

# Saying "I Do" New Orleans-Style



By Sue Strachan

## A toast to Crescent City weddings



Classic or unconventional, New Orleans has a venue to fulfill your wedding day fantasy. (©Beebe Tran/NOCVB)

Why would anyone *not* have their wedding in New Orleans?

It's a question many couples ponder when planning their big day, and one that, in recent years, has helped position the Crescent City—with its timeless architecture, one-

of-a-kind cuisine and cherished traditions—among the nation's top wedding destinations.

While each wedding is different and unique, there is one constant: The special *je ne sais quoi* the city can bring to the joyous day.



St. Louis Cathedral is the quintessential setting for a New Orleans wedding. (©Jen Amato/NOCVB)

The first location most couples consider is the French Quarter and its most iconic attraction, [St. Louis Cathedral](#). Since 1727, the cathedral, with its picturesque spires and iconic altar, has served as the setting for countless nuptials, and continues to today. According to the Archdiocese of New Orleans, the local landmark plays host to an average of 100 ceremonies annually.

It's not uncommon while walking through Jackson Square (which the cathedral faces) to suddenly find yourself a member of the wedding, tossing birdseed at a twosome you've never before laid eyes on. Or getting drawn into a brass band-led second-line procession en route to a reception at one of the many restaurants where dozens of multi-tiered cakes are sliced into each month.



Couples can "take the plunge" at the Audubon Aquarium. (©Audubon Nature Institute)

But not all New Orleans nuptials need be so formal. Not Catholic? The cathedral can still serve as the backdrop to a ceremony along adjacent Pirate's Alley, the cobblestone passage that runs aside of the church. Others have been known to celebrate the depths of their love at the nearby [Audubon Aquarium of the Americas](#), or to say their "I dos" along the Mississippi riverfront at [Woldenberg Park](#) or [Crescent Park](#).

The great outdoors can make a great New Orleans wedding venue, especially from March to April and October to November, when temperatures are mild and days are sunny. The city's legendary heat and humidity usually starts in May and continues through September, and December and February can be surprisingly cold. But what glorious places you can celebrate in during those four picture-perfect months!





City Park's circa-1907 Peristyle has hosted hundreds of New Orleans nuptials. (©New Orleans City Park)

The centuries-old oaks in [City Park](#) and [Audubon Park](#) not only make an ideal backdrop for wedding photos, but for the wedding itself. City Park is home to the Peristyle, a neo-classical open-air pavilion overlooking Bayou Metairie, that can work either for a ceremony or a reception—or both.

For those on a budget or seeking something out of the norm, New Orleans offers all manner of romantic and imaginative alternatives, from jazz clubs to racetracks. One young couple recently wed at a historic courthouse on the Westbank then took the ferry across the river to meet friends and made a second-line parade to a small restaurant in the French Quarter.



Race + Religious, one of many historic properties that serve as wedding venues. (©Race + Religious)

The city also has no shortage of historic homes and spaces oozing 19th-century atmosphere in which to construct the wedding of your dreams. From the French Quarter and Garden District to the Lower Garden District and Marigny (where singer Solange Knowles and music video director Alan Ferguson famously bicycled to their wedding in a former church that's been converted into an opera house), the options are near limitless.

It's your day to make your own. Why not make it in New Orleans?



A second-line parade is the perfect way to cap off a Crescent City ceremony. (©Dark Roux/NewOrleans.com)



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