

Fireworks Traditions Light Up the Fourth

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Mr4@tulane.edu

The Fourth of July weekend is here, and Americans are celebrating the nation's 233rd birthday as they have the preceding 232 by attending staged fireworks displays or setting off bottle rockets and Roman candles on their own front lawns.

In New Orleans, crowds will gather at the Mississippi River for the 19th annual Go 4th on the River, featuring a "dueling barges fireworks extravaganza" choreographed to patriotic music at 9 p.m. on Saturday (July 4). That evening, New Orleans's area fans of huge fireworks displays also can catch a baseball game along with fireworks at the New Orleans Zephyrs stadium, enjoy casinos with fireworks and celebrate at the "Uncle Sam Jam" in Metairie.

The independent evolution of laws regulating the sale and use of fireworks from one locality to the next generates intriguing inconsistencies. For instance, while it's illegal for individuals to purchase, detonate, or possess fireworks in the city of New Orleans, it is perfectly legal to sell them in the city of Gretna in neighboring Jefferson Parish, a short car ride across the Mississippi River.

In Gretna, vendors peddling wildly varied and colorful assortments of combustibles pop up like mushrooms during the week before Independence Day.

This video visits the corner of Americana occupied by fireworks stands.