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Hidden Brooklyn Gems Part II - Arts & Culture

New York City, Brooklyn, 3 Days

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Guide Description



AUTHOR NOTE: Williamsburg is a big part--but not the only part--of Brooklyn's flourishing arts, entertainment, food and nightlife scene.

Photo: Brooklyn Museum of Art. By Kent Wang.

Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - New York City, Brooklyn

DAY NOTE: Take in a show or a movie at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Then have dinner at the local favorite Rose Water and play bocce and have a drink (or take in more live entertainment) at Union Hall.



Rose Water

Market fresh in Park Slope



Brooklyn Academy of Music

Brooklyn's performing arts center



Union Hall

Bocce and live entertainment



Brooklyn Museum of Art

Stately museum near Prospect Park houses vast art collection



Brooklyn Botanic Garden

Bonsai bonanza



Prospect Park

Brooklyn's largest park

Day 2 - Brooklyn

DAY NOTE: From your home base (hotel or otherwise) in Manhattan, head to Union Square to catch the L train straight out to Williamsburg. Get out at either the Bedford Avenue or Lorimer Street stop and find yourself in the heart of an increasingly upscale hipster heaven. The neighborhood's flourishing arts scene is on display at the various galleries in the neighborhood; you can find out about the latest shows by checking out the website for Williamsburg Galleries. For dinner, head to Aurora for delicious, inventive Italian in a cozy atmosphere (check out the outdoor garden space in nice weather).



Williamsburg Galleries

Up-and-coming art in Brooklyn



Aurora

Piedmontese in Williamsburg

Day 3 - New York City, Brooklyn

DAY NOTE: For one more day of Brooklyn art, check out the Brooklyn Museum, located just next to the 2/3 subway stop at Eastern Parkway/Brooklyn Museum. This great museum is also steps from the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, so you can take in some nature after your dose of high culture. Stroll a little further past the garden entrance and you're at Prospect Park.

Day 1 - New York City, Brooklyn

QUICK NOTE

DAY NOTE: Take in a show or a movie at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Then have dinner at the local favorite Rose Water and play bocce and have a drink (or take in more live entertainment) at Union Hall.

contact:
tel: 1 718 783 3800
<http://www.rosewaterrestaurant.com/>

location:
787 Union Street
New York NY 11215

hours:
6p-10:30p M-Th, 6p-11p
F-Sa, 6p-10p Su, Brunch:
11a-3p Sa-Su

1 Rose Water

DESCRIPTION: This restaurant brings one of Manhattan's hottest culinary trends-market fresh food-to Brooklyn's upscale Park Slope neighborhood. The small space features a décor that is bright and sophisticated, with wooden chairs and red tables. The crowd consists of well-heeled locals, who have turned this eclectic restaurant into one of the neighborhood's hottest eating spots. Everything is made with fresh ingredients, so the menu varies according to what is in season, but the focus is on New American cooking with Middle Eastern influences. The restaurant opens daily at 5:00 p.m. for dinner. Please visit the website for further details. © wcities.com

contact:
tel: 718 636 4100
<http://www.bam.org>

location:
30 Lafayette Avenue
New York NY 11217

2 Brooklyn Academy of Music

DESCRIPTION: One of New York City's true gems, the Brooklyn Academy of Music is a world class performing arts center. Located at the edge of the recently gentrified Fort Greene neighborhood of Brooklyn, it offers some of the city's finest concerts and theatrical events. From opera and classical music to African dance and modern theater, the packed schedule offers something for everyone's taste. The complex is also home to Bam Rose Cinemas. © wcities.com

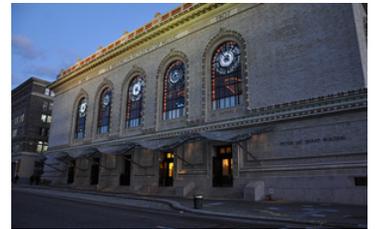


Photo courtesy of Brooklyn Academy of Music

contact:
tel: (718) 638-4400
<http://www.unionhallny.com/>

location:
702 Union Street
Brooklyn NY 11215

hours:
Mo to Fr from 04:00 PM to
04:00 AM, Sa to Su from
12:00 PM to 04:00 AM

3 Union Hall

DESCRIPTION: The walls are lined floor to ceiling with stuffed bookshelves, and a fireplace will warm your toes if you sit in one particularly intimate corner. Wait your turn at one of two bocce ball courts, or head downstairs for live music performances. © wcities.com



Photo courtesy of Union Hall

Day 2 - Brooklyn

QUICK NOTE

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contact:

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

location:

From Broadway to N. 12th Street
Brooklyn NY 11211



Williamsburg Galleries

DESCRIPTION: This association of Williamsburg galleries showcases the best work of emerging and established artists in the neighborhood. Check their website for a listing of the various venues and what's on display there.



Williamsburg & Greenpoint Brooklyn

contact:

tel: 7183885100
fax: +1 718 388 5300
<http://www.aurorabk.com>

location:

70 Grand Street
Brooklyn NY 11211

hours:

Monday-Friday, noon-3:30 pm and 6-11pm; Saturday-Sunday, 11 am-4 pm and 6-11 pm



Aurora

DESCRIPTION: Rustic Italian food in a charming brick- and wood-lined trattoria that sits a bit outside the center of hipster Williamsburg. The relatively inexpensive menu features a diverse offering of antipasti, delicious homemade pastas, and main dishes such as Barolo-braised beef, slow-roasted Berkshire pork belly, or seared diver scallops with bacon and tomato ragu. In addition to a cozy indoor space, Aurora boasts a large garden for dining al fresco.



Photo courtesy of Aurora

Day 3 - New York City, Brooklyn

QUICK NOTE

DAY NOTE: For one more day of Brooklyn art, check out the Brooklyn Museum, located just next to the 2/3 subway stop at Eastern Parkway/Brooklyn Museum. This great museum is also steps from the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, so you can take in some nature after your dose of high culture. Stroll a little further past the garden entrance and you're at Prospect Park.

contact:

tel: +1 718 638 5000

fax: +1 718 501 6136

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

location:

200 Eastern Pkwy
New York NY 11238

hours:

Wed-Fri 10am-5pm; 1st Sat of the month 11am-11pm, each Sat thereafter 11am-6pm; Sun 11am-6pm

1 Brooklyn Museum of Art

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

The museum hosts a free party from 5-11 pm on the first Saturday of each month (except September). Check out the adjoining Brooklyn Botanic Garden for a little nature to go with your art.

DESCRIPTION: In a city bursting with culture, the Brooklyn Museum, opened in 1897, is one of the highlights. Located just past beautiful Prospect Park, and adjacent to the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, the museum is housed in a majestic building designed by the architect Stanford White. In addition to various special exhibitions--a particularly notorious one, featuring works from the collection of Charles Saatchi, was criticized by then-mayor Rudolph Giuliani and led to a court battle over public funding for controversial art--the museum's permanent collection contains a wide range of Pacific, African and New World art, Asian art, Egyptian and ancient Middle Eastern art, decorative art, European, American and contemporary painting and sculpture.

© NileGuide



contact:

tel: +1 718 623 7200

<http://www.bbg.org>

location:

900 Washington Ave
New York NY 11238

hours:

Apr-Sep: Tu-F 8a-6p, Sa-Su & holidays 10a-6p; Nov-Mar: Tu-F 8a-4:30p, Sa-Su & holidays 10a-4:30p

2 Brooklyn Botanic Garden

DESCRIPTION: This small but beautiful botanic garden features a Japanese hill and pond garden, as well as the Cranford Rose Garden, herb garden, the Children's Garden and the Steinhard Conservatory of indoor flowers and plants. In all, there are 52 acres and 12,000 varieties of botanicals, ranging from the tiny bonsai to the towering oak. Self-guided tours, individual classes and certificate programs are all available. Students come with your valid id cards, if you want to avail of a concession. © wcities.com



contact:

tel: +1 718 965 8951
<http://www.prospectpark.org/>

location:

Eastern Parkway to Parkside Avenue
Brooklyn NY 11225

hours:

Daily 6a-dusk

3 Prospect Park

DESCRIPTION: The same architects who designed Central Park in Manhattan, Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, were responsible for creating this beautiful Brooklyn park. Unlike its more famous cousin in Manhattan, Prospect Park is not surrounded by skyscrapers. Many Olmsted fans dub this 526-acre park his crowning achievement. It features horseback riding, ice skating, tennis, paddle boats and a carousel, as well as the Prospect Park Wildlife Center. There is a band shell for concerts, and Prospect Lake is full of ducks, geese and swans.
© wcities.com



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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.

©

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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