



ALA Annual Conference Travel Tips



Weather in New Orleans

Fast Forecast Facts

- Average temperature: 88°F/31°C daily high, 68°F/20 °C evening
- HIGH humidity (ranging from 90% in the morning and 76% in the afternoon)
- Average June rainfall: 13 days of the month

The challenge of dressing for New Orleans weather, as for any ALA Conference venue, is that it's hot and humid outside but businesses and restaurants are ice cold, so having a light sweater or jacket on hand is ideal. Bring an umbrella too, as summer storms can spring up. The hotels and restaurants keep the air conditioning on to keep the mold at bay.



What to Pack

- You might want to plan your outfits for each day with the weather forecast in mind, mixing and matching to cut down on the packing. Save time by making a list of your outfits day-by-day so you don't have to spend time figuring out what to wear in the morning. Consider wearing a business casual outfit on the plane in case your luggage is lost and you need to wear something for a day or two.
- What's the dress code for ALA Conferences? For the most part the conference is business casual, however, a recent article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, encouraged conference attendees to "**dress aspirationally.**" What does this mean? If you're a graduate student, dress like a librarian. If you are a new assistant professor, dress like the person going up for tenure. Why? It can't hurt to have others envision you in the next professional stage or rank that you'd like to achieve. And if you're still not sure, err on the side of too dressed-up, just like you would for a job interview. (Some of you may be having job interviews at the Conference!)

- **You might want to dress to take advantage of the Headshot Studio where you can get Professional Headshots**

SATURDAY – SUNDAY IN THE NEW ORLEANS CONVENTION CENTER, PLACEMENT CENTER

- Any attendee can sign-up for an appointment with ALA's conference photography team to have a professional photo taken and set of digital images created for the attendees' use in job applications, social media, and other networking opportunities. Walk-ins welcome. Cost: \$20. This is a very popular thing, so it's a good idea to **sign up in advance.**



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- Don't forget your yoga clothes: There's a **yoga-meditation room in the New Orleans Convention Center, Room 274:**
 - Friday, June 22 9:00 am – 4:00 pm
 - Saturday, June 23 9:00 am – 5:00 pm
 - Sunday, June 24 9:00 am – 5:00 pm
 - Monday, June 25 9:00 am – 2:00 pm
- Bottom line: make sure your clothes are comfortable as days at conference are long and you will have more stamina if your body is comfortable. Bring (and wear) comfortable shoes that you can walk in because you will be walking a LOT around the convention center and the exhibit hall and the city. It's not a good idea to break in new shoes at conference.
- Don't forget your business cards as you'll want to be handing them out to people you meet. However, if you forget to bring business cards you can always say that you follow most people on Twitter or LinkedIn . . . and you can immediately follow someone you meet to show you're interested in them.
- Don't forget the chargers for all your devices. Since there's probably no power outlet to be found at your seat, consider investing in a [USB battery pack](#) for long-haul flights with your tablet or phone. And don't forget to put your laptop in airplane mode—if nothing else, it saves a little power.
- You'll want to keep receipts for your expenses in an organized folder or envelope. This will save you time and headaches when you're back home filling out those expense reports.
- Try not to forget your sunscreen and sunglasses! The UV index in June averages between 8-10 which is considered very high.
- **If you're trying to work on the plane, bring noise-cancelling headphones.** The continual vibrations and humming of most planes can be unsettling if you're working.
- Bring \$10 worth of singles for tips.



Transportation

From the Airport

In addition to taxis and Uber, you can also [reserve an Airport Shuttle at a discounted rate](#) (\$38 roundtrip and \$19 one way). Make a reservation at least 24 hours before your flight.

By Car

Unless you're planning extensive or far-flung explorations outside the major tourist zones, you really don't need to rent a car during your stay in New Orleans. The town is flat, ultra-



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picturesque, and made for walking; there are plenty of taxis (including **Uber** and **pedicabs**) and decent public transportation. Indeed, a streetcar ride is as much entertainment as a practical means of getting around. Meanwhile, driving and parking in the French Quarter bring grief. Many streets are narrow, potholed, crowded, and one-way. Outside the gridded Quarter, streets angle in logic-defying directions in attempt to align around the curvy Mississippi River. Street parking is minimal and lots are fiendishly expensive (hotel lots can be criminally high). If you're in town for a while or visit often, the **parkmobile app** is worthwhile. Once you complete the annoying set-up, you can conveniently pay for most street meters via smartphone.

Once you're in the city, you can take advantage of the Gale shuttle buses which travel between the Morial Convention Center and all the Conference hotels. Service starts on Thursday, June 21 at 12:00 noon and ends on Tuesday, June 27 at 2:00 p.m. Complete details are on the [ALA conference website](#).

By Taxi

Taxis are plentiful in New Orleans and can be hailed easily on the street in the French Quarter and in some parts of the Central Business District. They also usually line up at taxi stands at larger hotels. Otherwise, call and expect a cab to appear in about 15 minutes; much longer during peak times, events, and in residential areas. The rate is \$3.50 when you enter the taxi and \$2.40 per mile thereafter. During special events, the rate is \$5 per person (or the meter rate if it's greater) to the event site. From the French Quarter to an uptown restaurant or club, expect to spend \$15 to \$25; cash or credit cards accepted. The fee for transfers between hotels is \$10 no matter how short the ride.

The cab behemoth is **United Cabs** (www.unitedcabs.com; [tel] **504/524-9606**). **Nawlins Cab** (a family breakaway from United) operates by smartphone app (www.nawlinscab.com; [tel] **504/522-9059**) as does **Carriage Cab**, the slightly upscale sister to Checker and Yellow Cabs (www.neworleanscarriagecab.com; [tel] **504/207-7777**). You can also hire a taxi for a few hours or day at negotiable hourly rates (usually in the mid-\$30/hour rate), a hassle-free way to tour far-flung areas of the city.

Uber (available only by app) began operating in New Orleans in 2015. The usual concerns apply about this much-debated ride-sharing service. So far it gets mixed reports—with the major complaint being that there simply aren't enough drivers. That should change with time. Expect the fare to be slightly less than standard taxis till the surge prices kick in. Uber cannot pick up at the airport. Lyft is not a presence (yet).

On Foot

We can't stress this enough: Walking is by far the best way to see New Orleans (besides, you need to walk off all those calories!). You'll miss the many unique and sometimes glorious sights



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if you whiz past them. Slow down, stroll, and take it in. If it's just too hot, humid, or rainy, there's always a cab or bus nearby.

By Ferry

The **Canal Street/Algiers Ferry** is one of the city's great assets, not just for transportation to the old Algiers Point neighborhood, but to get a view of the city from the Mississippi River. It's a working ferry, but it's more than that at night, when the city's glowing skyline reflects on the water. The 25-minute ride from the foot of Canal Street costs \$2 each way. The ferry leaves New Orleans every 30 minutes Monday to Friday from 6:15am to 9:45pm, Saturday 11am to 8pm, and Sunday 11am to 6pm. Check for schedule changes on holidays and during events. Pedestrians and bikes only, no cars. (1 Canal St., across the tracks and up the big stairs; www.nolaferries.com; [tel] 504/309-9789).

By City Bus

New Orleans has a good public bus system that many locals rely on, so chances are there's a bus that runs exactly where you want to go. The fare is \$1.25; transfers are an extra 25 cents. You must have exact change in bills or coins, or you can use a **JazzyPass**). For route information, contact the **RTA** (www.norta.com; [tel] 504/248-3900) or pick up one of the excellent city maps at the **Visitor Information Center**, 529 St. Ann St., in the French Quarter.

By Streetcar

Besides being a National Historic Landmark, the **St. Charles Avenue streetcar** is also a convenient, scenic, and fun way to get from downtown to Uptown and back. The iconic green cars click and clack for 6 1/2 miles 24 hours a day at frequent intervals and get crowded at school and business rush hours. Board at Canal and Carondelet streets (directly across Canal from Bourbon St. in the French Quarter) or anywhere along the line. The tracks wind beyond the point where St. Charles Avenue bends into Carrollton Avenue, ending at Palmer Park (Claiborne Avenue). The original cars run on the St. Charles line, so it's not air-conditioned or wheelchair accessible (and it's a big step up). All other lines have A/C and lifts.

The **Riverfront streetcar** line runs the length of the French Quarter, from the Old Mint at Esplanade past the Convention Center to the Pontchartrain Expressway, with stops along the way. It runs daily 5:30am to 11:30pm, and is a great foot saver as you explore the riverfront. The spiffy, bright-red cars on the **Canal Street** line service two destinations. Check the sign on the front of the car: "Cemeteries" goes to several of the older cemeteries and runs daily 5am to 3am; "City Park" goes through Mid-City, to City Park/the New Orleans Museum of Art and Jazz Fest (expect jammed streetcars during Jazz Fest). The City Park route runs between 7am and 1:15am.

The **Loyola line** runs along Loyola Street, connecting the Union Passenger Terminal (and Amtrak and Greyhound passengers) with the Canal Street line, and continues to the French Market on weekends (Sat–Sun 6:30am–9:30pm).



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The **fare** for any streetcar line is \$1.25 each way. Add 25 cents to transfer to or from a city bus. All streetcars take exact change in bills or coins only, or **JazzyPasses**.



Dining

With more than 1,400 restaurants, New Orleans cuisine is built on a tradition that stretches from Paris to Port au Prince and from Cadiz to the Congo. The city received 9 nominations for the [2018 James Beard Awards](#). Check out ["Big Easy Eats"](#) in the June issue of *American Libraries*, which includes many vegan and vegetarian options.

Whether you have funding or not, you'll most likely be on a budget, and food and beverage costs can add up quickly. However, there are many opportunities for free food at conference. Sometimes continental breakfast is available to those that attend business meetings and there are often snacks available in the exhibit hall. Vendors often have breakfasts and luncheons where you can get a great meal for free. These tend to be by invitation though, so check with your colleagues to see if anyone at your library has received an invitation that they're not using. While the free foods may not be what you'd normally eat, taking advantage of free food is a good way of lowering your food costs. The opening exhibits reception on Friday night in the Convention Center features heavy *hors d'oeuvres and drinks*.

Some tips for staying within your food budget:

- Find a grocery store and purchase food to keep in your room.
- Buy prepared meals from a grocery store. These are often cheaper than eating at a restaurant. See if you can find a Whole Foods or Trader Joes close to your hotel.
- Bring snacks with you. Many snacks foods are small and portable, so you can carry them in your suitcase.
- If someone suggests an activity (food or otherwise) that is outside of your price range, tell them that. You don't need to go along with the crowd.



Sightseeing

I hope you can plan at least one day of your visit for sight-seeing since you might be hard pressed to find time to visit New Orleans.

Be sure to check out the Arts Guide, compiled by the [ACRL Arts Section](#). ALA's recommendations for things to do can be found in [this online guide](#), which covers festivals, tours, nightlife, attractions, sports, music, and cultural arts.