

SoHo & Chinatown

SOHO | NOHO | NOLITA | CHINATOWN | LITTLE ITALY

Neighborhood Top Five

1 Strutting your stuff down the concrete catwalks of **SoHo** (p94) – shopping bags in hand – then ducking down a side street to hunt for one-of-a-kind wares.

2 Slurping soup dumplings and browsing designer wares of ambiguous au-

thenticity amid the sizzling lights of **Chinatown** (p84).

3 Stepping into the veritable time machine that is the **Merchant's House Museum** (p83) to explore what life was like in New York during the 1800s.

4 Wagging your pressed index finger and thumb in delight while devouring steaming slices of pizza in **Little Italy** (p82).

5 Escaping the urban frenzy for a meditative moment at the **Mahayana Buddhist Temple** (p88) – the largest in Chinatown.



For more detail of this area, see Map p418 and p421 ➔

Explore SoHo & Chinatown

Like a colorful quilt of subneighborhoods sewn together in mismatched patches, the areas orbiting SoHo (or South of HOuston) feel like urban crumbs mopped up from other countries and sprinkled throughout lower Manhattan. Down in SoHo, the boxy blocks of Midtown are swapped for a decidedly human scale, making a casual stroll feel as if you're walking through an elegant village (with the exception of Broadway, the main drag).

And while the sidewalks unfurl in a regal manner, there's a palpable anything-goes spirit that wafts up like stall smoke in Chinatown, where frenzied crowds and hawkers mingle under the winking lights of aging billboards (think Vegas in the '80s). The best way to weave your way around is on foot – you'll get nowhere fast on wheels. And don't bother planning your route of attack. It's all about absorbing the atmosphere and letting your senses guide you: follow your nose down an alleyway for freshly baked pork buns, let the prayer gong guide you to a Buddhist temple, or look down colorful Canal St.

Local Life

➔ **Family style** Chinatown has the best dining deals around, and locals love to head downtown to satisfy their hankering for hole-in-the-wall fare. Experience the area's bustling dining dens with a handful of friends and eat 'family style' (order a ton of dishes and sample spoonsful of each). You'll be sure the waiter left a zero off the bill.

➔ **Side streets** The multilaned thoroughfares of SoHo are reserved for the legions of tourists – you'll find New Yorkers scouring the one-of-a-kind boutiques on the side streets for unique buys and slashed prices.

Getting There & Away

➔ **Subway** The subway lines dump off along various points of Canal St (J, M, Z, N, Q, R, W and 6). Once you arrive it's best to explore on foot. The neighborhood's downtown location makes it easy to access from Midtown and Brooklyn.

➔ **Bus & Taxi** Avoid taking cabs or buses – especially in Chinatown, as the traffic is full-on. For SoHo, have your taxi let you off along Broadway if you aren't fussed about your final destination. Don't take cabs south of Canal St if you're simply planning to wander around Chinatown.

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

Serious shopaholics should consult the city's in-the-know retail blogs before hitting the streets of SoHo – there's always some sort of 'sample sale' or marked-down offer going on.

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Dutch (p89)
- ➔ Balthazar (p89)
- ➔ Joe's Shanghai (p93)
- ➔ Café Gitane (p89)

For reviews, see p89 ➔

Best Places to Drink

- ➔ Pravda (p93)
- ➔ Jimmy (p94)
- ➔ Apotheke (p94)
- ➔ Randolph (p94)

For reviews, see p93 ➔

Best Places to Shop

- ➔ Housing Works Book Store (p94)
- ➔ Kiosk (p94)
- ➔ McNally Jackson (p94)
- ➔ Purl Soho (p95)
- ➔ Jack Spade (p95)

For reviews, see p94 ➔