

GOOD

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NEW ORLEANS

UNITED STATES

Government dysfunction at every level post-Hurricane Katrina reignited a spirit of self-determination in New Orleans that has been a powerful driving force over the past eight years. Grand experiments in civic innovation, like the creation of more than 80 new charter schools, are both highly controversial and indicative of the scale of change that the storm made possible. The intoxicating charm and resilience of New Orleans would seem to credit the traditional values that NOLA has boasted about for decades: fierce support for local artists, commitment to celebration and tradition, and caring for one's neighbors and community. Yet it is precisely these ideals that some think are at risk as New Orleans welcomes an influx of young, mostly white, college-educated newcomers with entrepreneurial goals and hipster tastes.

KEZIA KAMENETZ



Dedicated to cultivating social entrepreneurship, **Propeller** recently opened a dynamic workspace that augments its increasingly popular fellowship program for those who wish to tackle environmental, economic, and social problems in New Orleans. By being part of Propeller's network, organizations like Birthmark Doula Collective and BreakOUT! have the opportunity to collaborate with other innovators and increase their overall impact.



The Orleans Parish criminal justice system incarcerates more citizens—and disproportionately those of color—than any other on the planet. Because so many families in the city are affected by these facts, they inspire heated debates at dinner tables and within neighborhood groups. Organizations like the **Orleans Parish Prison Reform Coalition** and **VOTE** are leading the way to reform.



The combination of a year-round growing season and ample empty lots make New Orleans poised to become a leader in the locally-sourced food movement. The New Orleans Food and Farm Network has been at the helm of this initiative for many years, and its latest **Farm City program** aims to transform more than 500 lots into urban food production and community centers.



Mardi Gras is still as essential to the fabric of local culture as ever. Marching krewes like

Chewbacchus, 'tit Rex, and Krewe du Vieux maintain the traditions of creativity, self-expression, and *joie de vivre* that have marked the weeks-long festival for centuries.



New Orleans is a largely car-dependent city, but thanks to civic investments and numerous and outspoken community bike organizations like **Plan B**, New Orleans' bike ridership has increased by 54 percent since 2010.



The 1,300-acre **City Park** is home to a stunning collection of live oak trees and is now bursting with natural areas like **Couturie Forest**, which provides a taste of the swamp for city dwellers.



A thriving Vietnamese community in New Orleans East and a growing post-Katrina Hispanic population help make up the 5.8 percent of New Orleanians who are foreign-born. And while the struggle for racial equality continues, the amazing accomplishments of First Grace United Methodist Church—once composed of two churches, one historically white, the other black, which merged after Katrina—demonstrate what's possible when segregated communities come together as one.



Even with no mandatory paid vacation time, festivals dominate the New Orleans social calendar, celebrating the usual suspects like jazz and blues, but also mirlitons, po' boys, and balcony screaming.

THE STORY GOES that America's first cocktail, the Sazerac, was invented on the streets of New Orleans in the early

19th century. For better or for worse, NOLA has kept a close relationship with mixed drinks ever since.

