Lagniappe {lan•yap}
A little something extra - A free coffee or dessert or an extra item in a dozen.

Vieux Carré {veu•kah•ray}
A common name for the French Quarter meaning Old Square or Old Quarter. Originally, the area was called the “Ville” and made up the entire city of New Orleans. Today, its 90 city blocks are home to about 2,700 European and Creole-style buildings, most with a long and fascinating history.

Fais-Do-Do {fay•doe•doe}
A Cajun dance party that originated before World War II. Parents brought their kids with their blankets so the little ones would sleep while adults would eat, drink, and dance their way through the night. Fais-do-do loosely means go to sleep fast.

Gris-Gris {gree•gree}
In Louisiana, gris-gris is a term for a Voodoo spell that is believed to bring ill-fortune to those upon whom the spell is cast. In other parts of the world a gris-gris is an amulet that brings protection.

Faubourg {foe•burg}
Originally suburbs, they are now neighborhoods in New Orleans. The Faubourg Marigny is a famous neighborhood adjacent to the French Quarter.

Laisses Les Bons Temps Rouler! {less•say lay bon tonh roo•lay}
A French term that means “Let the good times roll!”

Beignet {BEN•yay}
Square pastries fried to crusty perfection and generously sprinkled with powdered sugar.

Andouille {ahn•DOO•ee}
Spicy Cajun sausage.

Boudin (boo•DEHN)
Spicy pork sausage stuffed with onions and herbs.

New Orleans {noo aw•lins}, {new or•lins} or {new or•lee•yuns}
Never {new or•lee•ens} unless referring to the street or the parish of Orleans or when you’re singing “Do you Know What It Means to Miss New Orleans”?

Courtbouillion {COO•boo•yawn}
A Cajun fish simmered in spicy tomato sauce.

Etouffée {ay•too•FAY}
Literally means “suffocated,” but in New Orleans it means smothered shrimp or crawfish with spicy tomato sauce served over rice.

Jambalaya {jahm•ba•LIE•ya}
The New Orleans version of Spanish Paella. This Cajun rice dish includes sausages, seafood, and spices.

Mirliton (MER•lih•tawn or MIL•lih•ton)
A tropical pear-shaped squash. Locals love to stuff them with seafood, meat, and cheese. Elsewhere, they are referred to as vegetable pears or chayotes.

Street Names
Many New Orleans street names have puzzling pronunciations. Some of the most frequently mis-pronounced names are:

- Burgundy (bur•gun•dee)
- Conti (con•tie)
- Calliope (kal•ee•ope)
- Melpomene (mel•puh•meen)
- Tchoupitoulas (cho•plih•too•liss)
- Clio (clee•oh)

Makin’ Groceries
New Orleans slang meaning shopping for groceries.

Fun Fact
Four works written in and about New Orleans have won Pulitzers; Confederacy of Dunces, by John Kennedy Toole, A Streetcar Named Desire, by Tennessee Williams, A Good Scent from a Strange Mountain, by Robert Olen Butler and The Optimist’s Daughter by Eudora Welty.
Pass a Good Time
Live it up – enjoy a party or a get-together with friends and family.

Pro Bono Publico
The motto of Rex, King of Carnival, meaning “For the common good.”

Flambeaux
Flambeaux carriers originated during the early years of Mardi Gras. Their flaming torches lit the sky for nighttime parades. Revelers tossed coins to them for their efforts. Today, the tradition continues and has evolved into a rich display of daring showmanship.

Krewe
An organization that puts on a parade or ball during Mardi Gras season. Fees paid by the Krewe members pay for the parades, floats and throws tossed by the riders to the cheering crowd.

Picayune
Old Spanish coin, 1/8 of a dollar and part of the name of the local paper, The Times Picayune.

Pirogue
A shallow canoe used to navigate the narrow and often shallow bayous and waterways of southeast Louisiana.

Voodoo
A religious practice that came to New Orleans via Haiti, which incorporates African practices and French Catholicism.

Where Y’at?
A local greeting similar to: How are you?

Brass Band
New Orleans Brass Bands carry on a long tradition including such greats as Louis Armstrong and the Marsalis Family. Their mobile instruments work perfectly for second-lines and street parades.

Secondline
Followers of a moving brass band that swing a handkerchief in a circle over their heads while dancing in a line to the music.
Cities of the Dead
Because of the high water table in the city, early settlers buried their dead above ground. Elaborate monuments and ornate tombs create a city like community for the deceased.

Banquette
A local term meaning a raised sidewalk.

Neutral Ground
Europeans and Creoles living in the French Quarter considered Americans unwelcome intruders after the completion of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. Immigrants settled across Canal Street and established what is now the Central Business District, Garden District, and Uptown. Canal Street became the “neutral ground” in the clash of cultures. New Orleans is a city sans medians; here, we have neutral grounds.

Parish
The term parish is used instead of county in Louisiana.

Swamp
A low, marshy wetland, heavily forested.

Bananas Foster
Brennan's first whipped up this flaming ambrosia of bananas and rum, spooned over vanilla ice cream.

Blackened Redfish
Highly seasoned redfish filets sizzled in a hot skillet. When Chef Paul Prudhomme made the Cajun dish a national craze, it put a strain on redfish supplies. Inspired chefs began blackening poultry and veal.

Chicory
Endive roots are roasted and ground into Louisiana coffee giving the coffee rich flavor and coloring.

Crawfish Boil, Crab Boil, or Shrimp Boil
A method to prepare seafood that consists of boiling the seafood with flavorful and spicy seasonings. Often included are corn-on-the-cob, sausage and potatoes.

Creole Cream Cheese
Creole Cream Cheese is similar to France’s light crème fraîche.
Creole Mustard
A course, stone-ground mustard with a unique vibrant flavor first introduced in New Orleans in the late 1800’s.

Dressed
A sandwich, usually a Po-boy complete with lettuce, tomato, pickles, and mayonnaise.

Muffuletta
It’s not just a sandwich; it’s a meal packed into a round loaf of Italian bread. This sandwich was invented by a Sicilian immigrant at Central Grocery in the French Quarter in 1806, and includes salami, ham, provolone, and olive salad.

Oysters
Eating them raw on the half shell is a local favorite. Connoisseurs like to oversee the process, watching as the shells are pried open. Most natives dip them in a sauce made with ketchup, Tabasco and horseradish to taste and a squeeze of fresh lemon.

Gumbo
Gumbo is the signature Creole dish of New Orleans and South Louisiana. It began with okra, or nkombo in Bantu, a vegetable of African origin. Native American filé (ground sassafras leaves) is often included. Caribbean-born chefs first whipped up this piquant potage—more soup than stew. In Southern Louisiana, it’s made with a dark roux (gravy base made by browning flour in fat), shellfish, and sausage, served over rice.

King Cake
These cakes are served between Twelfth Night, the beginning of Carnival Season, through Mardi Gras Day. They are typically decorated with purple, green, and gold sugar, and originally resembled French brioche. Whoever finds the baby in their slice, buys the next cake.

Who Dat
The phrase was a common dialogue element between performers and crowds at traveling shows. It is now the cheer of fans of the New Orleans Saints NFL football team and their fan base, The Who Dat Nation.

Cajuns
Nickname for Acadians, the French-speaking people who migrated to Louisiana from Nova Scotia, starting in 1755.
Mardi Gras Indians
Mardi Gras Indians trace their lineage to the original Native Americans who lived in southeast Louisiana, and the first Africans who arrived in the 19th century. The Indians don elaborate handmade, heavily feathered and beaded costumes.

Zydeco
A form of African folk music that evolved in southeast Louisiana during the 19th century. This upbeat, dancin’ shoes kind of music can be found at the annual Cajun-Zydeco Festival (which is always combined with the Creole Tomato Festival to ensure good eats), held in New Orleans every June.