Welcome to New York City

Epicenter of the arts. Dining and shopping capital. Trendsetter in fashion and design. Home to an astonishingly diverse mix of peoples and cultures. Add it all up and you have one of the most dynamic destinations on earth.

With its compact size and streets packed with eye-candy of all sorts – architectural treasures, Old World cafes, atmospheric booksellers and cute shops – New York City is an urban wanderer’s delight. Crossing continents is as easy as walking over a few avenues in this jumbled city of 200-plus nationalities. Every neighborhood offers a dramatically different version of NYC: from the 100-year-old Jewish delis of the Upper West Side to the meandering cobblestone lanes of Greenwich Village.

When the sun sinks slowly beyond the Hudson River and luminous skyscrapers light up the night, New York transforms into one grand stage. Well-known actors take to the legendary theaters of Broadway; world-class soloists, dancers and musicians perform at venues large and small across town. Whether high culture or low, New York embraces it all: in-your-face rock shows at Williamsburg dives, lavish opera productions at the Lincoln Center, and everything in between. This is a city of experimental theater, improv comedy, indie cinema, ballet, poetry readings, burlesque, world music, jazz and so much more. If you can dream it up, it’s probably happening in NYC.
**Lonely Planet’s New York City**

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Plan Your Trip

This Year in New York City

New York City

No matter when you visit, there's always something happening in New York City, with music festivals, holiday markets and costume parades packing the year's calendar. Be sure to plan ahead for the bigger events.

Above: Village Halloween Parade (p15); Top Right: Independence Day fireworks (p12); Bottom Right: Cherry Blossom Festival, Brooklyn Botanic Garden (p9)
Top Events & Festivals

Cherry Blossom Festival Apr 28–29 (p9)

Shakespeare in the Park Late May–Aug (p10)

SummerStage Jun–Aug (p11)

Independence Day Jul 4 (p12)

Village Halloween Parade Oct 31 (p15)
March

After months of freezing temperatures and thick winter coats, the odd warm spring day appears and everyone rejoices – though it’s usually followed by a week of sub-zero drear as winter lingers on.

🌟 Armory Show Mar 8–11
New York’s biggest art show (www.thearmoryshow.com) brings together some of the world’s top galleries, with art collectors and curators in a dazzling showcase of what’s new on the art scene. It happens on Piers 92 and 94, off Twelfth Ave (near 53rd St).

だし St Patrick’s Day Parade Mar 17
A massive audience, rowdy and wobbly from cups of green beer, lines Fifth Ave on March 17 for this popular parade (www.nycstpatricksparade.org) of bagpipe blowers, sparkly floats and clusters of Irish-lovin’ politicians. The parade, which was first held here in 1762, is the city’s oldest and largest.

🌟 New Directors/New Films Late Mar
Hosted by the Film Society of Lincoln Center, this 12-day film fest (www.newdirectors.org) is a great place to discover emerging directors from around the globe. It’s now in its 47th year, so you can count on an impressive lineup.

🌟 Macy’s Flower Show Late Mar–Early Apr
For two weeks in the early spring, Macy’s becomes a sweet-smelling floral extravaganza. The flagship store on Herald Square hosts elaborate displays of blooms, lush mini-landscapes and clever blends of the natural and human-made environment.
Plan Your Trip

This Year in New York City

July

As the city swelters, locals flee to beachside escapes on Long Island. It’s a busy month for tourism, however, as holidaying North Americans and Europeans fill the city.

Independence Day  Jul 4
America’s Independence Day (www.macys.com) is celebrated on the 4th of July with dramatic fireworks over the East River, starting at 9pm. Good viewing spots include the waterfronts of the Lower East Side and Williamsburg, Brooklyn, or any high rooftop or east-facing Manhattan apartment.

Nathan’s Famous Hot Dog Eating Contest  Jul 4
For rare skills not often celebrated on the sports pages, head to Surf Ave and Stillwell in Coney Island to see competitive eaters down ungodly numbers of hot dogs in just 10 minutes (www.nathansfamous.com/contest). The current record for men is 70 by long-time champ Joey Chestnut. For women, it’s 45 – held by the 98lb Sonya Thomas.

Lincoln Center Festival  Mid-Jul–Late Jul
This summer, skip the beach and take advantage of the stellar lineup of drama, ballet, opera and new music hitting Lincoln Stages over three weeks in July (www.lincolncenterfestival.org). Expect high-quality and highly original fare.

Lincoln Center Out of Doors  Late Jul–Early Aug
New York City’s performing arts powerhouse stages a festive lineup of concerts and dance parties at outdoor stages in the Lincoln Center complex (www.lcoutofdoors.org). Afrobeat, Latin jazz and country are all part of the lineup, and there are special events for families.
Plan Your Trip

Need to Know

**Daily Costs**

**Budget**

Less than $100
- Dorm bed: $40–70
- Slice of pizza: $4
- Food-truck taco: from $3
- Bus or subway ride: $2.75

**Midrange**

$100–300
- Double room in a mid-range hotel: around $200
- Brunch for two at a mid-range restaurant: $70
- Dinner for two at a mid-range eatery: $130
- Craft cocktail at a lounge bar: $14–18
- Discount TKTS ticket to a Broadway show: $80
- Brooklyn Academy of Music orchestra seats: from $84

**Top End**

More than $300
- Luxury stay at the NoMad Hotel: $350–850
- Tasting menu at a top-end restaurant: $90–330
- A 1½-hour massage at the atmospheric Great Jones Spa: $205
- Metropolitan Opera orchestra seats: $100–390

**Advance Planning**

**Two months before** Secure hotel reservations as soon as possible – prices increase the closer you get to your arrival date. Snag tickets to your favorite Broadway blockbuster.

**Three weeks before** If you haven’t done so already, score a table at your top-choice high-end restaurant.

**One week before** Surf the web and scan blogs and Twitter for the latest restaurant and bar openings, plus upcoming art exhibitions.

**Useful Websites**

- **Lonely Planet** (www.lonelyplanet.com/usa/new-york-city) Destination information, hotel bookings, traveler forum and more.
- **Explore Brooklyn** (www.explorebkbk.com) Brooklyn-specific events and listings.

**Currency**

US dollar (US$)

**Language**

English

**Visas**

The US Visa Waiver Program allows nationals of 38 countries to enter the US without a visa.

**Money**

ATMs widely available; credit cards accepted at most hotels, stores and restaurants.

**Cell Phones**

Most US cell (mobile) phones, besides the iPhone, operate on CDMA, not the European standard GSM – make sure you check compatibility with your phone service provider. There are many stores (mostly run by T-Mobile, Verizon or AT&T) where you can purchase a cheap phone and load it with prepaid minutes, to avoid a long-term contract.

**Time**

Eastern Standard Time (GMT/UTC minus five hours)

**Tourist Information**

There are official NYC Visitor Information Centers throughout the city. The main office is in Midtown (p233). For more, see the Survival Guide (p229)