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ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



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NYC Weekend on a Budget

New York City, 3 Days

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Guide Description



AUTHOR NOTE: Make no mistake--New York is an expensive city. But with a little effort, you can enjoy a great long weekend here without blowing your budget.

Photo: Staten Island Ferry. By robertpaulyoung.

Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - New York City

DAY NOTE: If you're not lucky enough to have friends or family with a welcoming spare bedroom (or couch), of the biggest expenses during your weekend in New York will be your hotel. Two reasonably priced options are the Cosmopolitan in Tribeca and the Hotel Newton on the Upper West Side. Both are in neighborhoods that are great for walking around, window-shopping and people watching, and both offer a good home base for exploring the rest of the city. After you check into your hotel, head to one of the art world's top attractions, the Museum of Modern Art, which offers free admissions on Fridays from 4 to 8 pm. Stroll over to Rockefeller Center's hustle and bustle and grab an early dinner at 'wichcraft, Tom Colicchio's fancy sandwich shop (it has many locations throughout the city, including one at 1 Rockefeller Plaza). For a chance at more culture, head to Carnegie Hall, where a limited number of \$10 partial-view tickets are available for performances in the Isaac Stern Auditorium (same-day tickets go on sale at the box office beginning at noon; they are limited to two per person).

	Cosmopolitan Hotel-Tribeca Affordable Tribeca Hotel
	Hotel Newton Upper West Side budget hotel
	Museum of Modern Art Cutting-edge museum with huge selection of contemporary art
	Wichcraft Good ol' home cookin'
	Carnegie Hall Music palace

Day 2 - New York City

DAY NOTE: After a classic New York bagel breakfast (Murray's in Greenwich Village is a popular choice), head downtown and take a trip on the Staten Island Ferry. A free ferry ride is a fun excursion that offers unparalleled views of the downtown New York City skyline and the Statue of Liberty. While you're downtown, explore South Street Seaport, which hosts free concerts and performances during the summer and houses an ice-skating rink in the winter. There's a TKTS booth located right near the Seaport, where you can pick up discounted Broadway and Off-Broadway tickets for that night's show or the next day's matinee. For dinner, try the famous Shake Shack (the original

Madison Square Park has recently been joined by an Upper West Side branch at Columbus Ave. and 77th St.) which in-the-know New Yorkers praise as the best burger in the city. For something a little more exotic, head down to the East Village, where the cheap eating options abound: some good choices are Dok Suni (Korean) and the always-open, always-popular Veselka (Ukrainian).

	Staten Island Ferry Free trip across New York Harbor
	South Street Seaport Historic port houses tourist-friendly shops & restaurants
	Shake Shack Burger heaven draws a crowd
	Dok Suni's Talkative Korean haven
	Veselka Hip Ukrainian fare, open 24 hours
	Cosmopolitan Hotel-Tribeca Affordable Tribeca Hotel
	Hotel Newton Upper West Side budget hotel

Day 3 - New York City

DAY NOTE: On the last day of your visit, make your way to Central Park, where you can take one of their numerous free tours to explore far-flung park regions like the North Woods, designed to replicate the Adirondack Mountains, or the Harlem Meer, an elevated area that colonial troops used to defend the city during the American Revolution. In the summer, the park offers a selection of great free entertainment, including Shakespeare in the Park, Summerstage, and the Met in the Parks series. Also, before you leave, be sure to take advantage of one of the best meal deals in the city: Gray's Papaya.

	Central Park Urban oasis, perfect for exploring or relaxing
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Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
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nightlife



Shakespeare in the Park

Free Shakespeare performed in Central Park



Met in the Parks

Free opera



Gray's Papaya

Dining deals at hot dog favorite

Day 1 - New York City

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contact:
tel: +1 212 566 1900 / +1 888 895 9400
fax: +1 212 566 6909
<http://www.cosmohotel.com>

location:
125 Chambers Street
New York NY 10007

1 Cosmopolitan Hotel-Tribeca

DESCRIPTION: Rooms at the Cosmopolitan Hotel in Tribeca are basic and plain, but modern and clean, and the larger loft-style rooms have an added character. Beyond its frugality, the Cosmopolitan's best asset is its location: on the corner of Chambers Street and West Broadway in fashionable Tribeca, near such fun spots as The Odeon and more upscale restaurants such as Nobu. It is a great home base for exploring neighborhoods such as Lower Manhattan and South Street Seaport, Soho, Chinatown and Little Italy. © NileGuide



Photo courtesy of Cosmopolitan Hotel-Tribeca

contact:
tel: +1 212 678 6500 / +1 888 468 3558
fax: 212/678-6758
<http://www.thehotelnewton.com/>

location:
2528 Broadway
New York NY 10025

2 Hotel Newton

DESCRIPTION: This Upper West Side hotel is a little far from the center of the action in New York City, but only a short subway ride to Midtown Manhattan. The neighborhood is residential and close to both Central Park and Riverside Park. The rooms are fairly large, and the suites have all the comforts of home including a mini-refrigerator, microwave oven, iron and ironing board. © wcities.com



Photo courtesy of Hotel Newton

contact:
tel: +1 212 708 9400
<http://www.moma.org>

location:
11 W. 53rd St
New York NY 10103

hours:
Sat-Mon and Wed-Thurs
10:30am-5:30pm; Fri
10:30am-8pm

3 Museum of Modern Art

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

From November 2009 through April 2010, the MoMA houses a major career retrospective of the wonderfully weird screenwriter/director/producer Tim Burton.

DESCRIPTION: Opened in 1929, the Museum of Modern Art was one of the first museums with a focus on modern art, and



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it boasts one of the world's most comprehensive collections. Its permanent collection numbers 135,000 paintings, prints, photographs, drawings, sculptures, films, and design objects, including works by Picasso, Cézanne, Van Gogh, Kandinsky, Dalí, O'Keeffe, Pollock, Warhol, and some of the best more contemporary artists, like Richard Serra, Cindy Sherman, and Chuck Close.

MoMA reopened in 2004 following a \$425 million expansion program that marked the museum's 75th anniversary. Led by the Japanese architect Yoshio Taniguchi, the renovation nearly doubled the capacity of the original building and revamped its appearance completely, starting with the striking entrance. A 110-foot-high atrium towers over an indoor walkway, extending over 53rd Street to a new entryway on 54th Street. The new six-story David and Peggy Rockefeller Building houses the main collection and temporary exhibition galleries, while the restored and expanded sculpture garden, named for museum founder Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, boasts more than 30 masterworks of modern sculpture. The MoMA's sleek next-door restaurant, the Modern, is also worth a visit.

© NileGuide

contact:

tel: 1 212 780 0577

fax: 1 212 290 7663

<http://www.wichcraftnyc.com/>

location:

6th Avenue, between
40th-42nd Street
New York NY 10016

hours:

M-Th 7a-8:30p, F 7a-6p, Sa-
Su 8:30a-6p

4 Wichcraft

DESCRIPTION: This restaurant is a veritable home away from home. Offering breakfast and more, the all American traditional dishes delight both, the palette and wallet. Have fried eggs with bacon, gorgonzola and frisee for breakfast, with a cappuccino to kick start the day. If you happen to swing by at lunchtime, the soup of the day with a Turkey Sandwich should ease those hunger pangs. Still hungry? A chicken or tuna salad should put a smile of satisfaction on your face. Wrap it up with an ice cream or a cupcake from their dessert list, and you're ready to go! © wcities.com



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contact:

tel: +1 212 247 7800

fax: +1 212 903 0765

<http://www.carnegiehall.org/>

location:

154 West 57th Street
New York NY 10106

hours:

Box Office: M-Sa 11a-6p, Su
noon-6p

5 Carnegie Hall

DESCRIPTION: Built by the steel magnate and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie in 1890, the hall is one of the most famous venues in the United States for classical music and popular music. The legendary building, renowned both for its beauty and its incredible acoustics, was designed by William Tuthill and constructed of brick and brownstone in an Italian Renaissance style. Until 1962, it was the official residence of the New York Philharmonic orchestra, but since then has had no resident company (the Philharmonic plays at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall). Visitors flock to the historic hall to hear the Berlin Philharmonic, the Vienna Philharmonic, and big bands from cities around the country and world. Carnegie Hall also hosts piano recitals, world music, choral evenings and even pop music and rock concerts. Among the legions of stars that have appeared throughout the hall's history are Tchaikovsky, Gustav Mahler, Isaac Stern, Itzhak Perlman, John



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Philip Sousa, Pablo Casals, Yo-Yo Ma, Maria Callas, Plácido Domingo, Luciano Pavarotti, Liza Minnelli, Fats Waller, and Frank Sinatra.

After being saved from demolition in 1955, Carnegie Hall was made a historic landmark in 1964. In 1986, it was renovated extensively and reopened in its current elegant incarnation, with plush seats boasting excellent views of the stage throughout the house, a pristine gold and white lobby, and a swanky cocktail bar, the Travelers Café Carnegie, on the parquet level. Carnegie Hall contains three separate concert halls. The Main Hall, renamed for Isaac Stern in 1997, seats 2,804 people on five levels; Zankel Hall (originally the Recital Hall) and the Weill Hall Recital Hall (the Chamber Music Hall) are smaller venues. The building also contains the Carnegie Hall Archives, established in 1986, and the Rose Museum, which opened in 1991. Founded by the Susan and Elihu Rose Foundation, the Rose Museum chronicles the hall's and exhibits its archival treasures to the public. The permanent exhibit contains a chronology of events from 1891 to the present, a history of the building, and items relating to the many notable figures that have walked through the Hall's doors. © NileGuide

Day 2 - New York City

QUICK NOTE

DAY NOTE: After a classic New York bagel breakfast (Murray's in Greenwich Village is a popular choice), head downtown and take a trip on the Staten Island Ferry. A free ferry ride is a fun excursion that offers unparalleled views of the downtown New York City skyline and the Statue of Liberty. While you're downtown, explore South Street Seaport, which hosts free concerts and performances during the summer and houses an ice-skating rink in the winter. There's a TKTS booth located right near the Seaport, where you can pick up discounted Broadway and Off-Broadway tickets for that night's show or the next day's matinee. For dinner, try the famous Shake Shack (the original Madison Square Park has recently been joined by an Upper West Side branch at Columbus Ave. and 77th St.) which in-the-know New Yorkers praise as the best burger in the city. For something a little more exotic, head down to the East Village, where the cheap eating options abound: some good choices are Dok Suni (Korean) and the always-open, always-popular Veselka (Ukrainian).

contact:

tel: +1 718 390 5253
<http://www.siferry.com/>

location:

1 Bay Street
New York NY 10301

hours:

24 Hrs

1 Staten Island Ferry

DESCRIPTION: This is undoubtedly New York City's best free ride. The 25-minute one-way trip across New York Harbor should give you ample opportunity to see such nearby sites as the Statue of Liberty, Brooklyn Bridge and lower Manhattan's skyscrapers. The fare for the ferry, which runs every 20 to 30 minutes, actually went down from 50 cents a few years ago. During rush hour, it is filled with Staten Island residents going to or from work in Manhattan. Cars and motorcycles are no longer allowed on the ferry. © wcities.com



contact:

tel: +1 212 732 7678
fax: +1 212 964 8056
<http://www.southstreetseaport.com>

location:

12 Fulton St
New York NY 10038

hours:

Museum Apr-Dec Tues-Sun 10am-6pm, Thurs 10am-8pm; Jan-Mar Fri-Mon 10am-5pm (On Mon, Schermerhorn Row galleries only); ships open noon-4pm

2 South Street Seaport

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

The Titanic Memorial, a small white lighthouse located at the intersection of Fulton and Water streets at the gateway to the seaport, commemorates the sinking of the RMS Titanic in 1912.

DESCRIPTION: This historic trading port, which dates back to the 1600s, is located on the edge of the Financial District, where Fulton Street meets the East River. It was restored and revitalized for tourist use in the late 1960s, and now boasts more than 120 shops, restaurants, and bars, as well as the South Street Seaport Museum, the Pier 17 Pavilion, and the New York City Police Museum. Visitors to the Seaport will also find some of the oldest architecture in downtown Manhattan, including renovated original mercantile buildings from the early 19th century, renovated sailing ships, and the former Fulton Fish Market.

With its cobblestone streets and broad piers, South Street Seaport offers a welcome escape from the congested, skyscraper-lined streets of downtown. There are usually free outdoor performances going on - check out a number of



Photo courtesy of visitingdc.com

prominent and up-and-coming acts at the outdoor stage set up in the summertime - and the cool breezes, fun people-watching, and beautiful views of the Brooklyn Bridge can all be enjoyed for free. © NileGuide

contact:
tel: 1 212 889 6600
<http://www.shakeshacknyc.com/>

location:
Near Madison Avenue and East 23rd Street
New York NY 10010

hours:
Apr-Nov: Daily 11a-11p

3 Shake Shack

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

The Shake Shack now has five NYC locations (Madison Square Park, Columbus Ave near 77th St, Theater District, Upper East Side, and at Citi Field, new home of the New York Mets).

DESCRIPTION: Billed as a modern-day "roadside" burger stand, Shake Shack goes back to the basics of the hamburger (no truffles, foie gras, pork belly or Kobe beef in sight). As a result, it's won over legions of fans since its opening in Madison Square Park in 2004 (around the corner from owner Danny Meyer's upscale star Eleven Madison Park), and has been a perennial contender for best burger in the city. In addition, the Shake Shack hot dog and frozen custard--a creamy twist on soft-serve ice cream--help build the lines in warmer weather to epic proportions in the park location.
© NileGuide



contact:
tel: 1 212 477 9506

location:
119 1st Avenue
New York NY 10003-2963

hours:
4:30p-11p Su-M, 4:30p-midnight Tu-Sa

4 Dok Suni's

DESCRIPTION: The name means 'little kiss' in Korean. It is a favorite among artsy East Village locals and downtown visitors seeking good cuisine at reasonable prices. There is usually a wait to squeeze into this place, but it is worth it; special dumplings, delicious noodle soups and Bibimbop (a rice casserole) draw the crowds. A skilled staff keeps a friendly attitude as they maneuver heavy trays through the closely packed tables. They accept cash only. © wcities.com



photo courtesy of Shanna Ravindra

contact:
tel: 1 212 228 9682
<http://www.veselka.com>

location:
144 2nd Avenue
New York NY 10003

hours:
24-hours daily

5 Veselka

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

Hungry diners should try the the bigos, a Ukrainian stew featuring kielbasa, roast pork shoulder, sauerkraut and onions and billed as "a substantial meal fit for a hunter."

DESCRIPTION: Whenever the craving hits for hearty eastern European fare at old-world prices, Veselka fits the bill with fluffy and light (if that's possible) pierogi (small doughy envelopes filled with potatoes, cheese, or sauerkraut), kasha varnishkes (cracked buckwheat and noodles with mushroom sauce), stuffed cabbage, grilled Polish kielbasa, freshly made potato



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pancakes, and such classic soups as a sublime borscht. Breakfast is special here. If all you want is a burger, don't worry -- it's a classic, too. Despite the authentic fare, the diner is comfortable, modern, and appealing, with an artsy slant and delicious house-made desserts. Veselka surpasses its status as a popular after-hours hangout with clubbers and other night owls to be a favorite at any hour. © Frommer's

contact:

tel: +1 212 566 1900 / +1 888 895 9400

fax: +1 212 566 6909

<http://www.cosmohotel.com>

location:

125 Chambers Street
New York NY 10007

6 Cosmopolitan Hotel-Tribeca

DESCRIPTION: Rooms at the Cosmopolitan Hotel in Tribeca are basic and plain, but modern and clean, and the larger loft-style rooms have an added character. Beyond its frugality, the Cosmopolitan's best asset is its location: on the corner of Chambers Street and West Broadway in fashionable Tribeca, near such fun spots as The Odeon and more upscale restaurants such as Nobu. It is a great home base for exploring neighborhoods such as Lower Manhattan and South Street Seaport, Soho, Chinatown and Little Italy. © NileGuide



Photo courtesy of Cosmopolitan Hotel-Tribeca

contact:

tel: +1 212 678 6500 / +1 888 468 3558

fax: 212/678-6758

<http://www.thehotelnewton.com/>

location:

2528 Broadway
New York NY 10025

7 Hotel Newton

DESCRIPTION: This Upper West Side hotel is a little far from the center of the action in New York City, but only a short subway ride to Midtown Manhattan. The neighborhood is residential and close to both Central Park and Riverside Park. The rooms are fairly large, and the suites have all the comforts of home including a mini-refrigerator, microwave oven, iron and ironing board. © wcities.com



Photo courtesy of Hotel Newton

Day 3 - New York City

QUICK NOTE

DAY NOTE: On the last day of your visit, make your way to Central Park, where you can take one of their numerous free tours to explore far-flung park regions like the North Woods, designed to replicate the Adirondack Mountains, or the Harlem Meer, an elevated area that colonial troops used to defend the city during the American Revolution. In the summer, the park offers a selection of great free entertainment, including Shakespeare in the Park, Summerstage, and the Met in the Parks series. Also, before you leave, be sure to take advantage of one of the best meal deals in the city: Gray's Papaya.

contact:

tel: +1 212 310 6600
<http://www.centralparknyc.org>

location:

Central Park Driveway
New York NY 10022

1 Central Park

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

The Central Park Conservancy runs free, volunteer-led walking tours; they take place rain or shine. No reservations are necessary.

DESCRIPTION: The idea for Central Park was born in 1858, which a competition was held to choose a design for what would be the first public park built in America. The winners were Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, whose Greensward plan proposed an entirely man-made park that would be intended only for public use, as a refuge from the relentless rhythms of New York City's already overcrowded streets. It took more than 15 years and \$14 million (the equivalent of about \$200 million today) to build the Park, with its 843 acres and six-mile perimeter extending from Central Park West to Fifth Avenue and from 59th Street to 110th Street. Those 843 acres include 136 acres of woodlands, 250 acres of lawns, and 7 different bodies of water totaling some 150 acres. Starting in 1980, a public-private partnership between New York City and the Central Park Conservancy restored and preserved Central Park, and attendance has only been rising in recent years. Now, more than 25 million visitors per year stroll its 58 miles of pedestrian paths, go horseback riding on 4.5 miles of bridle paths, bike or jog on its 6.5 miles of winding roads, or simply relax on the grass or on the nearly 9,000 benches provided. The famous Tavern on the Green restaurant - the location of the finish line for the New York City Marathon - was originally a sheepfold, housing the shepherd and the flock that grazed Sheeps Meadow until 1934. In nice weather, the still lush meadow now welcomes hordes of sunbathers, picnickers, and people-watchers, all of whom enjoy lounging underneath some of the only sky in Manhattan unmarked by tall buildings. Other special features of the park include the Central Park Carousel, the Marionette Theater, the Central Park Wildlife Center, the Charles A. Dana Discovery Center, the Delacorte Theater, the Great Lawn, the Central Park Zoo, the Henry Luce Nature Observatory, Wollman Rink, Lasker Rink, the Loeb Boathouse, and the North Meadow. © NileGuide



contact:

tel: +1 212 260 2400 (Box Office)
<http://www.publictheater.org/support/summer.php>

location:

81 Central Park West
New York NY 10023

hours:

Box Office: Su-M 1p-6p, Tu-Sa 1p-7:30p

2 Shakespeare in the Park

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

Tickets can be picked up at the Delacorte Theater starting at 1pm on the day of the performance. They are also available at The Public Theater (425 Lafayette Street) from 1-3 pm. Arrive early and be prepared to wait!

DESCRIPTION: The plays produced by the New York Shakespeare Festival and held in the Delacorte open-air theater every summer are free. In the past, they have attracted such big-name actors as Meryl Streep, Kevin Kline and Christopher Walken. However, the wait for tickets is certainly a test of endurance the line stretches forever, and it is quite possible that after suffering from the heat, bugs and lack of shade, you will be told that a show is sold out. If you manage to get a ticket, the recently renovated theater provides a lovely setting. © wcities.com



Photo courtesy of Shakespeare in the Park

contact:

tel: +1 212 362 6000
<http://www.metopera.org>

location:

86th Street
New York NY 10024

3 Met in the Parks

DESCRIPTION: Do you think you will never be able to land tickets to the Metropolitan Opera? You may get your chance in the form of free, open-air summer concerts. Every year, the Met sets aside a month of park performances throughout the five boroughs and parts of New Jersey and Connecticut. Call or visit the Web site for information season schedule. © wcities.com

contact:

tel: 1 212 799 0243
http://newyork.citysearch.com/profile/7166636/new_york_ny/gray_s_papaya.html

location:

2090 Broadway
New York NY 10025

hours:

24 hrs

4 Gray's Papaya

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

Recently, Gray's Papaya's "recession special" has offered two hot dogs and a drink for \$4.95.

DESCRIPTION: A New York favorite for almost 30 years, this hot dog joint offers a long-running special—one juicy hot dog with a slightly mysterious "papaya" fruit drink—that stakes a claim as the best dining deal in town. The store's famous facade has featured in several movies, and star chef Mario Batali is among the prominent New Yorkers who have proclaimed themselves fans of these dogs. There are three locations in the city, including this Upper West Side branch, the West Village (402 Sixth Avenue at 8th Street) and Hell's Kitchen (539 Eighth Avenue at 37th Street). © NileGuide



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New York City Snapshot

Local Info

New York, New York: There's truly no other city in the world like it. The city reaches far and wide with neighborhoods and people changing at every block you cross. Don't let the Big Apple intimidate you though, it's got a little bit of everything for travelers of all kinds to enjoy. Shopaholics and fashionistas roam the pricey boutiques of Soho while downtown locals flock to the street food of Chinatown. View stately museums of the Upper East Side or challenge your knowledge of art browsing Chelsea, this sprawling metropolis offers the best of all worlds...and that's just the big city of Manhattan. Here's an overview of some of that island's noteworthy neighborhoods, as well as the basics on the outer boroughs, too—Brooklyn, the Bronx, Queens and Staten Island. To dig deeper on any of these destinations, check out the relevant Neighborhood Information section.

Midtown

This is the beating heart of the Big Apple, complete with towering skyscrapers, packed streets, and many of the city's top destinations for sightseeing, shopping, and entertainment, including Times Square, the United Nations, the Empire State Building and Rockefeller Center. This is must-see New York, but make sure to spend some time outside this neighborhood if you want to breathe a bit more freely.

Central Park

Nestled between the Upper West and Upper East Sides, this 843-acre oasis is the most visited urban park in the country. Among its many charms are miles of winding pathways, several lakes and ponds, two skating rinks, a zoo, and a conservatory. Visit in the summer if you can, when the park hosts free concerts and plays.

Times Square/Theater District/Hell's Kitchen

The once seedy Times Square zone is all cleaned up and packed full of chain restaurants and other tourist-friendly attractions. Catch a Broadway show in the Theater District, or head west to Hell's Kitchen, also cleaned up from its seedier days and full of dining and nightlife options.

Chelsea

Chelsea has been the center of the city's art scene since the mid-1990s, with more than 200 galleries centered mostly in its western reaches (near 10th and 11th Avenues). In addition to the High Line, a newly opened public space along an old elevated railway, it also boasts some of the city's hottest nightclubs, is chock-full of busy restaurants and bars, and has long been seen as the heart of gay-friendly New York. □

Gramercy/Flatiron/Union Square

This central neighborhood has a little of everything, from pedigreed Gramercy Park to bustling Union Square (site of the city's largest greenmarket). It's also home to a number of the city's most popular restaurants, and the dining options abound on Park Avenue South and the area around Madison Square Park, near the iconic Flatiron Building.

Greenwich Village/West Village

With its labyrinthine (compared to the Midtown grid) streets and historic townhouses, the Village is classic New York. Its eastern region contains Washington Square Park and New York University, while the charming, formerly bohemian West Village is home to increasingly upscale shopping and restaurants. Head further west to the Meatpacking District, now a mecca of expensive dining/nightlife options.

East Village □

The East Village stands out for its young, arty, funky (though nowhere near as edgy as in years past) vibe, on display in its many shopping, dining and nightlife options. History buffs will appreciate landmarks like St. Mark's-in-the-Bowery Church, while a cleaned-up Tompkins Square Park offers great people-watching.

Lower East Side

□ Go below Houston Street on the east side and you'll find even more restaurants, boutiques and bars lining the streets of the ever-more-upscale Lower East Side. Though this area was once home to some of the city's worst slums, its gritty past has made way for a vibrant shopping, dining and nightlife scene. Learn about the neighborhood's past at the Lower East Side Tenement Museum (it's free!) or check out the historic Orchard Street Shopping District.

Soho

Though many galleries have moved to Chelsea, Soho still boasts its own art scene. Shopping is the real draw in this neighborhood, however, from high-fashion boutiques to the chain stores that line Broadway. At the eastern end of Soho, Nolita is perfect for shoppers who favor smaller, more unique stores. A plethora of kitschy Italian restaurants still draw tourists to the lively neighborhood of Little Italy, around Mulberry Street, including the throngs attracted by the annual San Gennaro Festival.

Lower Manhattan

This diverse zone encompasses Chinatown (with its designer knock-offs and dim sum), swanky Tribeca, family-friendly Battery Park City, and the bustling (at least during the week) Financial District. Must-see spots include South Street Seaport, Wall Street and the New York Stock Exchange, and the World Trade Center site.

Upper East Side □

The Metropolitan, the Whitney, and the Guggenheim are only the biggest players in this stately, museum-filled neighborhood, which also boasts some of the city's best high-end shopping (Madison Avenue) and some of its highest-priced real estate (Fifth Avenue along Central Park, Park Avenue).

Upper West Side

The beautiful Upper West Side, historically a mecca for New York City artists, writers and intellectuals, is also one of the city's most family-friendly neighborhoods, with brownstone-lined streets, brunch spots, shops galore, and easy access to Central Park. It's also home to Lincoln Center, the Museum of Natural History, architectural gems like the Ansonia and the Dakota, and (a bit further north) Columbia University.

Harlem

Long a vibrant center of African-American history, music and culture, Harlem has changed a lot in recent years, as a diverse new crowd of residents have started calling its stately old brownstones home. It's still a great destination for soul food (try stalwarts like Sylvia's) as well as live jazz and nightlife at historic spots like the Cotton Club or the Lenox Lounge.

New York City Snapshot continued

Brooklyn

From the galleries of Williamsburg to the brownstones of Brooklyn Heights, from family-friendly Park Slope to kitschy Coney Island, devotees of this borough wouldn't live anywhere else. Walk across the Brooklyn Bridge and check out the views from the Promenade, or stroll in Prospect Park, for just a taste of what Brooklyn has to offer. But don't neglect this outer borough on your next visit, there's plenty reason for Brooklyn to be worth your while.

Queens

The largest borough, Queens is also the most ethnically diverse, boasting arguably the best food in the city, from Greek in Astoria, to Indian in Jackson Heights, to Chinese and Korean in Flushing. It is also a popular destination for sports (Citi Field--new home to the New York Mets--and U.S. Open tennis) and culture (check out P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center in Long Island City).

The Bronx

Though New York's northernmost borough is best known to many as the home

of Yankee Stadium, the Bronx offers a good deal more than meets the eye. Explore its beaches and museums, its world-famous zoo and botanical garden, its own Little Italy, quaint City Island, and more parkland than any other borough.

Staten Island

The breathtaking views from the free Staten Island Ferry are just the beginning of this borough's charms. With a more suburban feel than any of the other boroughs, Staten Island boasts a number of parks, as well as a zoo, a children's museum, a botanical garden, a minor league baseball stadium, and a restored colonial village.

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Fun Facts

New York State: New York **Country:** United States

New York City By The Numbers:

Population: 8.3 million (city); 19.8 million (metropolitan)
Average January Temperature: 32°F / 0°C
Average July Temperature: 77°F / 25°C
Annual Rainfall: 47in / 1200mm
Waterfront: 578mi / 930km
Elevation: 87ft / 27m
Location shoots:

40,000 annually
Number of islands that NYC is made up of: 50

Quick Facts:

Time zone: GMT- 5 (GMT- 4 from first Sunday in April to Saturday before last Sunday in October); Eastern Standard Time (EST)
Electricity: 110/120 volts, 60Hz; round two-pin plugs are standard.
Country dialing code: 1
Telephone area code: Manhattan 212, 646 & 917; outer boroughs 718, 347 or 917

Did You Know?

The nickname, The Big Apple, came from sportswriter John Fitzgerald eavesdropping on stable hands in New Orleans, terming NYC's racetracks as "The Big Apple".

The department store Macy's is the world's largest store.

Babe Ruth slammed his first home run in the first game ever played at Yankee Stadium.

Once the skyline of NYC wasn't dominated by tall skyscrapers. In the 1660s, a two-story windmill was the highest building in New York City.

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