The Big Easier Adventure – Beyond Bourbon Street – Itinerary

New Orleans May 26-30, 2009

Registration fee is $595/person. $200 deposit required for reservation, balance due May 1. Checks should be payable to USI Alumni Travel.

Tuesday, May 26 – Arrive The Monteleone, check-in time is 3 p.m.

5:30 Gather for cocktails (cash bar) in Carousel Bar

6:30 Dinner at Brennan’s Restaurant, with expert commentary on wine pairings by Cellar Master Harry Hill

Wednesday, May 27

8 a.m. OPTIONAL - Breakfast off the beaten path. Gather in hotel lobby to walk to one of NOLA’s unexpected food finds.

12:30 Lunch at The Bistro with Chef Greg Piccolo. This five-course meal with wine pairings may make dinner unnecessary! Chef Greg will join us to discuss how a chef chooses and prepares a menu.

Thursday, May 28

8 a.m. OPTIONAL - Breakfast off the beaten path. Gather in hotel lobby to walk to one of NOLA’s unexpected food finds.

11 OPTIONAL – Attend a cooking class at the New Orleans Food Experience. After watching and learning, you get to eat all that good stuff, with appropriate wine pairings! Early registration is required.

4 p.m. VIP tour of the Museum of the American Cocktail. The Museum is located in Riverwalk, a short walk or cab ride from the Monteleone. OPTIONAL - After the tour, visit The Swizzle Stick Bar at Café Adelaide where expert mixologists will concoct New Orleans traditions such as the Sazerac. Dinner on your own.
Friday, May 29

8 a.m.  OPTIONAL - Breakfast off the beaten path.  Gather in hotel lobby to walk to one of NOLA’s unexpected food finds.

5 p.m.  Reception and tour of the Mardi Gras costume collection at Arnaud’s.  Dinner on your own.

Saturday, May 29 – (check out of The Monteleone by noon)

Prior to the trip, we will schedule a get-together to discuss activities and distribute extensive planning materials provided by your guides.

About your guides:

- Madonna Yancey has family ties in New Orleans and has been a regular visitor throughout her life.  She has covered the New Orleans Food and Wine Experience since 1998 and knows many of the great chefs of New Orleans.  She will be happy to teach you how to eat raw oysters, pinch crawfish heads, etc.

- Linda Cleek loves New Orleans and loves organizing things.  She is a double-alumna of USI and is associate dean of USI’s Division of Extended Services.  Although allergic to shell fish, she will be happy to tell you where to find Madonna.

They say:

Virtually none of the Big Easier Adventure involves Bourbon Street, although we will be crossing it occasionally.  We have nothing against Bourbon Street, it’s just that there’s so much more to New Orleans and so many tourists miss the best of it.  We’ve watched the city come back since Katrina, and welcome the opportunity to show you some of the reasons we know what it means to miss New Orleans.

Official Stuff:

Your registration fee covers four nights lodging (double occupancy), Brennan’s dinner, Chef’s Lunch, Cocktail Museum Tour, Arnaud’s reception/Mardi Gras collection visit, and pre-trip event and materials.  All other expenses, including transportation to and from New Orleans, are the responsibility of the individual traveler.

Every effort will be made to conduct the tour as described above, however, we reserve the right to make changes as circumstances dictate.