

Union Square, Flatiron District & Gramercy

Neighborhood Top Five

1 Perusing floor after floor of wildly priced home goods amid the glorious warehouse-chic surrounds of **ABC Carpet & Home** (p172).

2 Wandering between stalls stuffed with leafy farm produce at the **Union Square Greenmarket**

(p172), which transforms into a delightful Christmas market in winter.

3 Slurping handcrafted brews at Eataly's secreted Beer Garden, **Birreria** (p166), lofted high up among the Flatiron District's clock towers.

4 Walking square around **Gramercy Park** (p165), enjoying one of the city's most intimate urban moments.

5 Snacking on **Shake Shack** (p166) burgers amid audacious art installations in Madison Square Park.



For more detail of this area, see Map p432 ➔

Explore Union Square, Flatiron District & Gramercy

Although Union Sq earned its moniker from rather practical and prosaic roots, the name today has become so much more than the junction of two roads. In many ways the neighborhood is the union of many disparate parts of the city, acting as the veritable urban glue linking unlikely cousins. Some may criticize the area for not having a distinct personality of its own, but upon closer inspection, Union Sq and the Flatiron District seem to borrow rather cautiously and selectively from their neighbors.

There's not a lot of ground to cover, so the best plan of attack is to use the two major public spaces – Union Sq and Madison Square Park – as your anchors. From Union Sq you'll feel the Village vibe spilling over with the likes of quirky cafes, funky storefronts and dreadlocked buskers in the square. Up towards 23rd St you'll find the namesake Flatiron Building looming over the commercial quarter, replete with crowded lunch spots and after-work watering holes. East of both public spaces is Gramercy, which feels predominantly residential save for a generous peppering of restaurants throughout.

Local Life

➔ **Meals on wheels** The Union Sq and Flatiron areas have designated parking spaces for some of the best food trucks and carts in town. Head to the southwest corner of 14th St and Third Ave to check out trucks hawking their edible wares. The halal food cart at 28th St and Madison Ave has garnered quite a cult following – some say it's the best one in town.

➔ **Gourmet groceries** Eataly (p172) is making a name for itself as the place to go for Italophile food buffs, but locals do much more of their everyday shopping at Whole Foods (p173) and Trader Joe's (p172).

Getting There & Away

➔ **Subway** A slew of subway lines converge below Union Sq, shuttling passengers up Manhattan's East Side on the 4, 5 and 6 lines straight across to Williamsburg on the L or up and over to Queens on the N, Q and R lines. The L also travels across to the West Side, although when there's no traffic it costs about the same to take a cab (if you're two or more people). Take the Q for an express link up to Times Sq.

➔ **Bus** Easy to remember, the M14 and the M23 provide cross-town service along 14th St and 23rd St respectively. Go for the bus over the subway if you're traveling between two eastern points in Manhattan – it's not worth traveling over to Union Sq to walk back to First Ave.

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

Human traffic can be overwhelming in Union Sq, especially along 14th St. If you're in a rush, or trying to hoof it on foot, then switch over to 13th St and you'll cover a lot more ground in much less time.

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Birreria (p166)
- ➔ ABC Kitchen (p166)
- ➔ Casa Mono (p166)
- ➔ Ess-a-Bagel (p166)

For reviews, see p164 ➔

Best Places to Drink

- ➔ Raines Law Room (p168)
- ➔ Beauty Bar (p169)
- ➔ Gramercy Tavern (p167)
- ➔ Boxers NYC (p169)
- ➔ Crocodile Lounge (p169)

For reviews, see p168 ➔

Best Places to Take Photos

- ➔ Trader Joe's (p172), looking up Irving Pl toward the Chrysler Building
- ➔ Birreria (p166), from the roof deck
- ➔ The south side of Madison Square Park (p164) for a full-frontal of the Flatiron Building
- ➔ From the stone steps on the southern end of Union Sq (p162), capturing the chanting protestors or scurrying buskers

For reviews, see p164 ➔