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The Best of Historic New York

New York City, 1 Day

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Guide Description



AUTHOR NOTE: History lurks around every corner in New York, which was founded as the Dutch trading outpost of New Amsterdam in the early 17th century. The list below includes some of the most fascinating places to discover the history of the city and its people, as well as one spot--Ellis Island, the arrival point for some 16 million immigrants from 1892 to 1954--that more rightly belongs to the history of America itself.

Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - New York City



Museum of the City of New York

Explore New York's past and present



Wall Street & the New York Stock Exchange

Heart of Wall Street



Lower East Side Tenement Museum

Unique museum explores immigrant life in New York City



Ellis Island

Historic gateway for millions of immigrants to the United States



South Street Seaport

Historic port houses tourist-friendly shops & restaurants



Apollo Theatre

A Harlem landmark

Day 1 - New York City

QUICK NOTE

contact:

tel: +1 212 534 1672
fax: +1 212 423 0758
<http://www.mcny.org>

location:

1220 Fifth Ave
New York NY 10029

hours:

Tues-Sun 10am-5pm

1

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

contact:

tel: +1 212 656 3000
fax: +1 212 656 5557
<http://www.nyse.com/>

location:

11 Wall Street
New York NY 10271

hours:

M-F 9:30a-4p

2

Wall Street & the New York Stock Exchange

DESCRIPTION: The Stock Exchange's present home on Wall Street did not open until 1903, but trading in stocks began well before that; by the time this building became its headquarters, the Exchange had already been in existence for more than a hundred years. Today, people trade hundreds of millions of shares electronically as well as by the floor broker system. Visitors can see the action on the floor from a viewing gallery. Multi-media exhibits help explain the frenzy below. Admission is free. © wcities.com



wcities

contact:

tel: +1 212 431 0233 / +1 212 431 0714
fax: +1 212 431 0402
<http://www.tenement.org/>

location:

90 Orchard Street
New York NY 10002

hours:

There are 5 different tours, and they leave at various hours daily from 11am-5pm (The schedule is complicated)

3

Lower East Side Tenement Museum

DESCRIPTION: This museum, founded in 1988, is dedicated to all the immigrants who came to New York City during the 1800s, but in particular to the occupants of this one-time tenement on Orchard Street. See life as new Americans experienced it in Chinatown, Little Italy and elsewhere on the Lower East Side through photos, displays and memorabilia. The gallery is free. © wcities.com



Photo courtesy of Lower East Side Tenement Museum

and varies by month, so check the website or call.)

contact:

tel: +1 212 561 4588
<http://www.ellisland.com/>

location:

Ellis Island
New York NY 10004

hours:

Daily 9:30am-5:15pm (last ferry departs around 3:30pm)

4 Ellis Island

DESCRIPTION: Not far from Liberty Island and the Statue of Liberty stands Ellis Island, former gateway to the United States. Between 1892 and 1954, over 12 million Immigrants were processed in the "Main Building" at Ellis Island. In 1990, the long disused buildings were restored and the Immigration Museum was born. The Museum offers a variety of exhibits and programs about the history of Ellis Island and the immigration process. Today, the Main Building is a three floor museum, containing a variety of self-guided permanent exhibits. The museum includes a research library that contains materials related to the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island and immigration history. Visitors can use the museum's resources to track their own ancestors. The Oral History Collection includes over 1,000 taped and transcribed interviews of Ellis Island immigrants and staff. Both the Library and Oral History Collection are open to the public during regular operating hours of the museum. © wcities.com



wcities

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

5 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 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



Photo courtesy of visitingdc.com

contact:

tel: 212 531 5300

fax: 212 749 2743

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

location:

253 West 125th Street

New York NY 10027

hours:

Times vary (tours by appointment)

6 Apollo Theatre

DESCRIPTION: Built in 1914, this legendary Harlem theater launched or abetted the careers of countless musical icons -- including Bessie Smith, Billie Holiday, Dinah Washington, Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, Count Basie, and Aretha Franklin. This historic venue is in large part responsible for the development and worldwide popularization of black music in America. By the 1970s, it had fallen on hard times, but a 1986 restoration breathed new life into the landmark. In 2009, in time for its 75th anniversary, a major restoration of the Apollo was completed, and the results are spectacular -- from the refurbished terra-cotta facade, to the new box offices, to the high-tech marquee that retains the original 1940s style and features. The theater is still internationally renowned for hosting African-American performers of all musical genres, from hip-hop acts to Wynton Marsalis's "Jazz for Young People" events. Since 1934, Wednesday at the Apollo meant "Amateur Night"; forget American Idol -- this rowdy, fun-filled, often hilarious production draws young talents from all over the country with high hopes of making it big is the real deal. © Frommer's



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.

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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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