

lonely planet

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NYC

CITY GUIDE



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 JANSON

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

HIGHLIGHTS



ANGUS OSBORN

LOWER MANHATTAN & TRIBECA

Home to icons from Wall Street to the Statue of Liberty, the southern tip of Manhattan pulses with businesslike energy during the day before settling into quiet nights.



DAN HERRICK



ANGUS OSBORN



ANGUS OSBORN

1 Brooklyn Bridge

Walk or bike across this glorious span (p84).

2 Megu

Wow your senses at this stunning palace of Japanese cuisine (p257).

3 Statue of Liberty

Get up close and personal with the lovely lady (p70).

4 City Hall

Get inside city government with a free tour under the rotunda (p82).

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LOWER MANHATTAN & TRIBECA

Drinking p289; Eating p257; Shopping p223; Sleeping p362

The borough comes to a pencil point at its southern tip, forming the general swath known as Lower Manhattan. Teeming with iconic images that include Wall St, City Hall, the Brooklyn Bridge and, offshore in the near distance, the Statue of Liberty, this is a small region that manages to pack in a diverse wallop of sights. It's come back to life slowly and surely since being struck a heavy blow on September 11, 2001 (though bickering developers and government officials have seriously delayed redevelopment plans, leaving much of this region still under construction). The whole area, in fact, has gone through a recent renaissance, bringing newness in many forms – museums, hotels and trendy restaurants – that has in turn lured more and more visitors. Relatively new residents have made this the fastest-growing residential 'hood in New York for several years running. Add those elements to the area's geographic narrowness – making waterfronts and sweeping views an intimate part of the fabric here – and you've got quite a lively little city corner.

Strolling the winding streets here is an adventure to be sure, and one that changes dramatically depending on the day and time of your visit. Weekdays bustle with focused stock traders, bankers, government employees, housing lawyers and politicians, who rush to and from meetings and power lunches all day long. Weekend days belong in large part to tourists, who do their own form of bustling to hit the many attractions or get back to their fab water-view hotel room. Come nighttime, the pace of the area really slows, with shops closing early, courthouses and government buildings taking on a peaceful glow and the scattered collection of late-night bars and eateries injecting the buzz of possibility into the air. An exception to these rules can be found in Tribeca, known for rambling loft apartments, an industrial-chic feel and no shortage of trendy restaurants, bars, shops and hotels.

A great way to tap into the offerings here is to check in with the [Alliance for Downtown New York](#) (Map pp72–3; ☎ 212-566-6700; www.downtownny.com; cnr Church & Vesey Sts, also at Staten Island Ferry Terminal), which hands out maps and offers neighborhood factoids to intrepid explorers at two information booths, leads a free Wall St walking tour every Thursday and Saturday at noon and runs a wonderfully detailed website.

The best mode of transport for crisscrossing the area is walking, as most stops are close by each other. Or you can opt for short cab rides or helpful buses, using the M9 to cross from west to east or vice versa, the M15 to go up and down the east side or the M20 on the west. To get here in the first place, choose from practically any subway line. Check the map (pp72–3) to see which options get you closest to your mark.

NEW YORK HARBOR

The city's earliest immigrants got their first taste of New York here at Ellis Island, with the Statue of Liberty in sharp relief nearby. Retracing their footprints is a fine idea – as is luxuriating in the many other offerings down in these parts, including the picnic-perfect expanses on Governor's Island and the fun and free Staten Island Ferry, which gives you close-up glimpses of all the harbor's highlights while whisking you off to the shores of New York's forgotten borough.

STATUE OF LIBERTY Map p68

☎ 877-lady-tix (877-523-9849); www.nps.gov/stli, www.statuecruises.com (ferry info); admission free, ferry (incl Ellis Island) adult/child/senior \$12/5/10, with audio tour \$17.25/10/12.25, crown tickets (reservations required) \$3 additional; 🚢 ferries every

15-30min 9am-2pm (summer starting at 8:30am), park open 8:30am-6pm; 🚶 4, 5 to Bowling Green, 1 to South Ferry

One of the most recognizable icons in the world, the Statue of Liberty is a symbol of kinship and freedom formed out of 31 tons of copper and standing 93m from ground to torch-tip. A joint effort between America and France to commemorate the centennial of the Declaration of Independence, it was created by commissioned sculptor Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi. The artist spent most of 20 years turning his dream – to create the monument and mount it in the New York Harbor – into reality. Along the way it was hindered by serious financial problems, but was helped in part by the fund-raising efforts of newspaper publisher Joseph Pulitzer, as well as poet Emma Lazarus, who in 1883 published a poem

called 'The New Colossus' as part of a fund-raising campaign for the statue's pedestal. Her words have long since been associated with the monument and its connection to newly arrived immigrants:

Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to
breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming
shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-
tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!

Ironically, these famous words were added to the base only in 1903, more than 15 years after the poet's death.

Bartholdi's work on the statue was also delayed by structural challenges – a problem resolved by the metal framework mastery of railway engineer Gustave Eiffel (of yes, the famous tower). The work of art was finally completed in France in 1884 (a bit off schedule for that centennial). It was shipped here as 350 pieces packed in 214 crates, reassembled over a span of four months and placed on a US-made granite pedestal for a spectacular October 1886 dedication.

The statue and Liberty Island were put under the administration of the National Park Service in 1933; in 1984 a restoration began on the Lady's oxidized copper, and the UN placed it on a list of World Heritage Sites.

The most exciting news in years, though, came in 2009, when her crown was reopened to visitors for the first time since September 11, 2001. It had remained shuttered – along with the rest of the statue's interior – due to heightened security restrictions, leaving visitors with permission to visit only the pedestal, climbing the 168 steps to its top. With its grand reopening, though, folks who reserve in advance (more on that in a minute) can climb the (steep) 354 steps to Lady Liberty's crown, affording stunning views of the city and the harbor.

Now, for the bad news: crown access is extremely limited, and the only way in is to reserve your spot in advance – and the further in advance you can do it, the better, as up to a full one-year lead time is allowed. Also know that each customer may only reserve a maximum of four crown tickets.

Finally, although the ferry ride lasts only 15 minutes, a trip to both the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island is an all-day affair, and only those setting out on the ferry by 1pm will even be allowed to visit both sites. All visitors will need to undergo a special security screening before their visit, and waiting for that process can take up to 45 minutes. Though reservations to visit the grounds and pedestal are not required (the other option is to buy a Flex Ticket, which lets you enter anytime within a three-day period), they are strongly recommended, as they give you a specific visit time and guarantee you'll get in. Note that a less crowded approach to the statue is via **Liberty State Park** (☎ 201-435-9499; www.libertystatepark.org), which can be reached by car, taxi or a combination of the PATH train and light rail in New Jersey; call or check the website for details.

ELLIS ISLAND Map p68

☎ 212-363-3200, www.nps.gov/ellis; ☎ 877-LADY-TIX (877-523-9849), www.statuecruises.com (ferry info); admission free, ferry (incl Statue of Liberty) adult/child/senior \$12/5/10; 🚢 ferries every 15-30min 9am-2pm; 📍 4, 5 to Bowling Green, 1 to South Ferry

An icon of mythical proportions for the descendants of those who passed through here, this island and its hulking building served as New York's main immigration station from 1892 until 1954, processing the amazing number of 12,000 individuals daily, from countries including Ireland, England, Germany and Austria. The process involved getting the once-over by doctors, being assigned new names if their own were too difficult to spell or pronounce, and basically getting the green light to start their new, hopeful and often frighteningly difficult lives here in the teeming city of New York. In its later years, after WWI and during the paranoia of the 'Red Scare' in this country, the immigration center became more of a de facto holding pen for newcomers believed to be radical threats to the US. After admitting its last arrival in 1954 (a Norwegian merchant seaman), the place closed due to changes in immigration law coupled with rising operating costs.

Now anybody who rides the ferry to the island can get a cleaned-up, modern version of the historic new-arrival experience, thanks to the impressive **Immigration Museum** that's housed in the massive, beautifully

MAP LEGEND

ROUTES

	Tollway		Mall/Steps
	Freeway		Tunnel
	Primary		Pedestrian Overpass
	Secondary		Walking Tour
	Tertiary		Walking Tour Detour
	Lane		Walking Trail
	Under Construction		Walking Path
	Unsealed Road		Track
	One-Way Street		

TRANSPORT

	Ferry		Rail
	Metro		Rail (Underground)
	Bus Route		Rail (Fast Track)

HYDROGRAPHY

	River, Creek		Canal
	Intermittent River		Water
	Swamp		Lake (Dry)

BOUNDARIES

	International State, Provincial		Regional, Suburb
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AREA FEATURES

	Airport		Land
	Area of Interest		Mall
	Beach, Desert		Market
	Building		Park
	Campus		Reservation
	Cemetery, Christian		Rocks
	Cemetery, Other		Sports
	Forest		Urban

POPULATION

	CAPITAL (NATIONAL)		CAPITAL (STATE)
	Large City		Medium City
	Small City		Town, Village

SYMBOLS

Information	Shopping	Sleeping
Sights		Geographic

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