France; and the splendid Spanish Plaza is awash with fountains and handsome mosaic tiles.

There are many other STATUES AND MONUMENTS that salute the city's heros and heroines. The Crescent City's founder, Jean Baptiste le Moyne, Sieur de Bienville, stands on the corner of Howard and Loyola Avenues. In Jackson Square, there is a colossal equestrian statue of General Andrew Jackson, the hero of the Battle of New Orleans in 1815. Confederate General Robert E. Lee, the South's most beloved warrior, stands guard at Lee Circle. Henry Clay, Benjamin Franklin, General P.G.T. Beauregard, and Margaret Haughery are among the host of others commemorated by statues or monuments.

There are spectacular VIEWS OF THE CITY from the Top of the Dome on the 32nd floor of the Hyatt Regency, the River View on the 41st floor of the Marriott, and from the many eateries in the Jackson Brewery and the Millhouse.

Do as the locals do and spend a refreshing day at the LAKEFRONT, enjoying the sun, picnicking on Lakeshore Drive, and watching the sailboats on Lake Pontchartrain.

Don't miss the luxuriant PARKS of New Orleans. City Park, located on City Park Avenue, is a 1,500-acre urban oasis with moss-draped oaks, lazy lagoons, hiking and biking trails, golf courses, tennis courts, spectacular Botanical Gardens, an amusement park (with a turn-of-the-century carousel!), and ample grounds for picnicking. Things are likewise lush at Audubon Park on St. Charles Avenue. In addition to golfing and tennis, the park offers a 1.8 mile jogging path, shaded by giant oak trees, and 18 exercise stations. It's also a wonderful place for relaxing beneath a tree and building castles in the air. Woldenberg Riverfront Park, 13 acres of landscaped greenspace on the Mississippi, is the perfect location to watch New Orleans' riverfront renaissance taking shape.

New Orleans ARCHITECTURE is a very special treat. The French Quarter holds quaint two- and three-story structures of frame, old-brick, and pastel-colored stucco, decorated with dollops of gingerbread and swirls of fanciful ironwork. The Garden District is awash with Greek Revival, Italianate and Queen Anne mansions surrounded by luxuriant lawns. But the city has a modern face, too. The fabulous Superdome is the world's largest facility of its kind, and other modern structures include the New Orleans Convention Center, Place St. Charles, the LL&E Tower, the World Trade Center, and One Shell Square - the tallest building in the city.

You can watch experts make the city's famed PRALINES, then get the recipe for this tasty candy and take a little bit of New Orleans home to your own kitchen.

WINDOW SHOPPING is a favorite New Orleans pastime, for locals as well as visitors. Browse through the antique and souvenir shops, boutiques and galleries of the French Quarter. Then head toward the river to find the Jackson Brewery, the Millhouse, the Marketplace, Canal Place, Riverwalk, and the New Orleans Centre. Magazine Street offers a full six miles of antique shops in quaint old structures. Next, venture out to Uptown Square, Riverbend, the Rink, Clearview, Esplanade, Belle Promenade, Oakwood, Lake Forest Plaza, and Lakeside shopping centers for yet more browsing.

New Orleans is home to a number of UNIVERSITIES: Tulane and Loyola on St. Charles Avenue, the University of New Orleans on the Lakefront, and Dillard and Xavier Universities. Most offer regular concerts, films, and lectures free of charge and open to the public.

The FRENCH CULTURAL SERVICES CENTER offers French programs, classes, videocassettes, a library, periodic exhibits, film festivals, and lectures. It's at 3305 St. Charles Avenue. Just call 891-6901.

No matter what time of year you visit New Orleans, you're sure to find a FESTIVAL! The Carnival season begins annually on January 6, and the excitement builds, with more balls and more parades, until Mardi Gras!