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There's More to Mobile

Old-world attractions and modern delights in Alabama's port city

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COURTESY OF VISIT MOBILE

Dotted along Mobile's Dauphin Street and the surrounding neighborhoods are a myriad of local bars and restaurants—with frequent new additions—that run the gamut from pub food to fine dining.

Your thoughts of Mobile likely begin and end with images of its iconic tunnel and the enormous warship docked in the bay. But the quaint city by the bay has more jewels in its crown than meet the eyes of those speeding through to the beaches ahead. Mobile's rich history provides the backdrop for an eclectic

getaway. Downtown alone, with its tree-lined parks tucked among beautiful French architecture, boasts enough restaurants, museums, and bars to ensnare you all weekend long.

The Setting

Originally founded by the French in 1702, Mobile still retains many of its early buildings dating back to the nineteenth century; and cobblestone streets beneath the replica of the original Fort Conde offer an even deeper glimpse into the port city's busy colonial days.

Among the variety of accommodations at the city's center, three historic establishments distinguish themselves. **The Battle House Renaissance Mobile Hotel & Spa**, with its ornate sky-lit rotunda, stands on the site of Andrew

Jackson's headquarters during the War of 1812.

Plastered pillars leading up to the impressive skylight reflect the crests of the three different countries—France, Britain, and Spain—that ruled Mobile during its early colonization and influenced much of the city's architecture. The full-service hotel and spa (a Marriott affiliate) strikes the perfect balance of old-world charm and modern convenience. **The Admiral Hotel**, a 1940s-era boutique hotel, has been recently renovated with black and gold art deco touches and offers a hip vibe on a bustling main street.

For a more authentic trip back in time, the **Malaga Inn**, a converted double townhouse from 1862 overlooking a residential neighborhood, suggests a more laid-back ambiance with its charming courtyard and balconies.

With such central accommodations, a city exploration on foot is no sweat. Lower Dauphin Street, or LoDa as the entertainment district is nicknamed, is the best way to acquaint yourself with the cafés, bars, and quirky shops interspersed among the city's intimate urban parks. A stop inside locally owned **Serda's Coffee Company** will set you up with a caffeinated beverage or cup of gelato to begin your walk; but file Serda away for a return trip as the coffee shop also features a cozy bar with Alabama beers on tap. The canopy of oak trees in nearby **Bienville Square** leads up to a large, central wrought-iron fountain with benches and bistro tables, a popular setting for local festivals, concerts, and kids' events throughout the year as well as for picnic lunch dates for downtown workers and residents. After procuring a bag of

fresh-roasted peanuts from the neighboring

A&M Peanut Shop, the walk to **Cathedral**

Square is just a block down the street. A small

park, Cathedral Square is anchored by the nearly

two-hundred-year-old Cathedral-Basilica of the

Immaculate Conception—whose intricate

stained-glass windows and Carrera marble floor

are reminiscent of grand European cathedrals.

Restaurants and Nightlife

Dotted along Dauphin Street and the

surrounding neighborhoods are a myriad of local

bars and restaurants—with frequent new

additions—that run the gamut from pub food to

fine dining. If Gulf seafood is on your to-do list,

then a stop at the founding location of **Wintzell's**

Oyster House for raw oysters and fried seafood is

in order. The seventy-five year-old restaurant's

walls are covered in catchy sayings from original

owner J. Oliver Wintzell, who also penned the restaurant's tagline, "Oysters—fried, stewed or nude."

The Haberdasher, a cavernous gastropub, delights with seasonal cocktails and bar bites like the highly recommended pork and cheese arepas. Further down Dauphin Street, the German-inspired **LoDa Bier Garten** rounds out its one-hundred-plus beers on tap with thirteen different specialty burgers and house-made, German-style pretzels.

But for the full scope of downtown's beauty, look to (or rather, from) **Dauphin's restaurant**, set atop the newly renovated Trustmark building; its floor-to-ceiling windows offer panoramic views of the skyline and bay. Traditional steak and seafood dishes stand out in beautiful

presentations in this relatively new Creole- and Caribbean-inspired restaurant, and the onsite bar gleams its name from the building's vantage point—Dauphin's and its Bar 424 sit a stunning 424 feet from the ground.

A night out on the town can include bar hopping down Dauphin Street or enjoying live music at one of the district's many choices, such as the popular **Soul Kitchen Music Hall**. But perhaps the most memorable experience is a visit to **The Crescent Theater**, a one-room independent movie theater that shows both hard-to-find indie movies and the occasional blockbuster. The theater owner himself introduces each film, and beer and wine are attainable through a self-serve honor system.

Another recent arrival to the downtown scene, **The Noble South** presents an inventive take on farm-to-table cuisine in a historic, yet modern atmosphere, combining white-washed brick walls with orange metal chairs in its two-story-high dining room. Hearty plate lunches—with classics like meatloaf and fried catfish paired with southern sides—will run you around ten bucks, and the Sunday brunch is a nice way to cap off your weekend culinary tour.



COURTESY OF VISIT MOBILE

The Mobile Carnival Museum celebrates the city as the birthplace of American Mardi Gras celebrations.

Diversions & Excursions

The **Mobile Carnival Museum** celebrates the city as the birthplace of American Mardi Gras celebrations—as blasphemous as that may sound to Louisianans—dating back to 1703 when Frenchman Nicholas Langlois brought the first fête to the new world. Though less well-known than New Orleans’ celebrations, Mobile’s rich tradition of carnival krewes and annual family-friendly festivities is catalogued in the downtown museum, which displays the ornate gowns of past Mardi Gras royalty. New to downtown, the **GulfQuest National Maritime Museum of the Gulf of Mexico** captivates kids and adults alike with a detailed history of the Gulf’s maritime trade. The museum’s ninety interactive exhibits include boat racing and navigation simulators. Housed in a life-sized replica of a container ship on the edge of Mobile Bay, the five-story

museum culminates with a panoramic view of downtown Mobile and its impressive working shipyard. Just across the street is **Fort Conde**, a replica one third the size of the original French-built fort that occupied most of downtown's footprint during its tenure. The free museum offers a glimpse into colonial life, when Europeans and Native Americans shaped the city's formative years.

No trip to Mobile would be complete without a visit to the famous **Bellingrath Gardens and Home**, located approximately thirty minutes south of downtown on scenic Fowl River. The sixty-five acre property was the dream of Walter and Bessie Bellingrath, who built the expansive flowering gardens in the early 1900s after successfully opening the first Coca-Cola bottling plant in the southeast. The home-turned-

museum showcases the couple's antique collectibles in addition to seasonal flora in the intricately planned thematic gardens, among them an Asian garden, rose garden, great lawn, and conservatory. During the holiday season, guests can sip hot chocolate and stroll the illuminated landscapes that feature over one thousand set pieces lit with three million lights.

The beach, it seems, can wait a little longer.

1

THE BATTLE HOUSE RENAISSANCE MOBILE HOTEL & SPA

26 NORTH ROYAL STREET, MOBILE,
ALABAMA 36602 [WEBSITE](#)

2

THE ADMIRAL HOTEL

251 GOVERNMENT STREET, MOBILE,
ALABAMA 36602 [WEBSITE](#)



MALAGA INN

359 CHURCH STREET, MOBILE,
ALABAMA 36602 [WEBSITE](#)

4

SERDAS COFFEE COMPANY

3 SOUTH ROYAL STREET, MOBILE,
ALABAMA 36602 [WEBSITE](#)

5

BIENVILLE SQUARE

150 DAUPHIN STREET, MOBILE,
ALABAMA 36602

The square comes alive on Saturday mornings in the spring and fall with the local farmers market bringing fresh vegetables, meats, and breads along with artisan crafts from 7:30 am to 12.

On Friday, November 18, the city welcomes the holiday season with The Lighting of the Trees in Bienville Square from 5 pm–7 pm; Santa and the mayor will lead the tree lighting at 6:10 pm.

A&M PEANUT SHOP

209 DAUPHIN STREET, MOBILE,
ALABAMA 36602 [WEBSITE](#)

7

CATHEDRAL SQUARE

300 CONTI STREET, MOBILE, ALABAMA
36602

8

WINTZELL'S OYSTER HOUSE - DOWNTOWN

605 DAUPHIN STREET, MOBILE,
ALABAMA 36602 [WEBSITE](#)

9

THE HABERDASHER

113 DAUPHIN STREET, MOBILE,
ALABAMA 36602 [WEBSITE](#)

10

LODA BIER GARTEN

251 DAUPHIN STREET, MOBILE,
ALABAMA 36602 [WEBSITE](#)

11

DAUPHIN'S

107 ST. FRANCIS STREET, #3400,
MOBILE, ALABAMA 36602 [WEBSITE](#)

12

SOUL KITCHEN MUSIC HALL

219 DAUPHIN STREET, MOBILE,
ALABAMA 36602 [WEBSITE](#)

13

CRESCENT THEATER

208 DAUPHIN STREET, MOBILE,
ALABAMA 36602 [WEBSITE](#)

14

THE NOBLE SOUTH

203 DAUPHIN STREET, MOBILE,
ALABAMA 36602 [WEBSITE](#)

15

MOBILE CARNIVAL MUSEUM

355 GOVERNMENT STREET, MOBILE,
ALABAMA 36602 [WEBSITE](#)

16

GULFQUEST NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM OF THE GULF OF MEXICO

155 WATER STREET, MOBILE, ALABAMA

36602 [WEBSITE](#)

17

FORT CONDE

150 SOUTH ROYAL STREET, MOBILE,

ALABAMA 36602 [WEBSITE](#)

18

BELLINGRATH GARDENS AND HOME

12401 BELLINGRATH GARDENS ROAD,

THEODORE, ALABAMA 36582

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The advertisement is a rectangular graphic with a teal background. At the top, the text 'REGISTER FOR BREC'S {FALL}' is in white, with '{FALL}' in red. Below this, 'HOLIDAY CAMPS' is written in large, bold, purple letters. In the center, there is a cartoon illustration of a young child with dark skin and curly hair, wearing an orange jacket and blue pants, with arms raised. To the right of the child are three stylized, overlapping arrow shapes pointing left, colored white, yellow, and pink. At the bottom left is a white diamond-shaped logo with the letters 'BREC' inside. At the bottom right, the text 'CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION' is written in white on a purple background.



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