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Ten Best Hidden Gems in NYC

New York City, Brooklyn, 1 Day

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Guide Description



AUTHOR NOTE: Some of these gems are hidden in plain sight--The Museum of the City of New York, for example, or the fascinating Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum, which looms over the Hudson River just west of the West Side Highway. A ferry ride will take you to Governor's Island during the spring and summer months, when you can enjoy great views of the city skyline and picnic on the island's main green. Hop on the subway for the rest of these destinations, including the majestic Cloisters in the Bronx; City Island, with its old-fashioned fishing-village feel; Empire-Fulton Ferry State Park in DUMBO (featuring equally spectacular views, but from a different angle); or the funky P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center in Queens. Queens is also home to one of the city's only remaining beer gardens, Astoria's Bohemian Hall & Beer Garden. It's one of the three featured eating/drinking gems on our list, alongside the spare, charming Soho eatery Salt and Applewood, a temple to local/seasonal dining located on a quiet street in Park Slope.

Photo: The bow of the USS Intrepid. By Rob Young.

Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - New York City, Brooklyn



The Cloisters

Medieval monasteries



Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum

Walk the deck of the Intrepid



Empire - Fulton Ferry State Park

Nine acres of grass



Museum of the City of New York

Explore New York's past and present



P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center

Edgy Queens art center



City Island

Small beach Community



Governors Island

Historical island oasis a ferry ride away from Manhattan



Salt

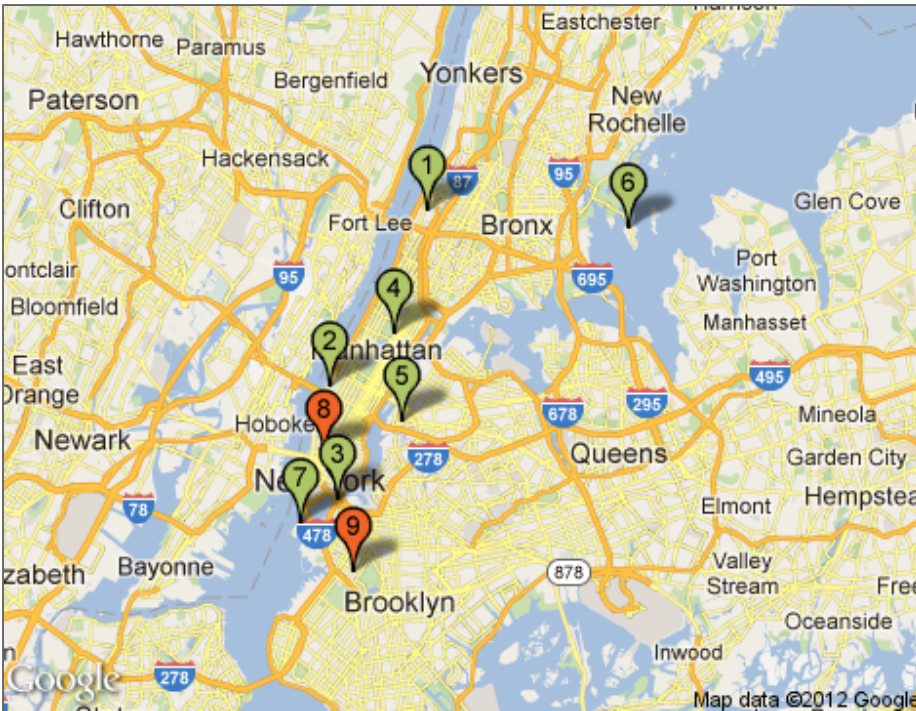
Seasonal American cuisine in Soho



Applewood

Slow food New American

Day 1 - New York City, Brooklyn



QUICK NOTE

contact:

tel: +1 212 923 3700

<http://www.metmuseum.org>

location:

Fort Tyron Park

New York NY 10040

hours:

Nov-Feb: 9:30a-4:45p Tue-

Sun. March-Oct: 9:30a-5:15p

Tue-Sun

1 The Cloisters

DESCRIPTION: If it weren't for this branch of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, many New Yorkers would never get to this northernmost point in Manhattan. This remote yet lovely spot is devoted to the art and architecture of medieval Europe. Atop a cliff overlooking the Hudson River, you'll find a 12th-century chapter house, parts of five cloisters from medieval monasteries, a Romanesque chapel, and a 12th-century Spanish apse brought intact from Europe. Surrounded by peaceful gardens, this is the one place on the island that can approximate the kind of solitude suitable to such a collection. Inside you'll find extraordinary works that include the Unicorn tapestries, sculpture, illuminated manuscripts, stained glass, ivory, and precious metal work. Modern times have even come to the Cloisters. There is an official blog devoted to their wonderful **medieval garden**, <http://blog.metmuseum.org/cloistersgardens>. Garden lovers will love to peruse its postings. By the way, even in the dead of winter and without flowers, the garden -- which is inside the museum in the center of a courtyard -- has a magical quality, especially when it snows. Despite the remoteness, the Cloisters are quite popular, especially in fine weather, so try to schedule your visit during the week rather than on a crowded weekend afternoon. A free guided Highlights Tour is offered Tuesday through Friday at 3pm and Sunday at noon; gallery talks are also a regular feature. Additionally, Garden Tours are offered Tuesday through Sunday at 1pm in May, June, September, and October; lectures and other special programming are always on Sunday from noon to 2pm; and medieval music concerts are regularly held in



Photo courtesy of The Cloisters

the stunning 12th-century Spanish chapel. For an extra-special experience, you may want to plan your visit around one. © Frommer's

contact:

tel: +1 877 957 7447 / +1 212 245 0072

fax: +1 212 957 8284

<http://www.intrepidmuseum.org>

location:

12th Ave & 46th St
New York NY 10036

2 Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum

DESCRIPTION: (The Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum is closed until the fall, 2008.) Walk the flight deck of the 900 foot-long aircraft carrier Intrepid. See hundreds of exhibits on aviation, deep sea and space exploration. Board the world's fastest passenger jet, Concorde, and see dozens of vintage and modern aircraft parked wind to wing on our flight deck. Experience the 4D-X Flight Simulator motion based thrill ride that holds 20 or climb the Special Forces Challenge rock wall. For directions, hours, prices, and the latest information on special events, call or visit website. © wcities.com



wcities

contact:

tel: +1 718 858 4708

<http://nysparks.state.ny.us/parks/info.asp>

location:

26 New Dock Street
New York NY 11201

3 Empire - Fulton Ferry State Park

DESCRIPTION: If you are looking out for a picnic spot where you can throw a frisbee around with your friends, then head out to this sprawling green spot. Since it is nestled in the old industrial area, one can't help but notice the two huge warehouses nearby. The Empire-Fulton Ferry State Park offers a great view of the bridge and lower Manhattan on a clear day. © wcities.com



wcities

hours:

Daily

contact:

tel: +1 212 534 1672

fax: +1 212 423 0758

<http://www.mcny.org>

location:

1220 Fifth Ave
New York NY 10029

4 Museum of the City of New York

DESCRIPTION: A wide variety of objects -- costumes, photographs, prints, maps, dioramas, and memorabilia -- trace the history of New York City from its beginnings as a humble Dutch colony in the 16th century to its present-day prominence. Two outstanding permanent exhibits are the re-creation of John D. Rockefeller's master bedroom and dressing room, and the space devoted to "Broadway!," a history of New York theater. Kids will love "New York Toy Stories," a permanent exhibit showcasing toys and dolls owned and adored by centuries of New York children. The permanent "Painting the Town: Cityscapes of New York" explores the changing cityscape from 1809 to 1997, and carries new profundity in the wake of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. In 2009, the exhibits, "Amsterdam/New Amsterdam: The Worlds of Henry Hudson" and "Valentina: American Couture and the Cult of Celebrity" were featured. © Frommer's



Photo courtesy of Museum of the City of New York

hours:

Tues-Sun 10am-5pm

contact:

tel: +1 718 784 2084
fax: +1 718 482 9454
<http://www.ps1.org>

location:

22-25 Jackson Ave
New York NY 11101

hours:

Thurs-Mon noon-6pm

5 P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

Admission to P.S. 1 is by donation only.

DESCRIPTION: Located in a former public school in Long Island City, Queens, this spacious art center provides a production and exhibition space for a variety of artistic works. The center is now part of the Museum of Modern Art, though it retains its own identity. Exhibits here range from video and sound projects to painting, photography and sculpture, but everything has a bit of an edge. Artists whose work is featured in P.S. 1 range along the more experimental end of the spectrum; prominent past exhibitors include Jack Smith, Julian Schnabel and James Turrell. © NileGuide



Photo courtesy of P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center

contact:

tel: +1 718 885 9100(Tourist Information)

location:

Long Island
New York NY 10464

6 City Island

DESCRIPTION: City Island is a tiny place, located beyond Pelham Bay in the northern part of the Bronx. It became an English settlement in 1685, and was used as a supply point for schooners traveling from Manhattan. Now the island is filled with yacht clubs, sailing schools, marinas, sail makers and some great seafood restaurants. Enjoy the water, fresh air and art galleries on the island. For those interested in the history of Native Americans, a Siwanoy Indian burial ground can be found at the island's highest point. © wcities.com



contact:

tel: +1 212 825 3051
fax: +1 212 825 3055
<http://www.govisland.com/>

location:

New York Harbor
New York NY 11201

7 Governors Island

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

Visitors to Governors Island are welcome to bring their own bikes to use on the island. On "Free Bike Fridays," visitors can borrow a bike for free, for up to one hour. On Saturdays and Sundays, adult bikes rent for \$15 for two hours. Governors Island is closed Mondays, including Labor Day.

DESCRIPTION: Governors Island, located in the harbor south of Manhattan, is a former military post that played a vital role in the Revolutionary War as well as virtually every other major U.S. military engagement, from the War of 1812 through World War II. In the 1960s, control of the island went to the Coast Guard, and at one time it served as a residential area for some 3,500 of that organization's members. Governor's Island played host to history several times during the last few decades, including a U.S.-U.S.S.R. summit between Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev in 1988 and U.N.-sponsored talks about restoring democratic rule in Haiti in 1993.



Sarah Pruitt

In 1995, the Coast Guard closed its facilities on Governor's Island, and in 2001 President Bill Clinton designated 22 acres of the Island, including the two great forts, as the Governors Island National Monument. In 2002, President George W. Bush, NY Governor George Pataki, and NYC Mayor Mike Bloomberg announced that the federal government would sell Governors Island to the people of New York for a nominal cost, and that the Island would be used for public benefit.

After a major refurbishment, Governors Island is now open to the public every Friday, Saturday and Sunday from May 30 through October 11 (2009 season). In addition to the Historic Landmark District, which includes the Governors Island National Monument (Fort Jay and Castle Williams), the island offers five miles of car-free biking and acres of green space for picnics, art exhibitions, performances and other events.

Free ferries to Governors Island run from Manhattan on Friday through Sunday (leaving from the Battery Maritime Building at 10 South Street, adjacent to the Staten Island Ferry) and from Brooklyn on Saturday and Sunday ONLY (leaving from Fulton Ferry Landing, just south of the base of the Brooklyn Bridge, at the end of Old Fulton Street).

© NileGuide

contact:

tel: 1 212 674 4968

<http://www.saltnyc.com>

location:

58 MacDougal Street
New York NY 10012

hours:

Dinner: Monday - Thursday

6:00pm-11:00pm Friday -

Saturday 6:00p -12:00am,

Sunday 5pm-10pm Lunch:

Monday-Friday 12pm-3pm

Brunch: Saturday 12pm-3pm

& Sunday 12pm-4pm

8 Salt

DESCRIPTION: This unassuming restaurant, which is located in a neighborhood that is filled with similar eateries, manages to hold its own in the face of intense competition. Salt exudes a low-key vibe, adorned as it is with the ubiquitous exposed brick walls and minimalist furniture; though it also sports a sign that proclaims "Good Food" above its open kitchen. On that count, the restaurant delivers—it offers a menu that features excellent salads, sandwiches and flatbreads, along with a few entrees at lunch time. At dinner time, it additionally offers you a choice of a protein like a Grilled Dorade or a Roasted Flounder which can be combined with two sides for a pretty substantial but healthy meal. - Anjeeta Nayar © wcities.com



citysearch

contact:

tel: 718.788.1810

<http://applewoodny.com>

location:

501 11th Street
Brooklyn NY 11215

hours:

Tuesday-Saturday 5-11 pm;

Sunday brunch 10 am-3 pm;

closed Monday

9 Applewood

DESCRIPTION: A constantly changing menu showcases organic and local ingredients in a cozy and warm dining space. Housed on the ground floor of a turn-of-the-century storefront, Applewood projects a relaxed, neighborhood feel with its dark wood bar, working fireplace, and comfortable seating, both indoors and out. It's perfect for both a casual neighborhood meal as well as a special event. © NileGuide



Photo courtesy of

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.

© NileGuide

Brooklyn Snapshot

Local Info

Just across the East River lies one of the largest and most distinctive cultural boroughs of New York City: Brooklyn. Only a subway ride away from Manhattan, this historical piece of the city transcends traditions, cultures, and cuisine unlike any other part of New York. Downtown Brooklyn is the borough's business center, up north is where creatives and artists have revealed working studios, while in the south you'll find some of the best and cheapest food including everyone's favorite- pizza, and in the center stretches Prospect Park which dissects several neighborhoods surrounded by literary and community institutions. There's the Russian-speaking community at Brighton Beach, the Irish, Italians and Norwegians at Bay Ridge, the Polish at Greenpoint and the Hispanics and Chinese at Sunset Park. Aside from this amazing diversity, Brooklyn is an exciting spot to visit because of its proud residents and the feeling of true community.

Sights

From the landmarks that have made Brooklyn famous to the parks and museums that dot this distinct city, you'll never run out of things to see. Walk or cycle to Manhattan via the Brooklyn Bridge, view the late 19th and early 20th century rowhouses at the Park Slope Historic District and ride the world's oldest wooden rollercoaster ride, the Coney Island Cyclone. And don't forget to make time in your itinerary to view the many museums in Brooklyn. Go to the Brooklyn Museum at Prospect Park which, by the way, is home to over 200 species of birds in their natural habitat, the New York Transit Museum in the Downtown area and the Brooklyn Children's Museum at Bedford-Stuyvesant. The Brooklyn Botanic Garden with its over 10,000 plant species and the 800-acre Marine Park are also well worth the trip. If you're in Brooklyn during the summer, Coney Island is still a favorite beach and amusement park hangout. And don't forget to grab a world-famous Coney Island Hotdog at Nathan's. Check out the New York Aquarium while you're there, too.

Dining

Brooklyn's diversity is also reflected in its food. 8th Avenue hosts high-end gourmet restaurants alongside cheap noodle shops. If you're craving Italian, Mexican or Japanese, head to Park Slope, which has a ton of restaurants reviewed in the Zagat's guide. Pizza lovers can take A Slice of Brooklyn pizza tour. Sample a taste of local beers at the Brooklyn Brewery. The Kensington, Fort Greene and Williamsburg Districts are also home to trendy restaurants. There's also a thriving restaurant scene in Smith Street at the Carroll Gardens area.

Shopping

Downtown Brooklyn is the main shopping district. Like any American city, you can find a great number of shops and department stores that sell anything from clothing to electronics. Go to Cobble Hill district if you want to shop for books and to Park Slope for health food options. For local jewelry and arts and crafts, check out the Brooklyn Flea in Fort Greene on Saturdays from 10 am to 5 pm.

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