



Music from the 1940s fills the Stage Door Canteen.

A New Way To See World War II

The National World War II Museum in New Orleans brings the historic era to life. Here's our ideal itinerary for an afternoon visit. BY LES THOMAS

Those millions of everyday Americans whose sacrifice and heroism led us through World War II can rest easy. Now there's a place in New Orleans that tells their story better than anyone ever has. When you step inside the distinctive glass-front National World War II Museum off Magazine Street, you're swept up in the same emotions that once rushed over them. One moment you're swing dancing in the Stage Door Canteen. The next you're watching a gripping, special effects-filled film that blasts you out of your seat. Whether you visit for an hour or a day, you'll never forget the way the museum presents the events and people of WWII.



The museum's American Sector restaurant

- **FIRST HOUR:** Be sure to see *Beyond All Boundaries*. Lines are long for the spectacular production narrated by Tom Hanks, so buy a ticket when you first arrive. Packed into 50 minutes, the first production airs at 10 a.m. and repeats hourly. It takes you from the attack on Pearl Harbor to war's end. Explosions shake your seat. Cold air and soap flakes lighted to look like falling snow make you feel the chill of the Battle of the Bulge. Suddenly a B-17 bomber's nose cone lowers from the ceiling, and you get a sensation of what it was like to be aboard a Flying Fortress with anti-aircraft fire exploding all around. The show's powerful special effects may be too intense for young children. The best value is a \$20 combo ticket that includes the show and museum admission.

- **SECOND HOUR:** Step across the street to the Louisiana Memorial Pavilion to see a Higgins boat—one of more than 20,000 built by Louisianans to land Americans on far-off shores. Listen to the story of Andrew Jackson Higgins, who learned his skills building boats to navigate the state's backwaters and went on to design the famed D-Day landing craft. Dwight D. Eisenhower said the strategy of the war could not have been carried out without them.

- **THIRD HOUR:** Cap off your visit with lunch at the re-created 1940s cafe known as John Besh's American Sector. Have a cup of heirloom tomato soup with a grilled ham-and-cheese sandwich (\$8) and splurge on a rich soda fountain chocolate shake (\$5). The restaurant is a labor of love for the famed New Orleans chef, an ex-Marine who served a 10-month tour in Desert Storm. He says the museum represents "sacred ground." Spend an afternoon here and you'll feel the same way. *

FOR MORE INFORMATION: nationalww2museum.org or 504/528-1944