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Where to eat in New Orleans, according to Emeril Lagasse

By [Marla Cimini](#) | June 15, 2018 5:09 pm

Chef Emeril Lagasse is known worldwide for his innovative dishes, award-winning restaurants and overall exuberance. As one of the original celebrity chefs, Emeril has hosted more than 2,000 shows on the Food Network throughout his career. Most recently, in 2016, he launched an original series on Amazon, called *Eat the Word with Emeril Lagasse*. In addition to his national (and international) acclaim, Emeril has had as much of a lasting impact on the New Orleans dining scene as just about any other chef.

Emeril has been an integral part of the New Orleans restaurant community for nearly 36 years. Today, he balances his time between the Crescent City and the Florida Panhandle, where he lives with his family. In total, he heads up 12 restaurants across the U.S., four of which are in New Orleans: NOLA, his newly revamped casual, French Quarter eatery; Meril, a warehouse district hotspot; Emeril's Delmonico, which serves up modern Creole cuisine in a historical ambiance; and his oldest and arguably best-known restaurant, Emeril's, which is celebrating its 28th anniversary this year.

Emeril has traversed major changes in the New Orleans culinary scene. For example, since he started cooking in NOLA, there has been a huge increase in the number of international restaurants, including Vietnamese and – particularly since Hurricane Katrina – Ecuadorian and Israeli.

“All the restaurants are great – or they close,” he says. “You have to be at the top of your game to succeed in this city.” These are some of Emeril's favorite New Orleans restaurants to visit when he's in The Big Easy:



Hot frog legs. Photo courtesy of NOLA

Galatoire's

This legendary Bourbon Street restaurant has been a popular New Orleans dining institution since 1905 – and a favorite for Emeril and his family. Famous for its variety of shrimp and seafood dishes, as well as lamb, steaks and poultry, **Galatoire's** “is a journey more than a dining experience,” Emeril says. “While it’s known for its Friday lunch, really any day of the week you can find yourself in a crabmeat-induced festive state of mind. Ask for the potato puffs and let your server recommend the menu. The staff has been there for so long, and they will steer you in the right direction.”

Paladar 511

Located steps from the French Quarter in the hip Marigny neighborhood, Paladar 511 serves up inventive pizza, pasta and Gulf seafood favorites made with seasonal and local ingredients. “You really can’t go wrong with anything on their menu,” Emeril says. “I love their lamb tzatsiki pizza – it’s a must-order. The arancini, little gem lettuce salad and chicken liver mousse are also favorites. Their brunch, specifically their breakfast sandwich, isel out of this world.”

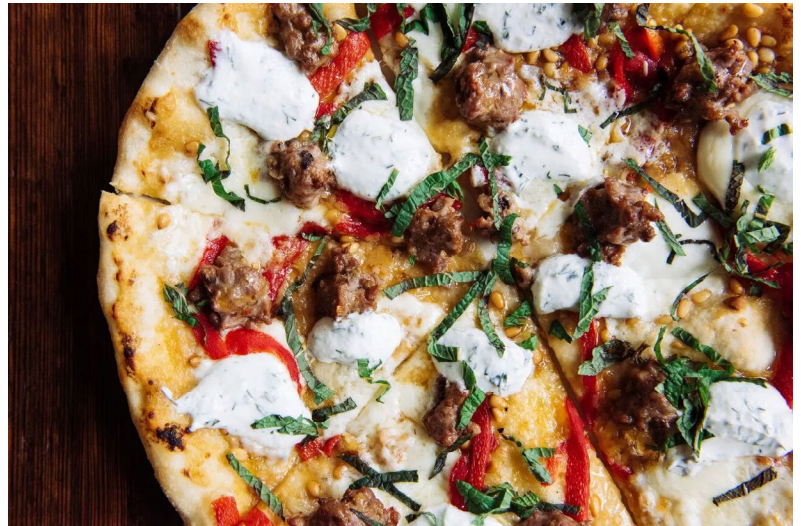


Photo by Rush Jadoe



Photo via Station 6

Station 6

Husband and wife chef team Drew Knoll and Alison Vega make guests feel at home in this cozy and comfortable **Lakeview area gem**. With a focus on seafood, the restaurant’s seared pompano, charbroiled oysters and salmon tacos are popular menu items. “They have a knack for seafood,” Emeril says. “The sloppy Drew sandwich with horseradish sauce is one of my favorites, and the seared pompano with cashew crust is wonderful. Ali is the salad queen – and her baby kale and chopped salads are so flavorful and delicious. Adding some perfectly fried oysters to the top is always a good idea, too.”

Casamento's Restaurant

This white-tiled NOLA mainstay opened in the early 1900s and continues to be top spot for oyster lovers. Featuring gumbo, crab claws and of course, oysters, Casamento’s is one of the city’s top seafood destinations. “I’ve been going there for 30-plus years. Their oyster stew is terrific,” Emeril says. “And they probably have the best oyster loaf in the city – also known as the peacemaker. It is overstuffed with some of the best fried oysters I’ve ever tried. They close when oysters aren’t in season, which just speaks to their commitment to serving the best.”

Domilise's Po-Boy and Bar

"Everyone will argue with you in New Orleans about which shop makes the best po-boy," Emeril says. "**Domilise's** happens to be my choice." A family business for several generations, this small neighborhood "hole-in-the-wall" is worth waiting in line for. "The dressed fried shrimp po-boy, the roast beef, and the hot sausage po-boys are fantastic – but really everything is delicious. And if you don't know where you are going, you can easily miss this tiny place," Emeril says. (Pro tip: go during mid-day if you want to avoid the line).

Hansen's Snow-Bliz

New Orleans is known as much for its heat and humidity as its cuisine, and the way locals deal with the muggy weather is by cooling down with a snowball. "Hansen's is real shaved ice – not ground – and all-natural. They make a lot of their own flavors," Emeril says. "They have a bananas foster snowball that is divine and refreshing, but it's not always on the menu. You can add condensed milk to any of their flavors to give it more sweetness. My kids really enjoy them – they are snowball freaks."



Photo via Hansen's Snowballs



Photo by Elsa Hahne

Pho Tau Bay

There are many authentic Vietnamese restaurants throughout the city. Over the years, Emeril has been a regular at the family-run Pho Tau Bay's Westbank outpost, and he still frequents its newer Central Business District location. "I can't go to New Orleans for a day or two without eating at Pho Tau Bay," Emeril says. It's always a treat to get to see Mama, Karl Jr. and Karl Sr. Their chargrilled pork spring rolls can't be beat – be sure to ask for peanut sauce on the side. Their pork vermicelli salad with an egg roll and the chicken pho are always my go-to dishes. Try any of their banh mi, which is the Vietnamese equivalent to a po-boy, because they are so flavorful and fresh. It's a different palette experience than your typical fried seafood and roast beef po-boy."

Compère Lapin

With a seasonal menu that focuses on regional ingredients and changes regularly, Compère Lapin is headed up by James Beard award-winning chef Nina Compton and her husband, Larry Miller, who runs the front of house. The restaurant specializes in seafood, roasted meats, shrimp dishes and more. Emeril explains. "I first met Nina on Top Chef when it was in New Orleans. We're lucky she fell in love with our town because Compère Lapin is a great addition to the dining scene here. Her food showcases her Caribbean heritage and highlights how influential those flavors and ingredients have been on the city's cuisine. The goat gnocchi is one of my favorites – and the menu is constantly evolving."

Marla Cimini

Marla is a journalist with a passion for travel, music and culinary adventures (combining all three whenever possible)! An avid globetrotter, beach lover and professional storyteller, she has covered many topics including: Santa Fe's chocolate trail; Hawaiian culinary trends; and Sicilian vineyards. Her articles have appeared in USA Today and numerous outlets worldwide. Marla is co-author of the book, *A Century of Hospitality*, a historical exploration of US hotels. Connect with her on Twitter & Instagram: @MarlaCimini

