

Overview of New York

New York City is without doubt one of the top urban travel destinations in the world and the city's immortalisation in numerous movies, books, and television series ensures that most people are familiar with the many attractions of this famous metropolis.

Beyond New York City, however, New York offers prime natural assets like Niagara Falls, a number of beautiful lakes, and some pristine protected wilderness areas, as well as several charming, historic cities and towns.

Until the arrival of Europeans in the 16th century, a group of Native American peoples called the Iroquois Confederacy controlled most of the area that is now New York. Henry Hudson named the Hudson River in 1609 and 60 years later the British took control, naming the region New York.

For the most part, the Native Americans prospered during this time, controlling the lucrative fur trade. A century later, during the French and Indian Wars, the British defeated the French and took control of all of northeast America.

The victory was largely thanks to the Iroquois allying themselves with the British. In 1763, all the new British Territory, extending as far as the Mississippi, was declared an Indian reserve. But this was short-lived.

The Iroquois again allied themselves with the British during the War of Independence, and in the reprisals, entire communities were wiped out and much of their land was deeded to the revolutionary war veterans.

Key Facts

Language:

English is the most common language spoken but Spanish is often heard in the south-western states.

Passport/Visa:

It is highly recommended that travellers' passports have at least six months' validity remaining after the intended date of departure from their travel destination. A visa is required for short visits unless travellers qualify for entry under the Visa Waiver Program. The Visa Waiver Program (VWP) enables citizens of certain countries to travel to the US for a stay of up to 90 days without a visa. Visitors under the VWP need to register online three days before travel and have an Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA). This allows the US government to screen all visitors before travel. Visitors entering the country under the VWP must have a machine-readable passport (MRP) that has a barcode on the photo page. Travellers under the VWP must have passports that include biometrics if they wish to enter the country without a visa, which means that passports must contain unique personal data such as fingerprints or iris details. All passports must contain a digital photo image in order to travel visa-free. All visitors to the USA have a photograph and two fingerprints taken by an inkless scanner on arrival, including those travelling visa-free under the VWP. As part of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), all travellers travelling between the United States and Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, and the Caribbean region are required to present a passport or other valid travel document to enter or re-enter the United States. If departing from the USA, a valid passport is required by immigration authorities. Immigration officials often apply different rules to those stated by travel agents and official sources.

Currency:

The official currency is the US Dollar (USD), which is divided into 100 cents. Only major banks exchange foreign currency. ATMs are widespread and credit cards are widely accepted. Banking hours are Monday to Friday 9am to 3pm.

Electricity:

Electrical current is 120 volts, 60Hz. Plugs are mainly the type with two flat pins, though three-pin plugs (two flat parallel pins and a rounded pin) are also widely used. European appliances without dual-voltage capabilities will require an adapter.

Travel to New York

Climate for New York

New York's climate can vary in different areas, but it falls in the continental climate zone and experiences four distinct seasons. Summers tend to be mild and the southeast lowlands usually have the warmest temperatures, as well as the biggest breaks between frosts.

Across the state, winters are cold and snowy, and in the central and northern areas the lakes usually freeze over. More snow falls on the eastern side of Lake Ontario than anywhere east of the Rocky Mountains, and the Great Lakes Plain snow belt receives the most snow in the whole country.

The higher elevations of the Catskills and Adirondacks Mountain areas also experience significant snowfall and cooler summers. New York winters, in general, tend to be unpredictable, sometimes wild, sometimes severe and stormy.

Summers can get hot and humid, often lasting until September. In New York City, the high temperatures in mid-summer (July) average around 86F (28C), and in mid-winter (January) the temperatures average as low as 28F (-2C).

Health Notes when travelling to United States of America

There are no specific health risks associated with travel within the USA. Medical facilities are excellent, but expensive. Only emergencies are treated without prior payment and treatment can be refused without evidence of insurance or proof of funds. Good medical insurance is essential. Visitors must be fully vaccinated with the primary series of an accepted COVID-19 vaccine to travel to the United States by plane if they are non-U.S. citizens.

Safety Notes when travelling to United States of America

Travel within the United States is generally trouble-free, though travellers should be aware that the US shares with the rest of the world, an increased threat from terrorist incidents. Security has been heightened, particularly at airports. Restrictions on hand luggage apply and travellers are advised to check on the latest situation with airlines in advance. Travellers should also be alert to the dangers of car and street crime in cities and should use common sense and take basic precautions. Hurricanes are common between June and November, putting the southern USA, including the Gulf Coast and the eastern US at risk. There is a risk of wildfires in many dry areas in the US, particularly on the West Coast from March to November.

Customs in United States of America

Laws vary from state to state, including speed limit, fines and punishment. The age at which alcohol may be legally bought and consumed is 21 years.

Duty Free in United States of America

Travellers to the United States who are returning residents of the country do not have to pay duty on articles purchased abroad to the value of \$800 provided their stay was longer than 48 hours and their duty-free allowance was not used in the 30-day period prior. For passengers arriving from Samoa, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands, a duty-free allowance of \$1,600 is allowed. The following items are included in this: 50 cigarettes and 10 cigars and 150 millilitres (5 fl. oz.) of alcoholic beverages or 150 millilitres (5 fl. oz.) of perfume containing alcohol. Restrictions may apply to goods from Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Burma (Myanmar), Angola, Liberia and Sudan. It is prohibited to import Cuban cigars from any country.

Travellers to the United States who are non-residents do not have to pay duty on the following items: 50 cigars or 200 cigarettes and gifts to the value of \$100 provided their stay in the USA is not less than 72 hours and that the allowance has not been used in the preceding six-month period.

Prohibited items for residents and non-residents include meat or meat products, poultry, narcotics, absinthe, plants, seeds, vegetables, fruits, soil, live insects and other living plants or animal pests. Fish is prohibited unless it carries disease-free certification. Wildlife and animals or their by-products carry restrictions. Dairy products and eggs from specified countries are not allowed. Firearms and ammunition are not allowed without the necessary license and permit.

Doing Business in United States of America

In such a large country, filled with so many diverse groups, business practices may differ according to each state, however rarely to any large degree. The East Coast is traditionally more formal than the West Coast, though in states such as California, dress code and conservative appearance are as common as they would be in New York. Punctuality is important throughout the country and it is considered rude to be late for a meeting. Gift-giving is uncommon as it may be construed as bribery. Appropriate titles (Mr, Mrs, Ms) are used upon introduction and until otherwise stated. Americans favour politeness and greetings of 'Hello' and 'How are you?' are often expressed with sincerity. Business hours may vary in each state, but an 8am start and 5pm finish Monday to Friday is the most common with an hour over lunch.

Status and age are not necessarily indicative of seniority, nor do they carry much weight in themselves. Those doing business in the States should be mindful of this fact; foreigners should never make assumptions about someone's position or rank. Best practice is to be respectful to all parties. That said, the US upholds a hierarchal business structure, in which 'the boss' is the ultimate decision-maker. Senior leaders have the power of the last word, and can go against the grain just as easily as they can follow popular opinion. Foreigners should concentrate on winning over this individual, even if the greater group seems unsupportive. Americans value a direct style of communication. In this fast-paced, consumer culture 'time is money', and small-talk is viewed as unnecessary and wasteful. It's best for foreigners to get to the point quickly, speak about issues in a frank and open manner, and to avoid taking offence if someone questions or challenges them outright.

Communication in United States of America

The international country dialling code for the United States is +1. Mobile networks cover most of the country, especially all urban areas, and WiFi is widely available.

Tipping in United States of America

A 15 percent tip is expected by taxi drivers, bartenders, hairdressers and waiters, but travellers shouldn't tip in fast-food or self-service restaurants. In expensive restaurants or for large parties, the tip should be 20 percent of the bill. It is normal to tip staff such as valets and porters in hotels; this is discretionary, although a minimum of \$5 is expected. Most services are customarily tipped if the service is good.

Passport/Visa Note

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Airports in New York

JFK (JFK)

John F Kennedy International Airport

www.kennedyairport.com

Location: New York City The airport is located 15 miles (24km) southeast of central Manhattan.

Time: GMT -5 (GMT -4 from March to November).

Contacts: Tel: (718) 244 4444

Transfer between terminals: Passengers can travel between JFK's six terminals for free on the AirTrain, with any travel beyond that incurring various costs.

Getting to the city: Ground Transportation Information is available in the baggage claim, arrival areas of all terminals, providing information on buses, shared-ride vans, and limousines. The AirTrain links the airport to the subway, train, and bus system, which go to the city centre. SuperShuttle Manhattan is a 24-hour, shared, door-to-door service to anywhere between Battery Park and 227th, including all hotels. The service also reaches the boroughs of Queens, Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Staten Island. Go Airlink is another rideshare service, providing shuttles that travel between the airport and the city. Similarly, NYC Airporter is an express bus service that transports passengers from JFK to stations such as Grand Central and Penn, and the Port Authority Bus Terminal.

Car rental: Car hire companies represented at all terminals include Alamo, Avis, Budget, Dollar, Hertz, Enterprise, and National. The AirTrain shuttles passengers between the terminals and the car rental offices.

Airport Taxis: Taxis are available in front of all six terminals, with the general journey time to Manhattan being around 40 to 60 minutes long. Excluding tolls, the flat fee to Manhattan is around \$52, while other approximate fares include Brooklyn \$59 to \$64, Queens \$28 to \$33, Staten Island \$67 to \$79, and the Bronx \$48 to \$68. A journey to La Guardia Airport may cost \$34 to \$39, and Newark Airport \$97 to \$102, with a \$17.50 surcharge. Tipping is customary for good service. Travellers should only use taxis from the taxi dispatch booth and refuse offers from others.

Facilities: All terminals have ATMs, bureaux de change, bars, restaurants, and a wide selection of shops. Travellers will be able to find most services in the terminals, including wifi, medical facilities, information counters, and shoe-shiners.

Parking: JFK has two types of parking. Long-term parking is four miles (6km) from the terminals and served by the free AirTrain. Passengers should allow 30 minutes to reach their terminal. The Central Terminal Area (CTA) parking is adjacent to the terminals and provides daily parking needs. Signs to the parking facilities are colour-coded to indicate their proximity to terminals. A cell phone lot waiting area is located near the airport's entrance for drivers to wait for disembarking passengers, reducing traffic congestion.

La Guardia Airport (LGA)

New York La Guardia Airport

www.laguardiaairport.com

Location: New York City The airport is located eight miles (13km) east of central Manhattan, in the borough of Queens.

Time: GMT -5 (GMT -4 from March to November).

Contacts: Tel: (718) 533 3400

Transfer between terminals: There are two bus routes connecting the four La Guardia Terminals. The Route A Bus is a free service running every 15 minutes, stopping at all terminals in the central terminal area as well as the Marine Air Terminal. Travellers should expect 15 minutes travel time. The free Route B bus runs every 10 to 15 minutes between all four terminals, except the Marine Air Terminal, Delta Shuttle. The journey time is between 5 to 10 minutes.

Getting to the city: Ground Transportation Information is available in the baggage claim, arrival areas of all terminals. All service arrangements can be made at these counters. Public buses service the city and connect with the New York subway; the Q33 and Q47 service Manhattan and Queens. The New York Airport Service Express Bus leaves regularly for all areas in Manhattan. The SuperShuttle Manhattan is a 24-hour, shared door-to-door service that goes to all areas of the city.

Car rental: Car hire companies include Avis, Budget, Dollar, Hertz and National. The Arrivals level of each terminal has either car rental courtesy phones or counters. Free shuttles transport customers between the terminals and the car rental offices.

Airport Taxis: The Welcome Center Ground Transportation Counter is near the baggage claim area, offering information on authorised transportation services. There are taxis available outside each terminal.

Facilities: All terminals have ATMs and currency exchange can be found at the Central and US Airways Terminals, as well as a wide selection of bars, shops and restaurants, but the best choice is at the US Airways, Delta and Central Terminals. There are business facilities at Laptop Lane in the Central Terminal, including meeting rooms, dataports, internet access, fax, phones, printers, and photocopiers. Disabled facilities are good, but those with special needs should ideally contact their airline or travel agent in advance.

Parking: Short-term parking is available next to the terminals. Long-term parking is available in Lot 3, although there are limited spaces. Additional long-term car parking is located very close to the airport and can be accessed by following the 'P' to the airport exit. Express payment machines are located throughout the parking areas. Signs to the parking facilities in the terminal buildings are colour coded to indicate their proximity to the terminals. Free shuttle buses transport passengers to the terminal buildings.

Buffalo Niagara International Airport (BUF)

Buffalo Niagara International Airport

www.buffaloairport.com

Location: The airport is located 11 miles (18km) from Buffalo.

Time: GMT -5 (GMT -4 from mid-March to the first Sunday in November).

Contacts: Tel: (716) 630 6000

Getting to the city: NFTA-Metro Bus and Rail provides public transport to and from the airport, and shuttles, taxis, and rental cars are also available.

Car rental: Alamo, Avis, Budget, Enterprise, Hertz, and National are all represented at the airport.

Airport Taxis: There are a number of taxi companies available at the airport or offering airport pick-ups.

Facilities: There are ATMs, a bureau de change, a barber, an electric-car charging service, an information desk, a shoe-shine service, and a pet-relief area. There are also various bars, shops and restaurants in the terminal. Disabled facilities are good; those with special needs should contact their airline or travel agent in advance.

Parking: The short-term parking lot is adjacent to the terminal building, and costs from \$4 per hour with a daily maximum of \$23. The long-term parking areas are connected to the terminal by a free shuttle bus service and charge \$1 per hour up to 5 hours, with a daily limit of \$12 or \$10 depending on the parking lot.

Westchester County Airport (HPN)

Westchester County Airport

airport.westchestergov.com/

Location: White Plains The airport is eight miles (13km) from White Plains in New York State.

Time: GMT -5 (GMT - 4 from mid-March to the first Sunday in November).

Contacts: Tel: (914) 995 4860

Getting to the city: Bee-Line Bus 12 runs from the airport to White Plains and the local train station, from which passengers can catch the MTA Metro-North Railroad. Bus fare is \$2.75 and the buses stop on the central traffic island just outside the terminal building. The other options for getting into White Plains are catching a taxi, using an app based taxi service like Uber or renting a car, though some hotels may offer airport transfers for guests.

Car rental: Rental car companies including Avis, Alamo, Budget, Enterprise, Hertz and National are all available at Westchester County Airport. The rental desks are located in the arrivals hall.

Airport Taxis: All taxi companies operating in the area are permitted to service the airport, but taxi pickup has to be arranged in advance. For those who have not pre-arranged taxi pick up, there is a desk in the arrivals hall that will arrange transport with one of the airport's licensed vendors.

Facilities: Facilities at Westchester include ATMs, business workstations, baby-changing facilities as well as a number of shops and restaurants.

Parking: The garage is next to the terminal, providing short-term and long-term parking.

Elmira Corning Regional Airport (ELM)

Elmira Corning Regional Airport

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

Location: Elmira The airport is situated seven miles (11km) northwest of Elmira.

Time: GMT -5 (GMT -4 from mid-March to the first Sunday in November).

Contacts: Tel: (607) 739 5621

Getting to the city: C-Tran bus route 20 connects the airport to Elmira between roughly 8am and 6pm on weekdays, and between 10am and 5pm on Saturdays. Adult bus fare is about \$2.25. A number of hotels offer airport shuttles for their guests and taxis and rental cars are also available. Ride-hailing apps such as Lyft are also available to passengers at the airport.

Car rental: Avis, Budget, Enterprise, Hertz and National are represented at the airport.

Airport Taxis: Bill's Transportation and Terps Enterprises service the airport, but it is recommended that taxis be booked in advance to ensure availability.

Facilities: Airport facilities include an ATM, restaurant, conference rooms, family restrooms, and wifi.

Parking: All airport parking is free for the first 15 minutes. Short-term parking costs \$1 for the first hour and \$1 for each additional 30 minutes, up to a daily maximum of \$10. Long-term parking costs \$1 for 30 minutes, \$1 for every additional hour, and a daily maximum of \$9. The more distant economy parking is slightly cheaper with a daily max of \$7.50.

Greater Binghamton Airport (BGM)

Greater Binghamton Airport

www.flybgm.com

Location: Binghamton The airport is situated 11 miles (18km) north of Binghamton.

Time: GMT -5 (GMT -4 from mid-March to the first Sunday in November).

Contacts: Tel: (607) 763 4471

Getting to the city: Taxis, airport shuttles, and rental cars are available to get into town.

Car rental: Avis, Hertz, and Budget are represented at the airport.

Airport Taxis: Numerous taxi companies service the airport, but it is best to book ahead to avoid a wait.

Facilities: The airport is small but comfortable. Facilities include vending machines, a restaurant, free wifi, and a conference centre complete with audio-visual equipment.

Parking: Short-term and long-term parking is provided at the airport. In short-term parking, the first 15 minutes are free, and the hourly rate is \$1 for the first hour, \$2.25 for the next hours, and a daily rate of \$11. Long-term parking is \$1 per hour for the first hour, \$2 per hour thereafter, and a maximum of \$8 a day.

Syracuse Airport (SYR)

Syracuse Hancock International Airport

www.flysyracuse.com

Location: Syracuse The airport is situated nine miles (14km) northeast of downtown Syracuse.

Time: GMT -5 (GMT -4 from mid-March to the first Sunday in November).

Contacts: Tel: (315) 454 4330

Getting to the city: Taxis to and from the William F. Walsh Regional Transportation Center will link travellers to Syracuse through Centro's bus network.

Car rental: Alamo, Avis, Budget, Dollar, Enterprise, Hertz, and Thrifty are represented at the airport.

Airport Taxis: Syracuse Regional Airport Taxi provides exclusive service to the airport. Dispatch desks for taxi services are located near each baggage claim area, and are staffed between 5am and 2am. Ride-hailing apps that operate at the airport include Lyft and Uber.

Facilities: Airport facilities include a barber shop, ATMs, public telephones, a variety of shops and restaurants, a pub, free wifi, and the interesting Discover the Airport Exhibit, which allows passengers to interact with planes and learn about how the airport works.

Parking: Parking rates in the airport garage are \$3 for the first hour, \$4 for 90 minutes, \$5 for two hours, and \$1 per hour thereafter up to a daily maximum of \$12. Parking is slightly cheaper in the open lots, with the first hour costing \$2 and a daily maximum of \$10.

Ithaca Tompkins Regional Airport (ITH)

Ithaca Tompkins Regional Airport

www.flyithaca.com

Location: Ithaca The airport is situated five miles (8km) northeast of downtown Ithaca.

Time: GMT -5 (GMT -4 from mid-March to the first Sunday in November).

Getting to the city: TCAT bus route 32 services the airport between 7.50am and 9.30pm on weekdays, and bus route 72 services the airport between 8.45am and 11pm on Saturdays, and between 7.45am and 4.45pm on Sundays. Taxis and rental cars are also available.

Car rental: Avis, Budget, and Hertz are represented at the airport.

Airport Taxis: Taxis are available at the airport, but it is best to order them in advance to avoid waiting. A taxi to downtown Ithaca costs roughly \$16 to \$18. Ride-hailing apps are also available at Ithaca Tompkins Regional Airport, including companies like Lyft and Red Route.

Facilities: This is a small airport and facilities are limited, but there is a conference room, a cafeteria, and free wifi. There are some vending machines for snacks.

Parking: All parking is free for the first 30 minutes. Parking costs \$2 for the first hour, and about \$1 per hour thereafter, up to a daily maximum of \$9 in the short-term lot, and \$7 in the long-term lot.

Stewart International Airport (SWF)

Stewart International Airport

www.swfnyc.com/

Location: Newburgh The airport is situated six miles (10km) west of Newburgh.

Time: GMT -5 (GMT -4 from mid-March to the first Sunday in November).

Contacts: Tel: (845) 838 8200

Getting to the city: Coach USA's Stewart Airport Express provides a fast and convenient bus service between the airport and New York City. Those wanting to take the Metro-North Train to New York City can catch the Leprechaun Bus, which transports passengers to the Beacon Station. Taxis and rental cars are also available.

Car rental: Avis, Budget, Enterprise, Hertz, and National are represented at the airport.

Airport Taxis: Visconti Ground Transport, which has desks in the terminal, offers taxi service 24 hours a day, but it is recommended that passengers reserve taxis in advance.

Facilities: Facilities include wifi, an ATM, a restaurant, a cafe, and a newsagent.

Parking: Short-term parking at the airport costs \$3 per hour, up to a daily maximum of \$30. Long-term parking costs \$10 for the first 24 hours and \$60 per week.

Greater Rochester International Airport (ROC)

Frederick Douglass Greater Rochester International Airport

www.monroecounty.gov/airport-index.php

Location: The airport is situated five miles (8km) southwest of downtown Rochester.

Time: GMT -5 (GMT -4 from mid-March to the first Sunday in November).

Getting to the city: Rochester Transit Service buses service the airport every day of the week, with an adult bus fare of \$1. A number of hotels in the area offer airport shuttles for their guests, while taxis and rental cars are also available.

Car rental: Avis, Budget, Enterprise, Hertz, National, and Alamo are all represented at the airport.

Airport Taxis: Taxis are available at the airport, and a ride from the airport costs a minimum of \$10, with \$3 charged per mile and a \$2.50 levy per additional passenger.

Facilities: Facilities at the airport include ATMs, a food court, various shops, bars, a business centre, an information centre, an interfaith chapel, conference rooms, a lost and found, a pet-relief area, and shoeshine services.

Parking: A cell phone lot allows passenger pickups, free of charge. Parking in the short-term lot costs \$2 for the first hour, up to a daily maximum of \$24. Long-term parking costs \$4 for the first two hours, and \$2 per each additional hour. The daily maximum is \$12. The economy parking lot is connected to the terminal by shuttles and costs only \$1 per hour and has a daily maximum of \$7.

Albany International Airport (ALB)

Albany International Airport

www.albanyairport.com

Location: Albany The airport is located about six miles (10km) from the city centre.

Time: GMT -5 (GMT -4 from mid-March to the first Sunday in November).

Getting to the city: Regional and long-distance local bus, taxi, limousine, and car rental services are available at the airport to transport passengers to the city centre.

Car rental: Car rental companies represented at the airport include Avis, Budget, Enterprise, Hertz, and National/Alamo. The rental car reservation counters are located in the baggage claim area of the terminal. The rental car fleet is located inside the airport parking garage.

Airport Taxis: The taxi stand is located just outside the baggage claim area. Capitaland Taxi is authorised to pick up passengers from the airport, but passengers may call any cab company for transportation to and from the airport. Capitaland Taxi vehicles are equipped with meters and credit card machines. Ride-sharing apps are also available at the airport, with Lyft being the primary service. Uber drivers aren't permitted to service passengers.

Facilities: Airport facilities include currency exchange, ATMs, and a business centre, including internet access, photocopying, computers, printers, and workstations. There's also an interfaith prayer room, a mail centre, free WiFi, restaurants, fast food outlets, and various shops.

Parking: The airport offers a wide variety of convenient and economical parking options. A multi-storey parking garage provides covered long and short-term parking and a heated pedestrian bridge takes travellers directly to the security checkpoint in the terminal. The short-term lot is free for the first half hour. Short-term parking costs \$2 for the second half an hour of parking and an additional \$1 for every half hour thereafter. Long-term parking costs \$2 for the first hour of parking and \$1 for every hour after that, up to a maximum daily rate of \$10.

New York City

The problem with visiting New York is knowing where to begin. But even if you don't immediately rush off to view the world-famous sights and landmarks of this most dynamic of cities, sometimes just being there is enough. The wonder of New York is in the energy and diversity that emanates from its densely packed, multicultural population. It vibrates with colliding cultures and languages, as highlife and lowlife rub together to produce a unique atmosphere, 24-hours a day.

Whether lolling on a bench in leafy Central Park, watching the world go by from a French bistro in Soho, or gazing up at Lady Liberty from the deck of the Staten Island Ferry, most visitors will feel they've done it all before. This is because New York is so familiar to anyone who has ever seen a movie or watched television. There is something special, however, in actually seeing the familiar landmarks and experiencing the pulse of The City That Never Sleeps.

Five boroughs make up New York City: Staten Island, the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, and Manhattan. But many visitors never leave Manhattan, with loads of things to do and see packed into this small area relative to the other boroughs. This includes the 24-hour pasta restaurants of Little Italy, and the bustling sidewalks of Chinatown, the jazz clubs of Greenwich Village, and the theatres of Broadway. Of course, iconic sights include the Statue of Liberty, the Empire State Building, and Times Square.

New York has been described as the best three-day city in the world, and that's about right. After a frenzy of museums, galleries, bars, and clubs, many visitors are ready for a break. Fortunately, there's a lot of choice in excursions. Outdoor attractions include the National Parks of upstate New York, to the beaches of Long Island, or simply the leafy oasis of Central Park. Whatever you're after, New York is ready and waiting to bewitch, enchant, and bewilder.

Getting around in New York City

New York's public transport system is relatively good and cheap, and it includes buses and the subway. There are also the iconic and ever-present yellow cabs, although they are more expensive. Visitors should avoid unlicensed cabs, sometimes called gypsy or pirate cabs. Lyft and Uber are available.

Visitors can use a combination of these or just get around on foot. Walking is often the best way to see the city. During rush hours, when buses and taxis are caught in gridlock and the subway is overcrowded, stretching the legs can be the quickest option.

Usually, the most efficient way to get around is the 24-hour underground system, especially as most of Manhattan's sights are near subway stations. Like other massive cities, however, this can be extremely confusing at first.

The bus system is simpler but slower, a good option for shorter distances or for travelling across town. Driving in New York is not recommended as traffic is heavy, drivers rude and aggressive, and parking both rare and exorbitant.

Nightlife in New York City

The nightlife in New York City encompasses jazz bars, nightclubs, lounges, comedy clubs, and live shows, with something happening around every corner. The Village, Broadway, Bowery, and Madison Square Garden are just a few destinations for evening entertainment in New York.

As a hub of the jazz world, New York is home to venues such as 55 Bar and Arthur's Tavern. Jazz tours from Greenwich Village to Harlem are a fun option for enthusiasts, with a stop at the legendary Apollo Theatre a great attraction to tick off the bucketlist.

As the launching pad of big name comedians such as Jerry Seinfeld, New York also has many comedy shows, with some of the best happening at the New York Comedy Club.

Of course, there are always famous Broadway shows in New York. Visitors should try the Palace or Eugene O'Neill theatres for the latest productions. Broadway shows are expensive, hence the popularity of the three TKTS discount ticket booths, the most popular of which is in Times Square.

They open every day at 11am, but the queues form well before this. Travellers can pick up last-minute tickets for half of the regular price, depending on what's available. There's seldom a queue at 5pm, with last minute prices dropping even further.

Nightclubs come and go quickly in New York City, as the fickle population becomes enamoured with the newest venues and trends. But visitors can always rest assured that whatever they want, the City of Dreams will have plenty of it.

Live music venues covering hip hop, rock, indie, and almost any other genre imaginable abound, and well-established venues offer events such as poetry readings. At any given time, internationally acclaimed DJs are usually heating up dancefloors in the New York darkness.

World-class performing arts venues are a dime a dozen in a city that boasts Madison Square Garden, Radio City Music Hall, Lincoln Centre, and Carnegie Hall, and visitors can take their pick of ballet, opera, symphony orchestras, and chamber music.

Dining in New York City

New York City is famous for roadside vendors selling all-American goodness, such as hotdogs, corndogs, bagels, and donuts. But it's an international affair when dining out, with offerings of cuisine from all over the world meaning it would take a lifetime to sample them all.

With more than eight thousand restaurants to choose from, it is difficult to know where to begin. Chinatown has restaurants serving Cantonese, Sichuan, and Shanghai cuisine, while there are also a few Chinese restaurants where dim sum is available throughout the day.

The popular Times Square is plagued with mediocre chain restaurants but there are a few wonderful eateries beyond the tourist traps. New York's steakhouses offer a variety of delicious steak options from porterhouse steak to New York strip steak.

Everything is big in the United States and the pizzas and pizza pies are no different. With plenty of fantastic pizza and Italian restaurants around the city, it's a pizza lover's paradise. Many small pizzerias sell the iconic New York-style pizza.

Ukrainian, Indian, and Japanese cuisine can be found in the East Village, while Harlem is synonymous with African and Soul food. Queens has the most variety, with Greek, Irish, Latin American, Russian, Indian, and Kosher fare on offer to tantalise the taste buds.

Tribeca Grill — \$\$\$ *American*

Located in Tribeca's Washington Market area, Tribeca Grill radiates excitement and energy. Co-owned by Robert DeNiro, 'The Grill' is a classic New York social venue. It's a massive restaurant with high ceilings and exposed brick walls, and it's great for celebrity spotting. The menu includes enticing grilled and sautéed selections, with cross-cultural creative influences of many different cuisines. Favourites on the menu include short ribs braised in red wine, the grilled duck, and the pan-roasted cod. Open for dinner every night, lunch during the week, and brunch on Sundays.

375 Greenwich Street
New York City, United States of America

www.tribecagrill.com

Le Bernardin — \$\$\$\$\$

Seafood

New York's internationally acclaimed seafood restaurant, Le Bernardin opened in New York in 1986 and in no time became a four-star restaurant that is renowned for setting standards in the cooking of seafood in America. The sliced conch in a Peruvian marinade is delicious, and the crispy black bass with Masala spice is also very good. Open for lunch, Monday to Friday, and dinner, Monday to Saturday. Closed Sundays. Reservations are essential.

155 West 51st Street (Midtown West)
New York City, United States of America

www.le-bernardin.com

Delmonico's — \$\$\$\$

American

This attractive Wall Street landmark, Delmonico's first opened its doors in the 1830s as the first fine dining restaurant in the country. It has an impressive history, even providing the setting for Mark Twain's birthday party. Serving up delicious steaks in a leather and mahogany setting, it attracts a loyal crowd of businesspeople who feel at home setting at the low-key bar. Signature dishes include the 'Delmonico Steak' and 'Lobster Newberg'. Reservations recommended, open Monday to Friday for lunch and dinner.

56 Beaver Street, near Wall Street
New York City, United States of America

www.delmonicos.com

Balthazar — \$\$\$

French

Since its 1997 opening, this SoHo bistro has retained its buzz and irresistible allure. It exudes the look and atmosphere an aged Parisian brasserie with pastel colours, oversized mirrors, and powdery homemade bread. Nightly specials focus around classic French dishes, such as duck confit with wild mushrooms. Open for breakfast and dinner all week, lunch Monday to Friday, and brunch on weekends. Reservations recommended.

80 Spring St, SoHo
New York City, United States of America

www.balthazarny.com

Gramercy Tavern — \$\$\$\$

American

This iconic Union Square eatery's spacious, rustic-looking interior includes a casual street-facing tavern, a lively bar and a series of formal dining areas. The dining room menu offers inventive American cuisine such as lobster salad, and venison with onion marmalade, while the tavern is good for seafood chowder or pork sandwiches. The tavern is open for lunch and dinner daily, and the dining room is open for lunch Monday to Friday and dinner all week. Reservations recommended.

42 East 20th Street (between Broadway and Park Avenue)
New York City, United States of America

www.gramercytavern.com

Nobu New York — \$\$\$\$

Japanese

Nobu opened in 1995, bringing innovative and fresh styles of Japanese cooking to New York City. The restaurant is a visual and culinary treat, with tall birch tree columns rising towards a ceiling painted copper with stylish patches of open brickwork showing through. Nobu's new style Japanese cuisine weds South American sensibility with Japanese traditions. Try the mussels with the signature Nobu salsa, or the yellowtail with jalapeño. Open Monday to Friday for lunch and all week for dinner, reservations essential.

105 Hudson Street (Tribeca)
New York City, United States of America

www.noburestaurants.com

Daniel — \$\$\$\$

French

One of best venues for classical French cuisine in New York, Daniel reflects its original 1920s Renaissance splendour. Using the freshest ingredients, seasonal masterpieces include squab with Swiss chard barbajuan, and a radish and artichoke barigoule. Customers should always leave room for the huckleberry sorbet. Jacket and tie is required for gentlemen. Open for dinner Monday to Saturday, closed on Sundays. Reservations recommended.

60 East 65th Street (between Madison Avenue and Park Avenue)
New York City, United States of America

danielnyc.com

Keen's Steakhouse — \$\$\$\$

American

For a thick cut of New York steak, one of the best places to go is Keen's Steakhouse. The buzzing dining room has an old-fashioned charm with classic elegance, and though it can be loud, there's always a great atmosphere. Don't expect a variety of vegetarian options on this menu, as it focuses on meat and seafood. Reservations recommended.

72 West 36th Street
New York City, United States of America

www.keens.com

Acme Bar & Grill — \$\$\$

Southern

With its exposed brick interior and the world's largest collection of hot sauce, catfish, and hickory chips delivered fresh from Mississippi, Acme Bar & Grill is as far south as you have to go to enjoy the cuisine of the Deep South. Creole delights are in abundance, such as Louisiana seafood gumbo, Creole jambalaya, and Catfish po' boys, a traditional submarine sandwich originating from Louisiana. An extra thing to note: the mashed potato is pretty famous. Open daily for lunch and dinner, and brunch on weekends.

9 Great Jones Street
New York City, United States of America

www.acmenyc.com

Ess-a-Bagel — \$\$

Delicatessen

Regardless of whether you're looking to eat on the run or ease into a delicious lunch, there's nothing like a big fresh bagel to sink your teeth into. Ess-a-Bagel is one of the most popular bagel spots in town, serving freshly baked bagels with any filling one can think of. These include orders such as honey-glazed turkey, chipotle chicken, lake sturgeon, or the traditional salmon and cream cheese, called 'lox and schmear' by native New Yorkers. They even have a selection of tofu bagels for vegetarians. Great for breakfast, lunch, or a cheap dinner in New York.

359 1st Avenue
New York City, United States of America

www.ess-a-bagel.com

Paul's Da Burger Joint — \$\$

American

Sometimes in life and in New York, it's essential to eat a truly great burger and satisfy this urge in the most complete and delicious way possible. Described as being vintage New York, Paul's Da Burger Joint is an East Village classic famous for its huge variety of perfectly prepared burgers. The diner décor is wonderfully kitsch and the joint is staffed by a team of eccentric and wacky waiters. Open daily from 11am till late.

131 2nd Ave
New York City, United States of America

www.paulsburgers.com

John's Pizzeria in Bleeker Street — \$\$\$

Pizzeria

Everybody knows about New York pizza, world-famous for being thin, crispy, and gigantic. John's Pizzeria is rated consistently as one of the best in New York City, with their coal-fired brick-oven pizzas sure to fill the stomach. The restaurant is unassuming, but the food is divine. They don't take reservations nor serve slices, so people must expect to wait at peak times. A genuine slice of New York.

278 Bleecker Street,
New York City, United States of America

www.johnsbrickovenpizza.com

Shopping in New York City

The amount and calibre of stores in the city will blow visitors away. Offering some of the best and most expensive shopping in the world, 5th Avenue is synonymous with classy high-end department stores such as Bergdorf's and Saks. Madison Avenue is known as the trendy road, boasting 15 blocks of celebrity designer shops such as Chanel, Jimmy Choo, and Prada. Soho is one of New York's poshest outdoor malls, with cobblestone streets and loft-like spaces creating a pretty and unique shopping experience.

As cosmopolitan as New York may be, visitors on a tighter budget can still find plenty of bargains at the city's flea markets, which offer some top quality goods with stores touting designer knockoffs, antiques, jewellery, curios, thrift wear, home furnishings, and cosmetics. Chinatown is a budget shopper's paradise with cheap knockoffs on offer, and haggling common practice.

Whether shopping in upscale Madison Avenue or the bargain-friendly Lower East Side, New York has something to offer everyone. Souvenirs can often be tacky, including miniature Statues of Liberty, I (heart) NY gear, New York Yankees merchandise, and Broadway posters.

Climate in New York City

New York City has a humid subtropical climate, with cold winters and hot, moist summers. The city's coastal location ensures that winters (December to February) are not as cold as inland cities on the same latitude, and daytime temperatures generally stay above freezing point but average lows drop to 27F (-3C). Snow is common in winter, but the amount varies, and winter rain is common. Spring in New York is pleasantly warm, and the weather heats up to high temperatures of around 77F (25C) by mid-May. Summers (June to August) are generally swelteringly hot and humid, with average highs hitting 84F (29C). The best time to travel to New York is in autumn, when temperatures are mild, days are sunny and humidity not too high.

Sightseeing in New York City

With New York's countless attractions, it would take months to see and do everything this vibrant city has on offer. The must-see New York attractions include iconic structures and buildings such as the Statue of Liberty, Rockefeller Center, the Empire State Building, Times Square, and the Chrysler Building. In among all the skyscrapers Central Park provides a green haven for relaxation and exercise. Many first-time visitors to New York don't leave Manhattan at all, but the four other boroughs of the city (Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island) all have their own appeal and are worth exploring for those wanting a broader experience of the metropolis. Taking a ride on the Staten Island Ferry is one of the best free activities NYC has to offer.

For culture vultures there are wonderful museums to explore, such as the American Museum of Natural History or the Metropolitan Museum of Art. There are also less high-brow museums: at Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum, for instance, visitors can play superhero on film.

An easy way to see the sights is to take a ride on one of New York's topless tour buses. It may not be as exciting as exploring the city on foot, but it's a great way to learn and see a lot quickly. Central Park also provides a great thoroughfare for sightseers exploring Manhattan on foot, and the grid-pattern layout of the streets makes navigating fairly simple. The New York subway is a good, cheap option for those needing to cover greater distances.

Those planning a lot of sightseeing should consider purchasing the New York Pass, which covers about 100 NYC attractions and allows the holder to skip the often lengthy queues at popular sites.

Kids Attractions in New York City

New York is a great place for holidays with children. Parents can take the family out to Ellis Island to see the Statue of Liberty or trek up the Empire State Building to stand on its observation deck, the panoramic views of the metropolis a joy at any age.

For active children, a stroll through Central Park will give them plenty of space to stretch their legs and, in winter months, families shouldn't miss ice skating at the Trump Wollman Rink or Rockefeller Plaza. The amazing shops around New York City are also perfect for those rainy days.

Options include NIKETOWN and the decadent Dylan's Candy Bar, where kids will go wild at the amount of sugary candies and chocolates available. The Brooklyn Children's Museum is also worth a visit, as are the New York Aquarium and Central Park Zoo.

For warm summer nights, nothing beats a baseball game at Yankee Stadium, complete with hot dogs and popcorn. With so much to see, children visiting New York City will be sure to have a memorable and unforgettable experience.

New York City Attractions

Tarrytown

Known as the setting of Washington Irving's *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, Tarrytown and its surrounds are filled with history. It is the birthplace of the author, home to the impressive Rockefeller residence and sits across the river from Hyde Park, where President Franklin D. Roosevelt was born. The late President's home has a library containing hundreds of photos and artefacts, as well as his car and a letter from Einstein that led to the development of the atomic bomb. Two miles (3km) outside Hyde Park is the Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, a spectacular Beaux Arts mansion.

The High Line

The High Line is a verdant elevated strip hovering between the skyscrapers of Manhattan's West Side. Built on what was once a freight rail line, this unique public park brings a welcome splash of greenery into the district. Drawing millions of visitors annually, it has led to a real estate boom in the areas it passes through, with apartments overlooking the pretty strip rocketing in value. The High Line features viewpoints, recreation areas and public spaces for exhibitions and productions. The 14th Street Passage and Chelsea Market Passage are semi-enclosed sections frequently used for public programs and art exhibitions. Picnic spots on the 23rd Street Lawn are ideal for peace and quiet while kids love features such as the Pershing Square Beams, where the original framework of steel beams is exposed to create a garden playground.

Website: www.thehighline.org

The Statue of Liberty

The universal symbol of freedom, the Statue of Liberty was the first thing seen by 12 million immigrants passing through Ellis Island Immigration Center. Sculpted by Frederic-Auguste Bartholdi and modelled on his mother, the French donated the statue to the US in 1875, and it was unveiled stateside in 1886. The reason was to commemorate the alliance between the two countries during the American Revolution. The ferry calls at both Liberty and Ellis Islands, and tourists can visit the Ellis Island Museum documenting the experiences of the immigrants. On Liberty Island, advance bookings allow visitors to access the crown of the famous statue, but these tickets must be booked some six months in advance for peak summer season.

Website: www.nps.gov/stli

World Trade Center - Ground Zero

The six hectare (16 acre) worksite that emerged from the rubble of the twin towers now symbolises the infamous events on September 11 2001, when almost 3,000 people lost their lives. Millions now come to pay tribute and witness the devastation at viewing sites. In January 2004, a design named *Reflecting Absence* by Michael Arad and Peter Walker was unveiled for the World Trade Center Memorial. The memorial features a landscaped civic plaza with two massive voids aligned with the footprints where the twin towers once stood. The memorial and museum are now open to the public, providing an accurate and moving account of what the community endured during the attacks. Tourists should be mindful that this is a sombre memorial frequented by mourning family members, so loud chatter and smiling selfies are inappropriate.

Website: www.national911memorial.org

Radio City Music Hall

Located in Rockefeller Center, Radio City Music Hall is one of the most famous theatres in the world. The home of the famous Rockettes chorus line, the interior of the theatre was declared a New York landmark in 1978. While not in regular use anymore, the Hall's beautiful cinema still hosts premieres, shows and selected feature films. The most popular event is the annual Radio City Music Hall Christmas Spectacular, attracting more than a million people and running since 1933. It's best to check the official website listings to see which potential productions and acts are on while tours run daily and usually receive rave reviews.

Website: www.radiocity.com

Empire State Building

The Empire State Building in New York is an iconic landmark in the sprawling Manhattan cityscape. Completed in 1931, it stretches 102 storeys into the sky and was considered the tallest building between 1931 and 1970. Today, it is only the 28th-tallest building in the world yet still retains much of its dramatic grandeur and presence. One of the most beloved activities is embarking on the journey to the top floor's observation deck, providing views across the entire city. It's best to visit between 8am and 11am, avoiding the scores of daily visitors. Free multimedia tours are downloaded with every admission.

Website: www.esbnyc.com

Central Park

The founders of New York set aside 340 hectares (840 acres) of central Manhattan as a public space, with Central Park officially opening in 1876 to provide an essential green lung within the concrete jungle of New York. It contains themed gardens, tennis courts, lakes and even a small zoo, infused with daily joggers, skaters, buskers and tourists. But there are areas beyond the range of baseballs and frisbees where tranquillity can be found, with music concerts and Shakespearian plays frequent occurrences. During winter, two ice-skating rinks open up in Central Park, with the Wollman Rink in particular considered one of the most picturesque in the world.

Website: www.centralparknyc.org

Museum of Modern Art

Founded in 1929, the Museum of Modern Art owns the most important collection of modern art in the United States. Referred to as MoMA, artists with work on display include greats such as Monet, Van Gogh, Matisse, Picasso, Max Beckman, Ansel Adams and Kiki Smith. What started as a gift of eight prints and a drawing developed into a vast and varied collection of some 150,000 paintings, prints, sculptures, photographs, and other media. MoMA's Library and Archives boast an impressive collection of books, historical documents and photographs. Priding itself as an educational institution, the Museum of Modern Art offers various activities and programmes for the general public. In addition, special segments broaden the community knowledge of and approach towards the exciting and puzzling world of modern art.

Website: www.moma.org

The Guggenheim Museum

Designed by renowned US architect Frank Lloyd Wright, the Guggenheim was built in 1959 and is an icon of Modernist architecture specifically created to showcase the modern art within. It features a highly celebrated collection of late 19th and 20th-century artworks, as well as touring exhibitions. Beneath a glass dome, a quarter mile ramp spirals down the inside of the building, past a collection including pieces by Pissarro, Kandinsky, Klee, Picasso, Toulouse-Lautrec, Cézanne, Mapplethorpe and Gober.

Website: www.guggenheim.org

Metropolitan Museum of Art

The Metropolitan Museum, affectionately known as the Met, possesses one of the greatest and largest art collections in the world. Banners above the Met's Fifth Avenue entrance herald the current attractions at this cherished New York institution. There are always temporary exhibitions from around the world alongside the impressive permanent collection. Highlights are numerous, with American collectors having the foresight and cash to buy up a large number of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist masterpieces from Europe at the end of the 19th century. The art collection at the Met now contains more than two million works of art from across the planet, from ancient worlds through to modern times. Some notable works are present from such greats as Van Gogh, Renoir, Monet, and Cezanne, rivalling any art collection on earth.

Website: www.metmuseum.org

American Museum of Natural History

Challenged only by its counterpart in London, the American Museum of Natural History is the largest and most important museum of its kind in the world. Forty five exhibition halls hold more than 30 million artefacts, quite enough to keep anyone busy on a rainy afternoon. The most popular exhibit is a 50ft (15m) tall skeleton of a barosaurus in the Theodore Roosevelt Rotunda, and there are three more spectacular dinosaur halls on the fourth floor. Other halls include the Hall of Biodiversity, the Hall of Ocean Life, and the Hall of Human Biology and Evolution. The fabulous Hayden Planetarium is a 90ft (27m) wide aluminium sphere that seems to float inside a massive glass cube, which in turn is home to the Rose Center for Earth and Space. Those tired of walking can check out the Museum of Television and Radio.

Website: www.amnh.org

Long Island

Long Island extends 100 miles (161km) east of New York City into the Atlantic Ocean and is a popular weekend destination for New Yorkers and tourists. The glorious white, sandy beaches along the south shore are ideal for those seeking refuge from the sweltering city in the summer.

Jones Beach is a 6 mile (10km) stretch of coastline, with thousands of people converging to soak up the sun. Fire Island is the east coast's leading gay resort, accessible via a short ferry ride, while cliffs crown stately homes and luxurious mansions along the exclusive beaches of the north shore.

The Hamptons is a community in the far east of New York, its miles of pristine beaches attracting the rich and famous from all over the United States. The heart of its scene is East Hampton, which has some excellent shops, restaurants, and a lively nightlife.

In Long Island's North Fork, around the town of Cutchogue, are the winelands of New York. Of the 13 vineyards, the best known is Pindar, which has tours and tastings every day. Nearby, the pretty, 17th-century town of Orient offers white clapboard houses and unspoilt beaches.

There are hundreds of museums, attractions, and sporting facilities scattered around Long Island to suit all tastes. Buses depart for Long Island regularly each day, although the quickest way to get there is via the Long Island Railroad from Penn Station. If driving, visitors should head east on the Long Island Expressway from Manhattan.

Hudson Valley and the Catskills

Just north of New York City, the Hudson Valley is surprisingly rural and littered with charming towns, picturesque farms, and old mansions. Many New Yorkers head this way at the weekend, attracted by the slower pace of life and scenic drives.

Albany, the region's capital, was founded by Dutch fur trappers in the 17th century and made its money by controlling trade along the Erie Canal. There is not a great deal to do or see in Albany when it comes to traditional cultural sightseeing, but sights include the New York State Museum and the Albany Institute of History and Art.

The beautiful Catskills Mountains, northwest of New York City, has long been a popular vacation spot and the choice of many a wealthy New Yorker for their summer home. The region is dotted with picturesque towns, reservoirs, forests, parks, historic buildings, and plenty of resorts.

Nicknamed the Borscht Belt, from the 1940s to the 1960s, the Catskills was highly popular with Jewish New Yorkers in particular, and some of the finest Jewish comedians sprang from the area, including Woody Allen, Mel Brooks, and Joan Rivers.

The region is also famous for hosting one of the world's best-known entertainment events, the 1969 Woodstock Festival. Over 500,000 free spirits gathered on Max Yasgur's dairy farm in Bethel to see some of the finest musicians of the era.

Today, the site is open to the public as is a museum that houses archives and interesting information from the event. The Catskills also offer plenty of exciting outdoor activities, including hunting, fly-fishing, skiing, canoeing, hiking, camping, and even golf.

Broadway

Going to the theatre is one of the most popular tourist events in New York and the shows on Broadway are world famous, boasting some of the best productions in the world from blockbuster musicals to intense and intimate dramas. There are ongoing shows that have been running for years, such as *The Lion King*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Chicago*, and *A Chorus Line*. Newer, edgier shows play off-Broadway, and may provide just as much entertainment at slightly lower prices. This is one way to experience part of the American dream, even if only on holiday. There is something to entertain people of all ages.

Website: www.broadway.com

Times Square

Though it is ultimately just an intersection at the corner of Broadway and 42nd Street, Times Square has achieved iconic status. In a single frame, it successfully represents the hive of activity that is New York City. Flashing advertisements produce a mesmerising and memorable sight, and account for why Times Square is used in countless films, TV series and books, and is the base for ABC's *Good Morning America* programs. Thousands gather annually for New Year's Eve in the square to see the famous ball drop. Since 2009, Times Square has been closed to traffic and visitors can now enjoy strolling and sitting at their leisure, instead of worrying about the city's notorious taxis and bustling vehicles.

Website: www.timessquare.com

Rockefeller Centre

This 22 acre (8ha) land houses a plethora of iconic New York City attractions. Radio City Music Hall ranks highly among visitors, having hosted multiple awards shows such as the Grammys, Emmys and MTV Music Awards and also being a concert venue frequented by today's top performers. The Rockefeller Plaza is the site of the eerie Lunchtime atop a Skyscraper photograph, as well as being the home of *Saturday Night Live* and popular TV series *30 Rock*. The Rockefeller Center also claims to have the best views of the city, a hotly contested competition for sure. At the building's base is the Rink at Rockefeller Center, with the golden statue of Prometheus at its head. Beneath is the concourse, an underground pedestrian mall boasting designer brands and food outlets.

Website: www.rockefellercenter.com

Brooklyn Bridge

The sheer scope of New York City is hard for visitors to understand until they've traversed the Brooklyn Bridge. Completed in 1883, it crosses 5,989 feet (1,825 m) of the East River and connects two of New York's biggest metropolises, Manhattan and Brooklyn. The construction was an impressive feat of engineering ingenuity and, upon completion, it was the longest suspension bridge in the world. Today, it is a treasured landmark of the city, colourfully illuminated at night to highlight the architectural towers and hangings. There is a pedestrian walkway from which visitors can savour vistas of both Manhattan and Brooklyn. Photographers looking for quintessential New York cityscapes should be sure to walk the bridge.

St Patrick's Cathedral

St Patrick's Cathedral is a magnificent example of Gothic architecture popular in 13th-century Europe. One of the city's most gorgeous buildings, its spires soar 330 feet (100m) into the air while its entrance is both grand and ornate. Built between 1850 and 1878, it is now the seat of the archbishop of New York and the largest catholic cathedral in the United States. To most New Yorkers and harried tourists, St Patrick's is most valued for its peace and tranquillity. But it's still an active place of worship although tourists are welcome they should show respect, especially during church services. Guided tours are available.

Website: www.saintpatrickscathedral.org

Grand Central Station

One of New York's most famous and best loved landmarks, Grand Central was opened in 1913 opposite Rockefeller Center. It is one of the world's largest train stations, with 44 platforms, but its true distinction is its magnificent architecture. Its striking ambiance is anchored by enormous windows and the refurbished ceiling covered by a detailed astronomical fresco. The terminal houses a number of good restaurants, budget-friendly eateries and speciality shops. The magnificent Vanderbilt Hall regularly houses public events, while there is also a one-hour guided tour; visitors should book several weeks ahead in peak season to avoid disappointment. Interestingly, Grand Central sees about double the amount of visitors every day as it does commuters.

Website: www.grandcentralterminal.com

Central Park Zoo

Home to some exotic and beautiful animals, the Central Park Zoo is a must for all children and animal lovers visiting the city. Residents at the zoo include the elusive red pandas, polar bears, snow leopards, and snow monkeys to name a few. The Tisch Children's Zoo is a great place for the young, with children able to pet the goats, sheep, alpacas, potbellied pigs, and other barnyard animals on display. Booking online may result in discounts and also allows visitors to skip the long summer queues.

Website: www.centralparkzoo.com

Wollman Rink

The Wollman Rink, located in Central Park and made famous by many movies, is a fantastic place to take the kids for the day during the winter months in New York City. The setting of this ice rink is beautiful, surrounded by trees with the New York City skyline above them. Children can even attend skating school while adults can host a party or event, guaranteeing an unforgettable experience. The rink is not just for children but also a popular spot for dates in New York City due to the romantic associations and stunning setting.

Website: www.wollmanskatingrink.com

Brooklyn Children's Museum

The Brooklyn Children's Museum is a great place to take the little ones while on holiday in New York City. It was founded in 1899 and its collections and exhibits include hands-on activities, role-playing opportunities, and resident animals. Thousands of artefacts are on display to teach children about science, the environment, culture, and the arts. There are no 'Do Not Touch' signs here! There is a cafe and a shop at the museum, and a special 'Totally Tots' section for kids under five. Adults must accompany children.

Website: www.brooklynkids.org

The Frick Collection

The Frick is quite possibly New York's most underrated art gallery, a collection of exceptional paintings featuring important works by Vermeer, Manet, Rembrandt, Whistler, Goya and Van Dyk. A highlight is the renowned pair of Holbein paintings of Thomas More and Thomas Cromwell, and a group of small bronze sculptures rated as some of the finest in the world. This was the New York residence of Henry Clay Frick, who transformed a fortune made in the coal business into this sublime building facing onto Central Park. The interior courtyard is a tranquil retreat from the busy world outside.

Website: www.frick.org

Staten Island Ferry

The ferry from Battery Park to Staten Island and back is a great way to see the Lower Manhattan skyline and Hudson River life. It's a must-see New York attraction that doesn't cost a thing. It also skirts the Statue of Liberty, affording decent views of this iconic structure. Most tourists stay onboard for the return leg, but it's worth hopping off and exploring a bit of Staten Island. Staten Island is a borough of New York City and a fun neighbourhood to explore, but the ferry journey, mainly used by commuters, is actually the main attraction. The ferry leaves roughly every 30 minutes or every hour and takes 25 minutes each way. Schedules are available on the official website.

Website: www.siferry.com

Greenwich Village

Greenwich Village began life as an industrial park but has been transformed by a vibrant arts community. Affectionately known as the Village, it's now home to New York University, the famous Washington Square Park and also the setting for the iconic sitcom Friends. Despite gentrification, the district has retained a bit of its artistic flair. There are a number of great off-Broadway theatres, as well as historic jazz and rock venues such as Bitter End, Village Vanguard, Small's, and the Blue Note. Additionally, there's an eclectic mix of international restaurants and cafes.

Wall Street

Home to the New York Stock Exchange, Wall Street has attained legendary status as the financial heart of the USA. The narrow street runs from Broadway to the East River and is home to landmarks such as Federal Hall, where George Washington was inaugurated as the first president. Twenty-three Wall Street still has shrapnel holes in its limestone facade from the 1920 Wall Street Bombing. Perhaps the most iconic symbol of Wall Street is the Wall Street Bull, a 7,100 pound (3,200kg) bronze sculpture by Arturo Di Modica. The sculpture is a popular photo opportunity in New York, symbolising financial optimism and prosperity. The installation of Fearless Girl, a small statue of a girl facing the beast, adds another layer of artistic intrigue. The statue was done by Kristen Visbal.

Coney Island

Coney Island has been a tourist attraction in New York City since the 1830s, when New Yorkers would flock to the beaches. Its movie theatres, amusement parks, museums, circus, aquarium and restaurants still attract crowds each summer. Claiming to be the birthplace of the hotdog, a visit to Coney Island isn't complete without sampling the yummy street food along the boardwalk. While filling their stomachs, visitors can gaze upon the fireworks that light up the sky each Friday around 9.30pm. The activities and amusements at Coney Island are in full swing from May to September, but many attractions close outside these months.

Website: www.coneyisland.com

Ellis Island

From 1892 to 1924, more than 20 million immigrants moved through the crowded halls of Ellis Island. Today, it draws millions of people each year as one of the most popular tourist attractions in New York City. The Ellis Island Immigration Museum offers multimedia exhibits and audio tours, a chance to experience the island as a new arrival might have back in the day. One of the more popular exhibits is the American Family Immigration Center, where visitors can access passenger records to find relatives, while there are also special children's tours. Reached by ferry, the journey also stops at the iconic Statue of Liberty.

Website: www.ellisland.org

Events in New York City

Chinese New Year Friday February 12, 2021 (12 February)

Where: Starting at Mott and Hester Street

A must-see on the opening day of the Chinese New Year celebrations, the city's Chinatown is the biggest in the United States. Performances dance in the streets in colourful costumes, preceding a great parade of dragon floats. With over 200 restaurants, celebrations are sure to be huge and business buzzing. There are interesting tidbits to note such as eating a whole fish to represent togetherness and abundance, and not chopping one's noodles as they represent long life. Colours are important at New Year too, with the luckiest being red, orange, yellow, gold, and pink. Black and white are unlucky.

<http://www.chinatown-online.com>

Central Park SummerStage Tuesday June 01, 2021 to Friday September 24, 2021 (TBC)

Where: Central Park

Summer Stage is one of New York's greatest institutions as Central Park fills up every summer with music, theatre, opera and dance. There's a different performance every Saturday and Sunday afternoon, and usually Wednesday, Thursday and Friday evenings, and entry is mostly free. Famous performers and musicians sometimes grace the stage in Central Park and the atmosphere at the concerts is one of the great joys of a New York summer. Bring a picnic if you don't want to pay for overpriced beer and food and get in early for a good spot. Visit the official website for a list of events.

<http://www.summerstage.org>

New York City Marathon Sunday November 01, 2020 (1 November 2020)

Where: Finish in Central Park

As the world's largest marathon, only London ranks alongside New York in terms of running prestige. The New York City Marathon hosts more than 35,000 runners from around the world, with a route passing through all five of New York City's five boroughs before finishing in Central Park. Spectators line the way, famous celebrities take part and there's usually some athletes in fancy dress, all creating a festive atmosphere. As so many people are keen to run, the general participants are usually selected in a lucky draw. Check the official website for details.

<http://www.tcsnycmarathon.org>

Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade Thursday November 26, 2020 (26 November)

Where:

Macy's Thanksgiving Parade is one of the Big Apple's most dynamic and colourful events, taking Thanksgiving celebrations one step further. The parade features marching bands, clowns and the Floats and Falloons, by far the day's biggest attraction. Towering over crowds, they are a Macy's hybrid of cold air balloons and floats. Famous characters include Angelina Ballerina, the Statue of Liberty, and Santa Claus. Starting on 77th Street, it proceeds down Central Park West to Columbus Circle, then down Broadway to Macy's at 34th Street, and finally finishing on Seventh Avenue. Good places to watch include Times Square and Columbus Circle.

social.macys.com/parade2010/#/home

Macy's Fourth of July Fireworks Spectacular Saturday July 04, 2020 (4 July annually)

Where: The spectacle will take place from barges positioned in New York City's East River

Independence Day is celebrated throughout the States, but nowhere more than in New York City. Although many locals leave to spend the holiday on Long Island or in Upstate New York, thousands of others stay behind to watch Macy's Fourth of July Fireworks Spectacular. This is probably the biggest and best firework extravaganza in the country, culminating in a massive party. More than 10,000 fireworks explode from barges along the west side of Manhattan, synchronized and choreographed to music. It starts at sunset and the best place to watch is from the banks of the East River.

<http://www.ny.com/holiday/july4>

TD Five Boro Bike Tour Monday May 03, 2021 (TBC)

Where: Battery Park to Staten Island

The Commerce Bank Five Boro Bike Tour is the biggest cycling event in the USA, seeing 30,000 cyclists pedalling through the five boroughs of New York City on 42 miles (68km) of traffic-free avenues, highways and bridges. The route travels through Manhattan, the Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn and Staten Island, encompassing the world's longest single-span suspension bridge, the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge. The day ends with a festival at Fort Wadsworth, featuring live music, food and exhibitions. Spectators make a festival out of the event and line the route to cheer the cyclists on. For more details and information on how to enter, check out the official website.

<http://www.bikenewyork.org>

Gay Pride Week and March Monday June 15, 2020 to Wednesday June 24, 2020 (TBC 2020)

Where: The march which follows a route along 5th Avenue, right onto 8th Street, on to Greenwich Avenue and along Christopher Street in Greenwich Village.

Rainbow flags flutter in Greenwich Village and crowds of people dress up in outrageous costumes during New York's Lesbian and Gay Pride Week, with numerous events arranged to commemorate the Stonewall Riot and to show support for the LGBT community of the city. Highlights of the week's festivities include a massive rally, the dance on the pier and the culminating march. Some huge sponsors get involved in Pride Week and people travel from all over the world to participate. New York City has a vibrant gay community and many locals come out in support of the community during the many events. For more information and a full programme of events, check out the official website listed below.

<http://www.nycpride.org>

Times Square New Year's Eve Celebrations Thursday December 31, 2020 (31 December)

Where: Times Square

Times Square boasts one of the largest New Year's Eve celebrations in the world and the biggest party in New York. The famous lowering of the New Year's Eve Ball signifies the 60-second countdown to midnight and the tradition has become a worldwide symbol of welcoming in the New Year, viewed by millions across the globe. The festivities include the raising and lowering of the ball, music, an hourly big screen video countdown and a spectacular burst of fireworks. Revellers are showered with colourful confetti and are given celebratory hats, pom-poms and balloons to welcome in the New Year.

<http://www.timessquarenyc.org>

US Open Tennis Tournament Monday August 30, 2021 to Saturday September 12, 2020 (30 August to 12 September)

Where: Arthur Ashe Stadium, Flushing Meadows

The top names and seeds in international tennis vie for victory in the final Grand Slam event of the season in New York each year. First played back in 1881 in the State of Rhode Island as a men's singles event only, the tournament occurs annually at Flushing Meadows-Corona Park in Queens. It wasn't until 1968 that the US Open took the shape and structure it has today. Those wanting tickets for big games are advised to book as far in advance as possible. For more details, check out the official website listed below.

<http://www.usopen.org>

New York Fashion Week

Saturday September 11, 2021 (11 September)

Where: The Museum of the City of New York

Fashion gurus, gorgeous models and Hollywood socialites attend the New York Fashion Week to check out the latest on the catwalk for next year's Spring Collection. Sadly, it's almost impossible for the general public to gain access to the event. Even so, budding fashionistas flock to New York at this time to enjoy the many associated events and spend some time celebrity-spotting and strutting their designer threads. For more information of this prestigious fashion extravaganza check out the official website listed below.

nyfw.com/home/

Airports in New York City

JFK (JFK)

John F Kennedy International Airport

<http://www.kennedyairport.com>

Location: New York City The airport is located 15 miles (24km) southeast of central Manhattan.

Time: GMT -5 (GMT -4 from March to November).

Contacts: Tel: (718) 244 4444

Transfer between terminals: Passengers can travel between JFK's six terminals for free on the AirTrain, with any travel beyond that incurring various costs.

Getting to the city: Ground Transportation Information is available in the baggage claim, arrival areas of all terminals, providing information on buses, shared-ride vans, and limousines. The AirTrain links the airport to the subway, train, and bus system, which go to the city centre. SuperShuttle Manhattan is a 24-hour, shared, door-to-door service to anywhere between Battery Park and 227th, including all hotels. The service also reaches the boroughs of Queens, Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Staten Island. Go Airlink is another rideshare service, providing shuttles that travel between the airport and the city. Similarly, NYC Airporter is an express bus service that transports passengers from JFK to stations such as Grand Central and Penn, and the Port Authority Bus Terminal.

Car rental: Car hire companies represented at all terminals include Alamo, Avis, Budget, Dollar, Hertz, Enterprise, and National. The AirTrain shuttles passengers between the terminals and the car rental offices.

Airport Taxis: Taxis are available in front of all six terminals, with the general journey time to Manhattan being around 40 to 60 minutes long. Excluding tolls, the flat fee to Manhattan is around \$52, while other approximate fares include Brooklyn \$59 to \$64, Queens \$28 to \$33, Staten Island \$67 to \$79, and the Bronx \$48 to \$68. A journey to La Guardia Airport may cost \$34 to \$39, and Newark Airport \$97 to \$102, with a \$17.50 surcharge. Tipping is customary for good service. Travellers should only use taxis from the taxi dispatch booth and refuse offers from others.

Facilities: All terminals have ATMs, bureaux de change, bars, restaurants, and a wide selection of shops. Travellers will be able to find most services in the terminals, including wifi, medical facilities, information counters, and shoe-shiners.

Parking: JFK has two types of parking. Long-term parking is four miles (6km) from the terminals and served by the free AirTrain. Passengers should allow 30 minutes to reach their terminal. The Central Terminal Area (CTA) parking is adjacent to the terminals and provides daily parking needs. Signs to the parking facilities are colour-coded to indicate their proximity to terminals. A cell phone lot waiting area is located near the airport's entrance for drivers to wait for disembarking passengers, reducing traffic congestion.

La Guardia Airport (LGA)

New York La Guardia Airport

<http://www.laguardiaairport.com>

Location: New York City The airport is located eight miles (13km) east of central Manhattan, in the borough of Queens.

Time: GMT -5 (GMT -4 from March to November).

Contacts: Tel: (718) 533 3400

Transfer between terminals: There are two bus routes connecting the four La Guardia Terminals. The Route A Bus is a free service running every 15 minutes, stopping at all terminals in the central terminal area as well as the Marine Air Terminal. Travellers should expect 15 minutes travel time. The free Route B bus runs every 10 to 15 minutes between all four terminals, except the Marine Air Terminal, Delta Shuttle. The journey time is between 5 to 10 minutes.

Getting to the city: Ground Transportation Information is available in the baggage claim, arrival areas of all terminals. All service arrangements can be made at these counters. Public buses service the city and connect with the New York subway; the Q33 and Q47 service Manhattan and Queens. The New York Airport Service Express Bus leaves regularly for all areas in Manhattan. The SuperShuttle Manhattan is a 24-hour, shared door-to-door service that goes to all areas of the city.

Car rental: Car hire companies include Avis, Budget, Dollar, Hertz and National. The Arrivals level of each terminal has either car rental courtesy phones or counters. Free shuttles transport customers between the terminals and the car rental offices.

Airport Taxis: The Welcome Center Ground Transportation Counter is near the baggage claim area, offering information on authorised transportation services. There are taxis available outside each terminal.

Facilities: All terminals have ATMs and currency exchange can be found at the Central and US Airways Terminals, as well as a wide selection of bars, shops and restaurants, but the best choice is at the US Airways, Delta and Central Terminals. There are business facilities at Laptop Lane in the Central Terminal, including meeting rooms, dataports, internet access, fax, phones, printers, and photocopiers. Disabled facilities are good, but those with special needs should ideally contact their airline or travel agent in advance.

Parking: Short-term parking is available next to the terminals. Long-term parking is available in Lot 3, although there are limited spaces. Additional long-term car parking is located very close to the airport and can be accessed by following the 'P' to the airport exit. Express payment machines are located throughout the parking areas. Signs to the parking facilities in the terminal buildings are colour coded to indicate their proximity to the terminals. Free shuttle buses transport passengers to the terminal buildings.

Western New York State

Known as the Western Door by the indigenous Seneca Native Americans who originally inhabited the area, the western region of New York State is more than just a gateway to the rest of the country. Indeed, it's a spectacular mix of farmlands, gorges, lakes, and waterfalls.

A diversity of landscapes forged by ancient glaciers, it is strategically situated on two of the Great Lakes, Erie and Ontario. Western New York borders Canada and is a critical link between the two countries, as well as a major commercial and transportation hub for upstate New York.

Perhaps the biggest draw card to this area is the breath-taking beauty of Niagara Falls, in the extreme northwest of the state. It attracts millions of visitors annually, while the Finger Lakes below Lake Ontario are also an immensely popular attraction.

The region surrounding the lakes is home to the country's oldest commercial wine producing area. Cliff-hugging vineyards compete with rolling farmlands and fields of sunflowers border picturesque towns, harking back to the Victorian era.

However, it is not all sleepy hollows and rural landscapes. Bustling cities such as Rochester and Buffalo offer top class amenities and attractions, including parks, museums, galleries, and fine restaurants.

The Western New York State region is a healthy mix of natural beauty and urbanity, and there is plenty to see and do, from hiking, fishing, and white-water rafting to wine tasting, shopping, and dining.

Sightseeing in Western New York State

Western New York is chock full of interesting cultural sites, with tourism dominated by two immensely popular attractions. Niagara Falls is a celebrated honeymoon destination while the Finger Lakes attract hikers, campers, fishermen, and boaters from all over the US.

Another wonderful scenic attraction in the region is the Letchworth State Park, fondly named 'The Grand Canyon of the East'. The Allegeny State Park and the Allegheny Forest also offer ample space for outdoor recreation. Popular cities and towns include Rochester, Buffalo, Jamestown, and Niagara Falls, which all make good travel hubs. Rochester, famous for being the birthplace of amateur photography, is home to the Strong National Museum of Play and some celebrated theatres.

Buffalo's top tourist attractions include the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site, and some lovely gardens and parks. The Six Flags Darien Lake theme park and concert venue, about half way between Rochester and Buffalo, also attracts throngs of visitors in the warm summer months.

Western New York State Attractions

Niagara Falls

The Niagara Falls straddle the United States and Canadian border, 340 miles (547km) northwest of New York City. They are one of the most popular natural attractions in the country, attracting more than 20 million tourists a year. The river plunges over a cliff of dolostone and shale, forming one of the largest waterfalls on earth. While best appreciated via a boat trip, there are a number of different tours available that will probably touch on the numerous daredevils that have braved its drop. Many have gone over in barrels, while a tightrope crossing in 1859 has inspired scores of tightrope walkers to do the same.

Website: <http://www.niagaraparks.com>

Finger Lakes

The 11 narrow Finger Lakes are popular getaways for boating and fishing, the surrounding rolling hills interspersed with waterfalls, gorges and parks perfect for Hikers, cyclists and skiers. Its name comes from Native Americans believing the Finger Lakes formed when one of their gods reached out to bless their region, leaving behind an imprint of their hand. Known also for its wine industry, most of the vineyards sit on the Cayuga Wine Trail, overlooking the Cayuga Lake. They offer tours, tastings and a variety of tourist accommodation from luxury lodges to campsites.

Buffalo

Buffalo sits on the eastern shore of Lake Erie, serving as a good base for visiting Niagara Falls and for exploring the Finger Lakes region. The city has some noteworthy Victorian architecture and good museums. Indeed, the Albright-Knox Art Gallery contains an impressive collection of works by American artists and hosts many great touring exhibitions, while the Buffalo Zoo is home to an exotic assortment of animals from all over the world. The nearby Letchworth State Park is popular with hikers and offers wonderful views over the Genesee River Gorge, promoted as the 'Grand Canyon of the East'.

Adirondacks

The Adirondack Park begins 150 miles (241km) north of New York City and covers an area larger than the Grand Canyon and Yellowstone National Parks combined. This 2 million hectare (6 million acre) wilderness is full of natural attractions and historic sites.

Thousands of miles of streams and rivers cross the park, attracting canoeists and kayakers, and the hundreds of lakes and glassy ponds are ideal for boating, windsurfing, and swimming. There is also good fishing, particularly salmon, trout, and pike, but summer flies can be a nuisance.

The Adirondack Mountains are among the highest and most dramatic in the eastern United States. In the summer they attract hikers, horse riders, and rock climbers, and in winter there are about nine ski resorts operating. The best ski resort in the region is Whiteface, nine miles (14km) northeast of Lake Placid, which has some challenging skiing and spectacular views, but visitors should be aware of the icy winds which regularly whip up the valley.

Lake Placid is a major cross-country skiing destination with 283 miles (455km) of trails and has plenty of other activities including ice skating, tobogganing, and bobsleighbing, a must for braver visitors. Some ski lifts remain open in the summer months, ideal for idle mountain bikers.

Saranac Lake is a quintessential American small town with a quaint atmosphere and historic buildings, while Ticonderoga is home to a Revolutionary War fort and museum. Elizabethtown and Chester are laidback resort towns, and Old Forge is a good base for exploring the Mohawk Valley and Northern Forest Canoe Trail.

New York Attractions

Overview

Of course, many of the world's most famous landmarks sit in New York City, including the Statue of Liberty, the Empire State Building, and Times Square. Yet there is much more to this historic and scenically diverse state than the famous Big Apple.

Those who can tear themselves away from the sprawling metropolis will find the rest of the state also has a lot to offer. Within an hour's drive of the city, visitors can find the beaches of Long Island, or escape to the Catskill Mountains to fish, hike, or ski.

North upon the Hudson River, the state capital of Albany is a good base for exploring upstate New York. The beautiful Adirondacks region is in the centre of the state, offering some of the highest and most dramatic mountains in the eastern United States.

It is here where visitors can hike, ski, horse ride, or mountain bike. On the border with Canada, between lakes Ontario and Erie, is one of the country's most spectacular natural attractions, and certainly the most popular: Niagara Falls.

And located midway between Niagara Falls and New York City are the Finger Lakes. Despite being within 200 miles (322km) of the city, it remains one of the most unspoilt holiday areas in the USA, renowned not only for the picturesque lakes but also wineries and lush forests.

Tarrytown

Known as the setting of Washington Irving's *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, Tarrytown and its surrounds are filled with history. It is the birthplace of the author, home to the impressive Rockefeller residence and sits across the river from Hyde Park, where President Franklin D. Roosevelt was born. The late President's home has a library containing hundreds of photos and artefacts, as well as his car and a letter from Einstein that led to the development of the atomic bomb. Two miles (3km) outside Hyde Park is the Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, a spectacular Beaux Arts mansion.

The High Line

The High Line is a verdant elevated strip hovering between the skyscrapers of Manhattan's West Side. Built on what was once a freight rail line, this unique public park brings a welcome splash of greenery into the district. Drawing millions of visitors annually, it has led to a real estate boom in the areas it passes through, with apartments overlooking the pretty strip rocketing in value. The High Line features viewpoints, recreation areas and public spaces for exhibitions and productions. The 14th Street Passage and Chelsea Market Passage are semi-enclosed sections frequently used for public programs and art exhibitions. Picnic spots on the 23rd Street Lawn are ideal for peace and quiet while kids love features such as the Pershing Square Beams, where the original framework of steel beams is exposed to create a garden playground.

Website: www.thehighline.org

The Statue of Liberty

The universal symbol of freedom, the Statue of Liberty was the first thing seen by 12 million immigrants passing through Ellis Island Immigration Center. Sculpted by Frederic-Auguste Bartholdi and modelled on his mother, the French donated the statue to the US in 1875, and it was unveiled stateside in 1886. The reason was to commemorate the alliance between the two countries during the American Revolution. The ferry calls at both Liberty and Ellis Islands, and tourists can visit the Ellis Island Museum documenting the experiences of the immigrants. On Liberty Island, advance bookings allow visitors to access the crown of the famous statue, but these tickets must be booked some six months in advance for peak summer season.

Website: www.nps.gov/stli

World Trade Center - Ground Zero

The six hectare (16 acre) worksite that emerged from the rubble of the twin towers now symbolises the infamous events on September 11 2001, when almost 3,000 people lost their lives. Millions now come to pay tribute and witness the devastation at viewing sites. In January 2004, a design named Reflecting Absence by Michael Arad and Peter Walker was unveiled for the World Trade Center Memorial. The memorial features a landscaped civic plaza with two massive voids aligned with the footprints where the twin towers once stood. The memorial and museum are now open to the public, providing an accurate and moving account of what the community endured during the attacks. Tourists should be mindful that this is a sombre memorial frequented by mourning family members, so loud chatter and smiling selfies are inappropriate.

Website: www.national911memorial.org

Radio City Music Hall

Located in Rockefeller Center, Radio City Music Hall is one of the most famous theatres in the world. The home of the famous Rockettes chorus line, the interior of the theatre was declared a New York landmark in 1978. While not in regular use anymore, the Hall's beautiful cinema still hosts premieres, shows and selected feature films. The most popular event is the annual Radio City Music Hall Christmas Spectacular, attracting more than a million people and running since 1933. It's best to check the official website listings to see which potential productions and acts are on while tours run daily and usually receive rave reviews.

Website: www.radiocity.com

Empire State Building

The Empire State Building in New York is an iconic landmark in the sprawling Manhattan cityscape. Completed in 1931, it stretches 102 storeys into the sky and was considered the tallest building between 1931 and 1970. Today, it is only the 28th-tallest building in the world yet still retains much of its dramatic grandeur and presence. One of the most beloved activities is embarking on the journey to the top floor's observation deck, providing views across the entire city. It's best to visit between 8am and 11am, avoiding the scores of daily visitors. Free multimedia tours are downloaded with every admission.

Website: www.esbnyc.com

Central Park

The founders of New York set aside 340 hectares (840 acres) of central Manhattan as a public space, with Central Park officially opening in 1876 to provide an essential green lung within the concrete jungle of New York. It contains themed gardens, tennis courts, lakes and even a small zoo, infused with daily joggers, skaters, buskers and tourists. But there are areas beyond the range of baseballs and frisbees where tranquillity can be found, with music concerts and Shakespearian plays frequent occurrences. During winter, two ice-skating rinks open up in Central Park, with the Wollman Rink in particular considered one of the most picturesque in the world.

Website: www.centralparknyc.org

Museum of Modern Art

Founded in 1929, the Museum of Modern Art owns the most important collection of modern art in the United States. Referred to as MoMA, artists with work on display include greats such as Monet, Van Gogh, Matisse, Picasso, Max Beckman, Ansel Adams and Kiki Smith. What started as a gift of eight prints and a drawing developed into a vast and varied collection of some 150,000 paintings, prints, sculptures, photographs, and other media. MoMA's Library and Archives boast an impressive collection of books, historical documents and photographs. Priding itself as an educational institution, the Museum of Modern Art offers various activities and programmes for the general public. In addition, special segments broaden the community knowledge of and approach towards the exciting and puzzling world of modern art.

Website: www.moma.org

The Guggenheim Museum

Designed by renowned US architect Frank Lloyd Wright, the Guggenheim was built in 1959 and is an icon of Modernist architecture specifically created to showcase the modern art within. It features a highly celebrated collection of late 19th and 20th-century artworks, as well as touring exhibitions. Beneath a glass dome, a quarter mile ramp spirals down the inside of the building, past a collection including pieces by Pissarro, Kandinsky, Klee, Picasso, Toulouse-Lautrec, Cézanne, Mapplethorpe and Gober.

Website: www.guggenheim.org

Metropolitan Museum of Art

The Metropolitan Museum, affectionately known as the Met, possesses one of the greatest and largest art collections in the world. Banners above the Met's Fifth Avenue entrance herald the current attractions at this cherished New York institution. There are always temporary exhibitions from around the world alongside the impressive permanent collection. Highlights are numerous, with American collectors having the foresight and cash to buy up a large number of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist masterpieces from Europe at the end of the 19th century. The art collection at the Met now contains more than two million works of art from across the planet, from ancient worlds through to modern times. Some notable works are present from such greats as Van Gogh, Renoir, Monet, and Cezanne, rivalling any art collection on earth.

Website: www.metmuseum.org

American Museum of Natural History

Challenged only by its counterpart in London, the American Museum of Natural History is the largest and most important museum of its kind in the world. Forty five exhibition halls hold more than 30 million artefacts, quite enough to keep anyone busy on a rainy afternoon. The most popular exhibit is a 50ft (15m) tall skeleton of a barosaurus in the Theodore Roosevelt Rotunda, and there are three more spectacular dinosaur halls on the fourth floor. Other halls include the Hall of Biodiversity, the Hall of Ocean Life, and the Hall of Human Biology and Evolution. The fabulous Hayden Planetarium is a 90ft (27m) wide aluminium sphere that seems to float inside a massive glass cube, which in turn is home to the Rose Center for Earth and Space. Those tired of walking can check out the Museum of Television and Radio.

Website: www.amnh.org

Niagara Falls

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Website: www.niagaraparks.com

Long Island

Long Island extends 100 miles (161km) east of New York City into the Atlantic Ocean and is a popular weekend destination for New Yorkers and tourists. The glorious white, sandy beaches along the south shore are ideal for those seeking refuge from the sweltering city in the summer.

Jones Beach is a 6 mile (10km) stretch of coastline, with thousands of people converging to soak up the sun. Fire Island is the east coast's leading gay resort, accessible via a short ferry ride, while cliffs crown stately homes and luxurious mansions along the exclusive beaches of the north shore.

The Hamptons is a community in the far east of New York, its miles of pristine beaches attracting the rich and famous from all over the United States. The heart of its scene is East Hampton, which has some excellent shops, restaurants, and a lively nightlife.

In Long Island's North Fork, around the town of Cutchogue, are the winelands of New York. Of the 13 vineyards, the best known is Pindar, which has tours and tastings every day. Nearby, the pretty, 17th-century town of Orient offers white clapboard houses and unspoilt beaches.

There are hundreds of museums, attractions, and sporting facilities scattered around Long Island to suit all tastes. Buses depart for Long Island regularly each day, although the quickest way to get there is via the Long Island Railroad from Penn Station. If driving, visitors should head east on the Long Island Expressway from Manhattan.

Hudson Valley and the Catskills

Just north of New York City, the Hudson Valley is surprisingly rural and littered with charming towns, picturesque farms, and old mansions. Many New Yorkers head this way at the weekend, attracted by the slower pace of life and scenic drives.

Albany, the region's capital, was founded by Dutch fur trappers in the 17th century and made its money by controlling trade along the Erie Canal. There is not a great deal to do or see in Albany when it comes to traditional cultural sightseeing, but sights include the New York State Museum and the Albany Institute of History and Art.

The beautiful Catskills Mountains, northwest of New York City, has long been a popular vacation spot and the choice of many a wealthy New Yorker for their summer home. The region is dotted with picturesque towns, reservoirs, forests, parks, historic buildings, and plenty of resorts.

Nicknamed the Borscht Belt, from the 1940s to the 1960s, the Catskills was highly popular with Jewish New Yorkers in particular, and some of the finest Jewish comedians sprang from the area, including Woody Allen, Mel Brooks, and Joan Rivers.

The region is also famous for hosting one of the world's best-known entertainment events, the 1969 Woodstock Festival. Over 500,000 free spirits gathered on Max Yasgur's dairy farm in Bethel to see some of the finest musicians of the era.

Today, the site is open to the public as is a museum that houses archives and interesting information from the event. The Catskills also offer plenty of exciting outdoor activities, including hunting, fly-fishing, skiing, canoeing, hiking, camping, and even golf.

Finger Lakes

The 11 narrow Finger Lakes are popular getaways for boating and fishing, the surrounding rolling hills interspersed with waterfalls, gorges and parks perfect for Hikers, cyclists and skiers. Its name comes from Native Americans believing the Finger Lakes formed when one of their gods reached out to bless their region, leaving behind an imprint of their hand. Known also for its wine industry, most of the vineyards sit on the Cayuga Wine Trail, overlooking the Cayuga Lake. They offer tours, tastings and a variety of tourist accommodation from luxury lodges to campsites.

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Broadway

Going to the theatre is one of the most popular tourist events in New York and the shows on Broadway are world famous, boasting some of the best productions in the world from blockbuster musicals to intense and intimate dramas. There are ongoing shows that have been running for years, such as *The Lion King*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Chicago*, and *A Chorus Line*. Newer, edgier shows play off-Broadway, and may provide just as much entertainment at slightly lower prices. This is one way to experience part of the American dream, even if only on holiday. There is something to entertain people of all ages.

Website: www.broadway.com

Times Square

Though it is ultimately just an intersection at the corner of Broadway and 42nd Street, Times Square has achieved iconic status. In a single frame, it successfully represents the hive of activity that is New York City. Flashing advertisements produce a mesmerising and memorable sight, and account for why Times Square is used in countless films, TV series and books, and is the base for ABC's *Good Morning America* programs. Thousands gather annually for New Year's Eve in the square to see the famous ball drop. Since 2009, Times Square has been closed to traffic and visitors can now enjoy strolling and sitting at their leisure, instead of worrying about the city's notorious taxis and bustling vehicles.

Website: www.timessquare.com

Rockefeller Centre

This 22 acre (8ha) land houses a plethora of iconic New York City attractions. Radio City Music Hall ranks highly among visitors, having hosted multiple awards shows such as the Grammys, Emmys and MTV Music Awards and also being a concert venue frequented by today's top performers. The Rockefeller Plaza is the site of the eerie Lunchtime atop a Skyscraper photograph, as well as being the home of *Saturday Night Live* and popular TV series *30 Rock*. The Rockefeller Center also claims to have the best views of the city, a hotly contested competition for sure. At the building's base is the Rink at Rockefeller Center, with the golden statue of Prometheus at its head. Beneath is the concourse, an underground pedestrian mall boasting designer brands and food outlets.

Website: www.rockefellercenter.com

Brooklyn Bridge

The sheer scope of New York City is hard for visitors to understand until they've traversed the Brooklyn Bridge. Completed in 1883, it crosses 5,989 feet (1,825 m) of the East River and connects two of New York's biggest metropolises, Manhattan and Brooklyn. The construction was an impressive feat of engineering ingenuity and, upon completion, it was the longest suspension bridge in the world. Today, it is a treasured landmark of the city, colourfully illuminated at night to highlight the architectural towers and hangings. There is a pedestrian walkway from which visitors can savour vistas of both Manhattan and Brooklyn. Photographers looking for quintessential New York cityscapes should be sure to walk the bridge.

St Patrick's Cathedral

St Patrick's Cathedral is a magnificent example of Gothic architecture popular in 13th-century Europe. One of the city's most gorgeous buildings, its spires soar 330 feet (100m) into the air while its entrance is both grand and ornate. Built between 1850 and 1878, it is now the seat of the archbishop of New York and the largest catholic cathedral in the United States. To most New Yorkers and harried tourists, St Patrick's is most valued for its peace and tranquillity. But it's still an active place of worship although tourists are welcome they should show respect, especially during church services. Guided tours are available.

Website: www.saintpatrickscathedral.org

Grand Central Station

One of New York's most famous and best loved landmarks, Grand Central was opened in 1913 opposite Rockefeller Center. It is one of the world's largest train stations, with 44 platforms, but its true distinction is its magnificent architecture. Its striking ambiance is anchored by enormous windows and the refurbished ceiling covered by a detailed astronomical fresco. The terminal houses a number of good restaurants, budget-friendly eateries and speciality shops. The magnificent Vanderbilt Hall regularly houses public events, while there is also a one-hour guided tour; visitors should book several weeks ahead in peak season to avoid disappointment. Interestingly, Grand Central sees about double the amount of visitors every day as it does commuters.

Website: www.grandcentralterminal.com

Central Park Zoo

Home to some exotic and beautiful animals, the Central Park Zoo is a must for all children and animal lovers visiting the city. Residents at the zoo include the elusive red pandas, polar bears, snow leopards, and snow monkeys to name a few. The Tisch Children's Zoo is a great place for the young, with children able to pet the goats, sheep, alpacas, potbellied pigs, and other barnyard animals on display. Booking online may result in discounts and also allows visitors to skip the long summer queues.

Website: www.centralparkzoo.com

Wollman Rink

The Wollman Rink, located in Central Park and made famous by many movies, is a fantastic place to take the kids for the day during the winter months in New York City. The setting of this ice rink is beautiful, surrounded by trees with the New York City skyline above them. Children can even attend skating school while adults can host a party or event, guaranteeing an unforgettable experience. The rink is not just for children but also a popular spot for dates in New York City due to the romantic associations and stunning setting.

Website: www.wollmanskatingrink.com

Brooklyn Children's Museum

The Brooklyn Children's Museum is a great place to take the little ones while on holiday in New York City. It was founded in 1899 and its collections and exhibits include hands-on activities, role-playing opportunities, and resident animals. Thousands of artefacts are on display to teach children about science, the environment, culture, and the arts. There are no 'Do Not Touch' signs here! There is a cafe and a shop at the museum, and a special 'Totally Tots' section for kids under five. Adults must accompany children.

Website: www.brooklynkids.org

The Frick Collection

The Frick is quite possibly New York's most underrated art gallery, a collection of exceptional paintings featuring important works by Vermeer, Manet, Rembrandt, Whistler, Goya and Van Dyk. A highlight is the renowned pair of Holbein paintings of Thomas More and Thomas Cromwell, and a group of small bronze sculptures rated as some of the finest in the world. This was the New York residence of Henry Clay Frick, who transformed a fortune made in the coal business into this sublime building facing onto Central Park. The interior courtyard is a tranquil retreat from the busy world outside.

Website: www.frick.org

Staten Island Ferry

The ferry from Battery Park to Staten Island and back is a great way to see the Lower Manhattan skyline and Hudson River life. It's a must-see New York attraction that doesn't cost a thing. It also skirts the Statue of Liberty, affording decent views of this iconic structure. Most tourists stay onboard for the return leg, but it's worth hopping off and exploring a bit of Staten Island. Staten Island is a borough of New York City and a fun neighbourhood to explore, but the ferry journey, mainly used by commuters, is actually the main attraction. The ferry leaves roughly every 30 minutes or every hour and takes 25 minutes each way. Schedules are available on the official website.

Website: www.siferry.com

Greenwich Village

Greenwich Village began life as an industrial park but has been transformed by a vibrant arts community. Affectionately known as the Village, it's now home to New York University, the famous Washington Square Park and also the setting for the iconic sitcom *Friends*. Despite gentrification, the district has retained a bit of its artistic flair. There are a number of great off-Broadway theatres, as well as historic jazz and rock venues such as Bitter End, Village Vanguard, Small's, and the Blue Note. Additionally, there's an eclectic mix of international restaurants and cafes.

Wall Street

Home to the New York Stock Exchange, Wall Street has attained legendary status as the financial heart of the USA. The narrow street runs from Broadway to the East River and is home to landmarks such as Federal Hall, where George Washington was inaugurated as the first president. Twenty-three Wall Street still has shrapnel holes in its limestone facade from the 1920 Wall Street Bombing. Perhaps the most iconic symbol of Wall Street is the Wall Street Bull, a 7,100 pound (3,200kg) bronze sculpture by Arturo Di Modica. The sculpture is a popular photo opportunity in New York, symbolising financial optimism and prosperity. The installation of Fearless Girl, a small statue of a girl facing the beast, adds another layer of artistic intrigue. The statue was done by Kristen Visbal.

Coney Island

Coney Island has been a tourist attraction in New York City since the 1830s, when New Yorkers would flock to the beaches. Its movie theatres, amusement parks, museums, circus, aquarium and restaurants still attract crowds each summer. Claiming to be the birthplace of the hotdog, a visit to Coney Island isn't complete without sampling the yummy street food along the boardwalk. While filling their stomachs, visitors can gaze upon the fireworks that light up the sky each Friday around 9.30pm. The activities and amusements at Coney Island are in full swing from May to September, but many attractions close outside these months.

Website: www.coneyisland.com

Ellis Island

From 1892 to 1954, more than 20 million immigrants moved through the crowded halls of Ellis Island. Today, it draws millions of people each year as one of the most popular tourist attractions in New York City. The Ellis Island Immigration Museum offers multimedia exhibits and audio tours, a chance to experience the island as a new arrival might have back in the day. One of the more popular exhibits is the American Family Immigration Center, where visitors can access passenger records to find relatives, while there are also special children's tours. Reached by ferry, the journey also stops at the iconic Statue of Liberty.

Website: www.ellisland.org

Currency

The official currency is the US Dollar (USD), which is divided into 100 cents. Only major banks exchange foreign currency. ATMs are widespread and credit cards are widely accepted. Banking hours are Monday to Friday 9am to 3pm.

Exchange rate for 1 USD - U.S. Dollar

0.00 BMD Bermudan Dollar	0.93 EUR Euro	0.80 GBP U.K. Pound Sterling	152.99 JPY Japanese Yen	1.37 CAD Canadian Dollar	0.91 CHF Swiss Franc
1.52 AUD Australian Dollar	39.40 UAH Ukrainian Hryvnia	443.91 KZT Kazakhstani Tenge	93,075.00 LBP Lebanese Pound	4.86 LYD Libyan Dinar	6.86 BOB Bolivian Boliviano
0.00 NPR Nepalese Rupee	0.00 OMR Omani Rial	0.00 QAR Qatari Rial	1.35 SGD Singapore Dollar	10.82 SEK Swedish Krona	0.00 TTD Trinidad Tobago Dollar
0.00 VEF Venezuelan Bolivar	58.11 DOP Dominican Peso	0.00 HRK Croatian Kuna	16.95 MXN Mexican Peso	610.53 XOF West African CFA Franc	0.00 PGK Papua New Guinean kina
0.00 BSD Bahamian Dollar	0.00 FJD Fiji Dollar	0.00 HNL Honduran Lempira	133.87 DZD Algerian Dinar	0.00 MMK Myanma Kyat	0.00 BWP Botswana Pula
3.72 PEN Peruvian Nuevo Sol	938.44 CLP Chilean Peso	386.84 AMD Armenia Dram	23.29 CZK Czech Koruna	17.63 MDL Moldova Lei	139.89 ISK Icelandic Krona
12,582.40 UZS Uzbekistan Sum	3.72 ILS Israeli New Sheqel	0.71 JOD Jordanian Dinar	0.00 KWD Kuwaiti Dinar	38.15 UYU Uruguayan Peso	0.00 MUR Mauritian Rupee
0.00 NIO Nicaraguan Córdoba	10.88 NOK Norwegian Krone	4.03 PLN Polish Zloty	3.75 SAR Saudi Riyal	0.00 LKR Sri Lanka Rupee	36.79 THB Thai Baht
3.66 AED U.A.E Dirham	5.09 BRL Brazilian Real	4.63 RON Romanian New Leu	7.81 HKD Hong Kong Dollar	610.53 XAF Central African CFA Franc	25,405.70 VND Vietnamese Dong
878.36 ARS Argentine Peso	0.00 XCD East Caribbean Dollar	0.00 GTQ Guatemalan Quetzal	10.06 MAD Moroccan Dirham	0.00 BHD Bahrain Dinar	1.00 PAB Panamanian Balboa
1.70 AZN Azerbaijan Manat	3,920.00 COP Colombian Peso	88.42 KGS Kyrgyzstan Som	362.00 HUF Hungarian Forint	10.89 TJS Tajikistan Ruble	16,073.70 IDR Indonesian Rupiah
47.95 EGP Egyptian Pound	1,358.84 KRW South Korean Won	7,456.52 PYG Paraguayan Guaraní	4.74 MYR Malaysian Ringgit	508.31 CRC Costa Rican Colón	1.67 NZD New Zealand Dollar
277.87 PKR Pakistani Rupee	91.39 RUB Russian Rouble	18.51 ZAR South African Rand	3.13 TND Tunisian Dinar	0.00 BBD Barbadian Dollar	1.82 BGN Bulgarian Lev
32.33 TRY Turkish Lira	57.28 PHP Philippine Peso	32.31 TWD New Taiwan Dollar	1,164.84 NGN Nigerian Naira	0.00 XPF CFP Franc	0.00 GHS Ghanaian Cedi
0.00 JMD Jamaican Dollar	0.00 ANG Neth. Antillean Guilder	0.00 BND Brunei Dollar	108.90 RSD Serbian Dinar	7.24 CNY Chinese Yuan	6.94 DKK Danish Krone
3.49 TMT New Turkmenistan Manat	83.42 INR Indian Rupee				