

# INTRODUCING NYC



*In a New York minute: taxis zoom through bustling Times Square (p143)*

IZZY KERIBAR

New York can be anything you want it to be. It's why countless people have pinned their dreams on the place, thrown caution to the wind and shown up on its doorstep.

And it's why visitors keep streaming in from all corners of the globe, grasping at their silver-screen visions – and finding them – but discovering plenty more on the way. New York is a city that's surprising yet malleable, incredibly straightforward yet bafflingly complex. It's got so many sides and so much to offer that it can be intimidating, even to the most urban-minded of visitors. But approach it with a combination of organization and openness, and you'll be met with some staggering and unexpected rewards.

You could decide you'd like your day to be filled with high culture and trendy eating, for example, and – voila! – you're working your way through the Museum of Modern Art, then watching the New York City Ballet perform at the Lincoln Center. Or perhaps you like your city to be tougher, and choose to spend an afternoon wandering through the twisting streets of Chinatown and in the edgy art galleries of Williamsburg. Just don't be too shocked if your day of high culture turns gritty when you come across a gifted jazz singer on the subway platform – or if your bohemian day gets fancy when a trendy boutique seduces you and you're shelling out for the perfect pair of shoes before you know it. Whatever. New York is easy that way.

## CITY LIFE

There's both good news and bad news in New York City at the time of writing. The bad – the state of the city's economy – is no surprise, considering the financial troubles of the entire country. With an unemployment rate mirroring the nation's at just over 10 percent, the hotel occupancy rate down to 88.2 percent (from 92.8 in mid-2008) and countless new construction projects sitting empty or stalled altogether, some may wonder where the bright spots could be. But that's where you come in, as 2009 brought in a record 47 million visitors, with nearly 10 percent from overseas, putting NYC in the coveted spot of number one tourist destination in the country. And the city is setting even higher goals for tourism in the coming years, ramping up its reach by opening new tourist offices in Toronto, Moscow and Mumbai, and launching new media campaigns in Italy and Germany, all in an attempt to bring in 50 million annual visitors by 2015.

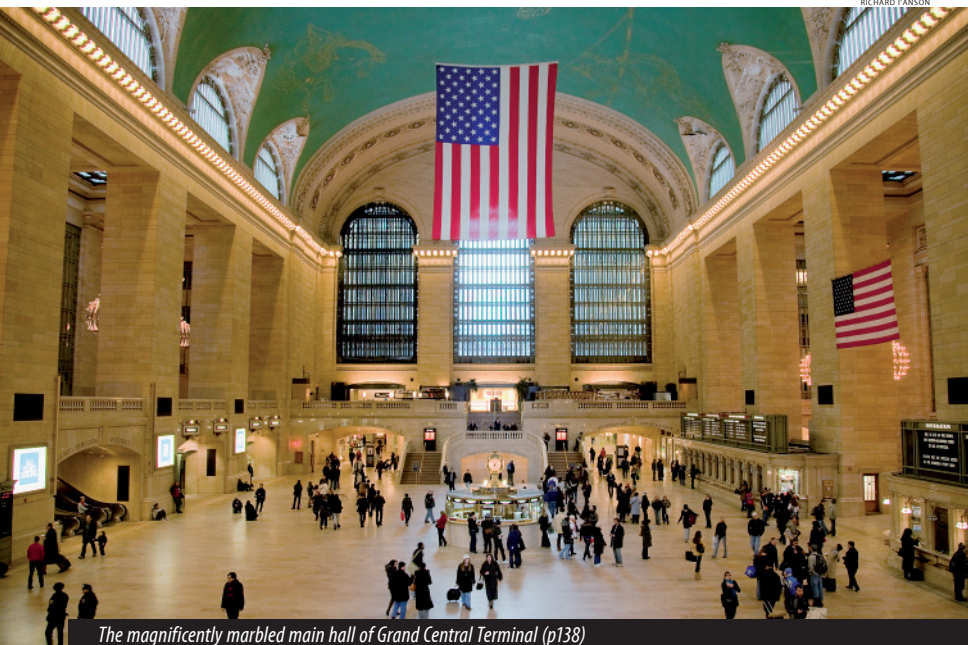
Luckily, visitors are drawn to new attractions, and a spate of them – with Harlem's Dwyer Cultural Center, the renovated El Museo del Barrio of Hispanic art, and parks like the elevated High Line and the Water Taxi Beach on Governor's Island among them – are here to help the cause.

The low crime rate – which dropped to a 40-plus-year low in 2009 – doesn't hurt, either. It's good information for the many out-of-towners who still fear they will visit here and find the New York of the 1970s. Though the city's major facelift has been widely flaunted, sometimes you just have to see something to believe it.

New York is cleaning up its act in other ways, too. It's been attempting to improve the state of public health with various programs, fix the school system and turn itself into the lean, 'green' machine that it should be, by calling for environmentally sound development and transportation policies. It's the city of the future. And it's here right now.

**'It's the city of the future.  
And it's here right now.'**

RICHARD FANSON



*The magnificently marbled main hall of Grand Central Terminal (p138)*

# THE AUTHORS

## Ginger Adams Otis



Although not a native daughter, Ginger is proud to call New York City home. A country girl from New Hampshire, she starting living in the city fast lane in the late 1990s. Ginger now considers herself a New Yorker except

during baseball season, when she reverts to being a die-hard member of the Red Sox nation. Ginger's done extensive reporting for radio outlets, newspapers and magazines in Central and South America, and worked on Lonely Planet guides in Brazil, South America, Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. When not working for Lonely Planet she's an intrepid beat reporter for one of New York's daily newspapers. Ginger was the coordinating author for this book and wrote the Sleeping and Day Trips & Excursions chapters.

## Beth Greenfield



A New Jersey native, Beth spent her teenage years yearning to someday live on the other side of the river. She began living the dream in 1993, right after college, and has been a New Yorker ever since. She's currently a staff editor at

*Time Out New York* magazine, and has written about travel, entertainment, gay culture and parenting for publications including the *New York Times*, *Time Out New York Kids* and *Out*. Her memoir, *Ten Minutes From Home*, was recently published by Random House. For Lonely Planet, Beth contributed to the previous three editions of *New York City* as well as to *Miami & the Keys*, *Mexico* and *USA*. Beth wrote this edition's Introducing NYC, Getting Started, Background, Neighborhoods (Manhattan), Eating (Manhattan), The Arts, Gay & Lesbian NYC and Directory chapters.

## Regis St Louis



A Hoosier by birth, Regis grew up in a sleepy town where he dreamed of big-city intrigue and small, expensive apartments. He settled in New York, which had all that and more, in 2001. Based in Boerum Hill, Brook-

lyn, Regis is a full-time travel writer and has contributed to more than two dozen Lonely Planet titles. For this edition, Regis wrote the Shopping, Drinking & Nightlife, Sports & Activities, Transportation, NYC Renaissance and The City of Arts chapters and cowrote the Neighborhoods and Eating chapters.

## LONELY PLANET AUTHORS

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# GETTING STARTED

New York will lead, and you must follow. Still, it can't hurt to be armed with a well-mapped plan, as the head-spinning number of options in this vibrant city will pull you in all directions. It's a dream destination, after all, and you'll want to know you experienced as much as possible. So budget your time – knowing that everything will take about twice as much time as you'd figured – and you won't be sorry.

## WHEN TO GO

New York shines in all seasons. Spring and fall, with their mild temperatures and disarmingly beautiful blossoms and foliage, are optimal times for strolling, which you'll do a lot of here. Summer brings stifling heat and sizzling pavements but other rewards aplenty, from outdoor concerts and festivals to crowd-free weekends, reduced hotel rates and perfect opportunities for side trips to the seashore. Finally, while winter can be chilly, it's nothing that can't be cured by lingering in cozy museums and cafes – or by the fact that hotel rates tend to drop after the fun and frenzied holidays, when the crowds thin out. Plus, experiencing a New York City snowstorm, when noise gets muffled and jaded city folk act like wide-eyed kids, is quite a heartwarming treat.

## FESTIVALS

It seems as though there's always some sort of celebration going on here. National holidays, religious observances and just plain ol' weekends prompt parades, parties or street fairs, with highlights such as the fireworks on July Fourth and the street parades for Halloween (October), Thanksgiving (November) and Gay Pride (June).

Federal holidays such as Labor Day, Christmas and Thanksgiving may affect business hours and transit schedules. While they won't affect your ability to eat out, explore or be entertained, they could put a crimp in your plans to visit the post office or bank. Check with your hotel concierge (or local host) before setting out.

## January

### THREE KINGS PARADE

☎ 212-831-7272; [www.elmuseo.org](http://www.elmuseo.org)

Every year in the first week of January, the streets of Spanish Harlem are filled with parading schoolchildren, donkeys and sheep,

celebrating Christmas in the tradition of many Latin American and Caribbean countries. Check the website for route details.

### WINTER RESTAURANT WEEK

☎ 212-484-1222; [www.nycvisit.com](http://www.nycvisit.com)

One of two official Restaurant Weeks (the other is in July), this marks a wonderful opportunity to try the expensive, high-profile restaurant of your dreams – nearly 200 participating eateries offer three-course lunches for \$20 or so and three-course dinners for \$30.

## February

### LUNAR (CHINESE) NEW YEAR FESTIVAL

[www.explorechinatown.com](http://www.explorechinatown.com)

One of the biggest Chinese New Year celebrations in the country, this display of fireworks and dancing dragons draws mobs of thrill-seekers into the streets of Chinatown. The date of Chinese New Year fluctuates from year to year, sometimes falling in late January but often in early February.

### MERCEDES-BENZ FASHION WEEK

[www.mbfashionweek.com/newyork](http://www.mbfashionweek.com/newyork)

The infamous Bryant Park fashion shows are sadly not open to the public. But whether you're invited or not, being in the city this week – when the couture world descends upon Manhattan to thrill over new looks – could provide a vicarious thrill, especially if you can find the after-parties. A second fashion week is held in September.

### WESTMINSTER KENNEL CLUB DOG SHOW

[www.westminsterkennelclub.org](http://www.westminsterkennelclub.org)

Who will be Best in Show? Catch the oft-mocked parade of pure breeds at this dead-serious canine showcase, held annually at Madison Square Garden (p305).

## March

### ST PAT'S FOR ALL PARADE

☎ 718-721-2780; [www.stpatsforall.com](http://www.stpatsforall.com)

Held early in the month in Sunnyside, Queens, this festive community affair is an inclusive answer to the mainstream St Patrick's Day Parade (below), which bans gay groups from marching.

### ST PATRICK'S DAY PARADE March 17

☎ 718-793-1600

A massive audience, rowdy and wobbly from cups of green beer, lines Fifth Ave on March 17 for this popular parade of bagpipe blowers, sparkly floats and clusters of Irish-lovin' politicians.

## April

### EASTER PARADE & EASTER BONNET FESTIVAL Easter Sunday

[www.saintpatrickscathedral.org](http://www.saintpatrickscathedral.org)

This loosely organized tradition brings mobs of well-clad folks to the stretch of Fifth Ave (closed off to traffic for the day) in front of St Patrick's Cathedral, where they strut in the sun to show off their elaborate bonnets, caps and other headgear. The fun usually lasts from 10am to 4pm.

### HAVANA FILM FESTIVAL

[www.hffny.com](http://www.hffny.com)

This beloved film fest screens shorts, docs and features from Cuba, the Caribbean, Mexico and Central and South America.

### TAX DAY April 15

April 15 is the deadline for Americans to pay off Uncle Sam. In NYC, it's just another reason to dress up and make some noise. Check out both the parties and protestors who gather on the grand steps of the 24-

hour General Post Office (Map pp144–5), with many procrastinators rushing by to get their postmarks, in a quirky, festive display of free speech.

## May

### TRIBECA FILM FESTIVAL

☎ 212-941-2400; [www.tribecafilmfestival.com](http://www.tribecafilmfestival.com)

Robert De Niro co-organizes this annual downtown film fest, held in the first week of May. The week of screenings, featuring world and US premieres, has become a prestigious, celeb-studded event, with plenty of red-carpet action.

### CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

☎ 718-623-7200; [www.bbg.org](http://www.bbg.org)

Known in Japanese as *Sakura Matsuri*, this annual tradition, held the first weekend in May, celebrates the pink, puffy flowering of the Kwanzan cherry trees along the Brooklyn Botanic Garden's famous esplanade. It's complete with entertainment, refreshments and awe-inspiring beauty.

### TD BANK FIVE BORO BIKE TOUR

[www.bikenewyork.org](http://www.bikenewyork.org)

May is Bike Month, featuring two-wheelin' tours, parties and other events for pedal-pushing New Yorkers. Bike New York's Five Boro Tour, the main event, sees thousands of cyclists hit the pavement for a 42-mile ride, much of it on roads closed to traffic or waterfront paths through each of the city's five boroughs.

### FLEET WEEK

☎ 212-245-0072; [www.intrepidmuseum.com](http://www.intrepidmuseum.com)

For one week at the end of the month, Manhattan resembles a 1940s movie set as clusters of fresh-faced, uniformed sailors go 'on the town' to look for adventures. The ships they leave behind, docked in the Hudson River, invite the curious to hop aboard for tours.

## June

### PUERTO RICAN DAY PARADE

[www.nationalpuertoricandayparade.org](http://www.nationalpuertoricandayparade.org)

The second weekend in June attracts thousands of flag-waving revelers for the annual Puerto Rican pride parade. Now in its fifth decade, it runs up Fifth Ave from 44th to 86th Sts.

## ONLY IN NYC

Get an only-in-New York opportunity with the following events' unique perspectives:

- Open House New York (p24)
- Hot Nude Yoga New Year's Eve (p25)
- How! Festival (p23)
- Queens Pride March (p22)
- Mermaid Parade (p22)
- Nathan's Famous Hot-Dog-Eating Contest (p23)

## HOT SUMMER IN THE CITY

The following organizations present frequent events and series, mainly in the summer months.

### Bryant Park/HBO Summer Film Series

Every Monday night from mid-June through August, a mob of New Yorkers bring blankets and picnic dinners to this patch of green ([www.bryantpark.org](http://www.bryantpark.org)) in Midtown, trying to catch a good spot for watching the classic films – *Casablanca*, *Annie Hall*, *Psycho* and others – that show on the big outdoor screen.

### Celebrate Brooklyn

From late spring through summer, the Prospect Park band shell in Park Slope, Brooklyn, presents a stellar lineup of concerts, films, spoken-word shows and dance performances. The series ([www.briconline.org/celebrate](http://www.briconline.org/celebrate)), going strong for more than 30 years, hosts shows during the week and on weekends, many of which offer free admission.

### Central Park SummerStage

Throughout the summer, the New York City Parks Foundation hosts an incredible series of outdoor performances ([www.summerstage.org](http://www.summerstage.org)) at its SummerStage ([Map p161](#)) – dance, theater, spoken word and music concerts in all genres – many of which are free. Recent talents have included Q-tip, Josh Ritter, Pavement, Cassandra Wilson and Morphoses/The Wheelon Company dancing to music by Martha Wainwright.

### NewFest: The New York LGBT Film Festival

In addition to hosting this annual gay film festival ([www.newfest.org](http://www.newfest.org)) in early June, NewFest presents LGBT film programming throughout the year, including NewFest at BAM ([p192](#)) in Brooklyn, which shows the best of the June fest in one packed weekend, and NewFest at IFC Center ([p331](#)), a monthly series in Greenwich Village.

### River to River Festival

Lasting throughout most of summer and offering something to do on almost every night of the week, this is the largest free arts event ([www.rivertorivernyc.org](http://www.rivertorivernyc.org)) in NYC, with hundreds of creators and performers bringing theatre, music, dance and film to a slew of downtown parks.

## JVC JAZZ FESTIVAL

☎ 212-501-1390; [www.festivalnetwork.com](http://www.festivalnetwork.com)

More than 40 jazz shows go on in clubs around the city for this festival held in mid-June, featuring big names such as Etta James, Branford Marsalis, Keith Jarrett and Eartha Kitt.

## LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL & TRANSGENDER PRIDE

☎ 212-807-7433; [www.nycpride.org](http://www.nycpride.org)

June is Gay Pride Month, and it culminates in a major march down Fifth Ave on the last Sunday of the month – a five-hour spectacle of dancers, drag queens, gay police officers, leathermen, lesbian soccer-moms and representatives of just about every other queer scene under the rainbow. Various outer-borough Pride events take place on other June weekends, with the [Queens Pride March](#) ([www.queenspride.com](http://www.queenspride.com)) in Jackson Heights among the most multiculti. The annual [Dyke March](#) ([www.nycdykemarch.org](http://www.nycdykemarch.org)), a sepa-

rate and female-only event, heads down Fifth Ave at 5pm the evening before the big march, starting at 42nd St and Sixth Ave.

## MERMAID PARADE

☎ 718-372-5159; [www.coneyisland.com](http://www.coneyisland.com)

Celebrating the sand, the sea and the beginning of summer is this wonderfully quirky afternoon parade, nearly 30 years old. It's a flash of glitter and glamour, as elaborately costumed folks display their mermaid finery along the Coney Island boardwalk. Held on the last Saturday of the month.

## July

### JULY FOURTH FIREWORKS

July 4

☎ 212-494-4495

America's Independence Day is celebrated with 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. Roosevelt Island also hosts a fireworks-viewing festival at its Southpoint Park. The pyrotechnic display, hosted by Macy's and courtesy of the renowned Grucci fireworks company, is an impressive sight to behold (though the accompanying patriotic music is rather on the schmaltzy side).

## NATHAN'S FAMOUS HOT-DOG-EATING CONTEST

July 4

[www.nathansfamous.com](http://www.nathansfamous.com)

This bizarre celebration of gluttony brings world-champion food inhalers to Coney Island each Fourth of July. The 2009 repeat winner, Joey Chestnut of California, beat his own record by downing 68 dogs (and buns!) in just 10 gut-busting minutes.

## PHILHARMONIC IN THE PARK

☎ 212-875-5656; [www.newyorkphilharmonic.org](http://www.newyorkphilharmonic.org)

Free nighttime concerts in the park from the country's premier orchestra are among the most wonderful treats of summer in the city. Grab a blanket, pack a picnic and choose from Central Park, Brooklyn's Prospect Park or parks in Queens, the Bronx or Staten Island; the symphony visits each borough, beginning in early July, and brings a different music program to each.

## August

### FRINGE FESTIVAL

☎ 212-279-4488; [www.fringenyc.org](http://www.fringenyc.org)

This annual mid-August theater festival presents two weeks of performances from companies all over the world. It's the best way to catch the edgiest, wackiest and most creative up-and-comers around.

### HOW! FESTIVAL

[www.howfestival.com](http://www.howfestival.com)

This week-long celebration, named for Beat writer Allen Ginsberg's famous poem, brings visual art, theater, dance, film and literature to venues around the artsy East Village. It sometimes falls in September.

### JUBILATION

[www.prideinthecity.com](http://www.prideinthecity.com)

This black gay pride festival – meant both for celebration and education about preventing the spread of HIV – brings five event-packed days to various venues around NYC. One highlight is the annual beach-party blowout,

featuring live performances, held at Jacob Riis Park (p211) in the Rockaways.

## US OPEN TENNIS TOURNAMENT

[www.usopen.org](http://www.usopen.org)

Tennis fans turn out en masse for this, one of the four Grand Slam tournaments of professional tennis, to see top-ranked men and women compete in singles and doubles matches. Sometimes falling in September, it is held at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center (p340), a sort of miniature tennis universe out in Flushing, Queens.

## September

### WEST INDIAN AMERICAN DAY CARNIVAL PARADE

[www.wiadca.com](http://www.wiadca.com)

To most New Yorkers, Labor Day is a wistful day signaling the official end of summer. But for two million Caribbean Americans and other fun-loving onlookers, it's time to head on over to Eastern Pkwy in Brooklyn for the annual Carnival parade – a colorful, day-long march and party featuring over-the-top costumes, delicious Caribbean eats and nonstop music.

### SAN GENNARO FESTIVAL

[www.sangennaro.org](http://www.sangennaro.org)

Rowdy, loyal crowds descend on the narrow streets of Little Italy for carnival games, sausage-and-pepper sandwiches, deep-fried Oreos and more Italian treats than you can stomach in one evening. For more than 80 years, it's remained an old-world tradition.

### DUMBO ART UNDER THE BRIDGE FESTIVAL

[www.dumboartscenter.org](http://www.dumboartscenter.org)

Celebrating and promoting Dumbo's local artist community – with newfound vigor each year, thanks to the neighborhood's ever-growing gentrification – this Brooklyn fest features open studios and galleries, performances and street displays.

## October

### BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

[www.stjohndivine.org](http://www.stjohndivine.org)

In honor of the Feast Day of St Francis, which falls early in the month, pet owners flock to the grand Cathedral of St John the Divine (p169) with their creatures – poodles,

## ADVANCE PLANNING

Procrastinators can do just fine winging it in New York. But if you have specific, must-do goals in mind, being prepared is essential.

It should go without saying that unless you have infinite bucks to spend (or no comfort or cleanliness standards to speak of), booking a hotel room in advance is a must. The same goes for anything else you might want to be a part of that's in high demand, whether it's dinner at a trendy spot or great seats at a popular theater event. For restaurant reservations, use the free, online OpenTable.com system; Broadway theater tickets, meanwhile, can be had through Telecharge.com, Ticketmaster.com or other sites (p323), while ballet and sporting-event tickets are best scored through the website of the individual venue or sports team.

Other outings you might want to plan for include nightclub forays – emailing or calling ahead to have your name placed on the night's guest list could save you from waiting in line behind the velvet ropes; see individual club websites (p303) for guest-list info. You can also avoid lines at some popular tourist sites by buying and printing out tickets in advance; both the Empire State Building (p139) and Top of the Rock (p147) allow you to do this.

A less obvious detail that will benefit from some forethought is that of renting a car for out-of-town side trips – especially on holiday weekends, when it can seem like every rental agency in the city is flat out of automobiles. Just hit the websites in advance to secure your vehicle (see p410).

Finally, before you leave you can start getting details about what will be happening in the city during your trip – just sign up for some email lists. One generally useful bulletin comes from **Daily Candy** ([www.dailycandy.com](http://www.dailycandy.com)), offering information on nightlife, shopping and dining. For news about sample sales (p223), sign up to receive updates from **Top Button** ([www.topbutton.com](http://www.topbutton.com)).

lizards, parrots, donkeys, you name it – to be blessed. It's a wild and wonderful afternoon for participants and onlookers alike.

### OPEN HOUSE NEW YORK

☎ 212-991-6469; [www.ohny.org](http://www.ohny.org)

The country's largest architecture and design event, held at the start of the month, features special, architect-led tours, as well as lectures, design workshops, studio visits and site-specific performances all over the city.

### HALLOWEEN PARADE

October 31

[www.halloween-nyc.com](http://www.halloween-nyc.com)

The nation's largest public Halloween celebration, nearing its 40th year, lures all sorts of freaks and geeks into the streets of Greenwich Village for a wild night of parading and prancing about in costume. The outfits range from very clever and of-the-moment to over-the-top raunchy, and the spectators lining the streets love one and all.

## November

### NEW YORK CITY MARATHON

[www.nycmarathon.org](http://www.nycmarathon.org)

Held in the first week of November, this annual 26-mile run through the streets of the city's five boroughs draws thousands of athletes from around the world – and

just as many excited viewers, who line the streets to cheer folks on.

### ROCKEFELLER CENTER CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY

[www.rockefellercenter.com](http://www.rockefellercenter.com)

At this traditional mob-scene event, folks flock around the massive spruce tree to watch it come aglow with energy-efficient bulbs before it's taken down and recycled into lumber. It's a green Christmas!

### THANKSGIVING DAY PARADE

[www.macys.com](http://www.macys.com)

This famous cold-weather event, for hardy viewers only, parades its famous floats and balloons (watch your head) in a new route as of 2009: instead of sticking to Broadway, it now moves down Seventh Avenue, from 72nd St to Herald Sq. For an even better view, join the throngs who gather at the southwest corner of Central Park to watch the balloons being inflated the night before.

### NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDENS HOLIDAY TRAIN SHOW

☎ 718-817-8700; [www.nybg.org](http://www.nybg.org)

Opening the day after Thanksgiving and lasting through January, this annual spectacle recreates New York City landmarks in miniature using natural materials like pinecones, cinnamon sticks and poppy



Pods, with miniature trains wending in and out. Come stroll through the Bronx wonder in the afternoon or – even better – at night, when the display is all lit up.

## December

### NEW YEAR'S EVE

December 31

[www.timessquarenyc.org/nye/](http://www.timessquarenyc.org/nye/)

In addition to the world-famous count-down to midnight and dropping of the Waterford Crystal ball held in Times Sq – a raucous, freezing, alcohol-fueled spectacle that you're honestly better off missing – the city has plenty of other celebratory events, namely the [Midnight Run in Central Park](#) ([nyrr.org](http://nyrr.org)) and midnight fireworks in Central Park, Prospect Park and the South Street Seaport. An unofficial but thoroughly NYC option is the [Hot Nude Yoga New Year's Eve](#) ([www.hotnudeyoga.com](http://www.hotnudeyoga.com)), a spiritual-meets-sensual night for men only.

## COSTS & MONEY

For several years now, droves of 'weak dollar' tourists have been descending upon the city's most fashionable shops, eateries and real-estate offices. They've been enjoying the sad state of the US dollar, which has continued its drop against the British pound and the euro.

And so, for the first time in recent memory, many New York visitors had come to enjoy bargains, rather than to grin and bear the act of emptying their wallets. Brits and Europeans: congratulations! Enjoy yourselves. Anyone else: prepare thyself. A trip to New York could never be described as cheap – even now.

That said, there are plenty of ways to enjoy the city, with options for just about every budget. Finding deals, whatever the state of the economy, usually just takes a mix of forethought and creativity.

Basic costs for a NYC trip start with accommodations (unless you've got a friend or relative who's willing to put you up in their sure-to-be-cramped apartment). An unavoidable fact is that the average night in a city hotel costs \$300, with those at the more desirable end easily going for upwards of \$400. The best way to find serious bargain rates is by not being picky about your hotel's location; in other words, look for beds in non-trendy parts of Manhattan (like East Midtown) or, better yet, in Brooklyn, Queens and even across the Hudson River, in New Jersey. If you're patient enough to deal with mass transit to

get you into the heart of the city each day, you'll wind up saving a pretty penny (though don't expect your rates to dip too far under \$200 a night).

City B&Bs also tend to be more affordable; several in and around the Chelsea area ([p367](#)) have rooms with shared bathrooms for about \$150 – just book far in advance, as they tend to fill quickly. Those who can stomach hostel aesthetics are most in luck, as there are several barebones places right in Manhattan, such as those in the Jazz Hostel group ([p378](#)), which offer dorm beds for as low as \$30.

But you'll still have to pay to eat, of course. The absolute cheapest way to go is to forgo the foodies' restaurant-scene paradise and stick to making your own meals (if you have access to a kitchen) or subsist on packaged and prepared foods bought at the city's many markets. Basic non-gourmet delis, found on practically every corner, make egg-and-cheese sandwiches for breakfast (\$3 on average), and a range of other basic sandwiches throughout the day, whether it's egg salad on rye for \$6 or roast beef on a roll for \$7. Street food, while not too healthy, is also way-cheap, with everything from hot dogs for \$2.50 to gyros for \$3 or \$4. Or you can try to be wholesome by trolling the city's vast array of Greenmarket farmers markets ([p132](#)) for fresh fruits, breads and cheeses for in-room backpacker picnics.

Eating at restaurants will cost you, but still, the prices range tremendously. The most budget options can get you hearty ethnic meals for under \$10, while midrange restaurants with table service start at about \$10 to \$15 per person for dinner, with the numbers going up from there. Head to a five-star

### HOW MUCH?

Bottle (8oz) of water: \$1.50

Bottle of Brooklyn Lager beer: \$2.50

Venti latte from Starbucks: \$4.53

Sunday New York Times: \$5

Hot dog from street vendor: \$1.75

Slice of pizza: \$2.50

I ♥ NY T-shirt: \$10

Movie ticket: \$12.50

Pair of Levi's Eco skinny jeans: \$69.50

NYC postcard: five for \$1

Taxi from Midtown to the Upper West Side: \$13

## WHEN IN NEW YORK CITY, DO AS NEW YORKERS DO

- Only hail a taxi if its roof light is on. Look carefully, though: if the middle light is on, the cab is available; if only the lights on the sides are on, the cab's off-duty; and if no lights are on, there's already a passenger inside. Trying to hail a taxi that's engaged or off-duty is probably the number-one tourist blunder.
- Be aware that most taxis, because of unfathomably ridiculous shift-change hours, are off-duty during rush hour, so avoid needing one between about 4pm and 5pm on weekdays.
- Don't stand on corners waiting for the 'walk' sign. New Yorkers cross against the light as soon as there's a big enough lull in traffic.
- It's How-sten Street. Not Hew-sten. Got it? Good.
- Be politely aggressive when boarding a crowded subway. Don't just stand and wait for your turn to board, or you may miss your chance.
- While waiting for your subway train to arrive, figure out from which end you'll need to disembark (eg uptown or downtown) and walk towards it, thereby assuring the most efficient use of time.
- When walking on the sidewalk, think of yourself as a car on the street: don't stop short, pay attention to the speed limit, and pull off to the side if you need to look at a map or dig through your bag for an umbrella.
- Don't walk down the street saying 'Hello!' to the people you pass. It's sad but true – everyone will think you're crazy.
- Say 'thank you' to the bus driver as you exit a bus from the front door (don't yell it from the back). It's one of a few pleasantries that New Yorkers really love to honor.

dining establishment, order three courses and throw in a bottle of wine, and you could easily drop \$200 per person. Families looking to save should head to diners and other low-key spots with kids menus (see boxed text, p264), which usually offer dishes for less than half of the normal price.

If you want to shop while you're here – and who doesn't? – then you'll also find extreme price ranges in all categories. For clothing, there are bargain spots aplenty, with stores like Filene's Basement (p241), Century 21 (p223), Loehmann's (p240) and H&M (p245) high on the radar screens of local bargain shoppers looking for knockoffs and discounted labels. You can also try your luck at designers' sample sales (see boxed text, p223).

Entertainment prices can be sky-high, with prime opera or theater tickets easily costing more than \$100 a piece. But there's plenty for paupers, too. Get your dose of theater for \$15 a pop at Off-Off-Broadway productions, or through events like the Fringe Festival (p23) – or try your patience waiting in line for tickets for Shakespeare in the Park (see p325), which offers top-notch theater for free. Broadway tickets can be bought for half price at the two TKTS booths (see the boxed text, p324) in Manhattan. And plenty of venues all over the city – music, comedy, cabaret, dance and theater – frequently offer cheap (\$5 to \$10) and free performances; check local arts listings in publications such as *Time Out New York* and the *Village Voice* for daily free and

cheap activities. Also, while museums like the expensive MoMA (p148) can charge up to \$20 for entrance, many have 'pay-what-you-wish' days or times, plus generous discounts for students and seniors.

## INTERNET RESOURCES

**Forgotten-NY.com** Kevin Walsh's awesome site about historic NYC, with not-found-elsewhere tales about everything from old subway stations to cemeteries.

**Freenyc.net** An excellent spot to find daily free and cheap events all over town.

**GoMag.com** Online version of a popular lesbian nightlife guide.

**GothamGazette.com** Top-notch source for city news, politics and heated issues.

**Gothamist.com** Cool blog site with quirky news and links about everything from local politics to entertainment gossip.

**Menupages.com** Indispensable guide to New York restaurants, organized by cuisine and neighborhood, with actual menus and locals' opinions.

**NewYorkology.com** Excellent roundup of NYC travel offers, events and news items.

**Nextmagazine.net** The online version of the ultimate gay nightlife guide, complete with bar listings organized by neighborhood.

**Nymag.com/visitorsguide** This special site from *New York* magazine has up-to-date tips for culture-savvy visitors.

## SUSTAINABLE NEW YORK

Here's some good news for travelers who want to leave a small carbon footprint in their wake: New York City makes it pretty darn easy to do just that, primarily because of its incredible mass-transit system. Walking should (and can easily) be your number-one choice here, but if you can't walk, then hop aboard the aging but efficient subway system or one of New York's public buses (the city claims the largest number of hybrid-electric buses in North America, with more than 1100 such pollution-free vehicles).

Even taxis – not as efficient as subways and buses, perhaps, but preferable to individually owned cars – are going green: more

than a thousand yellow taxis in New York are currently hybrids; by 2012, all of them will be, according to the pledge made by Mayor Bloomberg. There's even a privately owned car service, [New York Hybrid Car & Limo Service](#) (☎ 212-686-4492; [www.nyhcar.com](http://www.nyhcar.com)), which will send a hybrid auto when you call – and it doesn't cost any more than a regular limo, either. Yet another option is to hail a pedicab; these pedaled rickshaws can be found primarily around Midtown, especially when Broadway shows let out, and are great for traveling short distances when you're too pooped to perambulate.

Finally, sustain NYC's local economy by throwing the big chains (Starbucks, Barnes & Noble, etc) under the bus in favor of trying out the locally owned indie cafes and shops. Isn't that what travel's all about anyway?

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