built in a combination Maya and Toltec styles, with a staircase ascending each of its four sides. The sides are decorated with panels depicting eagles and jaguars consuming human hearts.



This Platform of Venus (left picture) is dedicated to the planet Venus. In its interior archaeologists discovered a collection of large cones carved out of stone, the purpose of which is unknown. This platform is located north of El Castillo, between it and the Cenote Sagrado.

The Temple of the Tables is the northernmost of a series of buildings to the east of El Castillo. Its name comes from a series of altars at the

top of the structure that are supported by small carved figures of men with upraised arms, called "atlantes."

The Steam Bath is a unique building with three parts: a waiting gallery, a water bath, and a steam chamber that operated by means of heated stones.

Sacbe Number One is a causeway that leads to the Cenote Sagrado, is the largest and most elaborate at Chuchén Itzá. This "white road" is 890 ft long with an average width of 30 ft. It begins at a low wall a few feet from the Platform of Venus. According to archaeologists there once was an extensive building with columns at the beginning of the road.

The Yucatán Peninsula is a limestone plain, with no rivers or streams. The region is pockmarked with natural sinkholes, called cenotes, which expose the water table to the surface. One of the most impressive of these is the Cenote Sagrado, which is 200 ft in diameter and surrounded by sheer cliffs that drop to the water table some 89 ft below.

The Cenote Sagrado was a place of pilgrimage for ancient Maya people who, according to ethnohistoric sources, would conduct sacrifices during times of drought. Archaeological investigations support this as thousands of objects have been removed from the bottom of the cenote, including material such as gold, carved jade, copal, pottery, flint, obsidian, shell, wood, rubber, cloth, as well as skeletons of children and men.

Interesting points about the Mayan people from our tour guide. Interbreeding was very common as there were some 3000 people within the walls of the city and another 10,000 outside the city.

The Pyramid of El Castillo in Chuchén Itzá was built to reflect the Mayan astronomical year. Each side has 91 steps with a final step at the top, so there are 365 steps total. The Pyramid was constructed so that it marks the equinoxes—the two days of the year when there are equal amounts of day and night. On these days, the sun casts an image of a snake that appears to move down the pyramid. The head which is found many places in our tour is the sign of fertility.

Did you know the Maya had two calendars? One was tied to the astronomical year and had 365 days like ours. The other was shorter, 260 days, and was associated with rituals.

The cycles of time were central to Mayan life, so the times when the two calendars came together were considered special events. This activity will help you understand how the Maya figured out when those coinciding days would occur.

According to our tour guide Children we sacrificed at the top of the building. Their hearts were cut out and the high priest would eat the heart and throw the body down the steps and at the bottom they would skin the body and then the high priest would wear the skin. Bodies were then burned as no history has been found within graves.

As we return, we stop to watch a procession to the Immaculate Conception (December 8th).

[More Pictures](#)



Day 4 (December 9th, 2018) - Roatán



After plenty of food and drinks we sailed overnight and arrived at Roatán, Honduras.

Roatán (Spanish pronunciation: [ro.a.'tan]). Roatan is one of Honduras's Caribbean Bay Islands, an island in the Caribbean, about 40 miles off the northern coast of Honduras. It is located between the islands of Útila and Guanaja and is the largest of the Bay Islands of Honduras. It is part of the huge Mesoamerican Barrier Reef, the largest barrier reef in the

Caribbean Sea (second largest worldwide after Australia's Great Barrier Reef. It's known for its beaches, dive sites and marine life, including whale sharks. Cruise ships dock in the capital of Coxen Hole and nearby Mahogany Bay.

The island was formerly known as Ruatan and Rattan. is approximately 48 miles long, and less than 5.0 miles across at its widest point. The island consists of two municipalities: José Santos Guardiola in the east and Roatán, including the Cayos Cochinos, further south in the west.

The island rests on an exposed ancient coral reef, rising to about 890 ft above sea level. Offshore reefs offer opportunities for diving. Most habitation is in the western half of the island.

[Video: Welcome to Roatan:](#)



The most populous town of the island is Coxen Hole, capital of Roatán municipality, located in the southwest.

The buses await (right in picture) us for the overland part of our tour.

We are waiting as they tie the ship to the pier. It is a process as a small boat pulls the line from the ship to the tie-downs and then a larger line is pulled and tied to the dock pillars..



We took a short bus ride to the Gumbalima Preserve & Animal Sanctuary. This tour company was very helpful as they let us board first as Diana was still using her cane. The previous tour not one seemed to care that Diana was using a Cain.

In Gumbalimba Park we witnessed the natural beauty of the Caribbean at Roatan's finest preservation park. We

explored unspoiled trails where flowers and butterflies give way to the shade of the tropical forest canopy. We make the crossing over Gumbalimba Pond via a scenic rope bridge. We delight in the tranquil sounds of the garden waterfall. Befriend the brilliant winged inhabitants of the Bird Sanctuary where friendly parrots and macaws bring the colors of the Caribbean alive. Ever dreamt of frolicking with monkeys? Enter the Monkey Refugio and meet the white face capuchin monkeys.

We roamed through the Botanical Garden and learned about the native exotic plants and we entered the Insectarium and discover the world of insects. After exploring, we wanted to dive into the freshwater pool or take a dip in the Caribbean-Oh well maybe somewhere else on our tour.

The Monkeys



Gumbalimba Park is not only a tourist attraction, but an animal preserve. The free-range capuchin monkeys are native to Central America and roam around the 20-acre park. They are curious and friendly enough to jump right on your shoulder, pick your pockets, and play with your hat (my hair) or sunglasses.



There were many photo opportunities abound with these cute little creatures! The guides at Gumbalimba are patient and willing to take tons of pictures for you or wait while you take a hundred selfies with your new furry friends.

I sent a text and I posted a picture with a baby monkey peeking around the side of my head. Many responded that it was very cute!

The Exotic Birds

The macaws and other exotic birds are free-flying and can be seen all over the park. However, there are guides along the way with birds trained to sit on your shoulder for pictures. These birds, like their monkey pals, are friendly and curious.



There are 19 species of macaws, many of which can be found on the island of Roatan. Fun Fact: The scarlet macaw is the National Bird of Honduras. We also saw hummingbirds and a toucan on our tour through Gumbalimba Park.

One reliable piece of advice about Facebook followers is that they love animals. All the pictures I sent were neat!



Bridge of Pirates

As we walked through the Gumbalimba Park we found the gorgeous the Bridge of Pirates. It is 237 feet of swinging suspension bridge that separates the main park area from the animal sanctuary. If you want to see the other part of the park, you had to cross it! The bridge traverses a small pond full of turtles. I think there were many more than 8 people on the bridge at the same time, but it did not collapse.



The pond under the bridge



Tom & Diana on the bridge



Coxen's Cave & Insectarium

Coxen's Cave is a man-made cave full of museum-quality pirate exhibits. Here you'll learn about notorious plunderer John Coxen and the rest of Roatan's pirate-filled history. There is also a 3-D model of the island on display in the cave, which notes several landmarks that you may have already seen. Gumbalimba's Insectarium is where you'll become educated on all Central America's creepy-crawlies! There are frames full of giant beetles, shiny butterflies, and camouflaged moths. Fun fact: Central America is home to one of the largest and shiniest butterfly species in the world – the blue morpho butterfly.

One of the best features of Coxen's Cave and the Insectarium is that it is air-conditioned!!! It would be easy to spend too much time looking around and reading all the informational plaques, just because escaping the heat and humidity felt so good. We were lucky this day as it was a pleasant day.

The intriguing pirate museum called Coxen's Cave, named after Captain John Coxon – one of Roatan's famous pirates who mysteriously disappeared along with his ship and entire crew after a scandalous life of raids and looting. Perhaps he met the same fate as the Flying Dutchman – that ghostly derelict ship doomed to sail the seas forever, never to find a moment's peace...

The museum is cleverly constructed to resemble a rocky cave with several chambers that naturally blend with its lush outdoor surroundings, and boasts fantastic informational displays with interesting trivia, sculptures and murals depicting historical scenes, and real ammunition used in the buccaneers' heyday.

Things like flintlock pistols, muskets with bayonets, cutlasses with scabbards, blunderbusses, and assorted daggers, swords and pistols divert the imagination to times long past when notorious pirates like Sir Henry Morgan (after whom a brand of rum is named), Blackbeard (the much feared Edward Teach himself), Nicholas Van Hoorn and John Coxon set up several pirate colonies on Roatan, from where they could easily ambush, capture and pillage unwary Spanish galleons headed back to Spain from the New World while laden with gold and silver. Aarrgh!!! And treacherous times be those, matey, when ye scarce could sleep a wink for fear of plunderin' pirates off the wild and primitive shores west of the Greater Antilles! Those were dangerous times indeed, making for fascinating study and numerous Hollywood tales.





I picked up this lady from our tour group, thought she was cute!!!



This evening we attended a show with featuring Chris Burke – A Celebration of the Sounds of Soul

Chris Burke's velvet vocals combine contemporary neo-soul/pop with the classic sounds of Stax and Motown. His style ranges effortlessly from the grit of Stevie Wonder, to the smooth R&B of Luther Vandross, to the pop falsetto of Daryl Hall. Having grown up in Henderson, North Carolina, then Birmingham, Alabama, he honed his vocal skills at Emory University in Atlanta where he served as lead in his a cappella group, with whom he toured and recorded 3 full length albums. After college, he performed on stages at Six Flags over Georgia for 5 years, including country shows, a 90s pop review, and a full band show. I thought he was terrible - a white boy trying to sing Motown-Not!

[More Pictures](#)

Day 5 (Monday December 10, 2018) - Harvest Caye



The sales pitch for this stop is “Enjoy the beautiful white sands of the Caribbean's premier resort-style destination, Harvest Caye, you have the privilege to take a dip in the expansive pool with a cascading waterfall, make sure to have a tropical cocktail at the Land Shark swim-up bar, Experience the thrill of zip lining across the island and kayak or paddleboard across the sparkling saltwater lagoon. Please be sure to bring your beach towel from the Ship, as Harvest Caye does not provide towel service. While in port, your key card must be used to charge all

activities, Shore Excursions and cabana rental. Cash or credit card is required for all Food & Beverage and retail outlets”.

One of the newest ports in the western Caribbean cruise itinerary for Norwegian Cruise Line guests is the brand-new Harvest Caye Port. Opened to the public in November 2016, the 75-acre island features plenty of facilities and activities to have fun on. Such as the 15,000 square foot swimming pool. A 1300-foot-long zip line which is 136 feet above the ground and a beautiful 7-acre white sandy beach. It's no wonder there are so many things to do in Harvest Caye, Belize.

Owned exclusively by Norwegian Cruise Line, this cruise port justifies the \$50 million and the 4 years of hard labor that was spent creating it. The non-tendering port could be one of the most authentic Caribbean cruise ports there is. And probably the reason why it was voted the best new cruise port in the Caribbean in 2017.

Norwegian Cruise Line partnered with the government of Belize to make this cruise port as authentic as possible. So, forget big shopping names like Diamond Internationals. NCL made sure that all the 400-staff working on the island are locals. All the restaurants, amenities and shopping stores are also locally owned. Even the materials used to construct the man-made port were sourced locally from Belize.



The Dock/island is owned and operated by Norwegian Cruise Lines...

We are off on another Excursion called Monkey River Eco Tour starting at the Gateway at Harvest Coye

We are off the ship today to visit the Monkey River Eco Tour located in Harvest Caye, Belize. We will cruise the winding Monkey River, looking at wildlife in the surrounding rainforest, and then enjoy a hike with a naturalist that will explain the plants' medicinal uses. After departing from the pier, you will soon arrive at a small village near the mouth of the Monkey River, where you will begin a leisurely cruise upstream. Along the way, the guide provided enlightening commentary about the region's history, including how the economy boomed in the late 19th century when large volumes of bananas were exported.



Little evidence of that thriving time period remains, as the meandering Monkey River is bordered by undeveloped rainforest. Natural beauty and remarkably diverse flora and fauna are now the main attractions. We saw a variety of wildlife, including crocodiles sunning on the riverbanks, turtles popping their heads above the water's surface, and iguanas perched in the tree limbs. As we got off the tour boat to see troop of black howler monkeys screeching in the forest.

Tropical birds were abundant along the river, especially wading birds such as herons, brightly colored tanagers and keel-billed toucans, the national bird of Belize. Toucans were easy to spot because of their large, colorful bills and how they croak like frogs.



We also got off the tour boat and hiked through the surrounding forest while the naturalist guide points out plants with medicinal qualities. For instance, leaves of the soursop are often brewed into a tea that reduces fever, and the wild yam has anti-inflammatory properties.



Bats



Aligator



tarantula





Above - We arrived by boat at this shop and it cost \$1.00 to get some toilet paper. Men had the advantage. Right - A pelican taking flight from the water.



Diana standing next to a coconut plant.

[Videos: Welcome to Harvest Caye & Along the Monkey River](#)

[More Pictures](#)

Day 6 (Tuesday - December 11, 2018) – Costa Maya



We arrived at the port Costa May, Mexico, Costa Maya is a small tourist region in the municipality of Ithon P. Blanci in the state of Quintana Roo, Mexico, the only state bounded by the Caribbean Sea to it East. Currency in Mexico is the “Mexican Peso” but US Dollars are accepted practically everywhere. The official language in Mexico is Spanish. However, in Costa Maya many people also speak English, Italian and German. Also, in Costa Maya can be found people who also speak Mayan and some who only Mayan.

Just a comment: No matter how much we planned for this trip we came across some minor issues. One was we brought our hiking

poles of for the life of us it took us awhile to remember how to tighten up the slider when adjusting the length of the poles.

And then there was the camera. We have a great camera but during the tour of Monkey River I but had a terrible time adjusting the focus. After about 20 pictures I got it set to where I wanted it.



A crowded port with three ships in port at the same time.



We walked off the ship and passed through the Costa Maya on our way via a bus to the Mayan ruins call Chacchoben

Chacchoben (chak-CHO-ben; Maya for "the place of red corn") is a Mayan ruin approximately 110 miles south of Tulum and 7 miles from the village from which it derives its name.

Settlement by the Maya at the site is estimated at 200 BC to 900 AD. The ruins at Chacchoben,

constructed by the Mayans in the 4th century, include magnificent stone structures and pyramids with some structures date from 700 AD. These are characterized by large temples and massive platform groups.

In the 1940s a farm was established near the site by the Cohuo family, but the ruins were officially reported to the Mexican government in June 1972 by Dr. Peter Harrison, an American archaeologist who was working on a project for The Royal Ontario Museum, and who also made the first maps of Chacchoben. Harrison stumbled upon this site while flying a helicopter over Mexico and noticed numerous hills in predominately flat lands. Harrison realized there were temples beneath these hills, which were naturally covered over a period of 2000 years.



In 1994 the Mexican National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) excavated and restored the site, which was closed to the public until 2002.

Visitors to the site today walk a circular path that includes three excavated and restored pyramids, as well as many walls and staircases. Excavation is continuing several mounds which are known to contain further buildings. Some structures still bear traces of the red paint with which they were originally coated, and INAH has set up shaded areas to prevent further degradation of this pigment by the sun. Also notable at the base of the largest pyramid is a large stone slab called a stela with a Mayan hieroglyphic inscription. Chacchoben is one of the more popular ruin sites in southern Quintana Roo, with regular tourist trips from the port of Costa Maya.

The surrounding jungle is characterized by abundant species of fauna such as, deer, peccary, armadillo, gray fox, spider monkey and howler monkey. Deeper into the jungle, more dangerous animals like jaguar, ocelot, puma and tapir can be found.

Chacchoben is a little different than the Mayan ruins at Chuchen Itsa as Chacchoben shows more of a town with its shopping areas and temples and we could climb on some of the structures in Chacchoben.





Diana examining the mortar between the rocks

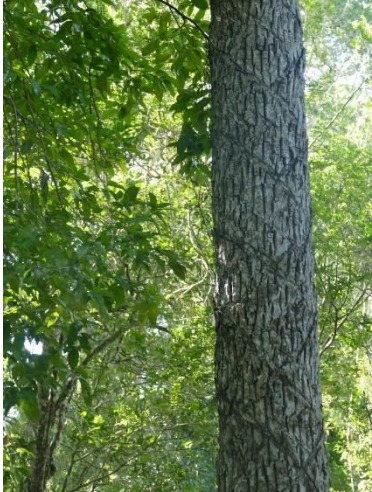


Up close view of the mortar



I was proud of Diana as we both climbed the structures today. She had given up her cane a day ago for good.





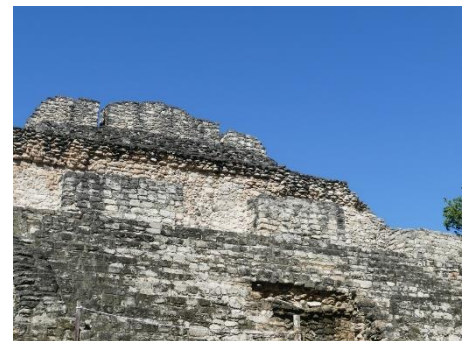
(left picture) These lines in this tree were used to drain the natural gum that was then turned into chewing gum. It was marketed in the United States as Chiclets.



(right picture) shows a hand print of the original builder of this structure



This shows a hand print of the original builder of this location



Corozo Cohune Palm Nut



The shopping area of the Mayan ruins



The steps of the temple we climbed



This tree grows around another tree and slowly squeezes the interior tree to death





Field of red corn growing among the palm trees next to the site of Chacchoben. The site name is modern and means red corn

This evening we attended the Broadway performance: Rock of Ages:

Rock of Ages is a jukebox musical built around classic rock songs from the 1980s, especially from the famous glam metal bands of that decade. The musical features songs from Styx, Journey, Bon Jovi, Pat Benatar, Twisted Sister, Steve Perry, Poison and Europe, among other well-known rock bands. It was written by Chris D'Arienzo, directed by Kristin Hanggi and choreographed by Kelly Devine with music supervision, arrangements and orchestrations by Ethan Popp.

During the performance, the performers frequently break the "fourth wall", directly addressing the audience and seemingly forgetting (or perhaps reminding the audience) that they are actors in a musical. Despite the musical's title, the Def Leppard song of the same name is not included in the musical.

The original Broadway production ran for 2,328 performances, closing on January 18, 2015 tied as the 29th-longest running show in Broadway history. Since debuting on the Great White Way in 2009, it has spawned replica productions worldwide in Japan, Australia and the United Kingdom among others, as well as several touring productions.



It is 1987, and the fabled West Hollywood club the Bourbon Room is the seedy, sordid, vibrant heart of the Sunset Strip. The music venue has seen better days, but as run by chilled-out former rock impresario Dennis Dupree, and tended to by Dennis's mischievous assistant Lonny, it is the essence of rock and roll. When bright-eyed young hopeful Sherrie Christian, a small-town girl who wants to make it as an actress, arrives in town, she bumps into Drew, a Bourbon Room busboy with dreams of rock and roll stardom. Love-struck Drew convinces Dennis to hire Sherrie, and the stage seems set for their romance. But when the Mayor of West Hollywood, persuaded by a couple of scheming German real estate developers, announces his intention to demolish the Bourbon

Room and the entire gritty Sunset Strip, the stakes are raised. Dennis convinces rock god Stacee Jaxx, lead singer of megaband Arsenal, to play the band's last show at the Bourbon Room, hopeful that the money raised will stop the building from being demolished. But Stacee, a man of massive charisma and massive ego, leaves destruction in his wake, sleeping with Sherrie and getting knocked out by his own band before the concert is over. During violent anti-demolition protests, Sherrie flees to a nearby strip club and Drew falls into the clutches of a boy band. Who can save the Bourbon Room, the young lovers, and the feuding Germans? Only Lonny, the "dramatic conjurer", knows for sure. Rock of Ages is a big, brash, energetic tribute to classic rock, to over-the-top ballads and fierce guitar, to the gritty glamour and rough energy of the Sunset Strip. This jukebox musical features '80s hits such as "We Built this City", "I Wanna Rock", and "Don't Stop Believin".

[More Pictures](#)

Day 7 (Wednesday - December 12, 2018) – Grand Cayman

Grand Cayman is the largest of the three Cayman Islands and the location of the territory's capital, George Town. In relation to the other two Cayman Islands, it is approximately 75 miles southwest of Little Cayman and 90 miles southwest of Cayman Brac.

Grand Cayman encompasses 76% of the territory's entire land mass. The island is approximately 22 miles long with its widest point being 8 miles wide. The elevation ranges from sea level at the beaches to 60 feet above sea level on the North Side's Mastic Trail.

We had planned to do a tour of Stingray City & Barrier Reef Snorkel. As this location requires tender boat to get us ashore and the seas had 12 foot swells the captain announced that we would not be able to disembark at this location as safety was his concern, so we skipped this port. Diana and I had planned for this site for a long time, but it was not to be. Diana was proud that she had purchased a new bathing suit that covered her back-smart move, me not so smart.

But one of the things that was important to me was to somehow buy something for Diana that would celebrate her putting up with me for the 10 years of our marriage. It was accomplished when she found a Zultanite ring.



We watched this tender boat off load passengers from another ship even though we could not disembark. Once we left port the other ship encountered high waves and had a terrible time getting people back on board.

[More Pictures](#)

Day 8 (Thursday December 13, 2018) – Ocho Rios

Ocho Rios (Spanish for "Eight Rivers") is a town in the parish of Saint Ann on the north coast of Jamaica. Just outside the city, travelers and residents can visit Columbus Park, where Columbus supposedly first came on land, and see maritime artifacts and Spanish colonial buildings.

It was once a fishing village but now caters to tourists. It is a port of call for cruise ships as well as for cargo ships loading sugar, limestone, and in the past, bauxite. Scuba diving and other water sports are offered in the town's vicinity.

The name "Ocho Rios" is a possibly misnomer, as there are not currently eight rivers in the area. It could be a British corruption of the original Spanish name "Las Chorreras" ("the waterfalls"), a name given to the village because of the nearby Dunn's River Falls.

The town has restaurants, and in Margaritaville and Dolphin Cove nightclubs where tourists swim and interact with dolphins. Another major point of interest is Fern Gully. Fern Gully is the result of a 1907 earthquake that destroyed one of the river beds in the area. Fern Gully stretches about 3 miles of great rocky gorge where travelers can see over 540 variety of ferns. In 1907, the British government paved over the destroyed river bed to create what is currently known as The Fern Gully Highway.

We are crazy enough to have taken the Bobsled run. Wow how exciting A little history: The Jamaican national bobsleigh team represents Jamaica in international bobsledding competitions. The team first gained fame during their debut in the 1988 Winter Olympic Games four-man bobsled in Calgary, Alberta, where they were underdogs as they represented a tropical nation in a winter sport. The team returned to the Winter Olympics in the two-man bobsled in 1992, 1994, 1998, 2002, 2014, and with a women's team for the first time in 2018. The team either failed to qualify or did not have a team during the other Winter Olympics.

In the beginning the team, consisting of Devon Harris, Dudley Stokes, Michael White, Freddy Powell, and last-minute replacement Chris Stokes, debuted at the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary, Alberta. The team was coached by Howard Siler, an Olympic bobsledder for the United States in 1972 and 1980. They quickly became very popular, largely because of their status as the ultimate "underdog" story of the games. Alongside the novelty of a tropical country competing in a cold-weather sport, the team had very little experience going down a bobsled track and borrowed spare sleds from other countries to compete. In a show of sporting camaraderie across national boundaries, other bobsledders were quick to give them guidance and support. They did not officially finish after losing control of the sled and crashing during one of their qualifiers. The movie *Cool Runnings* is loosely based on their experience at the 1988 games.

After the team returned to the Olympics in the 1992 Winter Olympics in Albertville, France, but finished poorly. They qualified again for the 1994 Winter Olympics in Lillehammer, Norway. There, the Jamaican four sled stunned many of their critics by finishing in 14th place ahead of the United States, Russia, Australia, and France.

In 2000, the Jamaican bobsleigh team won the gold medal at the World Push Championships in Monaco.

At the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, the 2-man team of Winston Watts (pilot) and Lascelles Brown (brakeman) set the Park City bobsled track record and the Olympic record for the push-start segment of the 2-man race at 4.78 seconds. Jamaica failed to qualify for the 2006 Winter Olympics in

Turin, Italy, or the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, Canada. They did, however, qualify for the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia as a two-man bobsled.

Jamaica also competed in women's bobsleigh, with a crew of two, consisting of pilot Porscha Morgan and Wycombe Cole on brakes, winning World Push Championship titles in 2000 and 2001. They achieved the fastest push times in all runs, resulting in a landslide victory. These women initiated the Jamaican women bobsleigh team/program and were contenders in the sport. However, the women's program suffered a setback because of lack of funding, and brakeman Wynsome Cole suffered injuries due to a crash, resulting in the team having to withdraw from a few of the competitions.

The Jamaican women's team was revived after the 2014 Winter Olympics, with KayMarie Jones and Salcia Slack competing in a North American Cup race in November 2014, becoming the first Jamaican female crew to have competed internationally in over a decade. One of the athletes on the revived team was Natalia Stokes, daughter and niece of former Jamaican bobsledders Chris and Dudley Stokes.

Having qualified for the 2014 Sochi Olympics, but lacking funding, the cryptocurrency Dogecoin community raised on the team's behalf \$30,000 of the approximately \$40,000 required within two days. An online campaign was set up, seeking to raise an additional \$80,000 through the crowdfunding platform Tilt. When it closed on 22 January 2014, the campaign had raised \$129,687, far surpassing the target.

After the 2014 Olympics former Olympic medalist and former coach of the Dutch and United States bobsleigh teams Todd Hays was appointed head coach and technical director of the Jamaican team. However, he had to leave his role after one season due to a lack of funds to pay his salary, although he continued to work with the team in an unofficial capacity. Ahead of the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea, the Jamaican Bobsleigh Federation invested significantly in the team, buying a new sled for the women's crew of Jazmine Fenlator-Victorian and Carrie Russell, and filling a number of coaching positions, with former British, Dutch and Brazilian coach Jo Manning becoming High-Performance Director, former Olympic and World Champion Sandra Kiriasis joining as driving coach and Dudley Stokes being appointed as coach responsible for of performance, mental preparation and general logistics. In January 2018, the Jamaican women's team secured qualification for the Olympics for the first time. However, the men's team missed out on Olympic qualification by one position in the world rankings. Days ahead of the start of bobsleigh training at the Games, Kiriasis parted ways with the Jamaica Bobsleigh Federation after she was told she would be demoted from her position as driver coach to the role of track and performance analyst. On 21 February Fenlator-Victorian and Russell finished 19th in the two-woman Olympic bobsleigh event.



We took a tour bus to the Bobsled Jamaica. It turned out to be a great adventure in Jamaica!! The tram ride up the mountain was beautiful! The foliage was amazing with huge plants and gorgeous flowers. Once on top of the mountain we enjoyed a long wait as people loaded on individual bobsleds. We took the bobsled down the mountain which was a blast and then took pictures on the slow ride back up.

We then took a short bus ride to Dunn's River Falls and watched as people climbed the falls and shopped at the craft market there. Plenty of time to do both in one day!! We counted this as the highlight of our stay in Jamaica!!

Dunn's River Falls is a famous waterfall near Ocho Rios, Jamaica and a major Caribbean tourist attraction that receives thousands of visitors each year.

At about 180 feet high and 600 feet long, the waterfalls are terraced like giant natural stairs though some incorporate man-made improvements. Several small lagoons are interspersed among the vertical sections of the falls.

The falls empty into the Caribbean Sea at the western end of a white-sand beach.

Climbing the waterfalls is a popular tourist activity and is often, but not exclusively, performed with the help of tour guides from the park. It takes about 1-1.5 hours to climb with short breaks for photographs and video recordings taken by the guides. There are also stairs alongside of the falls for those who do not want to get wet or are unable to manage the rocky, uneven terrain of the actual waterfall.

The falls are bordered by lush, green vegetation that shades the area from the sun and keeps the area, and climbers, cool. The climb can be relatively hard so is often undertaken as a hand-holding human chain led by a guide to make it easier.

The falls were the location where the Battle of Las Chorreras took place in 1657, when the British defeated a Spanish expeditionary force from Cuba. A plaque placed at the bottom of the falls by the Jamaican Historical Society commemorates the event

Dunn's River, a short stream dropping only 180 ft from its source to the sea, is fed by spring water rich with calcium carbonate and deposits travertine forming a sequence of tufa terraces. Such waterfalls are described by geologists as "a living phenomenon" because they are continuously rebuilt by the sediments in spring water.

Dunn's River Falls is one of the very few travertine waterfalls in the world that empties directly into the sea. We did not climb the falls as it looked a little slippery and I was not sure that was a good idea with Diana's recently healed bone fracture.





Lots of people waded towards the falls. I did not want Diana to tempt this as she was recently healed from her fall with our dog.

[More Pictures](#)

Day 9 (Friday December 14, 2018) – Open Sea.

We are on the sea for the next two days as we travel first NW from Jamaica and then just west of Cuba, we turned North West and head for New Orleans.

I have ways thought that ballroom dancing is stiff and sequined? Think again. After storming the stages on Broadway and the West End, the rebels of ballroom are proud to bring the passion, sensuality and the infectious spirit of the ballroom era to the Breakaway in the show “Burn the Floor”. This is the second time we have seen this show as it is really good. At the end of the show, stay and enjoy the special finale with the Officers, Staff and Crew of Norwegian Breakaway. We had seats directly in the center of the theater.

Interesting thoughts and observations. We had a day of rough seas and it was somewhat difficult to walk as the floor one move ever slow lightly causing a person who walks normal to do a lot of side stepping to keep our balance. Having a glass of wine was exciting as it felt like we had had several.

We most ate in the open dining as we like that kind of environment. We talked to many couples and had a great time. My favorite dish was soft served ice cream. It brought back so many fun memories of Bob and Mary Aymar as we had taken a cruise with them. Bob and I always had a contest-who could make the biggest bowl of soft serve ice cream (some many great memories).



Interesting facts about how people get food in the open dining situations (cafeteria style). They look at food and go into a hypnotic trance and just don't move. So, we had to move around them. When Diana was using her cane, it was easier as people would give way without it. It's like playing basketball where you must be looking at both sides as well as in front of you as you walk with a full plate of food. A real toe dancing movement.

There are many handicap folks on this cruise so that makes it even harder to get around during eating time. That is because most parents with kids are in school this time of year.

[More Pictures](#)

Day 10 (Saturday December 15, 2018) – Open Sea

We are on the open sea for the second day and have just passed Cuba to our East. We decided to take the tour "Behind the Scenes Tour of the ship. The tour took us back stage and shows how they store the customs and how they do their makeup and get back on the stage. We also toured the kitchen facilities and the laundry...



Ice sculptures
in the main
dining area



We did not visit the bridge but here are some interesting facts.

Part of the Bridge is where Emergency situations are assessed and evaluated. It is supported with several kinds of safety equipment controls and devices.

The following are part of the Safety Center.

- Consultum Main Fire Alarm computer. Receives and alerts locations of fire, heat flames and smoke.
- IMS Watertight. DOOf central control. Closes all watertight doors simultaneously remotely from the safety center within less than 1 min.
- Fire Door central control. Closes Fire doors simultaneously remotely from the safety center within less than 1 minute.

- Hi fog control. Activates High Pressure Sprinkler valves to extinguish fires.
- NAPA Loading Stability Computer. Calculates intact and Damage Stability with a simulation function.
- 4 Valmarine Automation Systems. View and Controls onboard automation.
- Sisco Tracking System. A computer-based system designed for Decision Support with Simulation and Track personnel on board including passengers when mustering in Emergency situations.
- Ventilation Emergency Shutdown Control Panel. Control intake and exhaust of ventilations onboard.
- Fire Detection Panel (Consilium integrated with Kongsberg MAS/SMS systems) An alarm will sound on the Bridge if a detector has been activated. The panel will display the exact location of the alarm. Detectors can be activated by smoke, heat and if removed or tampered with. Therefore, do not touch these!

Anchors/Windlass

- 2 anchors each weighing 16,125 kg.
- 2 anchor chains each 357.5 meters / 1172.9 feet and 114mm in diameter with K3 Grade Steel.
- Forward - 2 windlass combined with single mooring winches (National Oilwell Varco) + 4 double rope mooring winches (National Oilwell Varco) & AFT - 5 double rope mooring winches (National Oilwell Varco)

Lifeboat & Safety Information

- 18 Lifeboats in 2 different holding capacity. 12 Lifeboats holds 305 persons each' and 6 Tender boats holds 258 persons each. (Total 5,208 persons)
- 2 rescue boats
- 4 MES Stations with 24 life rafts in total. 20 which hold 158 persons & 4 which hold 50 persons (Total 3,360 persons)
- 13,062 Life Jackets (including child/infant)
- Maximum combined Lifeboat and Life craft Capacity is 8,568 persons
- To ensure the safety of all guests, a simulated emergency drill is held every week for crew members. At that time, lifeboats are lowered to ensure they are in proper working order.
- On Embarkation a mandatory passenger drill is also held to familiarize the passengers with onboard procedures in the unlikely event of an emergency.

Fuel use & capacity

- Fuel Capacity: 844822 gallons
- Fuel type: Heavy Bunker C IFO 380 cst, temperature before engines about 130 Deg/C 700m3 / 25,400 gallons per week however this all depends on load I speed
- Gas oil capacity 138690 gallon

Main Laundry Facilities



- 2 Tunnel wash systems composed of 12 compartment washers at 25kg per load and 8 dryers at 50kg per load.
- 2 Wet cleaning machines | 20kg per load
- 1 Dry Cleaning Machine / 15kg per load
- 2 Washer extractor machines [Big] /125kg per load
- 2 Washer extractor machines [Medium] / 33kg per load
- 3 Washer extractor machines [Small] / 20kg per load
- 3 Tumble dryer machines | 50kg per load

Almost everything is automated even the ironing the sheets and the folding of such items as table napkins to the bed sheets.



Garbage Incinerator &. Processing

- 2x Deerberg Systems garbage incinerators, which burn the dry garbage that is not offloaded for recycling.
- The ship has equipped with "state of the art" garbage processing equipment. Our system was designed and manufactured in Germany for Marine use.

Fresh Water Manufacturer

- Potable water capacity 4210 M3 /1112164 gallon
- Fresh water generators, type Alfa Laval MEP 10-6-900, production 900m3/day x 2 Reverse osmosis plants type Watman, production 600m3/day x 3

- Production maximum is 150 M3/hr = 39625 gallon / hr

Steam Production

- 2 x Alborg oil fired boilers and 4* Economizers (exhaust gas boilers)

This evening we attended a show called Magic and Comedy of Jason Andrews

Back with a brand-new show! Join World Champion Magician Jason Andrews for an evening of magic and comedy that will have the whole family wondering "how did he do it?" Direct from Las Vegas with more than 26 international variety awards, Jason Andrews has appeared on hit television shows such as Masters of Illusion, Penn & Teller's Fool Us, The Daily Show, and National Geographic's Brain Games, get ready to see the magic and have some fun in this family friendly show, prepare to be amazed. We again had seats in the middle of the theater.

Jason Andrews is a World Champion Magician who performs grand illusions, comedy magic, and sleight-of-hand on television & in live stage productions. In addition to "Las Vegas Entertainer of the Year", Jason's personality, comedy, and sleight-of-hand have received more than 25 international variety awards!

Jason's TV appearances include Masters of Illusion, Penn & Teller's Fool Us, The Daily Show & Brain Games. Jason's live production appearances include Crazy Horse Paris, Masters of Illusion Live, Champions of Magic Live, The Illusionary, & The Magic Castle in Hollywood.

A graduate of the Las Vegas Academy for the Performing Arts, Jason studied dance, movement, theater and live performance before turning professional at the age of 23; after winning the People's Choice Award & the World Championship of Magic from the International Brotherhood of Magicians. Jason performs across the US & internationally but is based in Las Vegas. We thought he was an outstanding magician.

The end of the cruise:

This is the end of our cruise. We were asked to get our bags packed and attach specific luggage tags to our bags and place them in the hall way by 1 AM on December 16, 2018. It has been a fun filled 10 days on our floating home but now it's time to explore New Orleans.

Notes:

- 1) Only 40 of the 5,000 some people got the Norovirus. Norovirus is a very contagious virus. You can get norovirus from an infected person, from contaminated food or water, or by touching contaminated surfaces. The virus causes your stomach or intestines or both to get inflamed (acute gastroenteritis).
- 2) 8 people missed boarding the ship at one port. The crew removed all their stuff and put it on the pier and left a note-Catch Up.
- 3) On a cruise ship you must wash your hands everywhere. The mystery still exists "Where did the salt & pepper shakers go"?
- 4) Using the bow and aft thrusters the ship can move away from the dock sideways...

[More Pictures](#)

Day 11 (Sunday December 16, 2018) – New Orleans

We had to make sure the things we needed for that day we with us because our bags have been moved and will be off loaded as we depart the ship.

We ate a great breakfast and head for our assigned meeting location by boarding pass. We waited awhile as they call various groups of people to get off the ship and then it's our turn. We exited the ship pass through customs and take a bus which we had previously made appointment to our hotel.

We are checking into the Marriott hotel and our room is on the 28th floor of the hotel. A very nice room overlooking the city and the mighty Mississippi.

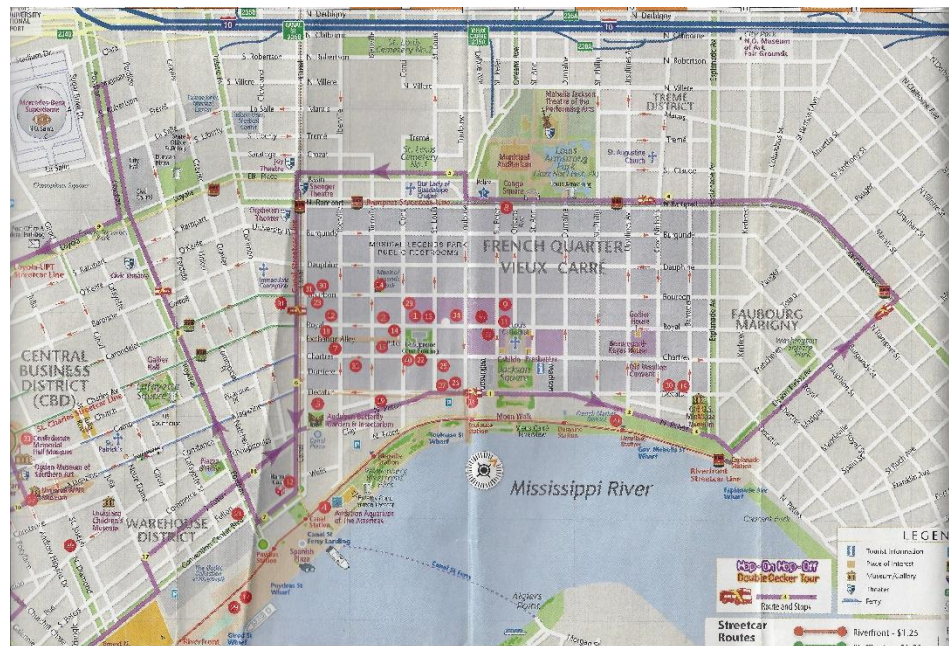


The view from out hotel room. The elevators are neat at this hotel. You enter the floor you want it the display indicates which elevator and off we go. Hardly any waiting.



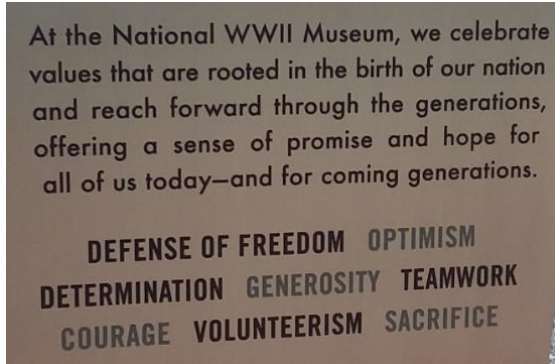
We do the usual and get organized and marvel the amount of space this hotel room has as compared to the cabin on the ship. We are planning on seeing the World War II museum this afternoon.

We have discovered that there is the American side and the French side of this city and the dividing line is Canal street. The name son both sides of Canal street are different depending on what street it is.





We have walked to the World War II museum. The National WWII Museum, formerly known as The



National D-Day Museum, is a military history museum located in the Central Business District of New Orleans, Louisiana, on Andrew Higgins Drive between Camp Street and Magazine Street. The museum focuses on the contribution made by the United States to Allied victory in World War II. Founded in 2000, it was later designated by the U.S. Congress as America's official National WWII Museum in 2003. The museum maintains an affiliation with the Smithsonian Institution. The mission statement of the museum emphasizes the American experience in World War II.

The Museum opened as the D-Day Museum, on June 6, 2000, the 56th anniversary of D-Day, focusing on the amphibious invasion of Normandy.

In addition to opening a second gallery exploring the amphibious invasions of the Pacific War in the original building, known as the Louisiana Memorial Pavilion, the museum has since opened the Solomon Victory Theater, the John E. Kushner Restoration Pavilion, the US Freedom Pavilion: The Boeing Center, and the Campaigns of Courage pavilion. There are further plans to construct what will be called the Liberation Pavilion.

Within the large atrium of the Louisiana Memorial Pavilion several aircraft are on display, including a Supermarine Spitfire and a Douglas C-47 Skytrain suspended from the ceiling. A LCVP, or "Higgins boat," is also usually on display in this pavilion. The exhibits in this pavilion focus on the amphibious landings in the European theater of the war and on the contributions of the Home Front. The Louisiana Memorial



Pavilion is also home to rotating temporary exhibits, as well as the immersive and interactive Train Car (part of the larger "Dog Tag Experience" interactive), which opened in 2013. We did this also and followed two people and they went through the war.



(left) The dog tags we used to following our two service men during their years in the war. The picture to the right is a larger version that the picture above it.

There are other parts of the is part of the museum includes several permanent galleries, including the Home Front, Planning for D-Day, and the D-Day Beaches. The third floor of the Louisiana Memorial Pavilion includes an observation deck for closer viewing of the hanging aircraft.



As we entered the museum, we were encouraged to allocate roughly 2½ to 3 hours to tour the museum. I would say 5 hours would have been a better time frame. We attended the award-winning 4-D film, “Beyond All Boundaries”. It was a true 4D experience where the seats bumped and vibrated as scenes of the war took place-it gave a very good overview of the war on every front.

The Museum closed for three months after Hurricane Katrina ravaged New Orleans in 2005, re-opening on December 3 of that year. A museum banner promoted the re-opening by proclaiming "We Have Returned," a

phrase made famous by General Douglas MacArthur regarding his eventual return to the Philippines in 1944.

As we walked back towards the hotel, we saw many interesting sites.



This sign reads “This statue of Henry Clay was erected A.D> 1856 on Canal Street at the Intersection of Royal and St. Charles streets and was moved to Lafayette Square AD. 1900.

Henry Clay, byname The Great Pacificator or The Great Compromiser, (born April 12, 1777, Hanover county, Virginia, U.S.—died June 29, 1852, Washington, D.C.), American statesman, U.S. congressman (1811–14, 1815–21, 1823–25), and U.S. senator (1806–07, 1810–11, 1831–42, 1849–52) who was noted for his American System (which integrated a national bank, the tariff, and internal improvements to promote economic stability and prosperity) and was a major promoter of the Missouri Compromise (1820) and the Compromise of 1850, both efforts to shield the American union from sectional discord over slavery. Clay was an unsuccessful candidate for president in three general elections, running first in 1824, then as a National Republican (1832), and finally as a Whig (1844).



We may use FedEx to ship things home as we have purchased a few additional items.

For our evening meal Diana wanted to treat me to some fried chicken so we walked a few blocks to a Popeyes chick place. It was good and very unhealthy. There was too much to each so as we left the place, we handed the remaining food to a homeless person, who I am sure enjoyed the treat.

We walked by the Eliza Jane hotel. It is tucked into the mid-19th-century Central Business District, the hotel is named after Eliza Jane Nicholson, publisher of The Daily Picayune in the late 1800s and the first woman publisher of a major metropolitan newspaper in the United States. The hotel's design showcases this history, giving guests and locals alike a glimpse into centuries-old stories and a feel of old New Orleans charm.



[More Pictures](#)

Day 12 (Monday December 17, 2018) – New Orleans



We are up early and off to McDonalds for Breakfast. We are looking for a local tour center, so we can plan our site seeing. We find a city our center between the hotel and McDonalds, so we stop in for advice. These people were fantastic, and we enjoyed of short visit. We signed up for three tours:

Monday – Today - “A City tour via bus”

Tuesday “Natchez Steam Boat (evening)

Wednesday “Plantation Tour”

Picture on left. view from the window of our hotel room. There is a common reference to “The Crescent”. It took us

awhile but what they were referring to is he shape of the river at New Orleans and it is in the shape of a crescent. We have the morning to walk around the city. The city is filled with many kinds or architecture and interesting places.





The above photo is a fire house but has been converted into a family home.



Calle D Bienville was a colonizer born in Montreal, Quebec. was an early, repeated governor of French Louisiana who was appointed four separate

(Picture below) A tribute to Fats Domino, Al Hurt and Pete Fountain



As we were walking downtown a person came up to Diana and said, "Are you a movie star" and then tried selling us music CDs. I thought I was smart and said I did not have any money. The gentleman says, "No Problem I can swipe your Credit Card on my Square-D attached to my phone." What???

After a morning walk around New Orleans, we at lunch at The Creole House Restaurant & Oyster Bar which serves New Orleans classics in the perfect casual atmosphere for everyone to enjoy. It stands as the oldest existing building on Canal Street. The Creole House offered Cajun and Creole cuisine, serving up true southern classics and future New Orleans staples to dazzle your taste buds. Fantastic food...

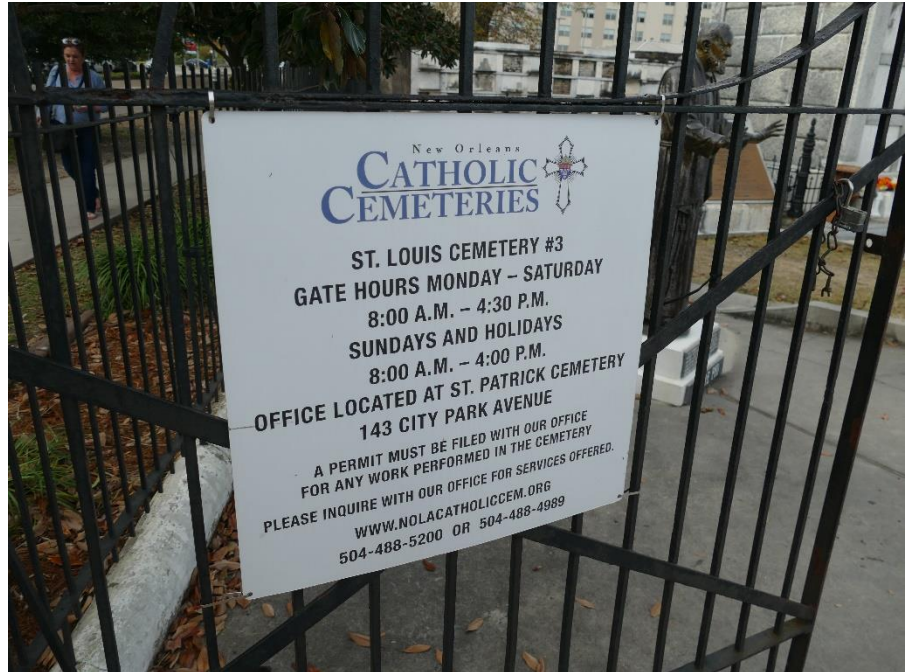


As we wait for our tour bus, I noticed the hotel across the street, a Sheraton New Orleans. In or about 1992 we stayed there for a day or so and walked Bourbon street and a couple of other places. Its hard to remember way back then so on our tour this time we are going to cover as much of the city as we can.

The tour today is by bus and we will be looking at any sites. I hope the pictures and comment will show the history and beauty of New Orleans.

One of our stops on the tour was Saint Louis Cemetery No. 3. It opened in 1854. The crypts on average are more elaborate than at the other St. Louis cemeteries, including several fine 19th century marble tombs.

Saint Louis Cemetery No. 3 also includes a Greek Orthodox section. The cemetery was heavily flooded during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, but its tombs escaped relatively unscathed. There was some plaster damage from debris.



But decadence in the original, non-metaphorical sense is also a regular fixture in this city whose past is littered with pirates, devastating fires, and horrific murders. There has been a lot of death and destruction in New Orleans, and the associated signs of physical decay—whether of buildings or of bodies—are everywhere. Particularly striking to many visitors are the city's numerous old cemeteries filled with creepy-looking aboveground tombs. Whereas death is usually kept hidden, buried out of sight, New Orleans gives residents and visitors constant reminders of the impermanence of life.

The question is "Why aren't the dead in New Orleans buried underground as they are in most of the rest of the country?" Tour guides are fond of explaining (and sometimes embellishing) the practice to shocked tourists. The main issue, they explain, is that New Orleans is located slightly below sea level. Because of this, the water table is quite high. When early European settlers put coffins under six feet of earth, they found that the water level would often rise above them, especially during the city's frequent floods. Since the coffins were filled with air, the water sometimes pushed them up through the earth, causing both a gruesome sight and a health hazard. To keep the coffins underground, holes were drilled in the lid to let air escape, and the coffins were weighted down with rocks and sand. But this was only partially successful, and in any case the saturated corpses did not decompose properly, leading to unsanitary conditions. The only solution was to bury the dead above ground.

Our tour guide did not mention that above-ground burial was a common practice in both France and Spain, where many of the early settlers were from. Even without the resurfacing coffins—which, by the way, were the exception rather than the rule—this practice may well have been adopted simply to keep with tradition. In any case, this method is still widely used today, even though the water table has dropped considerably over the past two centuries as nearby marshes and swamps were drained.

In New Orleans bodies are usually placed inside the walls of the tombs. Because of the hot, subtropical climate, the tomb then effectively becomes an oven, and the high heat causes the body to decompose rapidly in a process that has been compared to a slow cremation. Within about a year, only bones are left.

Just as an oven would not be constructed to bake a single loaf of bread, the tombs in New Orleans cemeteries are used again and again. The specifics vary depending on the

exact design of the tomb, but a typical scenario is that after a year and a day, the bones of the departed are swept into an opening in the floor of the tomb, which is then ready for its next occupant. It is a common practice to bury all the members of a family—or multiple families—in the same tomb, with names and dates added to a plaque or headstone as necessary. This procedure is not only sanitary and efficient; it also avoids the problem of growing real estate needs as time goes on.



There are 15 aboveground cemeteries in and around New Orleans. Cemetery St. Louis #1 has its own star: Marie Laveau, the Voodoo queen. Or, I should say, it has a tomb that many people believe contains her remains—no one is quite sure. But this uncertainty doesn't stop legions of admirers from leaving offerings and marking the tomb with X's in a supposed Voodoo ritual that is in fact apocryphal. This is just one of the cemetery sites associated with Voodoo practices—some genuine, some not.

The cemeteries of New Orleans are often called “cities of the dead.” Not only do the tombs look like buildings, but the cemeteries are organized with streets (and street signs) much like the cities of the

living. And it seems somehow appropriate that in New Orleans the decay of death faintly mirrors the decadence of life. That continuity between this life and the next is strangely comforting.

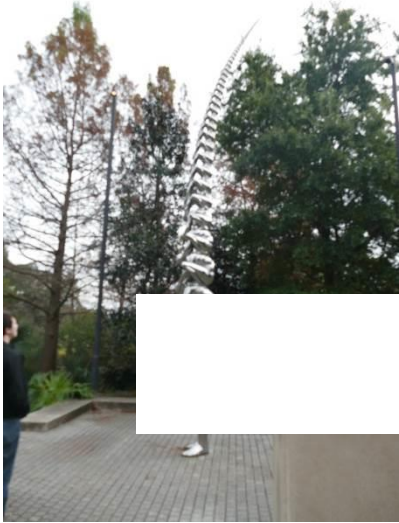
New Orleans Sculpture Garden

Located inside City Park the New Orleans Museum of Art is an exquisite pearl wrapped inside City Park's gorgeous natural landscape. The five-acre Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden at the New Orleans Museum of Art holds more than 60 sculptures collectively valued at \$25 million. These incredible works of art are nestled along meandering footpaths, reflecting lagoons, and 200-year-old live oaks inside the garden.















Antoine Bourdelle
French, 1863-1929
Hercules the Archer, 1909;
cast 1947
Bronze
Museum purchase, 49.47
by Antiquities Transacted by Mrs. William E. Heiss, Jr.



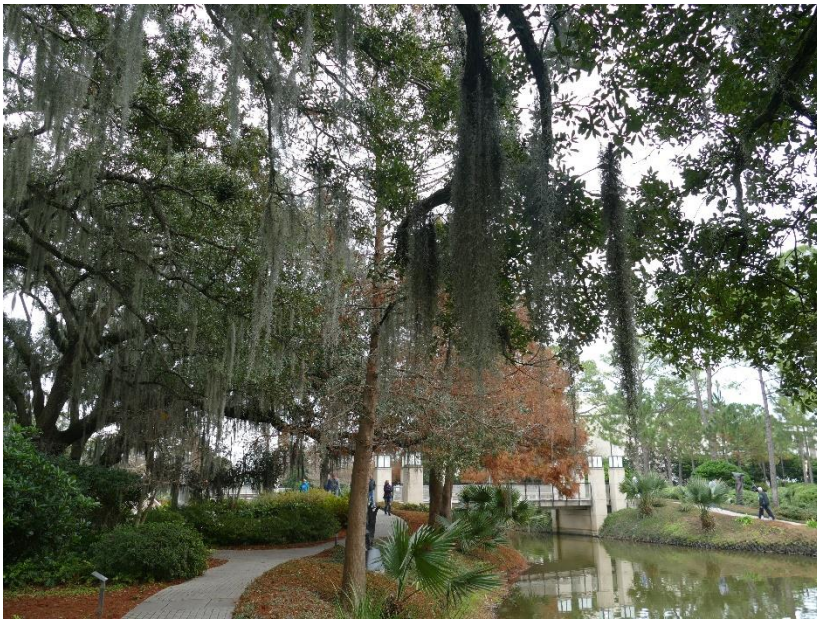
Information overload....



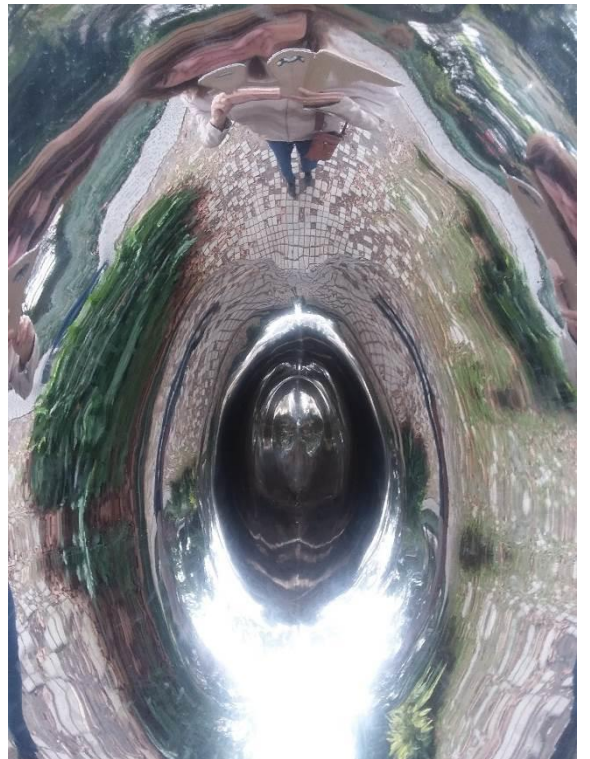




Beautiful gardens









The remaining part of the tour was by bus through beautiful houses and the Upper and Lower 9th Ward.

Lower Ninth Ward - The smallest of these pieces is the area south and east of these canals. The portion of the Ninth Ward along the river down-river from the Industrial Canal stretching to the St. Bernard line is called the "Lower 9th Ward" or "Lower Ninth". It includes the Holy Cross neighborhood, the twin Doullut Steamboat Houses and the Jackson Barracks. Until Hurricane Katrina, the Lower Ninth Ward had the highest percentage of black home ownership in the city.

Upper 9th Ward - The area west or "above" the Canal has sometimes been called the "Upper Ninth Ward." Such distinctions arose when the Industrial Canal bisected the neighborhood in the 1920s. The portion of the Ninth Ward along the riverfront between Faubourg Marigny and the Industrial Canal is known as Bywater.



At the end of August 2005, Hurricane Katrina made landfall just east of New Orleans, the fifth deadliest hurricane and the costliest natural disaster in the history of the United States. Multiple breaches in the levees of at least four canals resulted in catastrophic flooding in most of the city.

Nowhere in the city was the devastation greater than in the Lower 9th Ward, especially the portion from Claiborne Avenue back. This was largely due to the storm surge generated in the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet, a deep-draft shipping channel built by

the Army Corps of Engineers in the late 1950s. The construction destroyed tens of thousands of acres of protective coastal wetlands that once acted as a storm surge buffer for the community.

Storm surge flood waters appear to have poured into the Lower Ninth Ward from at least three sources. To the east, water flowed in from Saint Bernard Parish, while to the west the Industrial Canal suffered two major breaches: one a block in from Florida Avenue, the second back from Claiborne Avenue. The force of the water did not only flood homes but smashed or knocked many off their foundations. A large barge, the ING 4727 (owned by the Ingram Barge Company), was swept by flood waters into the neighborhood through the breach near Claiborne Avenue,



leveling homes beneath it. The storm surge was so great that even the highest portions of the Lower 9th were flooded; Holy Cross School, which had served as a dry refuge after Hurricane Betsy, was inundated. The foot of the Mississippi River levee, the area's highest point, took on some 2 to 3 feet of water.



The Lower 9th Ward was flooded again by Hurricane Rita a month later in September.

Garden District

The Garden District is a dynamic community grounded in a strong sense of tradition. Some of its homes are still known by the names of the families that built them over a century ago, and official flags designating Mardi Gras Royalty are a common sight here during Carnival season.



Laid out in 1806 by Barthelemy Lafon as an open, semi-urban system of interrelated parks with basins, fountains and canals, the Garden District was “one of the earliest expressions of the Greek Revival to appear in New Orleans,” according to noted architect, the late Samuel Wilson, Jr. The streets still bear the names of the nine muses of Greek Mythology, and many of the mid-19th century Greek Revival and Italianate homes remain.

Dubbed the “Garden District” for its capacious, showy gardens, this New Orleans neighborhood is noted for its astounding scenery - just one of its numerous attractions. Visitors are amazed by the elegant homes and the stylish setting that lends itself to a very relaxing and enjoyable experience for all.

The Uptown District, beginning upriver of the Garden District and stretching to Broadway Street, is a self-contained residential world. It’s a place where late 19th century homes are scrupulously maintained, and small-scale restaurants and shops reinforce the feeling that you are visiting a village, not a city.

Today’s Uptown retains many of the grand homes built in the 1890s along St. Charles Avenue and in exclusive cul-de-sac developments like Rosa Park. On oak-shaded streets intersecting St. Charles Avenue, frame houses with ample galleries are the norm. Closer to the river, more modest shotguns built to house 19th century workers are steadily being refurbished, insuring that this premier urban residential neighborhood will continue its legacy of gracious living.





Uptown was part of lands granted to Louisiana Governor Jean Baptiste LeMoyne, Sier de Bienville in 1719, then divided into smaller plantations in 1723. It wasn't until the 1884 World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition on the present-day site of Audubon Park, however, that the areas away from St. Charles Avenue experienced a building boom.

Perhaps it's the tree-shaded and spacious houses that make Carrollton feel nostalgic, or perhaps it is the influence of Tulane and Loyola universities that make

the neighborhood feel like a college town. Established as a rural resort community outside of New Orleans, the neighborhood still has a laid-back feel.

In 1833, New Orleans Canal and Banking Co. purchased half of the McCarty Plantation to obtain right of way for a planned extension of the New Basin Canal. Investors Laurent Millaudon, Senator John Slidell and Samuel Kohn bought the other half and hired planner Charles Zimpel to create the street grid. By the 1850s, the town had a racetrack, fine gardens, a hotel, and an elegant train station.



New Orleans family lore often includes stories of the "long" train ride up St. Charles Avenue, sometimes with an overnight stop at Sacred Heart Convent for the Catholic Creoles coming from the French Quarter and beyond, to holiday in "The Historic Town of Carrollton."

After the tour we did some more exploring in the French quarter and found a small museum about Marie Laveau.

The U.S. Embargo Act of 1808 ended all importation of African slaves to the United States. Voodoo queens were known to exercise great power in their communities and had the role of leading many of the ceremonial meetings and ritual dances. These drew crowds of hundreds and thousands of people. They were considered practitioners who made a living through the selling and administering of amulets, or "gris-gris", charms, and magical powders, as well as spells and charms that guaranteed to "cure ailments, grant desires, and confound or destroy one's enemies". Their power and influence were widespread and largely incontestable, recognized by journalists, judges, criminals, and citizens alike. These females of African and Creole descent emerged as powerful leaders in a society that upheld an oppressive slave regime and a dichotomy of freedom between blacks and whites. Their influence was also related to the early history of the city, in which "a shortage of white women resulted in a high



number of interracial liaisons." As in other French colonial communities, a class of free people of color developed who were given specific rights and, in New Orleans, acquired property and education. Free women of color had a relatively high amount of influence, particularly those who were spiritual leaders. In addition, the religious traditions in West and Central Africa, from where many voodoo customs are derived, provided for women to exercise extraordinary power.

Among the fifteen "voodoo queens" in



neighborhoods scattered around 19th-century New Orleans, Marie Laveau was known as "the" Voodoo Queen, the most eminent and powerful of them all. Her religious rite on the shore of Lake Pontchartrain on St. John's Eve in 1874 attracted some 12,000 black and white New Orleanians. It was said that politicians, lawyers, businessman, wealthy planters - all came to her to consult before making an important financial or business-related decision. She also saw the poor and enslaved. Although her help seemed non-discriminatory, she may have favored enslaved servants: Her most "influential, affluent customers...runaway slaves...credited their successful escapes to Laveaux's powerful charms". Once the news of her powers spread, she dominated the other Voodoo leaders of New Orleans. Also, a Catholic, Laveau encouraged her followers to attend Catholic Mass. Her influence contributed to the adoption of Catholic practices into the Voodoo belief system. Marie Laveau is remembered for her skill and compassion for the less fortunate.

Laveau also gained influence over her clientele by her work as a hairdresser, which gave her intimate knowledge of the gossip in town. Her customers also came to her to buy voodoo dolls, potions, gris-gris bags, and the like. Her influence continues in the city. In the 21st century, her gravesite in the oldest cemetery is a major tourist attraction; believers of Voodoo offer gifts here and pray to her spirit. Across the street from the cemetery where Laveau is buried, offerings of pound cake are left to the statue of Saint Expedite; these offerings are believed to expedite the favors asked of the Voodoo queen. Saint Expedite represents the spirit standing between life and death. The chapel where the statue stands was once used only for holding funerals. Marie Laveau continues to be a central figure of Louisiana Voodoo and of New Orleans culture. Gamblers shout her name when throwing dice, and multiple tales of sightings of the Voodoo queen have been told.



This picture shows the Catholic icons mixed in with the Voodoo practices. I always thought Voodoo was something bad, but it appears in is just the combination of African, slavery and Catholic traditions.

After dinner this evening we walked to visit a hotel Roosevelt. One of the guests on the ship had mentioned we should go see this hotel. At the bar in this hotel called Sazerac



The drink called Sazerac is a great drink. The Louisiana House of Representatives made a historic decision Monday: In a 62-33 vote, legislators proclaimed the Sazerac — the famed mix of rye whiskey, bitters and absinthe that originated in the bayou — New Orleans' official cocktail.

As we walked back, we headed for the local drug store as I was starting to come down with sickness.

Good Night all.

[More Pictures](#)

Day 13 (Tuesday December 18, 2018) – New Orleans

We are off today walk around the city as our river cruise is in the evening. We find a statue of Jean Baptiste LeMoynes de Bienville who is the found of New Orleans in 1717. Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville, (baptized Feb. 23, 1680, Montreal, New France [now in Canada]—died March 7, 1767, Paris, Fr.), French explorer, colonial governor of Louisiana, and founder of New Orleans. Jean-Baptiste was the eighth son of Canadian pioneer Charles Le Moyne. He entered the French navy at age 12 and served with his noted elder brother, Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville, in naval engagements (1696–97) in Hudson Bay and the North Atlantic during King William's War (War of the Grand Alliance).



When the conflict with England ended in 1697, he accompanied his brother on an expedition from France to explore the mouth of the Mississippi River and to plant a colony there. A settlement was founded near the area of modern Biloxi in early 1699, and Bienville was made second in command of the colony when his brother departed in the spring. He explored the lower Mississippi and the Red River (1699–1700), and, when the colony's leader, one "Sauvole," died in 1701, Bienville was commissioned as commandant. In 1702 he moved the colony to Fort Louis on Mobile Bay, and in 1711 it was established at the present site of Mobile, Ala.

Bienville remained as commandant of the French colony until 1712 despite numerous complaints against his rule. He was replaced by Antoine Laumet de Lamothe Cadillac, under whom he served as deputy for three years. In 1716 he led a campaign against the Natchez Indians, and two years later, after Cadillac's recall, Bienville was restored to the position of commandant. At that time, he founded the settlement of New Orleans on the Mississippi River, and four years later he made that city the new capital of the colony.

During his second term as Louisiana commandant, he captured Pensacola from the Spanish and instituted a strict "Black Code" regulating the conduct of black slaves. When the Company of the Indies, which had been financing Louisiana, became unable to continue its support, Bienville's enemies succeeded in having him recalled to France and dismissed as commandant. He returned as governor in 1733, however, after the colony came under royal control. His final term, which lasted for a decade, was marked by intermittent Indian wars. He voluntarily resigned the governorship in May 1743 and retired to Paris.

As we walked, we noticed what appeared to be a small museum concerning Jean Lafitte. It was the Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve. We thought he was a pirate and so we decided to stop in and visit the place. The was a national park ranger giving a talk of the local areas, so we sat down and listened.

It was fascinating information. The talk covered many interesting subjects. One was on the French Quarter- After founding New Orleans on a bend in 1718, French colonists laid it out in a neat grid. The distinctive look of the 66-block (old square) is due to the architectural styles, developed in New Orleans in the 1700s and 1800s. The St. Louis Cathedral, the heart of the district, is flanked by grand Spanish colonial public buildings.

The legacy: Jean Lafitte was a pirate, and so, unsurprisingly, few verifiable facts are known about his life. Pirates are funny that way. But, as is typical -- especially in a place like New Orleans -- in the absence of facts, legend has since rushed in to fill the void. The result is one of the city's most celebrated and romantic figures, a swaggering, swashbuckling man of mystery who led an army of privateers out of Barataria Bay, who helped Andrew Jackson save the city at the Battle of New Orleans -- and who has captured the imagination of the city and those who love it. Alternately portrayed as a gentleman smuggler and cold-blooded criminal, Jean Lafitte has over the years emerged as an enduring touchstone to New Orleans' past, and in many ways a personification of the city itself: roguish, charming, swaggering and an unapologetic follower of his own rules.



Interesting information as we walked along the Mississippi River







This was a great display of the tools used in structing coins. The coins struck at the New Orleans Mint were used by three different governments—the United States, the State of Louisiana and the Confederate States of America —all having operated the mint at one point during the first year of the Civil War.

The New Orleans Mint in Louisiana was the only Southern Mint to survive the Civil War. The Dahlonega and Charlotte Mints ceased production of coins in 1861 when the States of Georgia and North Carolina left the Union and joined the Confederacy. They never minted coins again. The State of Louisiana operated the New Orleans Mint from February 1861 and produced coins for about a month before it joined the Confederate States of America who minted coins until April 30, 1861.

Interesting Fact: Seated Liberty half Dollars. The design features a portrait of Lady Liberty seated on a stone, with a heraldic shield marked “Liberty” in her right hand and a pole with a liberty cap on the top in her left. The reverse depicts an eagle like that on earlier half dollars. Issued from 1839 to 1891.

Six design changes or varieties of Seated Liberty half dollars were issued. In the first year, 1839 an extra piece of drapery was added to Lady Liberty’s left elbow. In 1842 letters on its reverse were increased in size.

In 1853 the weight on the coin was reduced by seven percent. The California gold rush of 1849 set up a dynamic where silver coins were more valuable than gold coins. Two-hundred half dollars melted into bullion would buy not \$100 in gold but \$106.60. This gold could then be exchanged at face value for more silver coins. By 1853 silver coins had a higher metal value than monetary value and melting was widespread.

To make the public aware of this a new design was issued with arrows at the date and rays around the eagle. In 1854 the rays were removed from the design because striking issues with the crude steam presses used at that time.

A decade later, in 1866, the motto "In God We Trust" was added to the reverse design in a ribbon above the eagle.

In 1873 and 1874 arrows were once again added to the design, this time to let the public know an increase in weight to the original size.

The History of the New Orleans Mint That Produced Many Gold & Silver Coins

New Orleans, Louisiana is a city rich in history that was founded in 1718. One can be certain that a great deal of gold from Mexico flowed through its port on the Mississippi river long before it got its Mint in 1835. It was not the only Mint in the South, but it is certainly among one of the most important because it was the only Mint to produce silver coins in this part of the nation. Over the years it would produce more than 425 million silver and gold coins while taking a key place in U.S. history, but perhaps the most fascinating fact of all is that despite everything the building itself went through, it still stands today and is now a National Historic Landmark.

During the early 1800's, New Orleans was the 5th largest city in the nation and conducted the most trade with other nations, even more than New York City itself. With gold in nearby Alabama and plenty of other sources, it was a smart strategic choice of locations for a Mint at the time. The building itself features a style of architecture known as Greek Revival. It was designed by William Strickland who also designed four other mints in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Charlotte, North Carolina; and Dahlonega, Georgia.

The first gold coins produced by the New Orleans Mint were created using gold bullion from Mexico. That May of 1838, 30 dimes would be struck, but the Mint here would go on to produce silver coins such as silver 3-cent pieces, silver dollars and more. Among the many coins produced by this Mint are gold dollars, \$2.50 quarter eagles, \$3 coins, \$5 half eagles, \$10 eagles and even double eagles worth \$20 at the time.

On January 26, 1861 Louisiana seceded from the United States. This meant that the New Orleans Mint was considered owned by the state of Louisiana until they joined the Confederacy. The Mint would remain under Confederate control until the city of New Orleans was recaptured by Union naval forces in 1862. Many incidents took place after this including a scene during which an avowed Confederate supporter climbed atop the Mint facility and tore down a U.S. flag. The man was later hanged from a horizontal flagstaff in retaliation for his public display of derision towards the Union.

Beyond all that this Mint went through during the Civil War, it would be given a second chance to operate between 1879 up until 1909 when it was finally closed. Both women and men would then work in the Mint doing a variety of important jobs. Later, the New Orleans Mint would play a role as a prison from 1932 until 1943. During the Cold War years, it was left standing as a potential fallout shelter in the event of nuclear war. After this, it served as the building for the New Orleans Jazz Museum 1981 until 2005 when it was struck by Hurricane Katrina. Today, the building has been weatherproofed and treated for mold common to the Southern Louisiana climate so that it can host exhibits of gold coins, fine art and much more.



The New Orleans Mint (French: Monnaie de La Nouvelle-Orléans) operated in New Orleans, Louisiana, as a branch mint of the United States Mint from 1838 to 1861 and from 1879 to 1909. During its years of operation, it produced over 427 million gold and silver coins of nearly every American denomination, with a total face value of over US\$ 307 million. It was closed during most of the American Civil War and Reconstruction.

After it was decommissioned as a mint, the building has served a variety of purposes, including as an assay office, a United States Coast Guard storage facility, and a fallout shelter.

Since 1981 it has served as a branch of the Louisiana State Museum. Damaged by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, after over two years of repairs and renovations, the museum reopened in October 2007.

Exhibits include instruments used by some of New Orleans' notable jazz musicians, photographs, and posters, now part of the New Orleans Jazz Museum. The site is also a performance venue for jazz concerts, in partnership with the New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park and the private Music at the Mint organization.

The Louisiana Historical Center is located on the third floor of the building. The center includes collections of colonial-era manuscripts and maps, and primary and secondary source materials in a wide range of media. It is open to anyone with an interest in Louisiana history and culture.

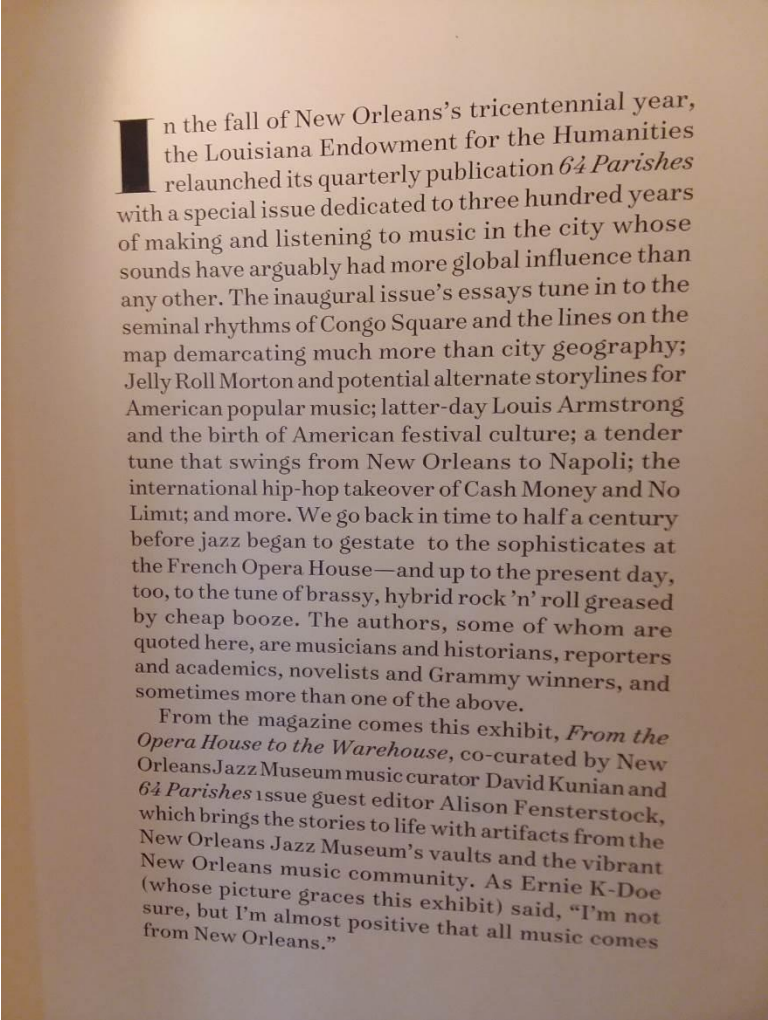
The New Orleans Mint has been designated a National Historic Landmark, and it is the oldest extant structure to have served as a U.S. Mint. Along with the Charlotte Mint, it is one of two former mint facilities in the U.S. to house an art gallery.

On the third floor of the Mint building is the Performing Arts Center of the New Orleans Jazz Museum at the Old U.S. Mint incorporates production, recording and web broadcasting of live music and theatrical performances, lectures, symposia, oral histories, video interviews, and curatorial panels.

From both a technical and cultural standpoint, the performance center at the Mint complements the New Orleans Jazz Museum's mission to celebrate the history of jazz, in all its forms, through dynamic interactive exhibits, multigenerational educational programming, research facilities and engaging musical performances.

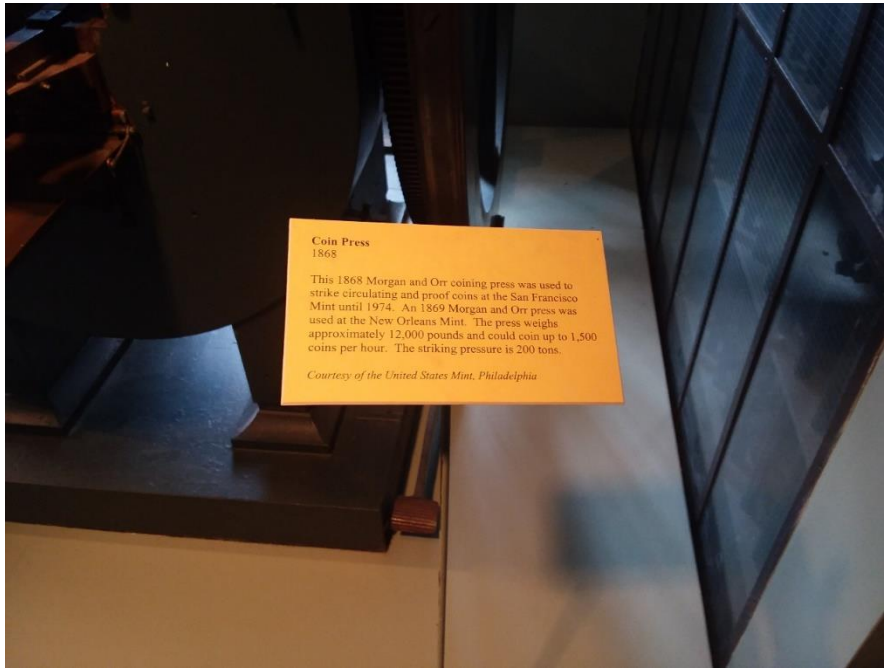
The New Orleans Jazz Museum now links its ongoing collections audio digitization work-flow with that of the Performing Arts Center, including the digitization of its internationally recognized Jazz Collection.

The Performing Arts Center provides the opportunity to link the artifacts and exhibits with the living musical and cultural traditions of the region through a variety of avenues, including live musical and theatrical performances, web streaming, lectures, symposia, conferences, and curatorial presentations. A new comprehensive exhibit on the history of jazz is in development. Regular updates will be posted on this site and social media.



In the fall of New Orleans's tricentennial year, the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities relaunched its quarterly publication *64 Parishes* with a special issue dedicated to three hundred years of making and listening to music in the city whose sounds have arguably had more global influence than any other. The inaugural issue's essays tune in to the seminal rhythms of Congo Square and the lines on the map demarcating much more than city geography; Jelly Roll Morton and potential alternate storylines for American popular music; latter-day Louis Armstrong and the birth of American festival culture; a tender tune that swings from New Orleans to Napoli; the international hip-hop takeover of Cash Money and No Limit; and more. We go back in time to half a century before jazz began to gestate to the sophisticates at the French Opera House—and up to the present day, too, to the tune of brassy, hybrid rock 'n' roll greased by cheap booze. The authors, some of whom are quoted here, are musicians and historians, reporters and academics, novelists and Grammy winners, and sometimes more than one of the above.

From the magazine comes this exhibit, *From the Opera House to the Warehouse*, co-curated by New Orleans Jazz Museum music curator David Kunian and *64 Parishes* issue guest editor Alison Fensterstock, which brings the stories to life with artifacts from the New Orleans Jazz Museum's vaults and the vibrant New Orleans music community. As Ernie K-Doe (whose picture graces this exhibit) said, "I'm not sure, but I'm almost positive that all music comes from New Orleans."



Took a few minutes to stop and listen to Jass music at an outdoor coffee type shop.



The story of our next stop on the walking tour concerns the Baroness de Pontalba.



A view of one of the row houses interiors.

Micaela Leonarda Antonia de Almonester Rojas y de la Ronde, Baroness de Pontalba (November 6, 1795- April 20, 1874) was a wealthy New Orleans-born aristocrat, businesswoman and real estate designer and developer who endures as one of the most recalled and dynamic personalities in the city's history, though

she lived most of her life in Paris.

On April 26, 1798, when Micaela was just 2 1/2 years old, her Spanish father, Don Andrés Almonester y Rojas, died, leaving her his sole surviving heir. Micaela inherited a considerable fortune. Her estate was capably administered by her mother, Louise Denys de la Ronde, referenced as "a superbly competent businesswoman who had greatly increased the inheritance since Almonester's death." Following Micaela's marriage, in 1811, to her French cousin, Joseph-Xavier Célestin Delfau de Pontalba, she moved

to France. The marriage was not successful, and she became a virtual prisoner at the de Pontalba chateau near Senlis.



Having failed, despite his concerted efforts over more than two decades, to gain possession of Micaela's entire inheritance, her father-in-law, Baron de Pontalba, eventually shot her four times at point-blank range with a pair of dueling pistols, and then committed suicide. She survived the attack, although her left breast and two of her fingers

were mutilated by gunfire. Her husband, Cèlestin, succeeded his father as baron, and Micaela was thereafter styled Baroness de Pontalba. She eventually obtained a legal separation from her husband.

Micaela was responsible for the design and construction of the famous Pontalba Buildings in Jackson Square, in the heart of the French Quarter. In 1855, she had built the Hôtel de Pontalba in Paris, where she lived until her death in 1874.

Prior to his death, her father had commissioned architect Gilberto Guillemard to design and construct the St. Louis Cathedral, the Presbytere and the Cabildo, all which line one side of Place d'Armes. The original church and Cabildo had been destroyed in the Great New Orleans fire of 1788. Shortly afterwards, Micaela's mother, Louise, married Jean-Baptiste Castillon, the 25-year-old French Consul. The bride being seven years older than the groom was widely exaggerated, garnering much scorn from the local population, who showed their displeasure by conducting a riotous charivari that lasted for three days and nights, and featured effigies of her new bridegroom and dead husband in his coffin. The charivari was only called off once Louise had promised to donate the sum of \$3,000 to the poor.

In 1848 at the outbreak of revolution in France, Micaela and two of her sons, Alfred and Gaston, departed for New Orleans. There, she quickly became the leader of fashionable society, her salons drawing the city's most important and influential people. The wealthiest white woman in New Orleans at the time, her contemporaries regarded Micaela as having been shrewd, vivacious, and business-like. Seeing New Orleans for the first time after an absence of many years, Micaela had immediately noticed that the once-stylish French Quarter had become derelict and unsightly. The Place d'Armes, in the heart of the French Quarter, was little better than a slum; its parade ground muddy and houses squalid and neglected. She owned most of the property in Place d'Armes as it formed part of her vast inheritance. Her assets there valued at \$520,000, but despite being owner of the third most valuable property in the French Quarter, she made little profit from it as most of her tenants were slack in paying the rent. Micaela put her imagination to work and made energetic plans to remedy the situation. She ordered the houses to be demolished and hired the skilled building contractor Samuel Stewart to renovate the Place d'Armes. The following year after obtaining an agreement from the city for a 20-year tax exemption, she personally designed and commissioned the construction of the beautiful red-brick town houses forming two sides of Place d'Armes which are today known as the Pontalba Buildings. Their exteriors resembled the edifices in Paris' Place des Vosges.

The construction of the Pontalba Buildings cost more than \$300,000, and she was a constant visitor to the construction sites, often supervising the work on horseback. The cast-ironwork decorating the balconies were also her personal design and she had her initials "AP" carved into the center of each section. Micaela knew so much about the design and construction of buildings that historian Christina Vella described her as a "lay genius in architecture".

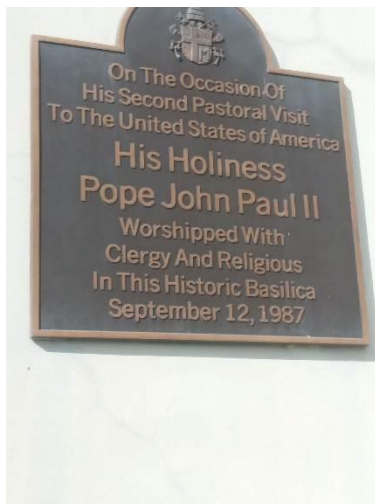
At the time the buildings were row houses. Micaela and her sons occupied the house at number 5, St. Peter Street. When Swedish singer Jenny Lind visited New Orleans for a month in 1851, Micaela



graciously allowed her the use of her own house along with a chef. Prior to her departure, Lind publicly expressed her gratitude to Micaela for the latter's lavish hospitality. Afterward, Micaela auctioned the furniture Lind had used. Micaela was also instrumental in the name change of Place d'Armes to Jackson Square; as well as the decision to convert it from a parade ground to a formal garden. She also helped finance the bronze equestrian statue of Andrew Jackson, featured prominently in the square, at whose side her uncle, Colonel Pierre Denys de La Ronde (1762 - 1824), had fought during the Battle of New Orleans, playing crucial roles in advising Jackson, and in rallying local support. It was alleged that when she was landscaping the garden, she threatened the mayor with a shotgun after he tried to prevent her from tearing down two rows of trees.

Shortly after Jenny Lind's visit, she and her sons left New Orleans for good and went back to Paris where her eldest surviving son, Célestin, and his family

resided. She spent the remainder of her life at her mansion on the Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré. When her estranged husband suffered a physical and mental breakdown, she took him in and cared for him up until her own death. Hôtel de Pontalba, Micaela's Paris mansion where she died in 1874



In planning for the next 2 days we bought tickets to visit a few more museums. After our walking tour we ate in the hotel restraint called the Pantry and rested a bit as we were taking an evening cruise on the Steamboat Natchez.

The Evening Cruise includes: Boarding opens 6pm, Boat sails 7-9pm, Creole Dinner Buffet, Dukes of Dixieland jazz band, Calliope concert at 5:30pm (I found this annoying), Indoor or Outdoor seating (It was cold this evening), and a unique night view of the French Quarter.

The steamboat is the ninth steamer to bear the name Natchez. It was her predecessor, Natchez VII, that raced the Robert E. Lee in the most famous steamboat race of all time. Even today, the Natchez is proudly the undisputed champion of the Mississippi, never having been beaten in a race. She's the best of her line.

It's a line of steamers that follows the course of river history, from the placid antebellum plantation era through the turbulence of Civil War to the Gay Nineties, and ultimately, our own 21st Century.

When she launched the Natchez in 1975, we revived more than a famous name. We created one of only six true steam powered sternwheelers plying the Mississippi. In 2013, only two remain. The Natchez combines authenticity, safety, and comfort.

The Natchez resembles the old-world sternwheelers VIRGINIA and HUDSON in her profile and layout. Her powerful steam engines were built for U.S. Steel Corporation's sternwheeler CLAIRTON in 1925. Her genuine copper and steel steam whistle is a treasured antique. Her copper bell, inlaid with 250 silver dollars to produce a purer tone, once graced the steamer J.D. AYRES. Her 32-note steam calliope was custom-crafted and modeled after the music makers of the Gilded Age (1877-1900).

The NATCHEZ is the pride of the Mississippi River and is as beautiful as any of her namesakes and has become an icon of the City of New Orleans. Many of her crew have been with her since her maiden voyage. There is a whole new chapter in the history of the river, and you are now a part of it.

For all its history and romance, riding a steamboat is as exciting and genuine as a century ago. From the calliope to the paddlewheel's 26 tons of white oak, your time on the mighty Mississippi River will be a lifetime memory.

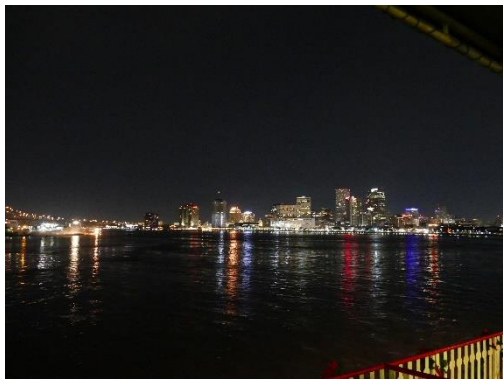
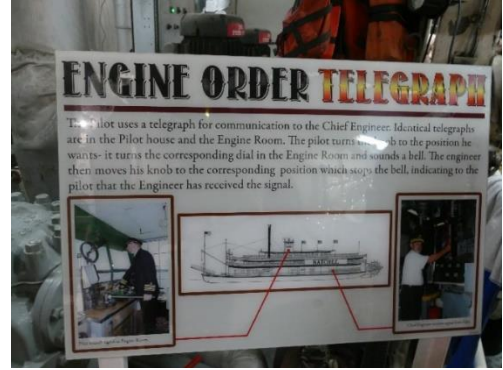
We are boarding the Steamboat Natchez.

The interior aa





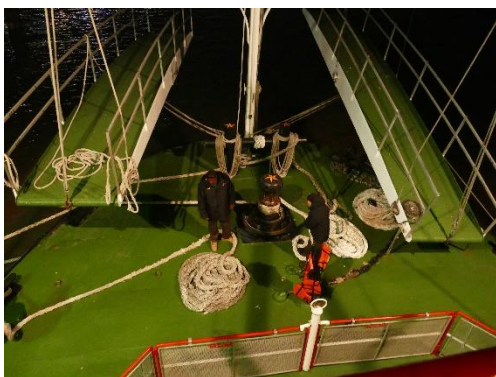
A large ship passing us on the Mississippi river



steamship

The skyline of New Orleans

The controls on the



The crew tying the ship to the dock



The Bridge over the River (looking upstream)

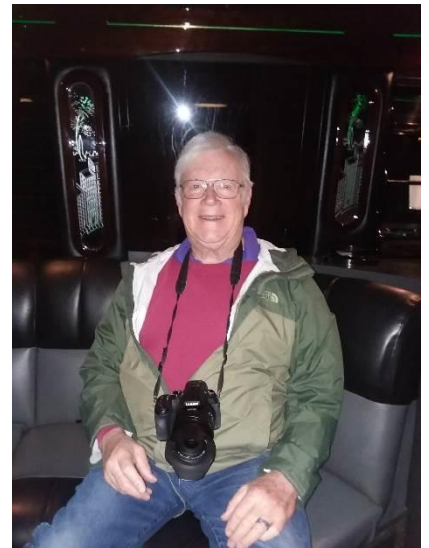
[More Pictures](#)

Day 14 (Wednesday December 19, 2018)

We are off to a plantation tour today. After a huge breakfast at the Creole house next to the hotel we are waiting for the bus. As we wait a plush bus pulls up and the driver asks if we are the Fisher group. Yes, and she says get in as this is a spare bus as our normal bus it broken down.



The inside of the bus



We drive a long distance in this bus, but we are the only passengers for this tour company today. We arrive at the Laura Plantation and join other folks for a waking tour with guide of the plantation. It looks like rain today, so we have on our rain gear.



The Laura Plantation is a restored historic Louisiana Creole plantation on the west bank of the Mississippi River near Vacherie, Louisiana, open for guided tours. Formerly known as Duparc Plantation, it is significant for its early 19th-century Cr ole-style raised big house and several surviving outbuildings, including two slave cabins. It is one of only 15 plantation complexes in Louisiana with this many complete structures. Because of its historical importance, the plantation is on the National Register of Historic Places. The site, in St. James Parish, Louisiana, is also included on the

Louisiana African American Heritage Trail.

Alc e Fortier, who later became Professor of Romance Languages and folklore at Tulane University, was said to have collected Louisiana Creole versions of the West African Brar Rabbit stories here in the 1870s.

The parents and family of U.S. singer-songwriter Fats Domino ("Blueberry Hill") had lived on the plantation.

In the early 1700s, a large Colapissa village called Tabiscanja or "long river view" was located on high ground above the Mississippi River. In 1785, Acadian refugees settled on the site.

In 1804, the Frenchman Guillaume Duparc, a naval veteran from the American Revolutionary War, had petitioned then-President Thomas Jefferson, for land. Jefferson secured Duparc's loyalty to the U.S., which had just acquired additional territory through the Louisiana Purchase, by granting him land along



the Mississippi River. Considering the natives to be Frenchmen, the French did not force them off the river lands. Instead, the Colapissa continued to live on the rear part of the plantation until 1915.

Duparc built his plantation house during 1804 and 1805. The house had a U-shape, with the two back wings around a central courtyard, and a detached kitchen building in the back.

The Duparc family acquired adjacent parcels of land, and the sugarcane plantation was expanded to over 12,000 acres of real estate. The plantation size, wings of the manor house, and outbuildings have changed over the years from the original plantation house completed in 1805.

The sugar mill was in the distance, 1 mile behind the big house, surrounded by sugarcane fields. A longer dirt road extended behind the house for 3.5 miles, lined with the slave cabins to house the workers.

In the years before the American Civil War, the slave quarters included a slave infirmary, 69 cabins, communal kitchens, and several water wells located along the road. Each slave cabin was occupied by two families, as duplex units sharing a central double fireplace. Near each cabin was a vegetable garden plus a chicken coop and/or pigpen. By the time of the Civil War there were 186 slaves working the farm. The DuParc Plantation exported indigo, rice, pecans, and sugar cane.

The complex continued functioning as a plantation into the 20th century. The two back wings of the manor house were removed, widening the back balcony, and a back-kitchen wing was added off the back porch. The remaining plantation complex consists of the "big house" with several outbuildings, including six original slave quarters, and a second house or mother-in-law cottage. The existence of the slave quarters, which workers continued to live in until 1977, contributes to the historic significance of the complex. Because of its importance, it has been listed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places. It is used to interpret history and for heritage tourism.



Shaded by the low branches of large oak trees, the main house is almost hidden from the road. Constructed in 1804-1805, the "big house" at Laura Plantation has a raised brick basement story and a briquette-entre-poteaux (brick between posts) upper floor. Much of the house was pre-fabricated, as its wooden beams were pre-cut off-site and arrived ready to be installed. It is one of only 30 substantial Créole raised houses in the

state.

Also noteworthy are the Federal-style interior woodwork and Norman roof truss, unusual for later Créole houses. The floor plan consists of two rows of five rooms that all open directly into each other without any hallways. The interior of the "big house" is furnished with original antiques. Some pieces were donated to the plantation by families of the original owners. Owners have left some areas inside the home unrestored to give visitors a sense of history and show wall-construction methods.

A large collection of family treasures and some items of apparel are on display, giving a sense of daily life. Laura Locoul Gore's memoir, *Memories of the Old Plantation Home*, provided much of what is known about life on Laura Plantation. There is a gift shop which has displayed some books about the area and related subjects.

On August 9, 2004, the plantation house was significantly damaged by an electrical fire which destroyed 80% of the house, including the kitchen wing behind the house. The left half of the house survived, but even the elevated foundation of the right side was burned. Restoration work was completed in 2006, despite the interruption of Hurricane Katrina in August 2005. The ashes of the kitchen wing were cleared, but the back wing was not rebuilt. Instead, the back corners of the house were capped with old gray boards to indicate where 2 back wings of the house had existed when Laura Lacoul sold the plantation in 1891.

Guillaume Benjamin Demézière Duparc was at the plantation for only 4 years, dying in 1808, just 3 years after the house was built. The Duparc daughter, Elisabeth, married into the Locoul family, and generations later, Laura Locoul Gore inherited the plantation after moving to New Orleans. Laura's memoirs were published in 2000.

On October 25, 1821, Elisabeth Duparc, a native of Pointe Coupée and the daughter of the late Guillaume Benjamin Demézière Duparc and Anne Nanette Prudhomme, was married at the St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Edgard to George Raymond Locoul, a native of Bordeaux, France, the son of Raymond Locoul and Marie Roland. From this marriage, the lands of Duparc, which is presently represented by Laura Plantation at the river, became the property of the Locouls. One member, Marie Elisabeth Aimée Locoul, the widow of Jean Flavien Charles de Lobel Mahy, the granddaughter of Guillaume Duparc, subdivided the Duparc tract from the river to Molaison. —Elton J. Oubre, *Vacherie*, St. James Parish, Louisiana.

Laura Locoul Gore was the fourth mistress of the plantation. She was born in the house in 1861. She inherited it and ran it as a sugar business until 1891, when she sold the plantation to Aubert Florian Waguespack. The Waguespack family ran, resided on, and lived at the plantation until 1984.



Laura Plantation's association with the Brer Rabbit tales drew preservationist Norman Marmillion's attention to the site. He created a for-profit company that attracted enough investors to embark on a ten-year plan of restoration. Some investors are descendants of former owners.

The Brer Rabbit and Brer Fox tales are variations on traditional stories that originated in Senegal and were brought to America around the 1720s by enslaved

Africans. According to the plantation's history, Alcée Fortier, a neighbor of the family and student of folklore, came there in the 1870s to listen to the freedmen. He collected the stories which freedmen told their children in Louisiana Créole French language. These stories were about Compair Lapin and Compair Bouki (the clever rabbit and stupid fool), in which the rabbit plays a trickster role. Twenty-five years later in 1894, Fortier published stories which he had collected and translated in the edition Louisiana Folk Tales: In French Dialect and English Translation. Fortier published such a book and may have collected the tales at Laura Plantation and his own family's plantation.



Beautiful inlaid doors





A good use for used wine bottles.



Another building on the plantation that has not been restored

If we had had time to visit some of the notable plantations in and around New Orleans it would have been very educational but many some other time or maybe just reading about each plantation.

Laura Plantation - LOUISIANA'S CREOLE HERITAGE SITE - Through intimate, first-hand accounts, explore the lives of four generations of one Louisiana Créole family.

Oak Alley Plantation - Dedicated to preserving and interpreting each chapter of its memory, Oak Alley invites visitors to explore twenty-eight historic acres and visit the exhibits:

Houmas House Plantation & Gardens - A short drive from New Orleans is Houmas House Plantation and Gardens. This historic estate boasts 38 acres of the South's most beautiful gardens, three.

Nottoway Plantation - Experience antebellum grandeur in a riveting tour of the South's largest plantation home. Featuring newly-renovated guest rooms, fine cuisine and wines in the.

San Francisco Plantation - Circa 1856, San Francisco Plantation is a national landmark and the only authentically restored plantation in Louisiana. Open 360 days a year with.

Whitney Plantation - Less than an hour from New Orleans. The only plantation museum in Louisiana with a focus on slavery. Historic buildings, museum exhibits, modern memorials and.

Destrehan Plantation - Closest plantation from New Orleans. Costumed tour guides. Exhibits include an original document signed by Thomas Jefferson, folk art depicting the 1811 slave.

Ormond Plantation - Ormond Plantation is a historic Louisiana landmark built in the late 1700s. The house is built in the "Louisiana Colonial" style, with bricks and large cement.

Malus Beaugard House - CHALMETTE BATTLEFIELD - Located on the site of the Battle of New Orleans, less than ten miles from downtown New Orleans, the Malus Beaugard House is open for self-guided tours during.

St. Joseph Plantation - Authentic tour of a working sugar cane plantation, family-owned since 1877. Birthplace of acclaimed architect H. H. Richardson. Explore original slave cabins.

Madewood Plantation - Nestled just in between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, the Madewood Plantation tour offers historical insight into life on one of the south's most beautiful sugar.

[More Pictures](#)

Day 15 (Thursday December 20, 2018) – New Orleans

This is our last day of vacation before we head home. I am tired and have picked up a nasty cold/flu somewhere on our travels. You know the kind where everything hurts even your teeth. We have tickets for various museum in the downtown area so off we go to learn more about New Orleans.

To complete our visit to New Orleans' historic French Quarter we wanted to visit Jackson Square and the Cabildo-an elegant Spanish colonial building, St. Louis Cathedral and other houses that displayed many rare artifacts of America's history.

In commemoration of the city's 300th anniversary, the Louisiana State Museum debuted a new exhibition, We Love You, New Orleans! celebrating people, places, and things that are quintessentially New Orleans including Sidney Bechet's saxophone, a Mardi Gras Indian suit, memorabilia from Pontchartrain Park, and a K&B sign, among other things.

Using a variety of artifacts, images and documents, the exhibition from "Dirty Shirts" to Buccaneers: The Battle of New Orleans in American Culture opens with an exploration of the battle's history, emphasizing the diversity of its participants, and closes with an investigation of how the battle has been remembered, commemorated and represented.

The Cabildo, the site of the Louisiana Purchase transfer ceremonies in 1803 and one of Louisiana's most significant historical buildings. From landmark court cases to visits from international ambassadors, many important events in Louisiana have taken place within the Cabildo. The three floors of Cabildo exhibitions cover the history of Louisiana by featuring artifacts such as documents, paintings and 3D objects from the museum's vast collection.

The Cabildo was built under Spanish rule between 1795 and 1799, following the Great New Orleans Fire of 1788 that destroyed the structure that stood on the property. Designed by Gilberto Guillemard, who also designed the neighboring St. Louis Cathedral and the Presbytere, the Cabildo was the site of the Louisiana Purchase transfer in 1803, which finalized the United States' acquisition of the Louisiana Territory and doubled the size of the fledgling nation.

The Cabildo served as the center of New Orleans government until 1853, when it became the headquarters of the Louisiana State Supreme Court, where the landmark Plessy v. Ferguson decision originated in 1892.

The building was transferred to the Louisiana State Museum in 1908 and has since served to educate the public about Louisiana history.

In 1988 the Cabildo was severely damaged in an inferno and, within five years, the landmark was authentically restored with 600-year-old French timber framing techniques. It was reopened to the public in 1994, featuring a comprehensive exhibit on Louisiana's early history.

This remarkable building's tumultuous past was good reason enough for us to pay a visit, and the historical treasures within made it an absolute must-see.

Few places offer the chance to experience the lifestyle of our ancestors of more than 150 years ago. The 1850 House is one of these rare places, offering a glimpse of upper-middle-class life in antebellum New Orleans, the most prosperous period in the city's history.

The 1850 House doesn't represent any single family's house, rather, it reflects mid-19th century prosperity, taste and daily life in New Orleans. The house is furnished with art and décor that speak to that era as well, including a set of John Slidell's china, Old Paris porcelain, New Orleans silver and dozens of notable paintings and furnishings that taken, transport you back in time.

1850 House History

The 1850 House is part of the Lower Pontalba building. Standing on opposite sides of Jackson Square, the Upper and Lower Pontalba buildings were designed and financed by the Baroness Micaela Almonester de Pontalba. Her father, Don Andrés Almonester y Roxas, was a Spanish colonial landowner who helped finance The Cabildo, St. Louis Cathedral and The Presbytère.

Inspired by the imposing Parisian architecture the Baroness favored, the distinctive rowhouses were intended to serve as both elegant residences and retail establishments. In 1921, the Pontalba family sold the Lower Pontalba Building to philanthropist William Ratcliffe Irby, who bequeathed it to the Louisiana State Museum in 1927.

The Presbytère's two permanent exhibits tell two sides of the ongoing Louisiana story—one of celebration and one of resilience.

Mardi Gras: It's Carnival Time in Louisiana offers a window into the annual celebration and riotous rituals of Mardi Gras, a festival that is inextricably woven into Louisiana's way of life and whose roots extend deep into the Middle Ages. There are parade floats to climb, costumes to see and historical throws on display as well as rare glimpses into the secretive social club society from which modern-day Mardi Gras krewes evolved. And it's not a party without music: Mardi Gras albums, records, sheet music and more are also part of the collection.

The Living with Hurricanes: Katrina and Beyond exhibit tells of rescue, rebuilding and renewal. When Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans' badly engineered levee system, it resulted in one of the worst disasters in American history, leaving 80 percent of the city flooded and hundreds of dead.

The exhibit documents the event, the aftermath and southeast Louisiana's ongoing recovery. With interactive exhibits and artifacts that showcase the spirit of the city's residents, this is a collection you don't want to miss.

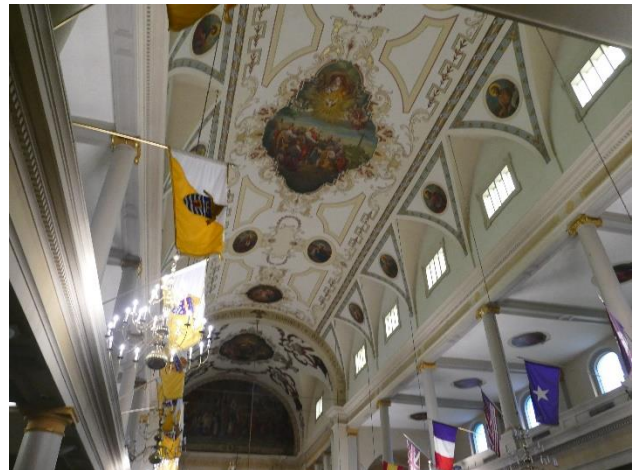
The Presbytère History

The Presbytère was designed in 1791 to match the Cabildo, alongside St. Louis Cathedral in the French Quarter. It stands today as a beautiful reminder of both Louisiana's singular past and its vibrant present.

The Presbytère, originally called Casa Curial or “Ecclesiastical House,” was built on the site of the residence, or presbytère, of the Capuchin monks. The building was used for commercial purposes until 1834 when it became a courthouse. In 1911, it became part of the Louisiana State Museum.

I have no pictures of this portion of our trip and I feel like I am going to die. I had to sit while Diana went exploring.

Did get a few pictures of the church.



As we walked through the church there was one room that was open and as I peeked in there was a priest reading a magazine and waiting for anyone who wanted to go to confession.

As we head for the hotel to go to the airport there was a Jazz Band planning in the public square and what a fitting end to our time in New Orleans the band was playing “When the Saints go Marching in”.

We took a taxi to the airport as Uber or Taxi was about the same cost. The plane from New Orleans to Houston was delayed due to weather so when we changed planes in Houston, we had to do the 50-gate dash. Wow, Diana has healed, and she was hard to keep up with. When we got to Albuquerque it was after 1 AM and there were many planes arriving apparently late due to storms. It was good to get home and see our puppy. I had a 9 AM meeting this morning.

[More Pictures](#)

*** The End ***