

2 Girls Who Travel Take New Orleans

Crescent City Blues and BBQ Festival

Live music by Southern blues and jazz greats, delicious barbecue and vendors showcasing their specialties and talents. What's not to love about New Orleans' Crescent City Blues and BBQ Festival? This was the tenth year for the two-day festival, which attracted about 15,000 attendees, according to Scott Aiges, director of programs, marketing and communications for the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation.

The New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation is a nonprofit established in 1970 with a mission to "promote, preserve, perpetuate and encourage the music, arts, culture and heritage of communities in Louisiana through festivals, programs and other cultural, educational, civic and economic activities." The

foundation is also responsible for the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival and is active primarily in the areas of education, economic development and cultural enrichment.

"The Crescent City Blues and BBQ Festival is the oldest and largest of four free festivals the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation produces each year. Each of the four festivals are intended to be a little slice of Jazz Fest, rather than the whole kit and caboodle of Jazz Fest," Aiges told 2 Girls Who Travel.

He said attendees of next year's Crescent City Blues and BBQ Festival can expect more great music, great food, great barbecue and a great arts market.

"We are a nonprofit, not concert promoters. We do these festivals because they are a part of our mission to support the musical culture of Louisiana, and the festivals that we do are smaller and more intimate than Jazz Fest, and that is appealing to a lot of people," said Aiges. "They are high quality events that provide a real value to the community, especially since they're free. People really appreciate that."

To learn more about the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation and their programs and events, visit www.jazzandheritage.org.



New Orleans artist Epaul Julien shows his art to visitors at the 10th Annual Crescent City Blues and BBQ Festival in New Orleans.

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: Epaul Julien

"Creating art is for me a necessity, a vital part of my existence. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, I felt abandoned by photography because I could not pack a giant enlarger, darkroom chemicals and the other bulky, cumbersome equipment in one day and evacuate from this city I love. In exile for six months, I decided to use images I salvaged from the storm—expression, light, energy, spirit, movement, texture and value to create new mixed media art." - Epaul Julien

Pulled straight from his bio, artist and New Orleans native Epaul Julien describes his passion for artistic expression. Julien, whose col-

lections are housed in art museums across the country, also has private collections for the likes of Reggie Bush, Emeril Lagasse, Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie and the Sir Elton John Collection, to name a few.

Using lumber and materials from post-Hurricane Katrina renovations in and around New Orleans – the wood is de-nailed, cut and then reworked – Julien is able to create art rich with imagery and unduplicated history.

Julien was on hand at the 10th Annual Crescent City Blues and BBQ Festival in New Orleans, displaying some of his historical and unique artwork. In between the steady stream of attendees who stopped by his booth to inquire about his art, 2 Girls Who Travel were able to steal a few minutes with Julien to find out a little more about his artistry.

"The inspiration behind my art is my culture – southeast Louisiana, Haiti, France – anything that influences the Creole culture of New Orleans and southeast Louisiana," Julien told 2 Girls Who Travel.

And much like any respectable artist, Julien did not isolate one piece of art as his favorite.

"All of them are my favorite pieces because all of them have different meanings, metaphors and relationships to my life and cultural heritage," he added.

To learn more about Julien or to see some of his art, visit www.epauljulien.com.

Top 10 Things to Do and Places to See in The Big Easy

New Orleans aka The Crescent City aka The Big Easy, offers food, nightlife, history and culture to the tenth power. There's something to do for everyone, and you'll never get bored. Of course, the French Quarter is the place to go for drinks, food and people-watching, but there's so much more to the city – art, music, antiques and architecture. Take a look at our top 10 list of things to do during your visit to NOLA! *Laissez les bon temps rouler!*

1) French Market – 1235 N. Peters St., New Orleans, LA 70116 – Food, trinkets, clothes and more ... it's a destination during your visit.

2) Café du Monde – 800 Decatur at St. Ann St. near Jackson Square; www.cafedumonde.com – A visitor's mecca for café au lait and beignets!

3) Walking Tour of the French Quarter – See the architecture and learn about the history and the French and Spanish influences in the city. There are many tours to choose from ... take your pick!

4) Antoine's – 713 St. Louis St., New Orleans, LA 70130; www.antoines.com – A world-renowned French creole fine dining restaurant – the oldest in New Orleans.

5) Magazine Street – Uptown to Downtown – You'll find eclectic boutiques, bars, antique shops, restaurants and more.

6) St. Charles Avenue – Home of the St. Charles Streetcar – take a ride on the streetcar to see all of the beautiful homes lining St. Charles Avenue.

7) The Cigar Factory – 415 Decatur St., New Orleans, LA 70130; www.cigarfactoryneworleans.com – Step into the world of cigar rolling and enjoy the rich complex smells – and while you're there, take home a few.

8) Jackson Square – 700 Decatur St., New Orleans, LA 70116; www.jackson-square.com – The St. Louis Cathedral, artists, restaurants, museums and the merchants make Jackson Square one of the French Quarter's most popular destinations.

9) Preservation Hall – 726 St. Peter St., New Orleans, LA 70116;



Bourbon House's charbroiled oysters with crawfish tails

www.preservationhall.com – Live jazz at Preservation Hall is a must!

10) Stella Jones Gallery – 201 St. Charles Ave #132, New Orleans, LA 70170; www.stellajonesgallery.com – One of our faves – New Orleans has "art for the gawds!"

Top 5 Oyster Houses in NOLA

Oysters ... we like 'em on the half shell, raw, baked, fried, charbroiled, chargrilled – long story short – we're as fond of oysters as Forrest Gump is of shrimp and New Orleans is one of the best cities for them! Here are five of our favorite Big Easy restaurants for the tasty bivalves.

1) Dragos – 2 Poydras St., New Orleans, LA 70130; www.dragosrestaurant.com

2) Bourbon House – 144 Bourbon St., New Orleans, LA 70130; www.bourbonhouse.com

3) Desire Oyster Bar at Royal Sonesta Hotel – 300 Bourbon St., New Orleans, LA 70130; <http://www.sonesta.com/desireoysterbar>

4) Acme Oyster Bar – 724 Iberville Street, New Orleans, LA 70130; www.acmeoyster.com

5) Antoine's – 713 St. Louis St., New Orleans, LA 70130; www.antoines.com



Garb Boutique on Magazine St.

About 2 Girls Who Travel:

Armed with a love for culture, adventure, food, arts and entertainment – and equipped with a laptop, camera and multiple cellular devices – 2 Girls Who Travel has a mission to share their journey with the world. Throughout their travels, they conduct exclusive interviews, write about cool finds, give destination-specific travel tips and provide their take on the best food and drinks and so much more. Embodying two different kinds of travelers – Val is the adventure-seeking millennial and Kim is the cultured lover of luxury – readers will learn more about them as they share their experiences traversing the globe! Subscribe to the 2 Girls Who Travel Blog at www.2girlswhotravel.wordpress.com.



Beautiful architecture on Royal St.



Mother's famous fried shrimp, oysters & catfish



World-Renowned Antoine's Restaurant

Parkway Bakery & Tavern: A Restaurant Founded on Tradition and Really Good Food

Located in mid-city, **New Orleans** is a restaurant so full of tradition, it's main menu item is recognizable far beyond the confines of the city by just three words, "Parkway Poor Boy."

And before we delve into the deliciousness that is the Parkway Poor Boy, it's a must that we discuss the history of the restaurant, which spans more than a century. History breeds tradition – and Parkway Bakery & Tavern is rich in history.

It was an unseasonably warm day in mid-October when 2 Girls Who Travel visited Parkway Bakery & Tavern. We were seated outside with chef and general manager Justin Kennedy, as he chronicled the humble beginnings of the restaurant.

Parkway opened in 1911 and was owned by a German family of bakers, the Goerings, and operated as a corner bakery before the owners sold it to the Timothy family in 1922.

Kennedy said the Timothy family were some real characters, often greeting customers with, "What do you want?" But what they lacked in customer service, they made up for in taste. The



People from all walks of life patronize Parkway Bakery & Tavern for the quality food and friendly service.

bread was baked fresh in-house and workers from the factory that was then located across the bayou – it has since been replaced with condos – would come to the restaurant in droves during lunch.

When the factory shut down in the 1980s, it was a big blow to Parkway's business. In addition, the neighborhood was getting older and the owners were getting older. In 1995, Parkway's owners put the building up for sale.

"My uncle Jay lived right next door. He was a carpenter. And he said, 'You know what? I don't want no riff raff joint opening up next to my house. I'm going to buy this corner to save my property.' So he bought Parkway and made it a toolshed for his construction business," Kennedy said.

As a kid, Kennedy used to work with his Uncle Jay at different job sites and he remembered his uncle would always brag that his toolshed was the old Parkway Bakery.

"The old-timers would always say, 'Parkway Bakery?! You gotta open that place back up!'" Kennedy said.



Parkway's Surf and Turf poor boy comes fully-dressed with layers of tender roast beef with gravy and golden-fried shrimp on fresh bread.

Eventually, Uncle Jay did. When Kennedy graduated from high school in 2003, he came and helped his Uncle Jay Nix reopen Parkway Bakery. At the beginning, Kennedy admitted they didn't really know what they were doing.

"We ended up figuring it out and we're still figuring it out," he said. "If you're born and raised in New Orleans, you know how to eat. That's why the restaurants have to be so good ... because the home cooks are so good here."

Parkway began as a family business and though ownership has switched families, it remains to this day a family business. Kennedy serves as chef and general manager, his uncle owns it, his mom runs the books, his sister runs the bar and his brother runs the kitchen with him. Add in about 40 staff members who are treated like family, and that rounds out the business.

Kennedy took a minute to chat with 2 Girls Who Travel about the makings of the perfect poor boy and why people continue to come back to Parkway time and time again.

2 Girls Who Travel: What goes into making the perfect poor boy?

Kennedy: The key to making a good poor boy is key ingredients. It's freshness. The bread that is delivered today is used and gone today. Tomatoes you slice fresh today are gone today. Everything has to be fresh, from all your produce to the products you put on it. Back in the old days, they didn't have processed foods – ready to go cooked beef and already fried and



Parkway still remains a family business, and all employees are part of that tight-knit group.

battered seafood. In the old days, you made it from scratch, cooked it, sliced it and put it on a sandwich, and that's basically what we do. We do things the way they're supposed to be done – the old way. We're a sandwich shop, but we do a lot of cooking in here. We make everything and we don't do foreign. We support our locals. Anything you can get local, right from your backyard, get it. Our oysters, shrimp and catfish we get right from Lake

Borgne or the Gulf of Mexico. You can't fake a good roast beef sandwich and that's what New Orleans poor boy shops are known for – roast beef. If you come around here trying to buy pre-cooked roast beef and sell it, you're going to get caught.

2 Girls Who Travel: What's your favorite menu item and why?

Kennedy: My favorite menu item is one we do called the surf and turf. It's roast beef and shrimp and those are our two biggest sellers. Some weeks, it's shrimp; some weeks, it's roast beef, depending on the weather and what's going on in town. When you see people in line, they always ask "should I get a roast beef or should I get a shrimp poor boy?" So I decided to develop the surf and turf. It's not a half and half. It's a layer of roast beef, a layer of shrimp and roast beef gravy on top. And it comes dressed: with lettuce, tomatoes, mayonnaise and pickles. The beef isn't in slices; it's more like stewed pot roast beef or debris. It's so tender and already pulled

apart, which makes a bed for the shrimp. It's delicious.

2 Girls Who Travel: What makes Parkway Tavern such a tradition? What keeps people coming back?

Kennedy: I don't look at this place as being another restaurant. I look at it as being an institution, like we're providing a city service. It's something people have to have. You have to pay your light bill. You have to pay your water bill. You have to pay your taxes. And people in New Orleans have to get their poor boy. There's a bunch of good poor boy shops and a lot of them come here. The thing about a New Orleans poor boy shop is this: you got all walks of life, from age 8 to 80, cripple to crazy. You got all different races, all different ages, all different demographics and you'll have a man with a \$500 suit rubbing elbows at the bar with a homeless person, and they're eating the same damn sandwich. That's what I like. You can sit in the bar and see the city of New Orleans come to you every day.