

Lima, Peru

Overview

Introduction

Lima, Peru, is a dynamic, vibrant city full of contrasts. Modern skyscrapers stand beside pre-Incan pyramids that cover entire city blocks. The City of Kings was formerly just a stopover en route to the tourist mecca of Cusco and the Incan ruins of Machu Picchu, but visitors to Lima are now spending more and more time soaking up the cosmopolitan atmosphere in Peru's capital city, where fine museums and world-class dining combine with thousands of years of history.

Whether you are shopping in designer boutiques and posh malls, partying until dawn in a nightclub facing the Pacific, or sampling seafood in the city's best *cevicherias*, there is something for almost everyone in Lima.



Highlights

Sights—The sights of Colonial Lima, including Barrio Chino (Chinatown); the ossuary, convent and architecture at the Iglesia y Convento de San Francisco; the changing of the guards at the Government Palace; the cliff-side bohemian neighborhood of Barranco.

Museums—Pre-Columbian artifacts at the Museo Arqueologico Rafael Larco Herrera; authentic Incan gold at the Museo Oro del Peru.

Memorable Meals—Stunning pyramid views from Huaca Pucllana Restaurant; Gaston Acurio's trendy criollo dishes at Panchita; novo-Peruvian delicacies at Malabar.

Late Night—The city's best nightclubs at Larcomar Shopping Center; dinner and drinks at a *pena* (folk-music club) downtown or in Barranco.

Walks—From Barranco's main plaza to the Pacific; through Colonial Lima; the seaside *malecon* in Miraflores; Parque El Olivar in San Isidro.

Especially for Kids—Learning about Peruvian wildlife at Parque de las Leyendas; marine animals on the Islas Palominos; the beaches of La Costa Verde.

Geography

Lima sits in the middle of the coast of Peru in the Chillón, Rimac and Lurín river valleys. The area is a desert sprinkled with small mountains that are now the sites of some of Lima's urban sprawl. Parts of the city sit on a several-hundred-foot/meter cliff that overlooks the Pacific. A wide, sandy area follows the shoreline and is home to beaches, roads and restaurants.

Neighborhoods sprawl out in every direction from the colonial center. Most of the important neighborhoods border the coastline or sit not far from it. In the far north is Callao, which is actually a separate city and is home to the airport and cruise-ship terminal. Most other tourist-oriented areas sit south of the center, including Pueblo Libre, San Isidro, Miraflores, Barranco and Chorrillos.

History

After the Spanish gained control of the Inca empire, they moved down from the Andes to build a capital on the coast: Lima was founded by Francisco Pizarro on 6 January 1535. At the time, small populations of native people were already living in fishing and farming settlements in the area. They had only been recently conquered by the Incas, however, and so were indifferent to the arrival of the Spanish.

The city became a Spanish capital in South America and one of the wealthiest cities on the continent. The nearby port of Callao became the point of export for Inca gold, Potosi silver and other goods that were being exploited in the Andes. Thus, it became a target for pirates, who sank dozens of Spanish galleons and frequently attacked the port. It's possible to see the remains of the defensive wall that Spaniards built in hopes of protecting their treasure.

Wide-scale trade stretched across the globe in the 18th century, and the city grew significantly. An earthquake in 1746 nearly destroyed the city, but it was soon rebuilt using African slave labor. Growth was slowed after independence was declared in 1821, but increased dramatically several decades later when the influx of capital from the guano boom allowed the city to expand. (Guano is nitrate-rich seabird droppings used for fertilizer.) The boom ended with the War of the Pacific (1879-83), when Peru lost some nitrate-rich areas to Chile.

The population ballooned in the 20th century as laborers moved down from the Andes to find work, setting up shanty towns around Lima, called *pueblos juvenes*. During the 1980s and '90s, terrorist groups from the Andes made Lima one of their targets, and the city saw numerous small bombings, until the major terrorist leaders were captured in 1992. The eradication of terrorism in the mid-1990s culminated with scandals involving Vladimiro Montesinos, the Peruvian chief of intelligence; President Alberto Fujimori fled the country to Japan before criminal charges could be brought against him.

In 2001, Alejandro Toledo was the first indigenous person to be elected president in Peru (or any Andean nation). His term was economically unpopular, and in 2006 conservative Alan Garcia, whose first term in office in the 1980s was disastrous, followed him. His more recent term was far more successful and the economy expanded rapidly. However, social conflicts resulting in several clashes between indigenous protestors and security forces marred his presidency.

In 2011, Ollanta Moises Humala Tasso, a center-left candidate and a former military officer, replaced Garcia, winning a run-off vote against his opponent, Keiko Fujimori, the daughter of the disgraced and now imprisoned former president. Humala has promised social reforms to balance the economic development and foreign investment, but concerns remain over land rights and sustainability and he faces detractors and protestors who believe he is merely following the path of Alan Garcia.

Port Information

Location

Cruise ships visiting Lima dock at the nearby town of Callao, which is located 7 mi/11 km from central Lima and 11 mi/18 km from Miraflores. There are few amenities for cruise-ship passengers at the pier, and the surrounding area is not very safe. Taxis are available at the port to transport visitors into Lima, which generally takes 30-40 minutes depending on the traffic.

Potpourri

Lima's coastline is often called La Costa Verde, or The Green Coast, because of the vegetation that grows along the sides of the oceanfront cliffs.

Lima sees little annual rainfall. The only precipitation comes from a heavy mist, called *garua*, that covers the city for much of the year.

Lima's newspaper, *El Peruano*, is the oldest Latin American newspaper still in existence. It was founded in 1825 by Simon Bolivar.

The 1919 census tallied 173,000 inhabitants in the metropolitan area of Peru's capital. Less than a century later, the number was greater than 8 million.

Chinese immigrants began arriving in the mid-19th century, and Lima's Chinatown, although modest, is the biggest in South America.

See & Do

Sightseeing

Lima's downtown, the colonial center, is home to the most interesting sites in the metropolitan area, and was named a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1991. Much of the center has been renovated to its former glory after years of neglect.

The heart of Colonial Lima is the Plaza Mayor, or Plaza de Armas, the government center since 1535. There you will find the Palacio de Gobierno (Presidential Palace), the Archbishop's Palace (notice the ornate balconies) and a stunning central bronze fountain.

Also bordering the plaza is the city cathedral, which holds the remains of Francisco Pizarro, the city's founder. Several other churches in the neighborhood are also worth a visit, such as the baroque Church of San Francisco, with beautiful hand-carved ceilings and extensive catacombs, and La Merced, the site of the first Mass in Lima. The nearby Barrio Chino, or Chinatown, merits a visit during lunchtime.

History buffs have more than their share of sights to choose from. Pre-Colombian pyramids such as Huaca Pucllana sit a few blocks from hotels in Miraflores and San Isidro. Centuries-old churches and colonial palaces dot the downtown area, and the Spanish fort Real Felipe lines the seafront of Callao. Pre-Colombian artifacts—such as gold, textiles, weapons and the always-crowd-pleasing erotic pottery collection—can be found in Lima's many museums.

Several charming neighborhoods are good places to stroll, people-watch or grab a bite to eat. Head to Barranco and make your way from the plaza past colonial mansions and down an attractive stone promenade to the Pacific, passing under the famous Puente de los Suspiros, or Bridge of Sighs, along the way.

Lima's green spaces are full of activity. Parque El Olivar, an olive grove planted by the Spanish, is a nice place to bird-watch or just relax. The larger and more active Parque de la Exposicion, which is downtown, is home to several good museums, weekly craft and food fairs, a small pond with paddleboats, a lighted fountain circuit, and numerous pavilions and theaters that play host to frequent events.

Lima's other sights include ancient pyramids, dramatic coastal cliffs and world-class museums. Most places can be seen on action-packed day tours, although many visitors to Lima will prefer to take their time and explore just one or two a day. There is more than enough to keep you busy for months on end.

Historic Sites

Fortaleza Real Felipe

Plazuela de la Independencia (Callao)
Lima, Peru

This Spanish-built pentagonal-shaped fortress was erected to prevent pirate attacks against Spanish galleons that departed Lima's main port. Later, the fort was used in both the War of Independence and the War of the Pacific against Chile. The fort is still in use by Peru's Navy, and a military museum, Museo del Ejercito, occupies much of the space. Several rooms with war and military artifacts can be toured (with a Spanish-speaking military guide), and there are significant displays of uniforms from throughout Peru's history as well as guns, cannons, paintings of important military figures and jail cells. Visitors can walk on the top of the walls for great views of Callao and the Pacific.

Daily 9 am-4 pm. Entry is only with a military guide (included in fee) and the tour takes two hours. Adults 12 soles, children 3 soles.

Huaca Pucllana Pyramid

Avenidas Borgono and Tarapaca (Miraflores)
Lima, Peru

Phone: 511-617-7138

<http://huacapucllanamiraflores.pe>

This fifth-century pyramid sits near skyscrapers and residential buildings in the heart of Miraflores. The adobe structure has served as a commercial, political and ceremonial center for several civilizations over the past 1,500 years. Mummies from the Lima and Wari cultures have been found during excavations of the site. One of the top restaurants in Lima, also called Huaca Pucllana, can be found adjacent to the site.

Daily except Tuesday 9 am-5 pm. Adults 12 soles, children 1 sol.

Museums

Museo Arqueologico Rafael Larco Herrera

Ave. Bolivar 1515 (Pueblo Libre)
Lima, Peru

Phone: 511-461-1835

<http://www.museolarco.org>

This stunning collection of pre-Columbian artifacts (mainly ceramics) is one of the best in the world. The 45,000 pieces chronicle more than 4,000 years of Peruvian history and touch upon every major civilization to inhabit the country, including the Inca, Moche, Nazca, Paracas and Chimu. The museum's setting is equally impressive in an 18th-century mansion that was built upon a seventh-century pyramid. A wing of the museum is dedicated to a collection of erotic pottery that shows pre-Colombian people, gods and animals in suggestive and sometimes graphic poses.

Daily 9 am-6 pm. Adults 30 soles, seniors 25 soles, children 15 soles.

Museo de Antropología, Arqueología y Historia del Perú

Plaza Bolívar (Pueblo Libre)
Lima, Peru

Phone: 511-463-5070

<http://museonacional.perucultural.org.pe>

One of the most underrated museums in Lima, the Museum of Anthropology, Archeology and History of Peru holds some of the most unique pieces from Peru's extensive history. It's located in a restored Republican mansion where liberators Simon Bolivar and Jose de San Martin lived. The permanent collection ranges from metals, musical instruments, and Republican and colonial art to the Raimondi Stela and the Tello Obelisk. Conferences, lectures, courses, workshops, theater performances and films are frequently held at the museum.

Daily except Monday 9 am-5 pm (to 4 pm on Sunday). Adults 12 soles, children 3.50 soles.

Museo de Arte de Lima

Paseo Colon 125 (downtown)
Lima, Peru

Phone: 511-204-0000

<http://mali.pe>

This sprawling, renovated art museum is located in the Parque de la Cultura. Its vast collection is composed of colonial furnishings, pre-Columbian ceramics and textiles, religious paintings from the colonial period, and modern sculptures, paintings and photography. There is also plenty of space dedicated to rotating exhibitions.

Tuesday-Friday and Sunday 10 am-8 pm, Saturday 10 am-5 pm. Adults 12 soles; seniors, students and children 4 soles; 3 soles per person for a guide.

Museo de la Nacion

Ave. Javier Prado Este 2465 (San Borja)
Lima, Peru

This multilevel museum is one of the largest in the country, and holds an array of artifacts and models spanning Peru's complete history, from pre-Columbian times to the modern era. The history of pre-Columbian groups is well accounted for in this museum with ceramics, textiles, military objects, diagrams, and an assortment of scale models of Inca and pre-Inca pyramids. A chronological order to the displays, with signs in both English and Spanish, helps visitors grasp the vast history of the country. A moving exhibit called *Yuyanapaq* (meaning "Remember" in the Quechua language) explains the civil war of the 1980s, which killed 80,000 people, mainly poor peasants. There is no better place to start your understanding of the history of Peru. In addition, the National Symphony Orchestra presents concerts there on Sunday at 11:30 am during the winter.

Daily except Monday 9 am-6 pm. Free admission.

Museo Oro del Peru

Alonso de Molina 1100 (Surco)
Lima, Peru

Phone: 511-345-1292

<http://www.museoroperu.com.pe>

The Gold Museum of Peru is perhaps the world's best after the gold museum in Bogota, Colombia. This basement museum in the posh district of Surco features an assortment of pre-Columbian gold artifacts, ceremonial objects and a few mummies from the various cultures that inhabited Peru and other South American countries, including the Inca, Chimu, Moche and Wari. Admission to the fascinating ground-floor weapons museum is included in the ticket price. It houses weapons and war objects from many countries and is the world's largest small-arms collection. Several small jewelers, an alpaca clothing shop and a small cafe are also located on-site. A 2001 investigation determined that more than 80% of the collection in the Museo Oro was fake, but the museum now claims that the bad pieces have been replaced and stands by the authenticity of the entire collection.

Daily 10:30 am-6 pm. Adults 33 soles, children 16 soles.

Neighborhoods & Districts

Barranco

Lima's artist and bohemian quarter, located just south of Miraflores, is one of the most fascinating districts in the city and seems to be in a world of its own. Barranco, which means "cliffs," was named because of the cliffs where it sits overlooking the Pacific. It is dominated by enormous colonial mansions built by Lima's elite in the 18th and 19th centuries. Today, many writers, artists and celebrities live in the district, which has seen a revival in recent years. The best *penas* and many great nightclubs, art galleries, restaurants, cafes and boutiques can be found there. Most tourists begin their visit at Barranco's main plaza, which is the hub of activity. From there, walk down the attractive promenade leading to the Pacific, where stunning views can be had from the restaurants and cafes that line the surrounding cliff sides. Spanning the promenade, the Puente de los Suspiros, or Bridge of Sighs, is the famous wooden bridge sung about by criollo singer Chabuca Grande, where young couples walk across holding hands.

Colonial Lima

Lima, Peru

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/500>

A UNESCO World Heritage site, Colonial Lima is one of the most interesting parts of the city and the one place in Lima that nearly every visitor spends a day touring. It is full of centuries-old churches that rival anything in Europe, colonial mansions and large plazas surrounded by impressive architecture. The area centers on the Plaza Mayor, or Plaza de Armas, a wide square surrounded by many of the most important buildings in the city, such as the baroque city cathedral, Archbishop's Palace and the Government Palace. Many other churches, colonial buildings and sights, including the Barrio Chino, sit within this district. Most locals consider Colonial Lima the area between the Plaza San Martin and the Rio Rimac, although technically it is just a small grid around the Plaza.

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/500>.

Miraflores

Although Colonial Lima is traditionally the political center of the city, the commercial, business and entertainment center is the seaside suburb of Miraflores. The district is Lima's tourist epicenter and home to the best restaurants, clubs, shopping and the majority of hotels. Most visitors frequent the area from Parque Kennedy, which is surrounded by shops and restaurants, to Larcomar Shopping Center that faces the Pacific.

San Isidro

North of Miraflores, this upscale residential district is also home to Lima's most exclusive hotels and restaurants oriented at business travelers and upmarket tour groups. A pleasant *malecon* with walking paths faces the Pacific, while the center of the district is home to Parque El Olivar, a centuries-old olive grove that is one of the most popular parks in all of Lima.

Parks & Gardens

Parque de la Exhibicion

Paseo Colon, Avenida Wilson, Paseo de la Republica and Avenida 28 de Julio (downtown)
Lima, Peru

This wide expanse of green space adjacent to downtown is Lima's answer to New York City's Central Park. Built in 1872 and sometimes called Parque de la Cultura, it features gorgeous Victorian and Byzantine architecture, a small pond with paddleboats, fountains, the Museo de Arte (residing in the former Exhibition Palace), numerous pavilions and stages, benches, walking paths and roving vendors. The site is home to weekly fairs and festivals, often showcasing crafts and foods from other parts of Peru. There is a permanent food court in the southeastern corner of the park.

Free.

Parque El Olivar

San Isidro
Lima, Peru

Many consider this popular bird-watching spot the most pleasant park in Lima. Olive trees planted by the Spanish about the time of the city's founding shade a maze of walking paths that weave in and out of Lima's most exclusive residential district and the city's business capital. Legend has it that one of Lima's patron saints, San Martin de Porras, planted the original trees from three small branches. Luxurious hotels and residential towers, fine-dining restaurants, chic cafes and shopping boutiques all border the park. The park is a popular spot for newlyweds to have their wedding photos taken.

Free.

Religious Sites

Cathedral of Lima

Plaza Mayor (downtown)
Lima, Peru

Although the first stone of the first manifestation of this cathedral was laid by Spanish conquistador Francisco Pizarro in 1535, the structure seen today is hardly original. It was destroyed or badly damaged by numerous earthquakes over the years. The third construction, taken on through much of the 17th century, went with a Gothic style after losing many vaults in temblors. Pizarro's tomb is found there. The

church hosts Mass on Saturday at 9 am and Sunday at 11 am. The cathedral's museum features a variety of artwork from the archbishops' and private collections. Multilingual guides are available.

Museum open Monday-Friday 9 am-5 pm, Saturday 10 am-1 pm. Admission to the museum is adults 10 soles, children 2 soles.

Church of La Merced

Jr. de la Union 621 (Historic City Center)
Lima, Peru

The original wooden structure, erected in 1536, was replaced by the 1680 Baroque-style basilica seen today. Within are lovely cloisters and a small museum in the sacristy that contains some religious artwork. Religious pilgrims go to see the cross of the Venerable Padre Urraca.

Open Monday-Saturday 8 am-noon and 5-8 pm; museum is open Monday-Saturday 9 am-12:30 pm and 2-5:30 pm. Admission to the museum is 6 soles.

Iglesia y Convento de San Francisco

Ancash at Plaza de San Francisco (downtown)
Lima, Peru

Phone: 511-426-7377

<http://www.museocatacumbas.com>

The Church and Convent of San Francisco, built in 1674, is a UNESCO Cultural World Heritage site and one of the most visited sights in all of Peru. The baroque church is decorated with Sevillian tiles and carved *mudejar* ceilings, but the main interest lies with the catacombs beneath the church. The bones of more than 25,000 people from Lima's early days are believed to be buried there, and many can still be seen laid out in bizarre designs. Tours of the museum last approximately an hour and can be given in English.

The museum is open daily 9:30 am-5:30 pm; the church is open daily 7-11 am and 4-8 pm. Museum admission adults 7 soles, students 3.50 soles, children 1 sol.

Recreation

Straddling mountains, desert and coast, Lima has diverse recreational offerings. Although the beaches are polluted and the water cold, surfing and sunbathing are still quite popular. Some beautiful biking and walking trails can also be found in the hills and on the coast, and a quality golf course is right in the middle of the city. Horseback riding around the pre-Columbian city of Pachacamac is also possible, as is paragliding over Lima and the ocean.

Beaches

La Costa Verde

The Green Coast is a long stretch of beaches running between the districts of Magdalena and Chorrillos that is populated with seafood shacks, health clubs and restaurants. The water is polluted, but during the summer months, the beaches are filled with tens of thousands of locals swimming, surfing, drinking, playing volleyball, jogging and sunbathing. Wealthy Limenos head to the beaches farther south, where posh beach houses and private beaches dominate the coastline.

Golf

Granja Azul Golf and Country Club

Carretera Central Km. 14 Valle Santa Clara, Ate Vitarte
Lima, Peru

The only public course in Lima, this nine-hole course is quite a challenge with a lot of tight shots, varying terrain and hazards. Service is professional, and the course is nicely maintained. Caddies are knowledgeable and very helpful. Other facilities include a putting green and driving range.

Rates vary.

Lima Golf Club

Ave. Camino Real 770 (San Isidro)
Lima, Peru

Phone: 511-442-6006

<http://www.limagolfclub.org.pe>

This private golf course is the best course in all of Lima and can be accessed with a member or by guests of the Sonesta El Olivar Country Club. The 18-hole, par-72 course is one of the most prestigious in Latin America and comparable to top courses in North America. A pool, tennis and squash courts, gym, restaurant and snack bar are also on-site.

Daily 7 am-5 pm. Rates vary.

Scuba & Snorkeling

AquaSport

Av. Conquistadores 805 (San Isidro)
Lima, Peru

Phone: 511-221-1548

<http://www.aquasport.pe>

Although there are no reefs along the coast and the water is cold, divers can still enjoy a wreck dive, a wall dive at Pucusana, and diving with sea lions. AquaSport rents all equipment and runs day trips. The outfitter also offers a variety of land-based activities such as ATV rentals.

Peru Divers

Ave. Santa Teresa 486 (Chorillos)
Lima, Peru

Phone: 511-251-6231

<http://www.perudivers.com>

Although the Pacific waters near Lima tend to be cold and have mediocre visibility, the opportunity to dive with sea lions up close can't be beat. Lucho Rodriguez has more than 20 years' experience in diving and is a PADI instructor and divemaster. He'll take you to the Islas Palominos to dive with sea lions, as well as Ancon north of Lima or Pucusana Bay and Islas Paracas to the south to see fish. Certification courses, equipment sales, rentals, repairs and diving trips are arranged.

Prices vary.

Surfing

Olas Peru Surf School

Ave. La Paz 1646, Oficina 102 (Miraflores)
Lima, Peru

Phone: 511-243-4830

<http://www.olasperu.com>

Olas Peru gives lessons of various levels to students of all ages. The highly respected school has been around for more than a decade and has received an International Certificate of the Australian Coaching Council. Prices are quite reasonable by international standards, and lessons can be arranged on a seasonal, weekly or daily basis. Courses are taught mainly on Costa Verde in Lima or occasionally elsewhere.

Pukana Surf School

Av. del Ejercito 322, Magdalena (next to Rosa Nautica Restaurant at Barranquito and Makaja)
Lima, Peru

Phone: 519-9765-4166

<http://www.pukanasurf.com>

Located just a short walking distance from Parque Kennedy in Miraflores, this is one of the best options for learning to surf in Lima. Lessons range from beginner to advanced levels and can be taken in groups or privately one-on-one. Lessons are generally at Barranquito Beach, but day trips can be organized to other locations. Equipment rental is also available.

Shopping

Lima offers the best shopping opportunities in Peru. There are more stores and better variety, and much of it is within reach of the average tourist. The capital is home to large U.S.-style malls and international fashion boutiques, as well as vast handicraft markets selling goods from the Amazon, Andes and coastal areas.

Premium items found especially in Peru include alpaca sweaters and scarves, Cafe Britt coffee, *pisco* (grape brandy), silver jewelry and housewares. Many of these items can be found in the shops in hotel lobbies, malls, the airport, and throughout San Isidro and Miraflores.

Larcomar Shopping Center, located on the Pacific cliffs, is an ideal spot for visitors, as many of the shop employees speak at least some English, and it is a short cab ride from most hotels. Jockey Plaza, a bit farther out of the city, is bigger and has posh stores from international designers. Several large handicrafts markets are located across the *ovalo* in Miraflores from Parque Kennedy. Items from across the country can be found there at only a slight price increase.

Books are expensive in Peru, and books about Peru in English are relatively scarce outside of the airport or in Miraflores.

Shopping Hours: Most shops, malls and handicraft markets in Lima are open daily 9 am-8 pm, including Sunday and holidays. Some places in high-traffic areas, such as Jockey Plaza and Larcomar, stay open until 10 pm.

Markets

Galeria Artesanal San Francisco

Jiron Lampa 236 (downtown)
Lima, Peru

There are several artisan shops and markets spread throughout the historical city center, but this is one of the best. Prices are reasonable, and the assortment of Peruvian handicrafts is provided by more than 80 vendors.

Monday-Saturday 10:30 am-1:30 pm and 3:30-7 pm.

Mercados Indios

Ave. Petit Thouars 5245 (Miraflores)
Lima, Peru

The Indian markets are a group of large handicraft and artisan markets near Parque Kennedy and the Miraflores Ovalo. You can find items from all over Peru for only slightly inflated prices. If you are on a tour, there's a good chance your driver will stop there (they'll get a commission). This is the best place in Lima to make quick buys for typical souvenirs and gifts—visit the day before your flight home.

Daily 9 am-8 pm.

Polvos Azules

Avenida Paseo de la Republica (2 blocks from Plaza Grau, downtown)
Lima, Peru

Completely overlooked by the higher-ups, Polvos Azules is Lima's largest, thriving black market. Almost all goods, such as DVDs, CDs, video games, electronics, clothes, shoes and luggage, are pirated or cheap knock-offs. The place is a maze, and you can visit 10 times before seeing everything.

Daily 9 am-8 pm.

Shopping Areas

Jockey Plaza Shopping Center

Ave. Javier Prado Este 4200 (Surco)
Lima, Peru

Phone: 511-437-4100

<http://www.jockey-plaza.com.pe>

Jockey Plaza is the largest shopping center in Peru and has more than 230 stores, many from well-known North American and European designers such as Hugo Boss and Christian Dior. There are also cinemas, grocery stores and dozens of restaurants. The two anchor stores are the South American department stores Saga Falabella and Ripley.

Daily 9 am-10 pm.

Larcomar Shopping Center

Parque Salazar (Miraflores)
Lima, Peru

<http://www.larcomar.com>

Larcomar is tourist central, but it attracts even more locals. Many of the best national chains, including Alpaca 111 and Ilaria (for silver), can be found there, as well as international chain restaurants and the best nightclubs in the city. There are also cinemas, a bowling alley, ocean views, bookstores, coffee stands and children's games. Many employees speak some English.

Daily 9 am-10 pm.

Specialty Stores

Agua y Tierra

Diez Canseco 298 (Miraflores)
Lima, Peru

Located on a small side street, this handicraft shop sells many hard-to-find items that come from villages in the Andes and Amazon. Many of the products include information detailing their origins. You'll find textiles, jewelry, carvings and various other handicrafts.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-6 pm.

Alpaca 111

Av. Jorge Bassadre (San Isidro)
Lima, Peru

Clothing made from alpaca is a popular shopping item in Peru, and this chain has multiple locations. What sets them apart from many others is the sale of vicuna products. Vicuna, related to the llama, produces the finest wool in the world, and you can purchase a variety of items ranging from accessories to full-sized coats. Another location is in Larcomar Shopping Center.

Casa de la Mujer Artesana

Ave. Juan Pablo Fernandini 1550 (at 15th block of Avenida Brasil, Pueblo Libre)
Lima, Peru

Phone: 511-423-8840, ext. 107

<http://www.casadelamujerartesana.com>

The women's artesan center is a crafts cooperative founded in 1996 to train and empower women, especially in impoverished areas of rural Peru. The high-quality crafts range from toys to clothes to home decorations.

Monday-Friday 11 am-1 pm and 2-6 pm.

Dedalo

Saenz Pena 295 (Barranco)
Lima, Peru

This rambling old house has some of the most interesting housewares, decor, toys, textiles and furniture in Lima. Everything is created by local designers. Much of it is very trendy and expensive. There's a coffee shop on the premises, too, for a quick pick-me-up after serious spending.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-9 pm.

H. Stern

Alongso de Molina 1100 (in the Museo Oro, Monterrico)
Lima, Peru

Phone: 511-345-1350

<http://www.hstern.net>

Although this is a South American jewelry chain, the Peruvian store offers an abundance of pre-Colombian Peruvian-inspired designs. This is a reliable place to get high-quality gold jewelry. H. Stern shops are common in the arcades of the high-end hotels and resorts.

Manos Peruanos

Petit Thouars 5411 (Plaza Artesanal, Miraflores)
Lima, Peru

This gallery and handicraft shop brings together an assortment of Peruvian fine crafts in materials that include glass, ceramics, leather, textiles and wood. Silver jewelry is also available. Everything is individually crafted.

Dining

Dining Overview

Peruvian cuisine has been recognized as the last great world cuisine to be discovered, and nowhere is this more evident than in the capital of Lima. Everything from world-class fine-dining restaurants to hole-in-the-wall *cevicherias* can be found in the city, each adding its own unique touch to the culinary landscape.

Cuisine from every region of the country can be found in Lima. Search around and you can find everything from typical Amazonian recipes in a boutique cafe to *cuy*, or roasted guinea pig, in a food stall run by Andean people just relocated from the mountains (though any highland city is a better place to find *cuy* in Peru).

The best restaurants are in Miraflores and San Isidro, the areas where many culinary tours focus. National and international chain restaurants are represented as well, but hidden down quiet residential streets and in hotels you will find trendy cafes, wine and tapas bars, and gourmet restaurants. That is where you will find some of the best chefs in Latin America.

Barranco is home to several good local and regional restaurants that are famous throughout Lima. There are spots that serve criollo, as well as *cevicherias*, sandwich shops, watering holes and several fine-dining establishments. A bit farther south, in the former fishing village of Chorrillos (now a part of metro

Lima), you will find some of the best seafood Lima has to offer. Crowds flood to the district every weekend, especially in summer, to indulge in the beachfront seafood shacks or long-running *cevicherias*.

Expect to pay within these general guidelines, based on the cost of dinner for one, not including drinks, tax or tip: \$ = less than 15 soles; \$\$ = 15 soles-45 soles; \$\$\$ = 46 soles-85 soles; and \$\$\$\$ = more than 85 soles.

Local & Regional

Antigua Taberna Queirolo

Ave. San Martin 1090 (Pueblo Libre)
Lima, Peru

Phone: 511-460-0441

<http://www.antiguatabernaqueirolo.com>

Continuously in operation since 1880 and located near several top museums, this *pisco* distillery and restaurant is a must for travelers with a hankering for simple tradition. It has a touch of elegance, but retains the old-time atmosphere with simple furniture, wood floors and old photos lining the walls. Go for a light meal and a glass of wine or *pisco* sour. The sandwiches aren't bad, but *hueveras fritas*, ceviche, *escabeche*, *cau-cau* and other criollo specialties are great.

Monday-Saturday for lunch and dinner, Sunday for lunch. \$\$\$. Accepts Visa only.

Astrid y Gaston

Cantuarias 175 (Miraflores)
Lima, Peru

Phone: 511-242-5387 or 511-242 4422

<http://www.astridygaston.com>

Landmark contemporary restaurant that combines Peruvian dishes with international cooking styles and techniques. The restaurant is highly regarded as one of the finest in South America and has spawned a handful of satellite restaurants around the world, making chef Gaston Acurio an international celebrity. Everything from *tiradito* to *tacu-tacu* to roast kid goat is delicately prepared.

Monday-Saturday for lunch and dinner. Reservations recommended. Semiformal dress code. \$\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Central Restaurante

Calle Santa Isabel 376 (Miraflores)
Lima, Peru

Phone: 511-242-8515 or 511-242-8575

<http://centralrestaurante.com.pe>

Chef Virgilio Martinez used what he learned from 10 years of cooking around the world to make his own mark on Peruvian cuisine. Some ingredients are grown on-site. The nondescript exterior might make some wonder if this is the wrong address. Consider the charred purple corn with scented octopus appetizer. There are many fine dishes to choose from, but the tasting menu is a nice place to start. The menu changes several times throughout the year, and touches of Indian, French or Sichuan are not uncommon.

Open Monday-Saturday for lunch and dinner. Reservations recommended. Semiformal dress code. \$\$\$\$.
Most major credit cards.

El Senorio de Sulco

Malecon Cisneros 1470 (Miraflores)
Lima, Peru

Phone: 511-441-0389 or 511-441-0183

<http://www.senoriodesulco.com>

Opened in 1986 in Surco by one of Lima's best-known female chefs, Isabel Alvarez. The restaurant specializes in recovering lost recipes and fusing traditional Peruvian dishes with modern techniques, ranging from simple to exotic. Try the stewed tongue, suckling pig soaked in *pisco* and slathered in a fruity sauce, or squid stuffed with shrimp, scallops and mushrooms. Soups, seasonal dishes and buffets are also on the menu. For dessert, try the Cape gooseberry or coca-leaf ice cream.

Monday-Saturday for lunch and dinner, Sunday for lunch only. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$.
Most major credit cards.

Huaca Pucllana Restaurant

Borgono Cuadra 8 (Miraflores)
Lima, Peru

Phone: 511-445-4042

<http://www.resthuacapucllana.com>

Huaca Pucllana is best known as the restaurant located on the grounds of the pre-Columbian pyramid of the same name. The stunning view of the large adobe structure, lit at night, is unparalleled and is the main reason prices are so high. Try Peruvian specialties such as *humitas verdes* or international staples such as rack of lamb. Four different ceviches and a variety of seafood and meat dishes are also offered.

Monday-Saturday for lunch and dinner, Sunday for lunch only. Reservations required. Semiformal. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

La Mar

La Mar 770 (Miraflores)
Lima, Peru

Phone: 511-421-3365

<http://www.lamarsf.com>

Celebrity-chef Gaston Acurio created the first upscale take on a Peruvian *cevicheria*, and the restaurant has spawned dozens of imitators. The trendy lunch spot is filled on most days but doesn't take reservations. Seafood dishes such as *arroz de mariscos* and ceviche span global styles, while still keeping a uniquely Peruvian touch. *Pisco*-infused cocktails make lunch last a bit longer than usual.

Daily noon-5 pm, till 5:30 pm Friday-Sunday. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Las Brujas de Cachiche

Ave. Bolognesi 460 (Miraflores)
Lima, Peru

Phone: 511-447-1883 or 511-447-1133

<http://www.brujasdecachiche.com.pe>

This excellent restaurant features many little-known Peruvian recipes as well as classics prepared by skilled chefs. Criollo dishes are favored (and the north-coast-style goat stew is excellent), but the eclectic menu has a bit of everything, including international standards such as steaks and grilled fish dishes. For dessert, try the *mazamorra morada* (purple corn pudding). Often features buffets and special menus promoting Peruvian ingredients. After dinner, head upstairs to the popular bar, Huarinas, which is always crowded with attractive young people.

Monday-Saturday for lunch and dinner, Sunday for lunch. Huarinas open Tuesday-Saturday nights only. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Panchita

Av. Dos de Mayo 298 (Miraflores)
Lima, Peru

Created by chef superstar Gaston Acurio (of Astrid y Gaston), Restaurante Panchita showcases modern Peruvian cuisine and is excellent for *anticuchos*, the grilled appetizers, as well as an outstanding *lomo*. Although a bit pricey, the portions are generous, and the bar offers a fine assortment of wines and, of course, a good *pisco* sour.

Open Monday-Saturday for lunch and dinner, Sunday for dinner only. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Pardo's Chicken

Larcomar Shopping Center (Miraflores)
Lima, Peru

Phone: 511-447-8023

<http://www.pardoschicken.com.pe>

Lima's No. 1 place for *pollo a la brasa* (broasted chicken), which is world-renowned. There are a dozen branches across the city, but the most convenient is at the Larcomar Shopping Center. Order a quarter chicken with fries and salad. The fast-food chain also has franchises in Trujillo, Chiclayo and Piura, as well as Chile and, in the U.S., Florida.

Daily for lunch and dinner, Thursday-Saturday late night. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Rustica

Parque de Barranco 105 (Barranco)
Lima, Peru

Phone: 511-247-9385

<http://www.rustica.com.pe>

This popular bar with outdoor tables features an excellent criollo buffet during the day. It's your best option for affordable criollo cuisine. Every popular Limeno dish can be found there, including ceviche,

cau-cau, *lomo saltado*, *pachamanca* and a range of Peruvian potatoes. For dessert, try the amazing *picarones* (pumpkin fritters) drizzled in syrup. A la carte menu is also available.

Daily for lunch and dinner, Thursday-Saturday for late night. \$\$\$. Accepts Visa and MasterCard.

Seafood

Canta Rana

Genova 101 (Barranco)
Lima, Peru

Singing Frog is a classic *cevicheria* with wood floors, photos of Latin American soccer players on the walls and minimalist, rustic furniture. The *jalea* (fried seafood), ceviche (fish marinated in lime juice, onions and chilies), and *arroz con mariscos* (rice and seafood) are pricey, but well worth it. Be sure to wash everything down with a jar of *chicha morada*, a purple corn drink.

Tuesday-Saturday for lunch and dinner, Sunday and Monday for lunch (until 6 pm). \$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

La Rosa Nautica

Espigon 4, Circuito de Playas (at the end of the Costa Verde pier, Miraflores)
Lima, Peru

Phone: 511-445-0149 or 511-447-0057

<http://www.larosanautica.com>

Although La Rosa Nautica is packed with busloads of tourists during lunch hours several days a week, there is no denying the charm of the place and the quality of the food served. It's the only restaurant in Lima set on a dock actually in the midst of the Pacific Ocean. The traditional Peruvian and international seafood dishes, such as *tiradito*, ceviche and risotto with squid ink, are excellently prepared and lauded throughout Lima.

Open daily for lunch and dinner. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Sonia

Ave. Agustin Lozano 173 (Chorrillos)
Lima, Peru

Phone: 511-249-6850 467-3788

<http://www.restaurantsonia.com>

This Lima institution was formerly a shack near the Chorrillos fish market that became so popular it moved farther onshore. This rustic *cevicheria* is credited with developing several styles of cooking such as *a la chorrillana* and *a lo macho*, which are now well-known throughout Peru. Ceviche is best there, but also give the *pulpo al olivo* and *jalea* a try.

Open daily for lunch. \$\$\$. Accepts Visa only.

Steak Houses

Carnal Prime Steakhouse

Elias Aguirre 698 (Miraflores)
Lima, Peru

Phone: 511-243-3088 or 511-243-3089

<http://www.carnalprime.com>

If you are looking for USDA Angus beef, this is the best option in Lima. Meat is cooked to temperature according to the order. Lobster and crab are also on the menu. The setting is modern and classy, and the dress code is smart casual.

Open Monday-Saturday for lunch and dinner, Sunday for lunch only. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$.

Cuarto y Mitad

Ave. Espinar 798 (Miraflores)
Lima, Peru

Phone: 511-446-5229

<http://www.restaurantcuartoymitad.com>

Although it can be debated which Lima steak house is best, this one is always on the list. Serves high-quality Argentine and American cuts of beef, pastas, and a nice array of Chilean and Argentine wines.

Daily for lunch and dinner. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Security

Etiquette

Peru is an almost entirely Catholic country and is highly conservative on many issues, although Lima is quite cosmopolitan and much more liberal than the rest of the country. Public displays of affection between homosexuals are frowned upon, despite Lima's vibrant gay scene.

On the other hand, backslapping hugs (*abrazos*) are common between men and air kisses are frequent between women or women and men.

When interacting with Peruvians, it is not wise to bring up politics or government. Talking about the War of the Pacific with Chile or how much you love neighboring nations is also taboo.

If invited into someone's home, you should always take a small gift, such as a bottle of wine.

Politeness is important to Peruvians. Begin every interaction with a polite handshake and *buenos dias* or *buenas tardes*, even if you don't speak any more Spanish than that.

The title *senora* is intended for older or married women and might draw a dirty look when applied to a young woman. Use *senorita* in that case.

Dress politely when visiting holy sites such as churches. Women should not wear shorts or dresses cut above the knee, and T-shirts and shorts are frowned upon for the men. Otherwise, fashion is relaxed enough for shorts and miniskirts in places such as Lima or in the Amazon region.

Personal space is a bit shortened in Peruvian culture, so don't be put off by people standing a bit closer than you are used to in queues or in other public spaces.

If you are meeting a Peruvian at a designated time, don't be surprised if they are as much as a half an hour late.

Personal Safety

Outside of Miraflores and San Isidro, visitors to Lima should not walk alone at night or take solo taxi cabs. This is especially true of downtown Lima, which is quite dangerous and impoverished despite significant restoration. Visitors should stick to well-lit streets and should not take taxis off the street, but rather call them ahead. Hotel taxis are generally the safest, although also the most expensive.

Don't flash your expensive digital camera or jewelry, and always keep an eye on your belongings. In crowded markets, beware of pickpockets, bag slashers, or even bold groups of bag snatchers. Always be aware of your surroundings.

Health

Most tourist areas in Lima are as safe and clean as any North American city, although some precautions should be taken. The tap water is never safe to drink. Bottled water is recommended and is served exclusively in restaurants. Food is safe in most instances, although some foreigners have gotten sick after eating at street stalls and small local restaurants. Avoid ice, salads, fruit juices made with unboiled water, and raw fruits and vegetables in these places. Most tourist-oriented restaurants are safe.

Visitors to Lima have little to watch out for. The temperature is mild, poisonous plants and dangerous wildlife are nonexistent, and tourist-oriented locations are generally quite clean. The most common occurrence is a mild case of traveler's diarrhea.

No vaccinations are required to visit Lima, but if you intend to visit Amazon regions, you may want to get up-to-date advice from your doctor before you go. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends hepatitis A and typhoid shots.

You can obtain a list of English-speaking Lima doctors from your embassy or hotel. In an emergency, try calling the Clinica Anglo-Americana, which has English-speaking staff and is open 24 hours. Alfredo Salazar 350 (San Isidro) Lima. Phone 511-712-3000 or 511-616-8900.
<http://www.angloamericana.com.pe>.

Disabled Advisory

Sadly, much of Lima is not equipped to handle disabled visitors, and there are no laws requiring special amenities for the disabled. Miraflores, San Isidro and downtown are generally flat and wheelchair accessible, although in some areas the cement is deteriorated. Most large international hotel chains have elevators and ramps, as do the largest museums, shopping malls and the airports.

Some private tour companies such as Apumayo Tours (phone 518-424-6018; <http://www.apumayo.com>) and Inkanatura (phone 511-203-5000; <http://www.inkanatura.com>) will help arrange complete tours for travelers with disabilities. Public transport for travelers with disabilities is nonexistent, and Peruvians with disabilities normally rely on family and transport workers to help carry them onto buses.

Facts

Dos & Don'ts

Do try ceviche. The combination of raw fish and seafood marinated in lime juice, onions and chilies is said to cure hangovers and is quite delicious.

Don't talk about how much you like Chile. Peruvians are very proud of their country and are especially standoffish about Chile, which defeated Peru in the War of the Pacific more than a century ago.

Do try to speak Spanish. Locals appreciate foreigners who make even a bad attempt.

Don't belch after a meal (or any time). It is considered the worst possible taste.

Do carry toilet paper with you. Many public restrooms don't have any.

Don't use, purchase or carry recreational drugs. Though small quantities of certain substances are actually legal for personal use, most police officers may not be aware of that fact or of the precise amounts.

Geostats

Passport/Visa Requirements: Citizens of Australia, Canada, the U.K. and the U.S. need passports but not visas. Proof of onward passage and sufficient funds is needed for all, although it's almost never requested. Reconfirm travel document requirements with your carrier before departure. The international departure fee at Jorge Chavez International Airport in Lima should be included in your ticket price.

Population: 9,129,790.

Languages: Spanish, Quechua.

Predominant Religions: Christian (Roman Catholic).

Time Zone: 5 hours behind Greenwich Mean Time (-5 GMT). Daylight Saving Time is not observed.

Voltage Requirements: 220 volts.

Telephone Codes: 51, country code; 1, Lima city code when calling from outside of Peru; 01, city code calling within Peru but outside Lima province; cell phones do not have an area code and simply begin with 09 (dropping the zero after the country code if it is an international call);

Money

Currency Exchange

Peru's economy is surging, so the nuevo sol (often called the sol) is a relatively stable currency and has even made some ground on the U.S. dollar in recent years.

Many hotels, grocery stores, tourism companies and restaurants also accept U.S. dollars, and it is wise to carry some as a reserve. Ensure that dollar bills are in excellent condition; worn bills or those with small tears are not accepted—although Peruvian nuevo sol bills are often worn and slightly damaged.

Dollars can be exchanged at the airport, banks, *casas de cambio* (exchange houses) and with official exchange people who can be identified by their yellow vests and who give good rates. They are found near Parque Kennedy in Miraflores and Parque San Martin in downtown Lima, among other places. However, count your money carefully before handing over your dollars, because "mistakes" are not rare. Leave your traveler's checks at home, as rates are bad and they are hard to exchange. Fake soles notes are common, and you should check each bill for its embedded symbol before finalizing an exchange.

ATMs are commonplace in Lima, particularly in Miraflores, and the easiest way to exchange money is from an ATM using a major bank card. There will be a small fee, but the rates are similar to banks or currency-exchange booths. Money can be drawn on credit cards, but be aware of the high interest rates credit cards immediately charge on cash withdrawals.

Most large hotels and major shopping centers have ATMs, and there are a number of banks on Avenida Larco in Miraflores that offer ATMs. Both U.S. dollars and nuevos soles are often available from ATMs. Banks can be troublesome because of long lines and red tape; *casas de cambio* give rates as good and are more convenient, especially outside of banking hours.

Taxes

There is a 19% restaurant tax added to checks at upscale restaurants that are not affiliated with a hotel. They may also add a 10% service charge. Some restaurants will include the tax in the menu price and will say so. Less expensive restaurants don't add tax.

Higher-class hotels charge a 19% tax; this can be refunded immediately to international travelers who supply a photocopy of their passport. (Many hotels will make the photocopy for you.)

Other sales taxes cannot be refunded. Airport taxes are charged for internal flights, but the airport departure tax for international travelers is included in the ticket price.

Tipping

Tipping is not expected in Lima or much of Peru, although in many places frequented by tourists, it has become common. Most Peruvians will leave no more than a 5% tip at restaurants, although travelers might leave 15%. Many higher-end restaurants will automatically add a 10% service charge. If so, you can and should still leave a small tip of 5% or so.

Expect to tip tour guides about 15 soles-50 soles or more per person per day, depending on the level of service. Trekkers are expected to tip porters, cooks and trekking guides. Taxi drivers are rarely tipped, although rounding up your fare an extra sol will be appreciated. Bellboys and skycaps get 2 soles-3 soles per piece of luggage. Indigenous people almost always ask for a tip if you take a photograph of them.

Weather

The cool Humboldt Current that runs along the Peruvian coast keeps Lima's temperatures fairly mild throughout the year. It can get into the mid 80s F/high 20s C during the summer months of December-March, but for the rest of the year, the temperature rarely goes above 70 F/22 C or below 50 F/10 C. Rain in Lima is almost nonexistent and precipitation is generally confined to the less than 1 in/2.5 cm annually generated by the *garua*, a thick mist that penetrates the city during the winter months.

What to Wear

Latin Americans are used to dressing up on most occasions, especially when going to restaurants, clubs, work and out in general. Suits are common attire among middle- and upper-class men and senior citizens, although younger generations are more relaxed and jeans are commonplace. Budget travelers and backpackers are sometimes looked down upon for their scraggly clothes, so having at least one nice outfit in your bag is recommended. Some restaurants and clubs have dress codes. Churches require a bit of modesty in dress; keep shoulders covered and shorts and skirts to the knee as least.

Except in the Andes, where thick sweaters and outdoor wear are common among travelers, Lima's mild climate allows for sophisticated and formal dress as desired. Shorts are rarely worn unless you are participating in athletic activities. A light jacket is necessary, except in summer.

Salaverry, Peru

Overview

Introduction

Salaverry is a small port town that serves as the gateway for cruise ship passengers visiting Trujillo, Peru's second largest city. Salaverry is not very touristy, but the unique culture of the Moche and Chimi people is a compelling reason to check out the area. However, most people visiting the port will depart for Trujillo and its surrounding archeological sites almost immediately.

Port Information

Location

Trujillo is located 10 mi/17 km from Salaverry, usually about a 30-minute drive. Taxis are available outside the port entrance but be careful—many of the drivers will try to monopolize your time in the area to make more money.

Manta, Ecuador

Overview

Introduction

A busy harbor set on the central Pacific coast, Manta, Ecuador, offers the Banco Central Museum (ancient Amerindian artifacts), an artisan market in Plaza Civica, an old wooden church and a picturesque fishing harbor.

The surrounding countryside of Manta has pristine beaches, backed by lush, rolling hills covered in orchards and cotton plantations. The sea has a dangerous undertow there, but the conditions December-April are right for surfing and international windsurfing competitions.

Nearby Portoviejo offers the museum Casa de la Cultura and botanical gardens.



Port Information

Location

Cruise ships dock in Manta's large port, which is an easy walk from the town center. There is also a free shuttle that runs from the port and drops passengers off in front of a shopping center.

Puerto Limon, Costa Rica

Overview

Introduction

Once an important banana port on Costa Rica's Caribbean coast, Puerto Limon is better known today as a good jumping-off point for visitors headed to Cahuita and Tortuguero national parks, or the Gandoca-Manzanillo National Wildlife Refuge. The city is also sometimes called simply "Limon" by locals, although that is also the name of the province.



Puerto Limon, which is about 100 mi/160 km east of San Jose, is also a popular stop for cruise ships. Unfortunately, there really isn't much to see or do in Puerto Limon itself—unless you are there for the huge Columbus Day Carnival in October.

This may soon change, however, as a major restoration project is under way in Puerto Limon to refurbish cultural buildings and improve infrastructure, including the Museo Regional de la Provincia de Puerto Limon, which used to reside in the colonial-era post office. Puerto Limon also hosted the XII Festival Internacional de las Artes in March 2010.

Bringing further recognition to this oft-forgotten city, the Transat Jacques Vabre sailboat race finished in Puerto Limon in 2009, and the city is expected to continue hosting this event. An environmental impact study to expand Puerto Limon has also been approved, and investors are bidding on the project.

Geography

Puerto Limon occupies a small bay surrounded on the north and west sides by low hills. It is open to the south, and for many miles/kilometers beyond is a marshy, mangrove-lined coastal plain. A small, craggy island—Isla Uvita—sits in the bay.

In 1991, the shore upon which Puerto Limon sits was heaved upward as much as 6.5 ft/2 m in places by an earthquake, and the seafront boulevard (which once overlooked a small beach) today overlooks a high-and-dry coral reef. The rocky, indentured shoreline north of town is backed by thickly forested hills.

Two beaches—Playa Bonita and Playa Portete—draw locals on weekends. Playa Bonita is by far the prettiest. Tucked between forested headlands, it has a coral reef offshore, and the tubular waves that wash ashore draw surfers.

History

Limon Bay has a unique spot in Costa Rica's history. It was there that Christopher Columbus first stepped ashore on the region's Caribbean shores in 1502 during his fourth and last voyage to the New World. The Genoese explorer anchored off Isla Uvita and called the region La Huerta (The Garden). Spanish conquistadores soon decimated the local population (many native people were enslaved to work in gold mines elsewhere in Central America), although that part of the coast was never really settled to any degree.

Pirates were a constant scourge along the coast. Many operated as loggers and smugglers—they also introduced the first African slaves to the region—and allied with coastal natives against the Spanish. Cacao was introduced in the 17th century, and for the next two centuries was the region's major export.

In the latter part of the 19th century, Jamaican laborers were imported to work alongside Chinese indentured laborers building the Atlantic Railroad (completed in 1880), linking the then-minor port town of Puerto Limon to San Jose. Many stayed to infuse the coast with distinctive Caribbean island cultural traits. The railroad's developer, Minor Keith, negotiated a huge land grant as part of the railroad deal and introduced bananas to the Caribbean lowlands. The industry thrived until disease struck in the 1930s.

In 1979, the cacao industry was effectively destroyed by *Monilia* fungus. The desultory port town limped along and was dealt another blow in 1991 when a severe earthquake destroyed many buildings, including the city's major hotel. Since then, a remarkable recovery and development has taken place, assisted by a regional tourism boom and major investments in a cruise terminal.

Port Information

Location

Cruise ships stopping on the Caribbean coast usually dock at Puerto Limon, which is the major port city and transportation hub of Costa Rica's east coast. The cruise terminal opens directly onto the main square in town—Parque Vargas. The terminal has its own crafts market with more than 100 artists, telephones, a pharmacy, and salons offering manicures, pedicures and massages when a cruise ship is in port. The main open-air market used by locals is just a two-block walk from the terminal.

Taxis are available both inside and outside the terminal gates, though it's best to take the ones inside as they have been approved by the port authority. Internet access is not available at the terminal, but there is an Internet cafe next door to Brisas del Mar Restaurant in Parque Vargas. Future plans for the terminal include a clothing store, a snack shop and a post office. For up-to-date information, contact the Unidad de Cruceros. Phone 2758-3529.

Many cargo ships (including those that carry paying passengers) sometimes bypass the city in favor of Moin, a dock about 4 mi/6 km northwest of Puerto Limon. Moin is little more than a pier where passengers disembark for tours and shore excursions, although private boats depart from there to Tortuguero. (The pier also serves the nearby banana plantations and oil refinery.) Neither Puerto Limon nor Moin has a tourist information booth.

Potpourri

Manatees inhabit the waters of wetland systems along the shore. These marine mammals spend most of their time submerged and thrive on munching water hyacinths. To spot them, look for bubbles erupting at the surface—the result of flatulence.

Sloths can often be seen in the trees around Puerto Limon and even crawling along telegraph wires. Many of the sloths at the Aviarios del Caribe Sloth Refuge center have been electrocuted while crawling along the wires.

Many black *costenos* (coast-dwellers) speak a lilting patois—part English, part Spanish, part Creole—that can dumbfound visitors.

Iguanas are called "tree chickens" by *campesinos* (farmers), who eat them. Other Costa Ricans consider the giant lizards to be a "poor-man's food."

Because hard currency was scarce in colonial times, cacao beans were sometimes used as currency.

Since the Caribbean coast is relatively straight, there are no marinas on that side of Costa Rica because there are no bays or harbors for shelter.

Banana and pineapple plantations predominate in the area in and around Limon Province. Banana plantations enfold the maturing stalks of bananas in blue plastic bags to ensure that they arrive in supermarkets in pristine condition. When driving past a banana plantation at certain times of the season, all the banana trees appear to have giant blue blossoms hanging from them.

The idea to export bananas from Central America originated when U.S. railroad entrepreneur Henry Meiggs traveled to Costa Rica to build a route from San Jose to Limon. Upon Meiggs' death, his nephew Minor Keith took over and started planting bananas to feed the workers. When the railroad was finished, he began exporting the crop, which later gave birth to the United Fruit Co.

Around 80% of all goods imported and exported in Costa Rica pass through Moin port.

See & Do

Recreation

Near the port, there is surfing at Playa Bonita, and a few companies organize a city tour of Puerto Limon. However, most tourist activities are in the surrounding areas. Appealing ventures for those keen on being immersed in the natural environment include a boat trip up the Tortuguero Canal toward Tortuguero National Park, visiting Cahuita National Park and hiking in the Gandoca-Manzanillo Wildlife Refuge.

North of Tortuguero, Barra del Colorado is a prime locale for game fishing (tarpon and snook are the feisty prizes). One-, two- and three-day white-water trips on the Reventazon River prove thrilling.

Hikers can follow coastal trails through Cahuita National Park (teeming with wildlife), the Gandoca-Manzanillo Wildlife Refuge to spot leatherback turtles, or the more rugged, lonesome and demanding Hitoy-Cerere National Park.

Snorkeling is best along the reefs in Cahuita and Manzanillo, and scuba diving is popular in Punta Uva (south of Puerto Viejo) and Manzanillo. For scuba-diving information in the Punta Uva area, contact Punta Uva Dive Center. <http://www.puntauivadivecenter.com>. Dolphin-spotting trips are also offered at Manzanillo and Punta Uva.

Isla Uvita, a small island off the coast near Puerto Limon, is a great place for kayaking, scuba diving and snorkeling.

Surfing is popular at Puerto Viejo, south of Cahuita. The famous "Salsa Brava" break is for experienced surfers, while the beach break at Playa Cocles, just to the south, is more gentle.

Shopping

The best place to shop for local artwork in Puerto Limon is the open-air Galeria Cristal, where local artists create and sell their pieces. More than 100 craft stalls can be found inside the cruise terminal when a cruise ship is in port. The central market also sells hammocks and crafts. Souvenirs La Casona, at Parque Vargas, sells T-shirts, hats and crafts from around Costa Rica (phone 2758-5752).

The best choices, however, are found in Cahuita and Puerto Viejo, which have dedicated souvenir stores selling hammocks, batiks, shell and coral jewelry, and gorgeous wood carvings. Stalls line the shore in Puerto Viejo selling arts and crafts and ethnic jewelry from all over Central America. Take a stroll down the main east-west road in Puerto Viejo for higher-end arts and crafts.

Info Boutique in Cahuita has a nice selection local crafts, souvenirs, and guidebooks and reading material in English. Tribal Market Art Cafe in Playa Chiquita, between Puerto Viejo and Manzanillo, sells carefully chosen ethnic textiles and crafts from around the world (phone 2750-0923).

Dining

Dining Overview

Puerto Limon has several excellent bargain restaurants, although gourmands should keep their expectations in check. The Mercado Central has snack counters where you can fill up on typical local dishes for less than 3,000 CRC.

Although good restaurants and swinging nightlife are somewhat lacking in Puerto Limon itself, action awaits to the south. Puerto Viejo, Cahuita and Manzanillo provide strong Caribbean influence and cuisine, as well as offer surfer and backpacker culture and fun nightlife. There are also more upscale options starting to appear.

The following is a sampling of restaurants in town. Expect to pay within these guidelines for a meal for one, not including drinks, tax or tip: \$ = less than 5,000 CRC; \$\$ = 5,000-10,000 CRC; \$\$\$ = more than 10,000 CRC.

Local & Regional

Jungle Love Cafe

Playa Chiquita
Manzanillo, Costa Rica

Phone: 2750-0162

<http://www.junglelovecafe.com>

This excellent open-air restaurant offers a fusion and Caribbean menu, while maintaining that cool Caribbean vibe.

Daily except Monday for dinner only. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Black Star Line

Calle 5 at Avenida 5
Limon, Costa Rica

Located in the oldest building in town—also an important venue for political meetings—this small restaurant serves spicy Caribbean cuisine.

\$\$-\$\$\$. No credit cards.

Jammin'

A casual and colorful, reggae-inspired restaurant serving jerk dishes, such as Jamaican jerk chicken over brown rice. Located in Puerto Viejo.

\$\$-\$\$\$. Phone 8826-4332.

Coral Reef Restaurant

Across from the plaza
Cahuita, Costa Rica

Delicious international and Caribbean menu, including seafood dishes. Attracts both locals and tourists.

\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Credit cards accepted.

Loco Natural

South of Puerto Viejo, toward Cocles
Puerto Viejo, Costa Rica

Exotic tropical cuisine.

Daily for dinner. \$\$-\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Just Wright Place

Avenida 6 at Calle 4
Limon, Costa Rica

Authentic Caribbean cuisine served buffet style.

Credit cards accepted.

Park Hotel Restaurant

Avenida 3 (between calles 1 and 3)
Limon, Costa Rica

A national and international menu is served in this air-conditioned restaurant.

\$\$. Credit cards accepted.

Restaurante Brisas del Caribe

North side of Parque Vargas
Limon, Costa Rica

This restaurant features an economical lunchtime buffet and a full bar. Though showing signs of age, this popular, open-air venue facing Parque Vargas is a nice place to enjoy a happy-hour cocktail.

\$. Most major credit cards.

Restaurante La Lechuza

Avenida 3 at Calle 3
Limon, Costa Rica

This air-conditioned restaurant serves a national and international menu.

Open Monday-Saturday for breakfast, lunch and dinner, Sunday for breakfast and lunch. \$\$. Credit cards accepted.

Seafood

Ceviche San Andres

Avenida 2 at Calle 5
Limon, Costa Rica

Fresh seafood in a casual setting.

\$-\$\$.

Maxi's Restaurant and Bar

South end of town
Manzanillo, Costa Rica

Terrific Caribbean seafood such as *pargo rojo* (red snapper) with coconut-flavored rice and beans. Live calypso music occasionally on Saturday.

Daily for lunch and dinner. \$\$. Most major credit cards.

Sobre Las Olas

Playa Negra
Cahuita, Costa Rica

Watch the waves crash while eating bruschetta and sipping wine underneath an umbrella of tamarind trees at this beachside restaurant. It serves Caribbean-inspired seafood dishes and international cuisine.

Security

Personal Safety

Downtown Puerto Limon is not particularly appealing to visitors. Except for a few nice parks and some monuments, there isn't much to see. We recommend avoiding the city at night unless you're in a group and/or are accompanied by a local tour guide. Caution is required while walking, as pickpockets abound. Avoid the sailors' bars near the port.

Crime in Costa Rica is largely opportunistic. Don't leave your belongings unattended in stores, restaurants, on public transportation or at the beach. When hiking, it's best to leave valuables secured at the hotel, including expensive jewelry, and to take along just copies of your passport's data page and Costa Rica entry stamp.

Costa Rica is relatively safe when compared to many Latin American countries, but as everywhere, drugs are having an impact, and crimes are becoming more frequent and more violent. Just remain alert and avoid run-down or suspicious areas.

Tourist police patrol around Puerto Limon, Cahuita, and between Puerto Viejo and Manzanillo. Their uniforms are clearly marked with the words "Tourist Police" on the back. They can be contacted at 2286-1473. In an emergency, dial 911.

Stay in groups when visiting national parks and preserves. Women should exercise extra caution and never hike isolated trails alone. The best way to see a national park in Costa Rica is with a certified local tour guide. This is not only safer, but you will also see more wildlife.

Beware of dangerous riptides, which can drag you out to sea, and avoid swimming in the ocean during high surf.

For the latest information, contact your country's travel-advisory agency.

Health

Sanitary conditions and water quality in Costa Rica are better than in most other countries in Central America. Although it's safe to drink tap water in many areas, most people stick to bottled or filtered water. Hot, freshly cooked food should be safe, but it's best to peel fresh produce before eating, make sure meat is cooked thoroughly and avoid local dairy products that have not been properly refrigerated.

Malaria is found along the Caribbean shore, including Tortuguero and Barra del Colorado national parks. Consult your doctor about appropriate measures, take plenty of insect repellent, and wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts at dusk and dawn. Hepatitis A and typhoid vaccinations also are recommended. The most serious medical problems—diarrhea, amoebic dysentery, dengue fever, malaria and typhoid—occur more frequently outside the capital but still are relatively rare.

Snakes abound in Costa Rica, including 19 venomous species. Although snakebites are rare, they do occur and it is wise to always wear footwear that covers the ankles while hiking in the Gandoca-Manzanillo National Wildlife Refuge and other wilderness areas. Avoid handling leaf litter and look before placing your hand on branches or in crevices. The aggressive and potentially fatal fer-de-lance is responsible for most snakebites and deaths and should be given a very wide berth if encountered.

Costa Rica generally has a strong national health care system with well-trained physicians and nurses, and the hospitals in San Jose (about 100 mi/160 km away) are good. The Tony Facio Hospital in Puerto Limon is located on the shore, north of downtown Puerto Limon, between avenidas 8 and 9. Phone 2758-2222.

Most essential medicines are available, but take all prescription medicine needed for the trip. The sun can be strong, so use sunscreen liberally and wear a hat. Don't forget a pair of comfortable walking shoes. Hiking boots are best if you are venturing into the rain forest. (Take plenty of extra socks. Your feet are likely to get wet, and fresh socks help prevent blisters and infections.)

Disabled Advisory

To comply with Costa Rica's Disability Discrimination Act, Puerto Limon is continually making improvements for the handicapped, but there's still a long way to go. Most sidewalks in town have ramps, although they can be bumpy in areas. Few public buildings are accessible to handicapped travelers.

Very few public buses accommodate handicapped passengers; however, there are a couple of transportation options available. Taxis Alfaro has wheelchair-accessible vans (phone 2222-4136 or 2221-8466) and Transcare offers a variety of mobility services for handicapped and incapacitated visitors. Phone 2288-1769 or 8395-1071. <http://www.transcarecr.com>.

Facts

Dos & Don'ts

Do know what *pura vida* (pronounced *POO-ra BEE-da*) means. The often-heard phrase literally translates as "pure life." Costa Ricans use this to say hello and goodbye and to express general happiness.

Do take time to view wildlife with an experienced naturalist guide. Opportunities abound for viewing caimans (like tiny crocodiles), monkeys, sloths, snakes, poison-dart frogs and scores of colorful birds. However, spotting them isn't always easy. A naturalist guide can easily find such creatures as well as provide fascinating information about their ecology.

Don't take a flashlight when viewing nesting marine turtles by night. These endangered creatures are easily frightened off. Do observe all the rules for viewing turtles, which should be done only in the company of licensed guides.

Do turn off the flash on your camera when taking pictures of wildlife.

Don't swim in the ocean during high surf. Hidden riptides can sweep you out to sea. If you get caught by a riptide, try not to panic and swim parallel to the shore to escape the narrow rip channel. Trying to swim against the current will only tire you out.

Don't buy drugs in Cahuita or Puerto Viejo. Many locals (especially Rastafarians) use marijuana, and drug traffickers have infiltrated the region, where cocaine is readily available. Not only is drug use illegal—plainclothes police are present—but it also undermines the integrity of local communities.

Do reconfirm airline reservations out of the country. Reservations are frequently canceled (particularly during the December and January holidays) if they're not confirmed at least 72 hours in advance. Car rental reservations also may be canceled if you arrive late unless you let the rental company know that your flight is delayed.



Do learn a little Spanish. Costa Ricans are warm and friendly, and they really appreciate your attempt to speak to them in their native language.

Do get very specific when you ask for directions, because Costa Ricans can be a little vague in this area. They will often reference directions from a certain general location or a landmark that may no longer exist. When they say "You can't miss it," you probably will.

Don't collect any plants or animals. They are considered precious resources and are protected by law.

Do conserve resources. Costa Rica is very ecosensitive. Ticos, from small children to adults, practice conservation and are concerned with maintaining sustainable tourism to protect their future.

Geostats

Passport/Visa Requirements: Canadians and citizens of the U.K. and U.S. need passports but not visas. Australians may enter with a passport only for visits up to 30 days (which may be extended locally). Proof of sufficient funds and onward passage are also required.

Reconfirm travel document requirements with your carrier before departure.

Population: 67,536.

Languages: Spanish.

Predominant Religions: Christian (Roman Catholic).

Time Zone: 6 hours behind Greenwich Mean Time (-6 GMT). Daylight Saving Time is not observed.

Voltage Requirements: 110 volts.

Money

Currency Exchange

Costa Rica's currency is the colon. The U.S. dollar is accepted as legal currency throughout the country.

Banks in Puerto Limon can change U.S. dollars, which are also accepted by most stores and merchants. Most banks have ATMs where you can use your debit and credit cards to withdraw cash in either colons or dollars. When you pay in dollars, you will often be given change in colons. Be vigilant when using ATMs. Ideally do so in the company of a trusted friend and during daylight hours.

Never change money on the street—not only is it illegal, but the chance of being ripped off is great.

Traveler's checks are rarely accepted. It can also be time consuming to cash them at banks.

Taxes

Most tourist hotels apply a 16.8% government tax. Check to see whether this is included in quoted rates. Small budget hotels are usually excepted.

Restaurants charge a 13% tax which is either included in the menu prices or added to the bill. Check the bottom of the menu to see if I.V.A. is included or not.

A 10% service tax is often added to the restaurant bill. When service is added, you don't need to tip, but it's appropriate to add a bit if you feel the service was excellent.

A 14,000 CRC passenger departure tax is required at the airports and is usually included in cruise fares.

Tipping

Most menu prices include a 13% restaurant tax and a 10% service charge. Restaurants list whether these are included or not at the bottom of the menu. Add a small tip for good service on top of the 10% service charge already added to restaurant bills. Tip tour guides but not taxi drivers, unless they provide an extra service.

Weather

Costa Rica's Caribbean coast has its own unique microclimate. Tradewinds keep the weather hot and humid most of the year, and short but heavy rainfall occurs often.

What to Wear

Dress in Costa Rica is conservatively casual. You'll feel comfortable during the day in casual sports clothes, but in a good restaurant at night you should adhere to local customs. In Puerto Limon, men wear collared shirts and slacks for business meetings and women wear skirts or dresses, though young adults are prone to adopt a sexier look, with skin-tight jeans de rigueur for women and a hip-hop-inspired look for young men.

Away from the city, most local inhabitants are relatively poor. Men typically may wear only shorts to beat the heat, although women always dress conservatively. Bathing suits and short shorts are for the beach or river rafting and shouldn't be worn elsewhere.

Hikers should wear comfortable shoes or sneakers (which will most likely get muddy) or lightweight hiking boots, along with lightweight pants and long-sleeved shirts to guard against thorns and biting insects. Take along a hat, not only as protection against the sun, but to keep leaves and other rain-forest debris out of your hair.

Carry a light raincoat or poncho in wet season (and stick a couple of plastic bags in your pocket to protect your camera). We also recommend a change of socks (especially on long day tours) to prevent blisters.

Neutral earth tones will help you blend in with the wilderness environment to enhance wildlife viewing.

Guatemala

Overview

Introduction

Guatemala, often trumpeted by travel agencies and guidebooks as "the country of eternal spring," is one of the most-often listed travel destinations in Central America: the stunning Maya ruins at Tikal, the well-preserved colonial city of Antigua, a vibrant indigenous culture, active volcanoes, highland lakes and exotic wildlife are its chief draws. But the savvy traveler knows that traveling to these gems and safely enjoying them can be a challenge in Guatemala, one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere.



From the 1950s until the mid-1990s, political unrest, followed by the country's bloodiest civil war, were deterrents to travelers—though many of the major attractions were far from the areas of fighting. However, since the war ended in 1996, there has been a spate of improvements in tourist accommodations and infrastructure. Luxury hotels have been built, roads have been upgraded and cruise-ship passengers have begun arriving again at the country's two modern ports of Santo Tomas and Puerto Quetzal.

At the same time, despite these improvements, a continuing high crime rate—including some violent attacks targeting travelers (and those wishing to adopt children in particular)—and endemic poverty have made Guatemala at best unpredictable and potentially dangerous.

We still think Guatemala is an exceptional destination, but we don't take the risks lightly. We urge all visitors to be extremely cautious, and we strongly recommend that you stick to the major tourist destinations and see them on a tour organized by a reputable operator. For added protection, a security escort may be booked for tourist groups through the INGUAT, the Guatemalan tourist institute. Though the vast majority of travelers who venture off the beaten trail enjoy their trips without incident, keep in mind that the problems that do occur generally happen away from large groups or well-traveled areas.

Plenty of tours are available that take in the best of Guatemala. One destination that shouldn't be missed is Tikal—the greatest of the ruins left from the age of the ancient Maya, whose accomplishments in the fields of architecture, mathematics and astronomy are a source of national pride and universal awe. In fact, we think Tikal (and a trip to the nearby island of Flores) is one of the most impressive ruins in the world, in a class with such places as Machu Picchu in Peru or the Valley of the Kings in Egypt. Tikal, with its complex of more than 30 different sites, is alone worth a trip to Guatemala.

But you needn't stop there. Guatemala's ecotourism opportunities (especially bird-watching and forest trekking), continue to increase, particularly in the areas surrounding the natural beauty of the Rio Dulce and Lake Atitlan—considered by many as the world's most beautiful lake—as well as the international-traveler base in the colorful colonial town of Antigua.

Geography

Guatemala is at the top (northwest) end of Central America, bordered by Mexico, Belize, Honduras and El Salvador. It has a very small piece of Caribbean coastline and a longer stretch dotted with black-sand beaches along the Pacific. Much of the country is covered by jungle and rain forest. Mountains—including 35 active volcanoes—are concentrated in the central and western parts of the country. The highest volcano (also the highest in all of Central America), Tajumulco, reaches 13,800 ft/4,200 m.

History

The ancestors of the Maya developed agriculture at some point before 2000 BC and so became less dependent on hunting, fishing and gathering. Corn was the reliable staple that allowed the Maya and other great cultures of what is now Mexico and Central America to flourish. The ancient Maya civilization eventually covered large areas of Mesoamerica. It reached its zenith between AD 250 and 800, though the civilization was still in existence—albeit in a much reduced state—when Europeans arrived in the early 1500s. Today, the Maya of Guatemala's highlands—those furthest removed from colonial influence—continue to practice many of their ancestors' traditions and beliefs.

The Spaniards conquered the weakened and then-divided Maya and took control of what is now called Guatemala in 1524. During the colonial period, Spanish-born colonists held the reins of power, but large groups of Creoles (Spaniards born in the New World) and mestizos (those of mixed Spanish and indigenous heritage) also developed. At the bottom of the social hierarchy were those of pure Amerindian or Afro-Caribbean heritage. Guatemala gained independence from Spain in 1821, and after a few years as a member of a confederation of Central American states, it became a separate republic in 1847.

Guatemala's seemingly endless political unrest was exacerbated by a 1954 coup—assisted by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency—that turned out a democratically elected leftist government. A series of military or military-influenced governments then ruled the country with a heavy hand, and resistance became armed and organized. In response to growing popularity of guerrillas among the landless indigenous people in the 1960s, the army unleashed a campaign of terror in which thousands of people were killed and entire villages were massacred. In late 1996, the civil war ended when a series of agreements was signed between the Guatemalan government and guerrilla insurgents. Over its 36-year history, the war claimed the lives of as many as 200,000 people.

Since the 1996 peace treaty, relations have improved between the Maya and the Ladinos (as those of mixed Spanish and Amerindian descent are known). But Guatemalan life has been far from harmonious. The 2000-04 presidency of Alfonso Portillo (who had very close ties to former president Gen. Efraín Ríos Montt) marked a period of skyrocketing crime and rampant corruption. Guatemala City in particular became a very dangerous place. The next president, Alvaro Colom, took office in early 2008, successfully continuing his predecessor Oscar Berger's policy of curbing corruption and violence; many Guatemalans now believe social conditions are improving, although the economy remains problematic.

After relatively peaceful elections, Colom was succeeded in 2012 by Otto Pérez Molina. He is the first former military official to be elected to the presidency since Guatemala's return to democratic elections in 1986, but is dogged by controversy, having proposed legalization of drugs, and is rumored to have committed human rights abuses when in the military.

The business climate of late has improved, but poverty remains widespread in Guatemala, Central America's most populous country. More than half of the people are Maya (the largest indigenous population in the region), the vast majority of whom still live in small farming villages, growing corn and beans as their ancestors did. They are famous for their intricate handmade textiles of brilliant reds,

yellows and purples. Numerous Mayan dialects are still spoken in Guatemala—with many dialects spoken by fewer than 100 people. In remote areas of the highlands, you may hear more Mayan than Spanish, even though Spanish is the country's official language.

Snapshot

Guatemala's main attractions include Maya ruins (especially Tikal), beautiful scenery, indigenous markets and culture, Spanish colonial towns, lakes, volcanoes, rain forests, hiking, bird-watching, good food, and clothing and blankets hand woven in traditional Maya patterns.

Anyone interested in Central American (especially Maya) culture and history can enjoy Guatemala, but you should take appropriate precautions against crime. Those uncomfortable in developing countries and those who seek polished resort areas should find another destination.

Port Information

Location

Guatemala's primary Caribbean port is Santo Tomas de Castilla (often referred to as Santo Tomas), situated in an inlet southwest of the industrial port of Puerto Barrios, and technically a part of that city. Most cruise ships tie up at Santo Tomas' modern pier, which is often busy with cargo ships as well. A small market has been set up on the dock so that cruise passengers can buy local handicrafts. The port isn't really geared for tourists yet—don't expect to find a tourist information booth or waiting taxi drivers. And there isn't much to do nearby—Santo Tomas itself, formerly known as Matias de Galvez, has a population of about 7,500 people. (The Santo Tomas port was built to replace the aging dock at Puerto Barrios, built in the early 1900s as a loading dock for bananas.)

If you don't sign up for a shore excursion, you can take a complimentary shuttle boat across the lagoon to the Best Western Cayos del Diablo Beach Hotel. You can lounge on the beach (don't expect much) or take a short guided walk on a jungle trail near the hotel for about US\$5 per person. The hotel has a pool, as well as a bar and a restaurant.

Just north of Santo Tomas is Livingston (known locally as La Boga), a lively Caribbean-style village of brightly painted buildings that can be reached only by boat. Settled originally by Garifuna blacks who had escaped slavery, the town is rich in both history and culture. A few small ships stop there as part of an excursion up the Rio Dulce to Lake Izabal.

Guatemala's major Pacific port for cruise ships is tiny Puerto Quetzal, about halfway between Mexico and El Salvador on what is often called Guatemala's Pacific watershed. (Because of the area's proximity to the volcanic hills in the interior, you'll see long stretches of black-sand beaches.) Puerto Quetzal has replaced the seedier-looking Puerto San Jose, but nonetheless it isn't really geared for tourists either—the dock is used mainly for unloading cargo when cruise ships aren't around. There are no nearby attractions, except for a small beach—a better one can be found at Balneario Likin, an upscale resort and residential complex to the east that is popular with wealthy Guatemalans.

Potpourri

Guatemala has 23 recognized Amerindian languages, more than any other country in Central America.

Stela D at the Maya ruins of Quirigua is so wonderfully decorated with carvings and glyphs that its image was chosen to adorn Guatemala's 10-centavo coin.

Guatemala boasts three UNESCO World Heritage sites: Tikal National Park, the colonial city of Antigua, and the archaeological park and Maya ruins at Quirigua. There are no fewer than 18 additional sites throughout the country that have been nominated as possible World Heritage sites.

During the colonial period in Guatemala from 1523 to 1821, 17 large earthquakes shook the city of Antigua. The worst hit in 1773—after which the city had to be completely rebuilt.

Tikal harbors more than Maya ruins. About 300 species of birds live there, along with howler and spider monkeys.

The country's Mam indigenous people, centered about Todos Santos Cuchumatán, are considered by anthropologists to have the most intact social structure and lifestyle of any in the country, with a way of life that has remained essentially unchanged for centuries.

See & Do

Sightseeing

See the sights in Guatemala City, including Parque Central and the Cathedral. Not to be missed is the world's largest map in Parque Minerva, and the city's wonderful art and archaeology museums. A trip to the country's former capital, Antigua Guatemala, is also in order. Despite countless earthquakes, floods and fires, it's a beautiful place, full of multicolored, colonial buildings, tropical gardens, plazas, fountains and cobble streets.

Marvel at the remains of great stone heads and other carvings dotted around the sugar-cane fields of Santa Lucía Cotzumalguapa and La Democracia. Survey superb craftsmanship in quaint towns such as Jocotenango (ceramics) and San Antonio Aguascalientes (hand-woven textiles), Salama (silver, clay and leather handicrafts), and Momostenango (traditional hand-woven ponchos).

Visit the Maya sites of Tikal—with its vast pyramidal temples, ball courts, causeways, plazas and public buildings—and others such as El Mirador, Uaxactun, Ixlu, Yaxha, Aguateca and Quirigua. In Tikal, head for the Tikal National Park for diverse wildlife, including howler monkeys, tropical birds, ocelots, jaguars and brocket deer.

Recreation

Guatemala is rich in the natural resources required for many outdoor recreational activities, and a wide selection of tours is available from most hotels in the appropriate areas. Hiking and mountain-biking tours are easy to come by in the highlands, with many such trips leaving from lakeside Panajachel or the tourist hubs of Antigua and Quetzaltenango (usually referred to as Xela—pronounced *SHAY-la*). Impressive volcanoes are easily accessible from both of the latter cities. For beautiful hikes that are far from the typical gringo trail, make your way to traditional Maya mountain villages such as Nebaj, in the Ixil Triangle. Getting there can be a challenge, but once there, book a tour with experienced local guides who will offer

insight into traditional Maya culture as well as sensational mountain views. You'll find that the cost is far less than almost anywhere else on the continent.

Those who prefer jungle hikes can arrange a trip to remote Maya ruins, such as El Mirador in northern Guatemala's El Peten region, and spend a number of days trekking to reach the site. Bird-watching is particularly rewarding in the northwest and throughout the region of Tikal. Textile and fabric-weaving tours and lessons are increasingly popular activities in the Maya villages and around Quetzaltenango.

Head to Guatemala's many waterways for kayaking or canoeing. Lake Atitlan offers a beautiful volcanic backdrop. Amatique Bay, off Guatemala's short Caribbean coastline, offers a variety of boating possibilities: kayaking around Punto de Manabique, or around the coast and into the small waterways near Puerto Barrios and Livingston. You may see manatees off the coast there. The Rio Dulce, which meets Amatique Bay at Livingston, can be explored inland all the way to Lago de Izabal—Guatemala's largest lake is far less touristy than Lake Atitlan. White-water rafting can be found on the Rio Cahabon, in the country's center. Monterrico, Guatemala's best-known beach, is on the Pacific coast. It is accessible only by boat and is surrounded by swamps and rivers you can explore. Swimming in the ocean should be undertaken with great caution, however, as the waters are rough and the riptide strong.

Shopping

The vivid colors and unusual textures of Guatemalan arts, crafts and fabrics have made shopping a major activity for visitors. The country's craftspeople spread out their wares on blankets and over kiosks along many roads and at most intersections. The two largest markets are the daily Central Market in Guatemala City and the Sunday and Thursday market in Chichicastenango.

Weavings are by far the most popular purchase. They come in a variety of sizes—if a wall hanging of a Maya ruler wearing a headdress of snakes doesn't quite fit your home decor, look for tablecloths and napkin sets in rainbow colors. You'll also see handmade wool rugs adorned with the glyphs of the Maya calendar and colorful cases for your glasses that you can hang around your neck. Another woven product, the cotton string hammock, is useful and easy to stuff in a suitcase to take home. If you like ceremonial masks, you'll find them in shops in Antigua and Panajachel and especially in the market at Chichicastenango.

Generally, you'll find high quality in even the smallest items; in fact, we think Guatemala's textiles are among the finest expressions of native art in the world. Even without bargaining (a common practice in the markets), prices are cheap considering the work involved. Little is known of the history of Guatemalan textiles, an art that has been passed down from generation to generation. Patterns woven into people's clothing can identify the village they are from and sometimes even reveal marital status and the number of children they have.

In Antigua, you'll find beautiful and unusual jewelry in the Jades factory. You can also shop for paintings that depict the traditions, customs, daily life and scenery of small communities in which the artists live.

Although Guatemala is not particularly noted for pottery, you'll see it, especially figures of angels holding doves (be careful, they break easily).

Don't try to ship anything home. Postal service in the country is unreliable at best. Be aware that the local shops recommended by tour operators, taxi drivers or your ship's port lecturer generally pay for the privilege.

Remember also that many artisans do not place the same value on quality as a foreigner purchasing an item. Always be sure to inspect what you buy ahead of time and don't hesitate to ask for better-quality items if you're in doubt. Guatemalans themselves do the same thing, and so should you. If something looks like a knock-off, or, at the other end of the spectrum, appears too good to be true, it is. Once you buy an item, forget trying to return it (even with a receipt), so buyer beware.

Shopping Hours: Monday-Saturday 9 am-12:30 pm and 3-7 pm. Market hours vary, so check with local officials.

Dining

Dining Overview

Guatemala offers a wide variety of food, from U.S.-style fast food in Guatemala City and Antigua to the indigenous dishes served in the countryside (featuring chicken, pork, lean beef, corn, avocado and zucchini). Among the local specialties are *pollo asado* (grilled chicken), *chuchitos* (tamales) and *frijoles con arroz* (beans and rice). Handmade tortillas are typically served with every meal; they're usually smaller and thicker than Mexican-style tortillas. The *desayuno chapin*, the traditional Guatemalan breakfast, consists of eggs, beans, cheese, fried plantains and tortillas. Interestingly enough, Guatemalans are cuckoo for cornflakes. Be forewarned: These cornflakes are often served with warm milk. Many cafes serve fantastic *chocolate* (hot chocolate). Ask for it *con leche* to get the richer version, made with milk.

In the capital, you will also find many restaurants serving various types of Latin American cuisine. Traditional Guatemalan dishes are spicier than most European cuisines, but not as hot as those in Mexico. Local food offers the best value. We particularly enjoy the 1930s-style luxury of a meal at the Hotel Pan American in Guatemala City (Zone or *Zona 1*, roughly equivalent to a neighborhood), complete with waiters in native costume and a piano player. Another favorite is the Hacienda de la Sanchez in Guatemala City, an excellent steak house that serves handmade tortillas. *Zona Viva*, "the lively zone" (Zone 10), is where many of the larger, luxury hotels are located, and excellent restaurants and entertainment can be found there, in both the hotels and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Antigua also offers a variety of restaurants serving international cuisine, including Italian, Thai, Japanese and Mexican. Vegetarians will be especially happy in Antigua, as most restaurants have meatless dishes on their menus.

Eating food prepared by street vendors involves some amount of risk. That said, we're happy to report that only good things have come from our personal experiments with the many roadside fried and grilled chicken stands throughout the country. Without fail, the chicken and fries were very greasy, very cheap and very delicious.

Tap water is not always safe to drink in Guatemala, particularly outside of Antigua, Guatemala City and Quetzaltenango. However, bottled purified water is sold in grocery stores and pharmacies throughout the country. Ask in bars and restaurants if ice cubes and drinks were made with purified water (*agua pura*).

Always peel fruit bought in markets and wash raw vegetables with purified water before consuming them. Good restaurants normally disinfect vegetables used in salads, but it's a good idea to ask first. If in doubt, avoid the salad.

Security

Personal Safety

Crime, including armed robbery and rape, continues in Guatemala, as evidenced by some well-publicized incidents involving foreign visitors. While improvements have been made in some of the primary tourism centers, the country as a whole remains comparatively dangerous. We urge you to exercise extreme caution when visiting. Because many of the incidents have involved roadway attacks on cars and buses, we recommend that you don't rent a car in the country and that you by all means avoid the public buses (local and intercity). The so-called "chicken buses"—colorfully decorated old school buses—are dangerous not only because of pickpockets and armed bandits but also because of the drivers' rather reckless driving styles. Use caution if you do take them, and conceal and separate your valuables. Statistically speaking, the nicer the bus, the safer it is, but robberies do occur on better classes of buses. Never, ever leave anything unguarded: It will disappear within minutes.

One of the safer ways to see Guatemala's main tourist attractions is on a tour run by a reputable operator. Although tour buses and shuttles occasionally have been attacked by armed robbers, tour groups are best able to take advantage of the security program run by the Guatemala Tourism Institute (INGUAT). On request, police will patrol specific roads and will accompany tour groups, provided that the officer's food and accommodations are paid for. Ask your tour operators if they participate in this plan. The Guatemalan government has also established a special tourist police force dedicated to protecting visitors in popular destinations such as Antigua.

Political demonstrations in Guatemala can turn violent, so it is wise to stay away from them.

Robberies and attacks have been especially prevalent in several areas: Pacaya and Agua Volcanoes, both located south of Antigua and Guatemala City; Cerro de la Cruz Park outside Antigua; on back roads near Lake Atitlan and the Pacific Coast Highway (CA-2); and the Peten region, including the more isolated areas of Tikal. The coastal regions generally are the safest areas. Avoid walking after dark in Guatemala City or hiking alone in remote nature preserves. Pickpocketing and purse snatching are common in urban areas, especially in public markets. However, despite security concerns, most foreign visitors enjoy a safe stay in Guatemala.

Emergency phone numbers in Guatemala are 120, 122, 128 or 911.

For the latest information, contact your country's travel-advisory agency.

Health

Guatemala City has good medical services, but this isn't the case in much of the rest of the country. Private hospitals in urban areas tend to be better equipped than public and rural facilities. But be aware that doctors and hospitals may ask for immediate payment in cash. Take along all prescription medicines needed for the trip. Arrange for adequate out-of-country medical insurance, including provisions for emergency evacuation, before leaving home. Note that private insurance coverage is not commonly honored in Guatemalan clinics and hospitals.

Sanitary conditions can cause problems for visitors, so be careful what you eat. Avoid fresh salads (or ask in a good restaurant if the salad vegetables have been disinfected), peel fresh fruit and raw vegetables, make sure meat is cooked thoroughly and avoid unpasteurized dairy products. Most hot, freshly cooked food should be safe, especially if it's included on a package tour. Do not drink the tap

water. Ask if ice cubes have been made with tap or bottled water. Stick with bottled purified water and prepackaged or boiled drinks.

Because of the presence of malaria and dengue fever—although both diseases are becoming less common—avoid mosquito bites by using a strong repellent, particularly in jungle environments. You should also see a doctor about antimalaria medication before your trip. Make sure your vaccinations are current for tetanus, diphtheria, typhoid, hepatitis and adult polio. Leptospirosis, a bacterial disease found in water contaminated with animal urine, is present in Guatemala. Take care to minimize contact with standing water in rural areas. Cholera is present. A vaccine is available, but offers only limited immunity. Avoid contact with animals because of the danger of rabies. If you are even nipped by an animal, consult a doctor. Prevent skin infections by covering and disinfecting even the smallest wound. The sun can be very strong, especially at high altitudes, so wear sunscreen and a hat. Don't forget a pair of comfortable walking shoes.

For more information, contact your country's health-advisory agency.

Facts

Dos & Don'ts

Do ask before photographing Maya—particularly children and women. Many Maya find it offensive and belittling to have their photos taken without first granting permission.

Do leave a tip if you stop to listen to a street performance on a marimba, which looks like a large xylophone. The national instrument of Guatemala can be played by as many as nine people. Tips are the musicians' livelihood.

Don't ever argue or offer resistance if you're stopped at a roadblock, whether military or otherwise. Vehicles that don't stop at roadblocks are often shot at. People who cooperate with armed robbers are usually not harmed.

Do watch your step while exploring Maya ruins. Not all hazards are marked. Staircases leading up to many of the sites often are missing a few steps. Also, when walking on wooded or grassy paths, watch out for roots that can catch your foot or uneven ground that can send you tumbling.

Don't flush toilet tissue. The wastebasket you'll find in some restrooms is a none-too-subtle request for you to throw used tissue in the basket, not in the bowl, because of narrow pipes. Only the most modern hotel facilities are designed to accommodate flushed toilet tissue.

Do be prepared for the heat, sand fleas and flies if you're headed into the jungle. Wear light-colored clothing and go heavy on the insect repellent.

Don't go out without a photocopy of your passport at all times. It's against the law not to carry a copy with you, and police at roadblocks will ask to see it. Keep your actual passport in a secure place, such as your hotel's safe.

Do read up on the history of the Maya before visiting Tikal and other sites in Guatemala. A little background information will greatly enhance your visit.

Do keep your eyes out for the resplendent quetzal, Guatemala's national bird, with its gaudy red and green plumage. You won't see it in zoos. This rare bird dies if held in captivity.

Geostats

Passport/Visa Requirements: Citizens of Canada and the U.S. need passports but not visas. Proof of onward passage and sufficient funds are required by all.

All U.S. citizens must have a passport when traveling by air to or from Bermuda, Canada, the Caribbean, Central and South America and Mexico. Citizens of Canada, Mexico and the British Overseas Territory of Bermuda also must have a passport or other designated secure document to enter the U.S.

Passports are required for land crossings at the Canadian and Mexican borders with the U.S. and for cruise passengers returning to the U.S. from Mexico, the Caribbean, Canada or Bermuda. Reconfirm travel-document requirements with your carrier prior to departure

Population: 13,824,463.

Languages: Spanish, more than 20 indigenous languages.

Predominant Religions: Christian (Roman Catholic, Protestant) and traditional Maya beliefs..

Time Zone: 6 hours behind Greenwich Mean Time (-6 GMT). Daylight Saving Time is not observed.

Voltage Requirements: 110 volts.

Telephone Codes: 502, country code; 2,Guatemala City city code; 9,Antigua city code;

Money

Currency Exchange

The Guatemalan currency, the quetzal, is named after the spectacular bird of the same name. In ancient Maya society, the quetzal's plumage was used as currency. Bills are in denominations of 5, 10, 20, 50 and 500 quetzals, whereas coins are denominated as 10, 25 and 50 centavos, and 1 quetzal.

ATMs are available in major cities only and usually accept either Visa/Plus system cards or MasterCard/Cirrus. If you have cards that operate on both networks, it may be prudent to take along both: Some towns have ATMs on only one network. Be wary of PIN-reading machines that have been hooked up to the outside of ATMs; any ATM that appears to have been tampered with; or an ATM that has people loitering nearby.

Many locations, particularly the touristy ones, accept U.S. dollars. Banks are generally the best places to exchange money, although some travel agencies and hotels will do so, too. Be prepared for long lines at many banks—withdrawing money from an ATM is usually a much faster option.

Banking hours are typically Monday-Friday 9 am-5 pm. A few banks in Guatemala City may have slightly longer hours, and some are open Saturday 10 am-1 pm.

Taxes

Guatemala collects a 12% value-added tax (VAT) on all purchases; in most cases, this tax is included in the quoted price. The hotel tax in Guatemala is 22%, and it's best to clarify if a quoted hotel charge includes all taxes—often the hotel tax is not included. There is also a shockingly high 17% tax on international destination tickets sold in Guatemala, so it's best to arrange ongoing travel before arriving.

Tipping

Tip 10% in restaurants if a gratuity has not already been added. Taxi drivers are usually not tipped unless they help you with your luggage. Hotel staff and airport baggage carriers are.

Weather

The best time to visit Guatemala is November-April, when there's less rain. That makes for less mud and easier traveling conditions, but it will also be hotter in the El Peten region and on both coasts. It's always cooler in the mountains (usually in the 60s-70s F/15-22 C) and hot and humid in the lowlands (especially on the Pacific coast). Tikal can be very hot in the summer (in the 90s F/33-37 C) and humid, but take a sweater and long-sleeved shirt for the evenings and a jacket for Guatemala City. In September, when tropical storms move in from the Caribbean, it can rain for days on end. Hurricanes are also a distinct possibility in September and October.

What to Wear

Guatemala is a conservative country where shorts are reserved for beach resorts or the pool. Women should dress modestly when visiting churches and historical sites. In the cities and highlands, spring clothing and a light jacket for cool evenings will serve you well. When visiting the archaeological sites and beaches, wear light-colored cotton clothing—long pants (both men and women) and a long-sleeved shirt—and comfortable shoes with nonslip soles. Sandals are permissible year-round, but never in a business environment. During the rainy season, waterproof, lightweight rain gear is more practical than an umbrella. Immediately take off your sunglasses if speaking with the military or a policeman. Beards are much less common there than elsewhere in Latin America, and long hair for men is frowned upon.

Roatan, Bay Islands

Overview

Introduction

Roatan, Honduras, is one of the largest of the country's Bay Islands. Popular areas include the French Harbour, West End and West Bay. A single road runs the length of the island and many of the towns are situated between the road and the beaches.



Roatan is known for its excellent scuba diving locations, especially at West End. The islands Guanaja and Utila are also nearby.

Port Information

Location

Roatan has become an increasingly popular destination for North American travelers. Coxen Hole is the island's capital, and the airport, ferry and cruise terminal are located there. However, there is little of interest for tourists in Coxen Hole, and time ashore is better spent exploring the rest of the island.

Facts

Geostats

Passport/Visa Requirements: Visitors to Roatan must present a valid passport when entering Honduras. Honduras does not require a visa, but visitors who plan to stay more than 30 days should apply for a 90-day visa from the Honduran consulate prior to their arrival.

Population: 60,000.

Languages: Spanish, English.

Time Zone: Daylight Saving Time is not observed.

Cozumel, Mexico

Overview

Introduction

Cozumel, Mexico, should not be compared to Cancun, the splashy resort just 40 mi/65 km to the north and one of its nearest neighbors. In the past, Cozumel had a laid-back, sedate atmosphere, and its superior fishing, snorkeling and diving gave it a definite edge.



Today, Cozumel retains its unique vibe and remains a better choice for those who don't like planned resorts, but the island is no longer an escapist's paradise. The snorkeling, diving and fishing are still great, but no one would mistake present-day Cozumel for the sleepy backwater it once was.

One reason is cruise ships. Cozumel is the most popular cruise stop in Mexico and can host as many as four large ships simultaneously. When more than one ship looms on the horizon, Cozumel's restaurants, bars and shops fill with day-trippers. Everyone, from shopkeepers to bartenders, gets a bit stressed by the crowds.

Still, Cozumel can be fun, especially for travelers interested in exploring its coral reefs on scuba and snorkeling outings. The island's only town, San Miguel, has retained much of its pleasant, small-town atmosphere. Those with enough time for a day trip will find the Mayan ruins of Tulum and Chichen Itza, on the Yucatan mainland, within striking distance.

Highlights

Sights—Deserted beaches on Cozumel's rugged east coast; sea and jungle vistas in the Faro Celarain Eco Park; the Maya ruins at San Gervasio.

Museums—The Museo de la Isla de Cozumel with its haunting Maya sculptures; the Navigational Museum with its unique navigational exhibits; the San Miguel Pax Music Museum with its collection of almost 1,000 different musical instruments from around the world.

Memorable Meals—Cajun gumbo at the French Quarter with Zydeco music on the side; pasta with fresh seafood in Guido's romantic courtyard.

Late Night—Frolic and fun at Senor Frog's and Carlos'n Charlie's; break a sweat dancing at Dubai; street festivities during Carnival.

Walks—The *malecon*, San Miguel's pretty seaside promenade; the botanical gardens in Parque Nacional Chankanaab; the seaside trails and views of Mayan ruins in Faro Celarain Eco Park.

Especially for Kids—Dolphin encounters at Parque Nacional Chankanaab; underwater tours with Atlantis Adventures submarines.

Geography

Cozumel is Mexico's largest island—33 mi/53 km long and 8 mi/13 km wide. The island is very flat. From the mainland, the tall hotel buildings appear to float on the horizon. Shops, restaurants and nightlife are concentrated in San Miguel, the only town, which is on the west coast of the island.

Cozumel has two highways. One makes a half-circle around the southern end of the island. Heading south out of San Miguel, it's a four-lane road for about 5 mi/8 km before narrowing to two lanes. The other highway is the Carretera Transversal (the cross-island highway), which is a well-maintained road that cuts straight through the jungle-covered center of the island and connects the east and west coasts.

It's hard to get lost in downtown San Miguel if you know the layout: *Avenidas* (avenues) run north-south, and *calles* (streets) run east-west. Except for the large thoroughfares, such as Avenida Melgar (also known as the *Malecon* or waterfront), Calle 11 and the island highways, most roads are one way.

History

The oldest Maya ruin on Cozumel dates from AD 300. The Maya believed that Cozumel was the spiritual home of Ixchel, the goddess of fertility and love. Maya women and men were said to make a pilgrimage to the island at least once in their lifetimes to ensure the healthy birth of their children.

The name Cozumel comes from the Mayan word *Cuzamil-Peten*, which means "Land of the Swallows." (Ixchel was often depicted with swallows at her feet.)

Cozumel was a quiet place until the early 1960s, when it was first visited by Jacques Cousteau, the well-known underwater explorer and documentary filmmaker. He put the island on the map as one of the great diving destinations in the world.

In recent decades, Cozumel has experienced the tourism boom that has transformed the northern Yucatan, and it has become an increasingly popular destination for cruise ships.

Port Information

Location

Cruise ships visiting Cozumel dock at the International Pier, Punta Langosta or Puerta Maya (the most developed; <http://www.puertamaya.com>), all of which have been reconstructed to withstand a Category 5 hurricane. For more information on each facility, see <http://www.cozumelmycozumel.com/Pages/CozumelCruisesBasics.htm>.

During peak times, some ships anchor offshore there and tender passengers to land. These are marked on cruise ship itineraries as *fundeo*.

Punta Langosta pier is a 10-minute walk, and the International Pier is a short taxi ride or a 2-mi/3-km walk along the waterfront to San Miguel. Puerta Maya's 9-acre/4-hectare cruise center has a transportation hub that can accommodate dozens of taxis and tour buses. The three piers have shopping malls, Internet access, taxis and tour stands.

A tourist-information office on the municipal pier and a booth in the nearby park are open daily 8 am-4 pm. The island's main tourism office is on the second floor of the Plaza del Sol shopping center on the east side of the town plaza, half a block from the municipal pier. It's open Monday-Friday 8 am-3 pm. Phone 987-869-0212. <http://www.islacozumel.com.mx>.

Potpourri

The El Cedral Festival was started about 150 years ago by Casimiro Cardenas. He survived an attack during the War of the Castes by clutching a small wooden cross and started the festival to honor its power.

Hernan Cortes, the Spanish conqueror of the Aztec Empire in the 16th century, made his first landfall from Cuba at Cozumel. Soon after the Maya population was decimated by smallpox carried by the Spaniards.

Cozumel was a sacred island according to its first settlers, the Maya. They dedicated the island to the moon goddess Ixchel and built many temples in her honor.

Cozumel was a favorite lair for some of the most notorious pirates along the Spanish Main. Henry Morgan, the most famous of them, went on to become the British governor of Jamaica as Sir Henry Morgan.

A large population that is descended from the ancient Maya lives in Cozumel—you'll know them by their Mayan dialect, round faces, dark almond-shaped eyes, coal-black hair and short stature. The women wear traditional embroidered *huipil* dresses, which look like sacks and help keep them cool in the heat of the day.

Black coral used to be harvested by native divers who plunged more than 100 ft/31 m beneath the surface of the ocean without the use of air tanks. Now the coral is on the endangered list, and its sale is prohibited by international law.

The island's airport was used as a U.S. Navy base during World War II.

See & Do

Sightseeing

San Miguel, the only town on the island, is a lively place. Although the typical traveler-oriented attractions are centered on the Plaza del Sol and Avenida Rafael Melgar (the 9-mi/14-km waterfront road also known as the *malecon*), be sure to take a stroll through some of the streets farther inland. You'll see the houses of the town's residents and nontourist businesses with colorful, hand-painted signs. Shop windows overflow with shoes and everyday necessities.

Another slice of Cozumel life takes place in the plaza, just off the *malecon*, on Sunday evenings, when the town residents (and a fair number of visitors) turn out for live concerts. Many of the locals are decked out in their finery—this is where those brightly colored shoes get put through their paces. There's dancing, flirting and general merriment. It's also a great opportunity to sample homemade foods, such as tamales, that are sold by local women to raise money for their churches.

As far as formal attractions go, the most popular is Parque Nacional Chankanaab, south of San Miguel, which includes botanical gardens, a fish-filled lagoon, a beach, good snorkeling waters and activities such as swimming with dolphins. At the far southern end of the island is Faro Celarain Eco Park, formerly Punta Sur Ecological Park, a nature preserve where visitors board open-air trucks to see the sights.

There are some Maya ruins on the island. They're small in comparison with those at Tulum or Chichen Itza, but they're worth a visit nonetheless, especially if archaeology is an interest, or if you're up for a jungle adventure. The best-preserved ruins are at San Gervasio, in the middle of the island, and El Cedral on the southern part of the island. There are also others, less visited, at Faro Celarain Eco Park.

Historic Sites

El Cedral

This small set of ruins on the southern end of the island is visited by fewer people than San Gervasio, so you may have the place to yourself. The ancient Maya built structures there, and it later became the first Spanish settlement on the island. It's where the conquistadors, led by Cortes, supposedly celebrated the first Catholic Mass in Mexico (though Veracruz claims this honor, as well). A one-room cinderblock church commemorates the first Mass.

Most of the Maya buildings that once stood at El Cedral were torn down by the Spanish, and the ruins were further damaged when the U.S. Army built an airstrip on the site during World War II. Of the Maya ruins, one small arch is all that's easily visible today. Smaller remnants are scattered in the bush around the site, but you'll need a guide and a horse to find them, both of which can be acquired near the arch.

Admission to the site is free, but you'll have to pay if you want to take a tour on horseback. An ATV tour, also for a fee, takes you to a nearby cenote for a cool dip in the smooth waters. El Cedral is located off the coastal road on the southern part of the island.

Punta Molas Faro

This isolated lighthouse on the north shore of the island is rarely visited, making its beach a wonderful getaway for those who like solitude and a magnificent view of the ocean. Although it's a great spot for birding, getting there by car is daunting, and you'll have to walk part of the way. The best bet is to go by boat or on a guided tour. Located at the northernmost tip of the island.

San Gervasio

The best-preserved ruins on the island, this site is small and compact, and the temples are barely one story high. A spiritual center for the Maya, where men and women came by canoe to pay homage to the goddess Ixchel, there are *stelae*, plazas and six structures to visit. The temple nearest the entrance once contained a steam bath used for purification rituals. A few hundred feet/meters away are smaller buildings where researchers believe priests would gather with pilgrims to interpret their dreams. Don't miss the temple with red handprints on the walls. It's thought that all of the buildings were once connected by

roads made of limestone. Knowledgeable guides wait at the entrance to the site and will give you a tour for a fee.

Daily 8 am-4 pm. Admission is US\$9. San Gervasio lies about 7 mi/11 km northeast of San Miguel. Get there by taking a small, paved side road off the Carretera Transversal (the cross-island highway).

Museums

Museo de la Isla de Cozumel

Avenida Rafael Melgar (between calles 4 and 6 Norte)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

If you are interested in learning about the history of the region, visit this charming little museum housed in what was the island's first luxury hotel. Stroll through exhibits detailing the coral-reef system around Cozumel, the early history of the Maya and the saga of piracy around the island. There are lots of other little nuggets as well, such as a display about Charles Lindbergh's 1928 visit to the island in his famous *Spirit of St. Louis* plane. Don't miss the replica of a traditional Mayan house in a courtyard with an explanation by a Maya guide of the medicinal herbs still used for healing today. Stop in for a bite to eat at the second-floor restaurant, which has stunning views of the ocean.

Daily 9 am-4 pm. Admission runs about US\$5. Special cultural programs are free.

Navigational Museum

Faro Celerain Eco Park
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

The Punta Celerain Faro lighthouse stands between both the southern and eastern coastal highways and is home to a notable navigational museum that contains a number of interesting displays, although the views across the island's southern tip are perhaps the highlight of any visit. (One can climb the narrow, winding stairs to the top of the lighthouse for the best scenery.) Nearby, a rugged beach is a good place for a stroll.

Open daily 7 am-4 pm. Admission is covered in the cost to enter the.

San Miguel Pax Music Museum

Avenida Benito Juarez (at Avenida 15 Norte)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

<http://www.islacozumel.net/services/pax>

The San Miguel Pax Music Museum boasts a collection of hundreds of different musical instruments from around the world, taking in more than 2,000 years of history. The traditional and indigenous Mayan flutes and classical Mexican guitars are always favorites there. A gift shop sells music-related souvenirs, along with some local arts and crafts such as ritual masks.

Open Monday-Friday 9 am-6 pm. Admission US\$4.

Parks & Gardens

Discover Mexico

Carretera Sur Km. 5.5
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: Toll-free 866-464-6205

<http://www.discovermexico.org>

If you don't have time to visit the entire country, the country comes to you at this park in an amazing two-hour tour. Artful displays of Mexico's monuments and cultures take in tequila- and handicraft-making, miniatures of ancient ruins, monasteries and convents, volcanoes, and Mexico City's famous Zocalo square with a film on Mexico as an introduction. A cafe gives you a taste of Mexico's best java, and a gift shop has the highest-quality crafts on the island.

Open Monday-Saturday 8 am-4 pm. Entrance fee US\$21 adults, US\$14 children. Tickets can also be purchased in combination with a visit to Parque Nacional Chankanaab starting at US\$34 per person.

Faro Celarain Eco Park

Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-872-0914

<http://www.cozumelparks.com>

This national preserve at the southern tip of the island (formerly Punta Sur Ecological Park) contains 247 acres/100 hectares of jungle, wetlands, lagoons and beaches. Before the park was established, this was one of the most isolated places on Cozumel, known primarily for the lighthouse there. Today, it still offers plenty of solitude, and cars are prohibited from entering the grounds. Instead, trucks with two-story decks are used to transport visitors through the park to view the birds and jungle vegetation and to spend time at the preserve's nice beach with hammocks. Electric bikes can also be rented for US\$6 per hour if you wish to explore the park on your own, and there are kayaks and snorkeling equipment for rent.

During the winter months, catamaran tours are available to nearby Colombia Lagoon, where you can do some more bird-watching and view crocodiles. (There's good bonefishing on the flats of the lagoon.) The lighthouse has been turned into a navigation museum chronicling the region's maritime history from the time of the Maya to the present and has a spectacular view from the top.

Park open daily 9 am-4 pm. Park admission is US\$12 adults, US\$8 children ages 3-11; price includes a general tour of the park, plus access to the lighthouse and associated museum. The catamaran tour is included. The park is off Carretera Sur (the southern coastal highway) Km. 27. .

Parque Nacional Chankanaab

Carretera Sur Km. 9 (6 mi/9 km south of San Miguel)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 998-193-3360. Toll-free 866-393-5158 from the U.S. for Dolphin Discovery

<http://www.cozumelparks.com>

This park is Cozumel's prime sightseeing and activity center, and it gives a lot of bang for the buck. It was built around a saltwater lagoon where you can observe sea life (swimming in the lagoon is not allowed), and it also has a large stretch of oceanfront property consisting of sand leading up to rock ledges along the water. Once there, you can dive and snorkel in the ocean to see the underwater reefs, statues and a

fair number of fish, or you can swim with dolphins at Dolphin Discovery for an extra fee (<http://www.dolphindiscovery.com>). Scuba diving (including certification courses), sea trek and snuba excursions can also be booked. If you're traveling with small children, take them to swim in the specially protected children's lagoon where small fish are let in from the open sea.

Away from the water, there's a botanical garden with hundreds of native tropical plants that have been labeled. You can also visit Maya Zone, a replica of a Maya village with an orientation on farming and building in ancient times. Bird-watchers will find frigate birds, tanagers, woodpeckers and swallows. Keep an eye out for the park's golden iguanas—some are as long as 3 ft/1 m. Two restaurants and changing areas are located on the beach.

We recommend getting to the park early to stake out a good spot near the water.

Open daily 9 am-4 pm. Park admission is US\$21 adults, US\$14 children ages 3-11. Snorkeling equipment rental is US\$10. Swimming with the dolphins (which includes park entrance) is US\$139 adults; children's rates start at US\$79. Dolphin Discovery also has a swimming pool, beach club and snack bar. A massage runs around US\$50. Wheelchairs that operate on the beach are available.

Recreation

Nearly all recreation on the island centers around the picturesque beachfront, with snorkeling, scuba diving, sportfishing and kayaking, windsurfing and sailing the most popular activities. Golf, tennis and horseback riding are also common.

Groups can also sign up for Jeep tours and other off-the-road adventures.

Beaches

There are three types of beaches on Cozumel. First, there are some stretches of white sand on the west side of the island, where most of the resorts and attractions are located. These beaches front mostly calm, turquoise-colored water sheltered by the Yucatan mainland, making it good for swimming and snorkeling. The best of the sandy beaches are Playa Azul, Playa Pila and Playa San Juan to the north; and Playa San Francisco, Playa Mia Grand Beach Park, Mr. Sancho's, Nachi Cocom and Playa Palancar to the south.

Also on the west side of the island, you'll find "beaches" made of brown limestone, a phenomenon known as "iron shore." To get into the water, you'll usually have to use a set of steps or a ladder from the shore or from a pier. Although iron shore isn't as picturesque as the white beaches, such areas are usually better for snorkeling. The waterfront at Parque Nacional Chankanaab is iron shore, but some sand has been trucked in to create a more pleasant sunning area.

On the east side of the island, facing the open waters of the Caribbean Sea, there are pristine beaches of white sand that are largely deserted. They're beautiful, but the water there can be dangerous, plagued by rough surf and dangerous undertows (which is why so few people frequent the beaches). These shores can be good for lounging, but we recommend that you stay out of the water. You should also keep in mind that the east side is mostly uninhabited save for a few ramshackle but charming restaurants and beach bars.

Mr. Sancho's

Carretera Sur Km. 13
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-871-9174

<http://www.mrsanchos.com>

"Loco on the beach" is the slogan of this place, where you'll find the most complete assortment of activities in Cozumel. Lounge under a *palapa* on the beach, enjoy the seafood restaurant, swing on the benches in Chichi's bar, relax in the 30-person whirlpool, or participate in a brief seminar on tequila and mescal. Rent a speedboat, go parasailing, go horseback riding, or take an ATV or motorcycle tour of the jungle. A shopping area re-creates the ambience of a colorful Mexican town, complete with locally made crafts.

Daily 9 am-5 pm.

Nachi Cocom Beach Club

Carretera Sur Km. 16.5
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-857-1157

<http://www.cozumelnachicocom.net>

If you want to combine sunning on a wide, white-sand beach with a good lunch and lots of activities, Nachi Cocom is the right place. Visitors can rent WaveRunners, go parasailing, kayaking, snorkeling, fishing or simply lounge on the beach or by the pool followed by a session of massage or hair braiding.

Daily 9 am-4 pm. All-inclusive pricing is US\$55 adults, US\$35 children ages 12-17, US\$17 children ages 4-11. Attendance is limited to 100 guests per day, so reservations are encouraged, especially during the busy season and holidays.

Palancar

Carretera Sur Km. 18
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

<http://buceopalancar.com>

This wide beach lies in front of the most famous reef in Cozumel. There, local businesses offer such water activities as kayaking, Jet-Skiing, sailing, snorkeling and scuba diving for beginners. A *palapa*-style restaurant in the middle of a great jungle setting serves typical Yucatan dishes and seafood.

Daily 10 am-4 pm. No admission fee.

Playa San Francisco

Carretera Sur Km. 15
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

One of the oldest beaches in Cozumel and shared by several hotels, Playa San Francisco has up-to-date facilities. Maya structures rim the wide, safe beach. The on-site restaurant offers seafood and Mexican cuisine, and there are plenty of watersports and beach activities, as well as a large area for sunbathing.

Daily 9 am-5 pm.

Boating & Sailing

Most beachfront hotels rent sailboarding equipment. Expect to pay US\$50-\$60 for up to two hours. Parasailing is also possible.

Cozumel Sailing

Carretera Norte Km. 3 (at Puerto Abrigo Marina North)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-869-2312 or 987-869-1777

<http://www.cozumelsailing.com>

Charter a sailboat (a 35-ft/11-m trimaran or a 22-ft/7-m sloop), with or without crew, for a variety of excursions: sunset sails, all-day adventure sails or deep-sea fishing.

Reservations required. Rates start at US\$90 adults, US\$45 children. Sailing lessons offered.

Fishing

Although no fishing is allowed near Cozumel's protected reefs, the waters around the island have some of the best fishing in the Caribbean, particularly at the drop-off near Playa del Carmen. Catch includes swordfish, blue and black marlin (catch-and-release only), shark, wahoo and barracuda, depending upon the time of the year. On the flats you can catch bonefish.

For a private charter, prices start around US\$400 for the boat for a half-day excursion, and up to US\$700 for a full day. Make plans in advance, or go to the marina, Puerto Abrigo at Carretera Norte Km. 3, and deal directly with the boat captains there.

Albatros Charters

Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-872-7904. Toll-free 888-333-4643 from the U.S

<http://www.albatroscharters.com>

Offers private sportfishing charters. Rates range US\$445-\$675 for four to eight hours, depending on the size of the boat. Boats hold a minimum of six people. Individuals can join a group starting at US\$200.

Cozumel Fishing Charters

Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-869-8560. Toll-free 877-288-7765 from the U.S

<http://www.fishingcozumel.net>

Offers deep-sea outings, bottom fishing, fly-fishing tours and combination outings with a variety of local suppliers.

Golf

Cozumel Country Club

Carretera Costera Norte Km. 6.5
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-872-9570

<http://www.clubcorp.com/Clubs/Cozumel-Country-Club>

The island moved one step up the tourism hierarchy when this course opened. The 18-hole, par-72 layout was designed by Jack Nicklaus.

Greens fees for nonmembers run US\$129 before 12:30 pm and include a shared cart; US\$84 after 12:30 pm. (Guests at some luxury hotels get reduced fees of US\$129 for morning play, US\$85 for afternoon play.) Package prices start at US\$159 if booked online and include 18 holes with a shared cart, Nike club rental, two sleeves of golf balls, range balls and a course souvenir.

Horseback Riding

Rancho Buenavista

Avenida Rafael Melgar (at Calle 11 Sur)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Scenic setting for guided horseback rides through rugged tropical landscape. Can accommodate individuals or groups.

Monday-Saturday 9 am-3 pm.

Scuba & Snorkeling

Jacques Cousteau introduced the world to the underwater life of Cozumel in the 1960s, and despite some damage from overuse and hurricanes, the reefs that ring the island remain wonderful places to snorkel and scuba dive—some are close enough that you can swim to them from shore. Famous around the world, this Great Mayan Reef marks the beginning of a 600-mi-/965-km-long reef system that stretches south to Central America. Dive shops are plentiful—the Cozumel Association of Dive Operators includes more than 100 certified dive shops, many of which operate out of the resorts. Cozumel also has several decompression chambers—it was the first Mexican resort area to do so—which earns the island kudos for safety.

Divers generally can expect visibility of 100 ft/30 m, but it's even better than that at Palancar Reef, at the southern end of the island. Expect to see coral of every color of the rainbow. The rest of the marine life is colorful, too: anemones, starfish, octopuses, lobster, crabs and, on a larger scale, graceful rays and dolphins. San Francisco Reef is popular for its plentiful fish, and the Santa Rosa Wall and the Colombia Pinnacles rate high for sheer excitement as well as for bountiful sea life.

Because of strong currents, Cozumel dive operators practice a style of diving known as "drift diving." Divers relax and float with the 5- to 6-knot Guiana Current, and dive-boat captains follow behind and pick up their groups at the end of the dive.

With so many fine dive operations on the island, it's a buyer's market. If you happen to be visiting in the off-season (May-early December), you can shop around once you get there. During high season, it's best to reserve in advance. You must be a certified diver and present your certification card to go diving, although some shops offer an introductory course for beginners (check locally).



Expect to pay around US\$75 for a two-tank dive with boat trip, water and soft drinks included.

The most accessible place to snorkel is the Parque Nacional Chankanaab, about 6 mi/10 km south of San Miguel. Another possibility is Airplane Flats in front of the El Cid La Ceiba Beach Hotel, where a plane was sunk in shallow water for the filming of a movie. Snorkeling gear rents for about US\$5 a day. Another option to consider is one of the island's many snorkel tours to Palancar Gardens and Colombia Shallow Reef. Prices range US\$50-\$65 for a guided group snorkeling trip with boat.

Note: Always be careful when snorkeling in Cozumel. Currents along the west side of the island can be swift, and even though most are located away from the shoreline, that's not always the case. On the east coast, the water is much rougher, with stronger currents and undertows. Never go snorkeling or diving alone.

Aqua Safari

Ave. Rafael Melgar No. 429 (between calles 5 and 7 Sur)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-872-0101

<http://www.aquasafari.com>

Perfect for those who are new to diving, Aqua Safari has received many accolades for safety and expertise in working with novice divers. Also offers more than 20 intermediate and advanced courses geared for open water, dive masters and underwater photography.

Expect to pay US\$75-\$85 for a two-tank dive, not including equipment rental and a small park fee; add US\$15 for a third tank dive on the same trip. Night dives are US\$45, and a one-tank afternoon dive is US\$35.

Deep Blue

Ave. Rosado Salas No. 200
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-872-5653

<http://www.deepbluecozumel.com>

This company offers several levels of certification (PADI, TDI, IANTD). Its divers know the best reefs and use advanced equipment to find the perfect spots to dive. Rental equipment is available, too.

Expect to pay US\$75 for a two-tank dive, including equipment. Promotes packages with several local hotels. You can also charter your own boat with a dive master for five or fewer divers.

Dive Cozumel/Yellow Rose

Ave. Rosado Salas No. 85 (between avenidas Rafael Melgar and 5)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-872-4567. Toll-free 866-319-2649 from the U.S

<http://www.divecozumel.net>

If you want to live the high life, sign on for one of the trips aboard the *Yellow Rose*, a 48-ft/15-m craft. A gourmet catered lunch is included.



A three-tank dive departs daily at 8:30 am and returns at 4 pm. It costs US\$115. A two-tank afternoon/night dive departs at 4:30 pm and returns at 9 pm for US\$80.

Dive Paradise

Ave. Rafael Melgar No. 602
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-869-0503 or 987-872-1007

<http://www.diveparadise.com>

This company offers dive training at all levels and a variety of dive trips by day or night, either singly or in packages. The company has six locations around Cozumel; you can rent or buy equipment at its main store on Avenida Melgar and at the Costa Club Resort.

Two-tank dive trips start at US\$74, and one-tank trips are offered 3-5 pm, starting at US\$35. An exclusive "Cock-A-Doodle-Dive" is offered 6 am-1 pm, allowing divers to visit the reefs before other boats have even left the shore—three tanks for US\$98 for a minimum of three divers.

Snuba and Sea Trek

Carreterra Sur Km. 9
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

These below-the-waves adventures are available at Chankanaab Park, upping the array of activities already on tap. Snuba has participants connected to air hoses as they goggle their way past fish and coral to depths of 20 ft/6 m. Sea Trekkers don spacelike white helmets with their own air supply—they don't even get their eyelashes wet as they walk on sand 25 ft/8 m under the water. No swimming skills needed.

Tours leave every hour 9 am-3 pm next to Dolphin Discovery at the park. Price is US\$65 per person.

Shopping

A favorite pastime of nearly every visitor to Cozumel is shopping, and for good reason. Although prices for most crafts are quite high compared to other parts of Mexico, you'll find good buys on a wide variety of regional items: woven hammocks, leather purses and sandals, cotton clothing, ceramics, silver and gold jewelry, onyx and liquor. You can also find bargains on other Mexican handicrafts such as brightly colored baskets, papier-mache figures and wood carvings.

The main shopping district surrounds the plaza and spreads out north and south along Avenida Melgar—the *malecon*—and the flea market is located at Calle 1 Sur, near the main plaza. Hawkers selling inexpensive trinkets and sometimes dubious-quality jewelry now line the street from the main plaza to the cruise-ship malls. Walk on the seaside sidewalk to avoid them. Buy silver, gold and semiprecious gemstone jewelry from reputable merchants, and be sure to look for the .925 stamp on silver, which verifies that it is .925 parts pure sterling. Don't be fooled by "German" silver, which isn't stamped, and is made of nickel. And don't forget to explore the side streets leading off the plaza where you can often find lower prices and unusual crafts.

The cruise-ship piers at Punta Langosta, International Pier and Puerta Maya have malls with high-end boutiques and specialty shops, which vary with each pier's shopping experience. You'll find high-fashion clothing, crafts, cosmetics, electronics, jewelry (especially diamonds) and more casual name-brand wear. They are worth checking out even if you are only window shopping.

Almost all stores accept U.S. dollars as well as pesos. Often you'll find prices marked in both currencies—and sometimes only in U.S. dollars. Most major credit cards are readily accepted. (You often can get a better price if you offer cash—U.S. dollars or pesos—instead of credit cards.)

Do be prepared to bargain. In fact, it's expected in most markets and street stalls (though not in upscale boutiques) and can be entertaining for both buyer and seller—Cozumelenos are good-humored about the whole process. A good way to start is to offer half of what is asked. Then both negotiators work toward the middle. But don't bargain for something unless you really want it: It's considered rude not to buy after your price has been accepted.

Although you may see shops selling black coral jewelry, be aware that it's on the endangered list of international trade and will be confiscated at U.S. customs and other countries when returning home, even if the seller provides a certificate.

Shopping Hours: Generally Monday-Saturday 9 am-9:30 pm with reduced hours on Sunday. Some stores away from the main tourist areas close for two hours during the midafternoon siesta.

Markets

El Mercado

Avenida Rosado Salas (between avenidas 20 and 25)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

This is the island's food market, where you can buy local spices, honey, dried chiles and Mexican pottery. You'll see plenty of Cuban cigars being sold, too, but be aware that they cannot be legally taken back to the U.S., and some of them may be fakes.

The market is open daily 7 am-3 pm.

Plaza del Sol

Plaza del Sol (east side of the main square in San Miguel)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

This shopping center has two floors of crafts and jewelry, but quality varies—be sure to check purchases carefully. The merchandise includes items from all over Mexico. It opens onto a patio surrounded by shops selling silver and ceramics. Nearby is a branch of one of the world's most upscale jewelers, Van Cleef & Arpels.

Shopping Areas

Forum Shops

Waterfront (at Calle 10 Norte)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

A glossy-looking two-story shopping complex that could be anywhere in the Caribbean, the Forum sells high-end jewelry, clothing and perfumes, claiming to offer outlet prices. The Havana Blue bar offers spirits as well as hand-rolled cigars, and an auditorium occasionally features a local folklore performance.

Open daily 10 am-9 pm.

Specialty Stores

Blue Agave

Ave. 5 No. 98 (between avenidas Benito Juarez and 2 Norte)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

A tequila boutique stocking more than 250 brands, with a sideline of excellent mescals made in Oaxaca State. Aged and "white" Don Julio, Jose Cuervo and Herradura are a few varieties up for free samples. The store ships to the U.S. and prices range US\$15-\$200. There's a walk-in cigar humidor in the back.

Daily 9 am-9 pm.

Bugambilias

Avenida 10 Sur (between Avenida Rosado Salas and Calle 1 Sur; near the Waterfront)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

The best place to buy handmade children's clothing, gorgeous embroidered tablecloths and lace.

Open Monday-Saturday 9:30 am-3 pm and 6-9:30 pm.

Celebrity Jewels

Ave. Rafael Melgar No. 54 (between avenidas Benito Juarez and 2 Norte, along the *malecon*)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Finely crafted silver jewelry from the heart of Taxco, Mexico's premier silver center, is sold from the workshops of various silversmiths in this sophisticated outlet. The quality is several steps above what you'd find in the flea market.

Open daily 9 am-9 pm.

Galeria Azul

Ave. 15 N. No. 449 (between calles 8 and 10)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-872-0963

<http://www.cozumelglassart.com>

Greg Dietrich has exhibits of his engraved blown glass, colorful silk scarves and works of other island artists at his studio. Visitors can also see him at work on his original pieces inspired by Cozumel's underwater reef life.

Open Monday-Friday 11 am-7 pm, or by appointment during off hours.

Habana Cigar Co.

Ave. Rafael Melgar No. 27B (between calles 3 and 5 Sur)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

This store offers around 30 brands of hand-rolled cigars from Cuba in their original wrappings. It claims to carry no fakes, and stocks such names as Vegueros, Cohiba and Marquez.

Daily from 9 am-9 pm.

Los Cinco Soles

Ave. Rafael Melgar N. No. 27
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

One of the oldest luxury stores in town, Los Cinco Soles occupies an entire block along the *malecon*, north of the ferry pier. If you don't have time to visit other shops, head there for one-stop shopping. It sells everything from high-quality Talavera pottery, jewelry, clothing and hand-blown glass to Mexican furniture and liquor.

Monday-Saturday 8 am-9 pm, Sunday 9 am-5 pm.

Mr. Buho

Malecon (between calles 3 and 5)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Fresh-looking black and white clothing with simple lines for women as well as men draw customers to this small shop near the main plaza. Hard-to-find, classical *guayabera* shirts for men are also stocked.

Monday-Saturday 8 am-9 pm.

Pama

Ave. Rafael Melgar S. No. 9 (at Punta Langosta Pier, along the *malecon*)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

This store specializes in high-quality, duty-free jewelry, perfumes, watches and some casual clothing.

Monday-Saturday 9:30 am-9:30 pm.

Pax-La Casa de la Musica

Avenida 15 (at Avenida Benito Juarez)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

<http://www.islacozumel.net/services/pax>

Housed in a museum, this unique store has a remarkable collection of musical instruments from all over Mexico, as well as some from Central and South America. The shop also carries a selection of beautiful wood carvings, masks and other unusual handicrafts.

Monday-Saturday 9 am-6 pm.

Raices Handcrafts

Ave. 10 No. 172 (between avenidas Rosado Salas and 1)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

This tiny shop has unique papier-mache Mardi Gras masks, cat and bear figures, and a whole shelf of Frida Kahlo-themed knick-knacks made by the owner's daughter. Also hand-embroidered bags from Chiapas, pewter crosses and other Mexico mementos.

Daily 10 am-5 pm.

Tucan

Avenida Rafael Melgar (at Calle 8 Norte)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Sells Mexican Talavera pottery, blown glassware and items made of pewter.

Open Monday-Saturday 8:30 am-8 pm.

UltraFemme

Ave. Rafael Melgar No. 341
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-872-1217

<http://www.ultrafemme.com>

More than 500 brands of cosmetics, jewelry and perfumes by Dior, Lancome, Chanel and others. All are sold at duty-free prices, making items in this store a bargain.

Daily 9 am-10 pm.

Veari

Malecon (between calles 2 Norte and Benito Juarez)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Sells hand-crafted leather boots, belts, wallets and purses made in Guadalajara, one of the country's premier leather centers. Designs aren't fancy, but the workmanship is solid.

Dining

Dining Overview

Most restaurants in Cozumel are informal—"comfortably casual"—and jackets are almost never required. There is a wide range of prices. Seafood and authentic Yucatecan cuisine are specialties of the region and are hard to find in places such as Playa del Carmen and Cancun. Be careful of the habanero-pepper sauce, which is served on the side—it's made from one of the hottest peppers in the world.

Prices in Cozumel's restaurants tend to be higher than those in Playa del Carmen on the mainland.

Expect to pay within these guidelines for a meal for one, not including drinks, tax or tip: \$ = less than US\$15; \$\$ = US\$15-\$25; \$\$\$ = US\$26-\$50; and \$\$\$\$ = more than US\$50.

Local & Regional

Casa Mission

Calle 55 (between Avenida Benito Juarez and Calle 1)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-872-1641

<http://www.missioncoz.com>

This place is known as much for its setting as for its Mexican cuisine and seafood. Located in a large Mexican hacienda-style home that is surrounded by gardens, it's a pleasant place to spend an evening. Service is warm and friendly, in keeping with the ambience.

Open daily for dinner. \$\$. Most major credit cards.

Del Museo

Waterfront and Calle 6
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

This open-air restaurant is great for enjoying sea breezes and people-watching. It's on the top floor of the local museum. The food is good—not great—but the view makes it all worthwhile. You can see all the way across the Yucatan Channel to Playa del Carmen.

Daily for breakfast and lunch. \$-\$\$. No credit cards.

Kinta

Avenida 5 (between calles 2 and 4)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Mexican cuisine prepared with flair by Kris Wallenta, the ex-chef of Guido's. The menu at this place is pampering taste buds and creating a buzz among foodies. The bistro turns out a small but select offering of chicken, beef and such seafood dishes as grilled scallops and shrimp bathed in a tomato-corn salsa with cilantro pesto and rice. For dessert, there's the elusive *jericalia*, a hard-to-find Veracruz custard infused with real vanilla-bean flavor and spices and covered with a caramel-sugar crust.

Daily except Monday for dinner. \$\$-\$\$\$. MasterCard and Visa only.

La Choza

Calle Rosado Salas 198 at Avenida 10
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

This cheerful and casual Mexican restaurant draped with *papel picado* (typical paper cutouts) has a long history of pleasing locals as well as tourists with its wide selection of regional dishes such as tacos, fajitas, stuffed peppers and chicken in mole sauce.

Daily for lunch and dinner. \$\$. Most major credit cards.

Mission Downtown

Avenida Rosado Salas (between Calle 5 and the waterfront)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-872-6340

<http://www.lamissioncozumel.com>

This place offers traditional Mexican dishes as well as seafood in a tropical garden setting. Its slogan is, "If you don't like it, you don't pay."

Open daily for lunch and dinner. \$\$. Most major credit cards.

Palmeras

Waterfront (at Avenida Juarez)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-872-0532

<http://www.restaurantepalmeras.com>

The oldest restaurant in Cozumel is located a few steps from the main pier, overlooking the ocean and adjacent to the main plaza of Cozumel. Decorated with the palm trees of its name, it's lost a lot of its local vibe but is a favorite with cruise ship passengers who pack it when the ships come in. It's a good place for a relaxed lunch, a cup of coffee or a cold beer.

Daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner. \$\$-\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Pancho's Backyard

Waterfront (at Calle 6 Norte)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Located in a courtyard in the prettiest store in town, Los Cinco Soles, this restaurant gets our vote for the most romantic dining spot on the island. Its quiet patio setting and the sounds of trickling water in the fountains only add to the atmosphere. Service is excellent, and the food is always good (though seldom great). Long lines form at lunch when the cruise ships are in port.

Monday-Saturday for lunch and dinner, Sunday for dinner only. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Parrilla Mission

Pedro Joaquin Coldwell (between calles 2 and 4)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-869-2463

<http://www.parrillamission.com>

This place specializes in tacos, but it also offers Yucatecan chicken, pork and seafood dishes. There is a second location called Parrilla Mission Sur, open for breakfast and lunch, at Avenida 55 between Avenida Juarez and Calle 1 Sur.

The original location is open daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner. \$-\$\$. No credit cards.

Sonora Grill

Avenida Benito Juarez (at Calle 15 Norte)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

This well-established restaurant has been catering to islanders and especially divers for years. The open-air restaurant with the pretty flower boxes in front specializes in seafood such as the conch-shrimp-octopus-lobster tail platter as well as beef dishes from northern Mexico and such light fare as burgers and fajitas. Salsas are kitchen fresh, and food portions are generous.

Monday-Saturday for breakfast, lunch and dinner. \$-\$\$. No credit cards.

Cuisines

American

French Quarter

Avenida 5 Sur (between Avenida Rosado Salas and Calle 3)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-872-6321

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/French-Quarter-Restaurant-Bar-In-CozumelMexico/337070720415>

The downstairs portion of this restaurant is a sports bar, and upstairs is the restaurant where typical New Orleans fare such as delicious Cajun gumbo and jambalaya are on the menu. It also offers fresh seafood and steaks, and diners get personal attention from the owner, which goes a long way to create a family ambience. Zydeco bands play evenings, with a few patrons hitting the dance floor.

Daily except Tuesday for dinner. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Margaritaville Cafe

Waterfront (at Calle 11)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-872-0256

<http://www.margaritaville.com.mx>

Part restaurant, part beach bar, this outlet of Jimmy Buffett's famous cafes is right on the water, making it a picturesque spot for fried fish, grilled tacos and burgers.

Open daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner till 2 am. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Italian

Guido's

Waterfront (between calles 6 and 8)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-872-0946

<http://www.guidoscozumel.com>

This cozy restaurant is the best place on Cozumel for wood-oven pizza and pasta. Try the caprese salad and fettuccine alfredo with shrimp and mushrooms. The tree-shaded patio is especially pleasant.

Open Monday-Saturday for lunch and dinner. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Seafood

El Sazon del Camaron

Avenida 65 (at Calle 2, about 10 blocks from the *malecon*)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

It's all about shrimp (*camaron*) tacos at this modest eatery, and locals pack in for breakfast and lunch. Watch the Jimenez family work behind the counter turning out the breaded crustacean from scratch, served with a drop of black beans, pickled red onions and sour cream.

Security

Personal Safety

Cozumel is among the safer islands in the Caribbean, but you should still use commonsense precautions. Don't leave your belongings unattended at the beach or visible in a parked rental car, and don't walk along deserted beaches in the evening. This is especially true on the less-populated east side of the island. (There are sometimes military patrols in the area watching for drug smugglers.) There are police patrols along the *malecon* and at the beaches.

Tourists are not typically the target of crime, and driving around the city is generally safe. However, it is a good idea to take a taxi to your hotel at night. If you rent a car, it's best not to leave it parked on the street overnight.

The U.S. consulate is open 10 am-noon Monday-Friday. Avenida Juarez, Second Floor, between Waterfront and Avenida 5. Phone 987-872-4574.

For the latest information, contact your country's travel-advisory agency.

Health

It's a good idea to avoid food from street vendors or raw food and to stick with the clean-looking restaurants that draw a lot of customers. Ask your doctor about hepatitis vaccinations before your trip.

If you get sick, medicines are available from several pharmacies, especially the big one in the new megastore near the Punta Langosta Mall along the *malecon*. Some painkillers and other medicines, such as prescription sleeping pills, tranquilizers and antibiotics, will require a prescription from a local doctor, written in Spanish. Some pharmacies get around this by referring tourists to a island doctor, who will write the prescription for a fee. In an emergency, go straight to the hospital.

Medica San Miguel—a modern, privately run hospital—offers diagnostic and emergency services, as well as a decompression chamber. As the hospital's primary business is medical tourism, surgical and cosmetic services are also offered, and medical staff is bilingual. Land and air ambulance service is available. Always open. Calle 6 N. No. 132 between avenidas 5 and 10. Emergency phone 987-872-6194. Hospital phone 987-872-0103. <http://www.medicasanmiguel.com.mx>.

For the latest information, contact your country's health-advisory agency.

Disabled Advisory

Sidewalks with ramps can be found downtown in the main shopping areas along the *malecon* and main plaza. Entrances to some of the bigger shops and some restaurants also have ramps. Beyond this, it's rough going.

Newer hotels have special rooms for people with disabilities, but currently there is no public transportation equipped for wheelchairs. Chankanaab Park offers wheelchairs that operate on the sand.

Facts

Dos & Don'ts

Do greet everyone with a *buenos dias* (good day), *buenas tardes* (good afternoon) or *buenas noches* (good evening). Mexicans value this practice and will always extend a greeting, even to strangers, before getting down to business.

Do know that prices may be quoted in pesos and/or U.S. dollars. (Pesos are marked M\$, MX\$ or MXP\$.) Although U.S. dollars are almost always accepted on Cozumel, you can't always be certain. In general, you'll get the best rate if you pay in pesos. If traveling off the island to visit inland ruins, take pesos. U.S. dollars are less prevalent inland.

Don't walk out of a bar or cantina with a bottle of beer. Most beer bottles have deposits paid for by the establishment, so the staff keeps a close eye on them. If you want to take the beverage with you, ask for a plastic cup. (Be aware that walking along a street with a container of beer or mixed drink is only tolerated in the tourist zone along the waterfront. Elsewhere in the town, you may get fined.)

Do get away from the tourist areas and explore San Miguel's funky back streets with their colorful houses and typical Mexican street life.

Don't enter churches wearing shorts or beach clothing, especially if you're a woman.

Geostats

Passport/Visa Requirements: Australian and U.K. citizens need passports. The Mexican government charges a tourism tax of about US\$22 for all visitors except cruise-ship passengers and a departure tax of US\$40, though both are usually included in the price of your airline ticket. A yellow-fever certificate is required if you're arriving from an infected area (contact health authorities for the latest information).

All U.S. citizens must have a passport when traveling by air to or from Bermuda, Canada, the Caribbean, Central and South America, and Mexico. Citizens of Canada, Mexico and the British Overseas Territory of Bermuda also must have a passport or other designated secure document to enter the U.S.

Passports are required for land crossings at the Canadian and Mexican borders with the U.S. and for cruise passengers returning to the U.S. from Mexico, the Caribbean, Canada or Bermuda. Reconfirm travel-document requirements with your carrier prior to departure.

Population: 100,000.

Languages: Spanish is the main language, but English is widely spoken. A few people speak Maya.

Predominant Religions: Christian (Roman Catholic).

Time Zone: 6 hours behind Greenwich Mean Time (-6 GMT). Daylight Saving Time is observed from the first Sunday in April until the last Sunday in October.

Voltage Requirements: 110 volts.

Telephone Codes: 52, country code for Mexico; 987, area code for Cozumel;

Money

Currency Exchange

U.S. dollars are widely accepted on Cozumel. In fact, most ATMs give both U.S. dollars and Mexican pesos, but the fees per transaction from both the local bank and your own bank can be hefty. ATMs are readily available, and most are located within a block of Plaza del Sol in San Miguel and in all banks.

However, it is also possible to pay for purchases in Mexican pesos, and if you visit less-traveled areas on the mainland, you will find pesos to be more commonly used than U.S. dollars. San Miguel has a number of privately run exchange booths, or *casas de cambio*, which will change U.S. and Canadian dollars or traveler's checks to pesos at rates only slightly lower than the banks' rates. *Casas de cambio* keep longer hours than banks and are often more convenient to use. Banks are open from 9 am to 4 or 5 pm Monday-Friday. Some are also open until noon on Saturday.

Taxes

The government of Mexico charges a value-added sales tax of 11% on virtually all transactions in the state of Quintana Roo. In most cases, it's included in the price quoted. Visitors cannot obtain refunds on any taxes.

Tipping

A tip of 10%-15% is expected at most restaurants. Housekeepers at hotels normally receive US\$1-\$2 a day, and sky caps at airports and bellhops at hotels receive US\$2 a bag. Taxi drivers usually don't expect a tip, but you may tip if they provide extra service.

Weather

Expect daytime high temperatures in the 80s F/20s C almost year-round on the Yucatan Peninsula. The humidity will be higher in the summer months, but breezes off the sea will help to keep you cool. Hurricane season is June-November, which is when rain is most likely.

What to Wear

Casual summer clothing is appropriate year-round, but swimsuits are worn only on the beaches or at hotel swimming pools. Men are rarely, if ever, required to wear jackets. Shorts and sandals are acceptable for fast-food places, but they are not considered appropriate for the nicer restaurants. Street wear is resort casual, and residents generally choose comfort over chic.

Culturally speaking, neat, dressy-casual resort wear is appropriate for business meetings. Women can wear a lightweight suit or dress, whereas men can get away with the traditional guayabera shirt and pants.

No matter what you wear, always use plenty of sunscreen and a hat with the extra precaution of long pants and sleeves to protect against mosquitoes if journeying into a jungle area or the Maya ruins. During the winter months, a light jacket for men and a sweater or shawl for ladies is recommended because of cooler evenings.

Miami, Florida

Overview

Introduction

Miami, Florida, has always billed itself as a travel destination. Warm weather, sandy beaches and bright sunshine were selling points more than 100 years ago, just as they are today. But Miami's allure extends beyond its shores. People from all over the Caribbean and Latin America have settled in Miami, giving the city its distinctive, lively international character.



The warm-weather fun is still a big attraction, but the biggest draw is the cosmopolitan flavor coupled with all the great restaurants, sports teams (Dolphins, Heat, Hurricanes and Marlins) and upscale sheen—plus a long list of TV shows that have "Miami" in their titles.

South Beach, with its cheerful, sherbet-colored art-deco buildings and palm-tree-lined avenues, is the center of Miami's trendy dining and nightlife scene. Other corners of Miami, including Coconut Grove and Coral Gables, offer their own versions of fine living and colorful happenings.

And don't overlook the natural world—though you may have to drive to the Everglades to get a good view of it.

Highlights

Sights—The breathtaking view of the city from the MacArthur Causeway at night; Everglades National Park; the palmy streets and posh estates of Coral Gables; Coconut Grove and CocoWalk; South Beach; a drive down historic Old Cutler Road from Coconut Grove to Southwest 168th Street.

Museums—The Italianate gardens of Vizcaya Museum and Gardens; art-nouveau and art-deco objects at the Wolfsonian-FIU Museum on South Beach; first-rank traveling exhibits at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MoCA) in North Miami; extensive collections at Lowe Art Museum on the University of Miami campus in Coral Gables; the Bass Museum of Art in Miami Beach.

Memorable Meals—Eat stone crabs with the rich and famous at Joe's Stone Crab Restaurant; Euro-hip at The Forge; Cuban favorites in an upscale atmosphere at Versailles Restaurant & Bakery; fusion fare at Azul; dry-aged beef and truffled mac-and-cheese at Prime One Twelve.

Late Night—The street scene in South Beach; the sidewalk bars and bistros, shops and nightclubs along Lincoln Road and elsewhere in Miami Beach; Coconut Grove; Southwest Eighth Street.

Recreation—Golfing at one of Miami's many courses; betting on a horse race; boating, scuba diving, snorkeling or fishing in the Atlantic or Biscayne Bay; hang gliding, kite boarding and windsurfing on Biscayne Bay along Rickenbacker Causeway; bicycling or in-line skating through Coconut Grove or South Beach.

Geography

Miami is a sparkler of a city set against the water. The downtown area hugs the junction of the Miami River and Biscayne Bay. A surge of development brought life to sleepy downtown neighborhoods, transforming them into urban vistas of galleries, cafes, nightlife, restored homes and high-rises. To the south, Coconut Grove is 3 mi/5 km along the water, and South Miami is about 6 mi/10 km away. Farther south, you'll find Homestead and, beyond that, the Florida Keys.

The neighborhood of Coral Gables is approximately 6 mi/10 km west of Miami. Beyond that is Kendall—a vast stretch of condos, homes, shopping malls and restaurants that reaches the edge of the Everglades. Miami Beach is a finger of land separating Biscayne Bay and the Atlantic, connected by five causeways to the mainland. At its southern tip is South Beach, also known as the Art Deco District.

History

Originally settled at the mouth of the Miami River by the Tequesta Indians, Miami wasn't much more than a trading post when real estate and railroad developer Henry Flagler extended his railroad to meet it in 1896 and then dredged the harbor to allow his fleet of steamships to dock.

The land boom of the 1920s put the city on the map, thanks to the millionaires who built mansions along Biscayne Bay. The economic bust in 1929, combined with major destruction from a hurricane the previous year, reduced Miami to a depressed shadow of its former self, with few jobs and little development.

In the 1940s, the invention of air-conditioning and the return of ex-servicemen who had savored Miami's charms during World War II led to steady growth. In the 1950s, thousands more arrived—from New York, Chicago, Detroit and elsewhere—to start careers, raise families and become movers and shakers. Miami was transformed into a cosmopolitan hub.

Beginning in 1960, a flood of Cuban refugees turned Miami into a bilingual city within about five years. Succeeding decades brought many other Latinos, as well as Haitians, Asians, Israelis, Canadians and Europeans. Today the city is considered a melting pot of the Americas, with more than 60% of its citizens foreign-born. Miami's government, politics and businesses reflect its diversity.

Port Information

Location

One of the busiest cruise-ship ports in the world is conveniently located on Dodge Island, which is connected by a five-lane bridge to downtown Miami. There's usually lots of traffic going back and forth—about 4 million passengers a year embark from the port, which serves around a dozen cruise lines and has seven passenger terminals. Taxis are plentiful. For those who drive to Miami, secured parking lots are adjacent to each terminal. There is a courtesy minibus to take passengers to cruise lines from the car park. Expect to pay US\$20 per day.

Most cruise-ship passengers arrive in Miami by air. The trip from Miami International Airport to the port usually takes 20-30 minutes, except in rush hour, when it can be a lot longer. There is a flat US\$24 rate from Miami International Airport to the Port of Miami. Most major cruise lines offer bus service from the airport to the port. (If you weren't provided ground transportation as part of a fly-cruise package, it can't hurt to ask if there's room on the bus to your terminal.) Port of Miami. Phone 305-371-7678. http://www.miamidade.gov/portofmiami/cruise_terminals.asp.

Potpourri

Forty of Miami's buildings are permanently decorated in lights. The Bank of America Tower changes color 80-100 times a year. The Metromover, which circles downtown, stays lit by a rainbow of neon that rises over the city skyline at night.

South Beach is a mecca for buff bodies. One estimate put the number of models living there at 1,500.

Miami's residents come from more than 120 countries and speak nearly 70 languages.

The Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables was built in 1926 and is one of the most stunning hotels in the nation. It is reputed to have the longest swimming pool in the world. During World War II it was a veterans' hospital. The hotel offers guided tours of its facilities. Many former U.S. presidents, including Bill Clinton and George Bush, have stayed in its presidential suite.

The Cardozo Hotel, located in South Beach, is an art-deco hotel built in 1939 by Henry Hohausser, the most prominent architect in Miami at the time. It has beautifully rounded sides and racing stripes on the exterior beneath the windows and terrazzo floors. It's now owned by singer Gloria Estefan.

If you would like to mail a package from an art-deco landmark, visit the Miami Beach Post Office at 1300 Washington Ave. in South Beach. Check out the mural on the wall of Ponce de Leon and Native Americans.

Jennifer Lopez, Lenny Kravitz, Oprah Winfrey, Enrique Iglesias, Janet Reno and Sylvester Stallone all own homes in Miami.

Espanola Way in South Beach, the gambling destination of Al Capone in the 1920's, re-emerged in recent decades with the filming of TV episodes of Miami Vice and Burn Notice.

A flock of flamingos arrived from Cuba in 1934 to inhabit the infield lake at Hialeah Park racetrack. They remain as a tourist attraction at the Park and a symbol of the state in the logo for the Florida lottery.

See & Do

Sightseeing

Although Miami is scarcely more than a century old, it has architecturally significant public, commercial and residential buildings—including some designed by architects with international reputations. For visual treats, take a slow drive along side streets in historic neighborhoods such as Little Havana, Miami Beach, South Beach, Coconut Grove and Coral Gables.

Downtown in the Miami-Dade Cultural Center you'll find both the Miami Art Museum and History Miami (which offers excellent walking tours). Southwest of the cultural center, around Southwest Eighth Street ("Calle Ocho"), is Little Havana—home not just to Cuban immigrants, but also to Nicaraguans, Hondurans, Guatemalans, and other Latin-American and Caribbean immigrants. If you're there in March, join more than a million revelers at Little Havana's Calle Ocho Festival, a one-day extravaganza billed as one of the biggest block parties in the world.

It will only *seem* as if a million people are on the streets of South Beach, the supertrendy section of Miami Beach between First and 23rd streets. The best way to see the sites there is on a walking tour offered by

the Miami Design Preservation League. Also, Jungle Island's home on MacArthur Causeway is a quick trip from just about anywhere.

On the mainland in Coconut Grove, don't miss the Vizcaya Museum and Gardens, an Italianate palace surrounded by formal gardens that are a great place to stroll.

For a look at early settlers' life in Florida, visit The Barnacle, a pioneer residence. Also worth a visit is the Ancient Spanish Monastery in North Miami Beach.

Historic Sites

Ancient Spanish Monastery

16711 W. Dixie Highway
North Miami Beach, FL 33160-3714

Phone: 305-945-1461

<http://www.spanishmonastery.com>

This is the oldest nonnative building in the Western Hemisphere. It was built in Spain between 1133 and 1141, and William Randolph Hearst brought it to the U.S. in numbered pieces in 1925. In the 1950s, it was reassembled on the current site. It is a popular spot for weddings and private events, so public hours vary. Call ahead Friday-Sunday before you go to be sure it is open.

Generally open for self-guided tours Monday-Saturday 10 am-4:30 pm, Sunday 11 am-4:30 pm. US\$8 adults; US\$4 children ages 6-12, students and seniors; free for children age 5 and younger.

Coral Castle

28655 S. Dixie Highway
Homestead, FL

Phone: 305-248-6345

<http://www.coralcastle.com>

Edward LeedsKalnin, a Latvian immigrant, built this stone edifice over a span of two decades (1920-40) as a monument to Agnes Scuffs, a young woman who had rejected him. Though he stood just 5 ft/1.5 m tall and weighed only 100 lbs/45 kgs, he managed with makeshift tools to dig, cut and move thousands of pounds of limestone rocks, whose total weight exceeded the stones used to build Stonehenge and even the Great Pyramid of Giza. LeedsKalnin died in Miami in 1951. Today his handiwork is a museum.

Open Sunday-Thursday 8 am-6 pm, Friday and Saturday 8 am-8 pm. Guided tours daily. US\$15 adults, US\$7 children ages 7-12, free for children younger than 7. Group rates available.

Deering Estate at Cutler

16701 S.W. 72nd Ave.
Miami, FL

Phone: 305-235-1668

<http://www.deeringestate.com>

Chicago industrialist Charles Deering, whose younger brother James Deering built Vizcaya in Coconut Grove, created his own estate farther south in the town of Cutler (now part of Miami). He acquired more than 440 acres/180 hectares on which stood the Richmond Cottage (built 1896-1916), a wood-frame

house that served as his first winter home. In 1922, Deering hired architect Phineas Phaist to design and build Stone House, a Mediterranean revival-style mansion. Deering died in 1947. His estate remained in his family until his youngest daughter died in 1982, when it was purchased by the state of Florida. Badly damaged by Hurricane Andrew in 1992, the estate has been restored and is now an environmental, archaeological, historical and architectural preserve. It offers daily historical, mangrove and trail tours (each lasting 45-60 minutes), as well as day and moonlight canoe tours.

Daily 10 am-5 pm (last ticket sold at 4 pm); closed Thanksgiving and Christmas. US\$12 adults, US\$7 children ages 4-14. Weekend canoe tours US\$30 adults, US\$20 children ages 9-14; call to confirm schedule.

Holocaust Memorial

1933-1945 Meridian Ave. (near the Miami Beach Convention Center)
Miami Beach, FL

Phone: 305-538-1663

<http://www.holocaustmmb.org>

This memorial pays tribute to the millions of people who lost their lives during the Holocaust. The centerpiece is a large bronze arm and hand tattooed with an Auschwitz concentration camp number: It rises from the ground, grasping at life with men, women and children clinging to it. Light and dark imagery is also emphasized, with Jerusalem stone columns leading through an arbor to granite walls etched with Holocaust history. The memorial also has a meditation garden and an eternal flame. Audio recordings of Israeli children singing Holocaust songs are very moving.

Daily 9 am-9 pm. Free.

MacArthur Causeway

State Road 836 across Biscayne Bay
Miami, FL

One of five causeways leading to the beach, this one runs from downtown Miami to the south end of Miami Beach. To the north, celebrities and the rich-and-famous have estates on Star Island, Hibiscus Island and other pricey patches of land in the middle of the bay. You're also likely to see the enormous hulls of cruise ships moored along Government Cut. Looking landward, you'll have a breathtaking view of the Miami skyline. The view is especially beautiful at night.

Old Cutler Road

Old Cutler Road
Miami, FL

By bike or by car, ride along historic Old Cutler Road from Coral Gables south to the old town of Cutler. This road rivals any scenic route in the U.S. for its beauty. While on this adventure, visit Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden.

The Barnacle

3485 Main Highway
Coconut Grove, FL 33133-0915

Phone: 305-442-6866

<http://www.floridastateparks.org/thebarnacle>

This state historic site contains the oldest home in Miami-Dade County. Situated on the shore of Biscayne Bay, The Barnacle was the home of Ralph Middleton Munroe, one of Coconut Grove's pioneers. A visit to the site is like a step back in time.

Open Friday-Monday 9 am-5 pm. Guided tours are available at 10 and 11:30 am and 1 and 2:30 pm. Group tours Wednesday and Thursday by advance reservation. Closed New Year's, Thanksgiving and Christmas days. Admission US\$2 per person. Museum tour US\$3 adults, US\$1 children ages 6-12, free for children age 5 and younger.

The Villa by Barton G

1116 Ocean Drive
Miami Beach, FL

Phone: 305-576-8003

<http://www.villabybartong.com>

Its gilded front entrance is infamously known as the site of Gianni Versace's murder on 15 July 1997. The house, a jewel by the ocean, was built in 1930 and contains 22 apartments. It was modeled after the oldest house in the Western Hemisphere, Santo Domingo's Alcazar de Colon. Versace restored the building, and after his death, his sister Donatella sold it to business tycoon Peter Loftin for US\$19 million. The building was sold again in 2010 to entrepreneur Barton G. It was later sold in 2013 to VM South Beach LLC for US\$41.5 million, with Barton G continuing to operate the restaurant and hotel where rooms start at US\$795 per night. It remains the most famous address on South Beach, where tourists gather—day and night—to have their pictures taken.

Venetian Pool

2701 DeSoto Blvd.
Coral Gables, FL

Phone: 305-460-5306

<http://www.coralgables.com>

This former rock quarry was transformed into a natural swimming hole in 1924, with spring-fed waters surrounded by coral rock. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the site is filled with scenic porticos, relaxing loggias and a fun waterfall for both adults and children.

Open Monday-Friday 11 am-6:30 pm, Saturday and Sunday 10 am-4:30 pm. US\$11.50 adults, US\$6.60 children ages 3-12. Children younger than 3 are not admitted.

Vizcaya Museum and Gardens

3251 S. Miami Ave.
Miami, FL 33129-2831

Phone: 305-250-9133

<http://www.vizcaya.org>

This magnificent estate was the winter home of U.S. businessman James Deering. It provides a spectacular view of Miami's Biscayne Bay. Deering built the European-inspired estate in 1916, with every architectural detail finished to perfection. He then filled the home with art and treasures spanning 2,000 years. The 34-room National Historic Landmark is surrounded by 10 acres/4 hectares of formal gardens and fountains. Guided tours are available most days and audio tours are available for US\$5 in multiple languages.



The museum and gardens are open daily except Tuesday 9:30 am-4:30 pm. Closed Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. US\$18 adults, US\$9 seniors and students, US\$6 children ages 6-12, free for children younger than 6.

Museums

Museum of Contemporary Art

770 N.E. 125th St.
North Miami, FL 33161-5654

Phone: 305-893-6211

<http://www.mocanomi.org>

MoCA is dedicated to the art of recent decades. Though it has a fine permanent collection, its top-quality changing exhibits attract the most visitors. Contact the museum for information about its current show.

Open Tuesday and Thursday-Saturday 11 am-5 pm, Wednesday 1-9 pm, Sunday 11 am-5 pm (last Friday of the month till 10 pm). US\$5 adults, US\$3 students and seniors, free for children younger than 12.

Bass Museum of Art

2100 Collins Ave.
Miami Beach, FL 33139-1825

Phone: 305-673-7530

<http://www.bassmuseum.org>

The Bass has expanded the facilities for its permanent collection of old masters, sculptures and objets d'art, enhancing its reputation as the most comprehensive museum collection in southeast Florida. It offers changing exhibits, educational programs, concerts and films.

Open Wednesday-Sunday noon-5 pm; Friday till 9 pm. US\$8 adults, US\$6 seniors and students, free for children younger than 6.

Casa Bacardi

1531 Brescia Ave., University of Miami
Miami, FL

Phone: 305-284-2822

<http://www.miami.edu/iccas>

Located at the Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies at the University of Miami, the facility features interactive exhibits and educational sessions about Cuban history and culture. A cinema shows daily informative films about Cuban heritage, lifestyles and politics. A display of musical instruments and more than 2,000 digital songs for listening are available by Cuban singers and composers in the music pavilion.

Monday-Friday 10 am-5 pm. Donation US\$5 adults. Children under 12 free.

Wolfsonian-FIU Museum

1001 Washington Ave.
Miami Beach, FL 33139

Phone: 305-531-1001

<http://www.wolfsonian.org>

Formerly a storage unit for a wealthy collector of 20th-century art and other objects, this vintage building in the Art Deco District has been lovingly restored and now belongs to Florida International University. It contains nearly 70,000 cultural artifacts that shaped our world from the 1880s to the present—but only a segment of those treasures is on display at any given time. Exhibits range from furniture and the evolution of industrial design to World War II print propaganda. Check out the 1929 bronze art-deco mailbox, which originally was in the New York Central Railroad Terminal in Buffalo.

Open Saturday-Tuesday and Thursday noon-6 pm, Friday noon-9 pm. Closed Wednesday. Guided tours Friday at 6 pm. US\$7 adults; US\$5 seniors, students and children ages 6-12. Free admission Friday after 6 pm.

Gold Coast Railroad Museum

12450 S.W. 152nd Street
Miami, FL

Phone: 305-253-0063

<http://www.goldcoast-railroad.org>

This is a must-see museum for model train collectors and locomotive lovers. It features 40 passenger cars, freight cars and other railway equipment. On display is *Ferdinand Magellan*, the private railway car of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the only rail car custom-built for a U.S. president. A model train building has an array of model scales on display plus a room where kids can assemble their own wooden train sets, including Thomas the Tank Engine models. On weekends there are train rides for an additional fee.

Open Monday-Friday 10 am-4 pm, Saturday and Sunday 11 am-4 pm. US\$8 adults, US\$6 children ages 2-11.

Miami Science Museum

3280 S. Miami Ave. (midway between downtown and Coconut Grove—you can reach the Miami Science Museum via the Metromover on the Vizcaya Station stop)
Miami, FL 33129

Phone: 305-646-4200

<http://www.miamisci.org>

In addition to displaying its own collections and hands-on exhibits, this science complex hosts traveling exhibitions from the Smithsonian Institution and other sources. An outdoor wildlife center houses rescued birds and reptiles. The planetarium has hourly shows and telescope viewings on Friday evenings, weather permitting. It is also home to Jack Horkheimer's PBS program *Star Gazer*.

Daily 10 am-6 pm. Last admission at 5:30 pm. Combined admission to the museum, wildlife center and planetarium is US\$14.95 adults; US\$10.95 seniors, students and children ages 3-12. Separate admission for laser shows.

Perez Art Museum

1103 Biscayne Blvd.
Miami, FL 33130-1504

Phone: 305-375-3000

<http://www.pamm.org>

The museum exhibits, collects, preserves and interprets art of the Western Hemisphere. The focus is on works from the 1940s to the present, complemented by art from other eras for historical perspective. Dine at the museum's restaurant with locally inspired dishes.

Open daily except Monday 10 am-6 pm, Thursday till 9 pm. US\$12 adults, US\$8 seniors. Free admission every second Saturday and first Thursday of each month.

Rubbell Family Collection

95 N.W. 29th St.
Miami, FL

Phone: 305-573-6090

<http://rfc.museum>

The contemporary art collection of the Rubbell family includes lights and massive murals along with moving mannequins and abstract sculptures in 45,000 sq ft/4,180 sq m of rotating exhibit space. The Rubbells have been collecting contemporary art since the 1960's. The exhibits contain some nudity and pieces that may not be suitable for children. Major artists in the collection include Paul McCarthy, Charles Ray and David Salle. The building also houses a research library, sculpture garden, book store and gift shop. Doors close in the summer to prepare for new exhibitions.

November-July, Tuesday-Saturday 10 am-6 pm. US\$10 adults, US\$5 students.

The Patricia and Philip Frost Art Museum

10975 S.W. 17th St.
Miami, FL

Phone: 305-348-2890

<http://thefrost.fiu.edu>

Featuring thought-provoking exhibitions that challenge established notions of politics, identity and our role within the environment. The work of up-and-coming Caribbean and South American artists is highlighted, as well as Southeast notables such as Mike Kelley and Mark Messersmith. The annual faculty exhibit is another must-see. Located at Florida International University.

Tuesday-Saturday 10 am-5 pm, Sunday noon-5 pm. Free admission.

Wings Over Miami Air Museum

14710 S.W. 128th St. (at the Kendall-Tamiami Executive Airport)
Miami, FL

Phone: 305-233-5197

<http://www.wingsovermiami.com>

This family-orientated tribute to veterans, aviators and aircraft history is located at the Tamiami Airport. The museum hangar contains military and vintage planes, including the B-59, 1942 Boeing Stearman, 1957 Ikarus and the GNAT, used by the British Yellowjacks and Red Arrows aerobatic teams. The gift shop includes photos and model planes, both pre-made and build-it-yourself kits.

Thursday-Sunday 10 am-5 pm. US\$10 adults, US\$7 children younger than age 12.

Neighborhoods & Districts

Brickell Financial District

Southeast 14th Street and Brickell Avenue
Miami, FL

High-rise office buildings, condos and high-end hotels are mushrooming in this neighborhood south of downtown, home to many international banks and multinational companies. Many Brickell-area restaurants open and quickly close, and the food there tends to be expensive.

Coconut Grove

3015 Grand Ave
Miami, FL

<http://www.coconutgrove.com>

"The Grove" was an independent municipality until the city of Miami annexed it in a summer referendum in 1925—an event still resented by Grove residents. Coconut Grove encompasses a historic neighborhood built by Bahamians who had come to work at Vizcaya. The narrow tree-shaded streets of North and South Grove are treasure troves of eclectic architecture and diverse tropical landscaping.

Coral Gables

220 Miracle Mile
Miami, FL

<http://www.shopcoralgables.com>

In 1917, developer George Merrick turned his father's citrus groves into a planned community with architectural and height restrictions. His Mediterranean vision survives in street names, the building styles of older homes and commercial structures, and to a lesser extent, in the main shopping area along Miracle Mile and Ponce de Leon Boulevard. Restaurants and bars give downtown Gables a vibrant nightlife. Be prepared to pay for parking after 6 pm.

Little Havana

Southwest Eighth Street (or Calle Ocho, between Interstate 95 and 27th Avenue)
Miami, FL

A trip to this neighborhood is like visiting Havana without ever leaving Miami. The heavily commercial district is a locus of Cuban (and other Latin-American) stores and restaurants. Jewelry, furniture, clothes,

music, and odds and ends can be purchased there at fair prices. You'll find plenty of good eateries as well—and not just Cuban fare. At Calle Ocho and Memorial Boulevard (Southwest 13th Avenue) stands the Brigade 2506 Memorial, recalling the unsuccessful 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba by an exile force. A tiny museum is adjacent, open Monday-Saturday 9 am-4 pm.

Miami Design District

3841 N.E. Second Ave. (Between North Miami Avenue and Northeast Second Avenue, from Northeast 36th Street to Northeast 42nd Street)

Miami, FL

<http://www.miamidesigndistrict.net>

Once just a shopping district for interior designers, this area is becoming increasingly hip in its own right. Gallery walks are held once a month, and a sprinkling of hipster hangouts attracts a young, artsy crowd as well as more sophisticated art collectors. A number of good restaurants also have opened in the area. Just south of the Design District, Wynwood is a revitalized residential, gallery and nightlife hot spot.

South Miami-Dade County

South of Coral Gables, several small communities and incorporated cities have grown steadily toward one another to form a solid suburban strip, but each has distinctive characteristics. South Miami, the Old Cutler area and Pinecrest look a lot like Coral Gables. Kendall has newer homes on smaller lots, many apartments and a busy commercial district around the massive Dadeland Mall. Agriculture still holds sway in the vicinity of Florida City, Homestead, the Redlands and Perrine. Many of Miami's best-known attractions are in these neighborhoods, including Coral Castle, Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, Zoo Miami, Monkey Jungle, and the Fruit and Spice Park. You'll need a car to explore these areas.

The Biscayne Corridor

The area surrounding Biscayne Boulevard, from Morningside near 57th Street, north of downtown, to 79th and beyond, is developing into an eclectic antiques and ethnic-restaurant district on the edge of Little Haiti.

Shopping

The shopping mall is king in Miami. The Falls is a water-oriented, lushly landscaped delight filled with upscale shops and restaurants. Dadeland Mall was the first and is the most successful mall, and Bal Harbour Shops, at the other end of the county, caters to the ultrarich.

Aventura is a mall that's been turned into an entire city, complete with condos and high-rises. Dolphin Mall, west of the airport, has its own Florida Turnpike exit. Smaller and very funky is CocoWalk in Coconut Grove, geared to the young and restless, and the Shops at Sunset Place wins the prize for size (at least in the vertical dimension). The Village of Merrick Park in Coral Gables, also serving a high-end clientele, is Miami-Dade's newest mall.

Not everyone lives at the mall, however. In fact, there's been a backlash against them as people seek a small-town feeling and owner-operated shops. South Miami has typified this kind of atmosphere. In the southwest corner of Coral Gables, at Sunset Drive (72nd Street) and Red Road (57th Avenue), the merchants have fought hard to preserve their special ambience. Shops and restaurants provide a charming mix—from children's clothes to antique jewelry.



Miracle Mile in Coral Gables (Coral Way between Douglas and LeJeune roads) is a blend of small shops and restaurants. The stores there have been improved with the aim of maintaining the small-town feel they've had since they were built in the 1920s. We highly recommend that travelers take a look.

The Lincoln Road Mall has a distinctly antimall feel to it—strictly a pedestrian space—but in the past decade, small, funky shops have been replaced by chains such as Gap and Victoria's Secret. Renovated from its art-deco glory days, the mall has become one of the most cosmopolitan places for a stroll, drinks, dinner and shopping.

Espanola Way between Washington and Pennsylvania Avenues and 14th and 15th Streets in South Beach is worth a stroll for its unique stores featuring jewelry, designer jeans, vintage clothing, collectibles and gifts.

Factory Outlets

Florida Keys Outlet Center

250 E. Palm Drive
Florida City, FL 33034-3514

Phone: 305-248-4727

<http://www.premiumoutlets.com>

This outlet mall is located in Florida City, adjacent to Homestead, off the last turnpike exit in Miami-Dade County. There are more than 40 factory shops, offering popular names at outlet prices. A food court is on-site.

Open Monday-Saturday 10 am-9 pm, Sunday 11 am-6 pm.

Shopping Areas

CocoWalk

3015 Grand Ave.
Coconut Grove, FL 33133-5100

Phone: 305-444-0777

<http://www.cocowalk.net>

This trendy, self-styled European village has shops, a movie complex, outdoor cafes, nightclubs and many, many people (mostly young). It's a design experiment that works so well it has been copied in shopping centers all over Florida. The second-story balcony is a great place to people-watch and have a drink. Shops are standard mall venues.

Open Sunday-Thursday 10 am-10 pm, Friday and Saturday 10 am-11 pm; restaurants and bars are open late.

Aventura Mall

19501 Biscayne Blvd.
Aventura, FL 33180-2342

Phone: 305-935-1110

<http://aventuramall.com>

Competing with the high-end specialty stores of Bal Harbour Shops is a challenge, but Aventura Mall tries. It features Bloomingdale's, Macy's, Nordstrom and more than 250 other shops and restaurants. Fortunately, there's plenty of free parking and valet-parking service.

Open Monday-Saturday 10 am-9:30 pm, Sunday noon-8 pm.

Bal Harbour Shops

9700 Collins Ave.
Bal Harbour, FL 33154-2200

Phone: 305-866-0311

<http://www.balharbourshops.com>

You'll find such names as Tiffany & Co., Gucci, Cartier, Fendi, Yves St. Laurent, Hermes, Neiman Marcus and Saks Fifth Avenue in a lush tropical setting, as well as charming cafes and restaurants.

Open Monday-Saturday 10 am-9 pm, Sunday noon-6 pm. Parking US\$4 per hour (US\$1 per hour with validation). Valet parking US\$10.

Bayside Marketplace

401 Biscayne Blvd.
Miami, FL

Phone: 305-577-3344

<http://www.baysidemarketplace.com>

This waterfront collection of unique shops, chain stores, eateries and kiosks represents the diverse cultures of Miami. The shopping center's location near the Port of Miami offers spectacular views of Biscayne Bay. Street performers entertain at various times, and boats are for hire at the dock. Adjacent to Bayfront Park, it's a lively place for folks of all ages.

Open Monday-Thursday 10 am-10 pm, Friday and Saturday 10 am-11 pm, Sunday 11 am-9 pm.

Dadeland Mall

7535 N. Kendall Drive (12 mi/19 km southwest of Miami off Highway 1; or via Metrorail)
Kendall, FL 33156-7704

Phone: 305-665-6226

<http://www.simon.com/mall/dadeland-mall>

Among the first and still one of the most successful malls in Florida, Dadeland is a favorite with Latin-American shoppers, with more than 175 brand name stores, a food court and restaurants.

Open Monday-Saturday 10 am-9:30 pm, Sunday noon-7 pm.

Dolphin Mall

11401 N.W. 12th St. (about 5 mi/8 km from Miami International Airport—it has its own exit off Florida's Turnpike)
Miami, FL 33168-6111

Phone: 305-365-7446

<http://www.shopdolphinmall.com>

A single path loops throughout the entire mall, which is divided into eight walkways. More than 240 designer brand stores and 17 restaurants. Cast-iron sculptures of dolphins are at the four entrances. Shuttle bus transportation is available to and from downtown Miami, Miami Beach and Miami International Airport.

Open Monday-Saturday 10 am-9:30 pm, Sunday 11 am-8 pm.

Lincoln Road

Lincoln Road between 16th and 17th streets
Miami Beach, FL 33139

<http://www.lincolnroad.org>

The main shopping drag runs from Washington Avenue on the east to Alton Road on the west. This open-air mall is filled with dozens of galleries, shops and restaurants along an eight-block pedestrian promenade with shade trees down the middle. At one time, Lincoln Road was a posh shopping strip. The street was closed to traffic, and in the 1960s, it began to decline. Hard on the heels of the South Beach renaissance, it was transformed into a row of art galleries, performing-arts showcases and trendy cafes. You can stroll through numerous galleries or admire the Lincoln Theater. Delightful Sunday flea market and farmers market. Keep an eye out for in-line skaters, bicyclists and dogs. And don't miss the US\$65-million parking garage that serves as both a lot for cars and a venue for events, located at 1111 Lincoln Road. Rates there, at US\$4 an hour, are steeper than nearby municipal lots (which run about US\$1), but the architecture and views are spectacular. Rates increase if there is a special event taking place. Meters range US\$1-\$1.75 per hour depending on location.

Miami Design District

Between North Miami Avenue and Northeast Second Avenue, from Northeast 36th Street to Northeast 42nd Street
Miami, FL

Phone: 305-531-8700

<http://www.miamidesigndistrict.net>

An 18-square-block district filled with upscale showplaces—from art galleries, antiques stores and import shops to flooring, furniture, kitchen, lighting and tile stores. It's a pleasure to walk and browse through it. Plan to rest and eat lunch in the leafy courtyards of the district's cafes.

Shops at Sunset Place

5701 Sunset Drive (at the corner of Southwest 57th Avenue)
South Miami, FL 33143-5348

Phone: 305-663-0873

<http://www.simon.com/mall/the-shops-at-sunset-place>

Covering a full city block, this structure has restaurants, shops, an IMAX theater, a 24-screen movie complex and a Game Works arcade. It's considered a monstrosity by many locals.



Open Monday-Thursday 11 am-10 pm, Friday and Saturday 11 am-11 pm, Sunday 11 am-9 pm.

Streets of Mayfair

2911 Grand Ave.
Coconut Grove, FL

Phone: 305-448-1700

<http://www.mayfairinthegrove.net>

Next door to CocoWalk, this two-block, open-air shopping center is home to specialty shops such as Cuban Pete's Cigar Lounge and Brazilian clothier Jus D'Orange. Standard mall fare such as The Limited and Bath & Body Works can also be found, along with restaurants, movie theaters and nightclubs.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-7 pm, Sunday 10 am-5 pm.

The Falls

8888 S.W. 136th St.
Kendall, FL 33176-5833

Phone: 305-255-4570

<http://www.simon.com/mall/the-falls>

A stroller's delight, with more than 100 shops built around artificial waterfalls. Bloomingdale's is at one end, Macy's at the other. Entertainment is often staged around the ponds. Many good restaurants and a 12-screen movie complex are on-site. Parking is easy to find and free.

Open Monday-Saturday 10 am-9 pm, Sunday noon-7 pm.

Dining

Dining Overview

Dining in Miami is a multicultural smorgasbord, where you can sample Cuban *arepas*, Brazilian *churrasco*, alligator nuggets and the best of old-world cuisines. Miami-Dade County is covered with restaurants, from trendy tourist areas such as Coconut Grove, Coral Gables and Miami Beach to established neighborhoods such as South Miami and Kendall—where some of the best restaurants and values are found.

Latin-American cuisine is ubiquitous, with Italian, Japanese and Thai fare being close runners-up. "Floribbean" meals, which fuse Caribbean spices and fruits (papayas, oranges, plantains, mangos, avocados) with Florida classics, have gained popularity. The creation is both light and exotic.

Foodies will enjoy sampling the country's largest collection of home-grown tropical and subtropical fruits in the Homestead and Florida City farming communities. Fruit and Spice Park is the perfect place to sample fresh exotic fruit such as mamey and guava. Area farmers markets provide delicacies for guests to take with them.

The dress code varies greatly in Miami. If you're in doubt, call and ask before you go. Many restaurants and clubs are very specific about what is or isn't acceptable—and because many of-the-moment restaurants in South Beach and elsewhere double as lounges and late-night clubs, chic dressing there is de rigueur.

Many restaurants in Miami offer early-bird discounts for dinner before 6 pm, especially during the off season in the warmer months until October. Also, Miami has restaurant month in August every year with big discounts at many of the finer restaurants.

Typical dining times are 7-10 am for breakfast, 11:30 am-2 pm for lunch and 6-10 pm or later for dinner. These guidelines aren't firm in Miami-Dade, a round-the-clock community with a growing number of after-hours and 24-hour dining locations. Many restaurants cut back on their hours and days during summer.

Do make dinner reservations for restaurants in Miami Beach, and not at the last minute.

Expect to pay within these general guidelines, based on the cost of a dinner for one, excluding drinks, tax and tip: \$ = less than US\$15; \$\$ = US\$15-\$25; \$\$\$ = US\$26-\$50; \$\$\$\$ = more than US\$50.

Local & Regional

15th & Vine Kitchen and Bar

Viceroy Miami Hotel, 485 Brickell Ave.
Miami, FL

Phone: 305-503-4400

<http://www.viceroyhotelsandresorts.com/miami>

The contemporary tapas-style menu includes small, flavorful portions of fresh seasonal ingredients. Signature items are Spanish octopus, Korean short rib tostadas, truffled mushroom agnolotti and dungeness crab roll. Full-sized menu options include savory wood plank seared salmon, grilled prawns and ribeye steaks. A tasting menu is also available.

Monday-Friday for breakfast, lunch and dinner, Saturday and Sunday for brunch and dinner. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Ortanique on the Mile

278 Miracle Mile
Coral Gables, FL

Phone: 305-446-7710

<http://www.cindyhutsoncuisine.com>

Next to the Miracle Theater in Coral Gables, this place offers chef Cindy Hutson's tropical-fusion "Cuisine of the Sun." Jazz every Sunday evening.

Open Monday-Friday for lunch and dinner, Saturday and Sunday for dinner only. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Seafood

A Fish Called Avalon

700 Ocean Drive
Miami Beach, FL

Phone: 305-532-1727

<http://www.afishcalledavalon.com>

This seafood grill on the patio of the Avalon Hotel provides casual but upscale New American dining and a perfect view for people-watching in the midst of South Beach action. Try the signature Bang-Bang Shrimp, macadamia-crusting snapper or Caribbean spice grouper with mango relish, all paired perfectly with wines.

Open daily for dinner. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Joe's Stone Crab Restaurant

11 Washington Ave.
Miami Beach, FL 33139

Phone: 305-673-0365

<http://www.joesstonecrab.com>

This is the most famous restaurant in the county. The modest, plain structure where Joe's started out in 1913 (now extensively remodeled) is visited by presidents and the rich and very famous. Joe's almost single-handedly *invented* stone crabs as an eating adventure. The slaw, key lime pie and hash browns are all an integral part of the experience.

Open Tuesday-Saturday for lunch and dinner, Sunday and Monday for dinner only. Summer hours (mid-May to July) Wednesday-Sunday for dinner. Closed August to mid-October. No reservations; expect a long wait. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Security

Personal Safety

It's no secret that crime has been a major problem in Miami. A concerted campaign by local and state law-enforcement groups has made real progress in protecting tourists, and crime rates have dropped in recent years. Maps are distributed by car rental agencies to show the safest routes. Signs have been put up on the expressways to guide visitors more effectively. A booklet of tips and warnings is given to each visitor, and intensive police surveillance around the airport has made a difference.

The tourist areas themselves—Bayside, Miami Beach, Coconut Grove and Coral Gables—are no more dangerous than tourist areas in any other large city. The popularity of South Beach is such that it has extended the "safe" tourist area into streets that were marginal (or perilous) a few years ago. Still, it's best not to stray into areas where you don't see crowds on the sidewalks. Use your common sense and take notice of your surroundings. Avoid wearing expensive (or expensive-looking) jewelry or watches on the street, and don't flash cash.

Try to keep to the main streets when driving through certain areas of the city, especially the northwest section of town, east of the Palmetto Expressway and just west of South Miami. Ask your hotel's concierge or at the front desk for information about specific areas you'll be visiting.

Health

General sanitation is excellent, and the food and water are safe to consume. Miami's heat can exceed 100 F/38 C in the summer, so drink plenty of fluids to avoid fatigue and dehydration. Apply sunscreen liberally when outdoors. Mosquito-borne illnesses such as malaria and West Nile virus are not a serious threat, but efforts should be made to prevent any exposure. The Everglades and beach areas at dusk and dawn will pose the highest risks of these illnesses; wear mosquito repellent.

Alligators aren't often found roaming free on main highways, but in the Everglades they're not an odd sight. Keep substantial distance and do not feed them. Everglades tours will give more specific guidelines on animal interaction safety.

Stinging jellyfish and stingrays are sometimes in the water. If you get stung and have a serious reaction, hospital emergency rooms are open 24 hours. Be careful when you are in the water, and avoid swimming near schools of fish as they can attract larger predatory fish and sharks.

Excellent hospitals in the area include Baptist Hospital at 8950 N. Kendall Drive (phone 786-596-1960; <http://www.baptisthealth.net>), Mount Sinai Medical Center at 4300 Alton Road (phone 305-674-2121; <http://www.msmc.com>), Miami Children's Hospital at 3100 S.W. 62nd Ave. (phone 305-666-6511; <http://www.mch.com>) and Port of Miami Medical Clinic at 1015 N. America Way, Suite 150 (phone 305-358-4265; <http://www.portofmiamimedical.com>).

Air Ambulance offers travel oxygen and equipment rentals (<http://www.aeromedic.com>). Miami-Dade Ambulance Service is at 2766 N.W. 62nd St. (phone 305-779-0505).

In the case of a medical emergency, dial 911.

Disabled Advisory

Although there isn't one central source for information on disabled access, Florida, in general, has stringent accessibility standards. Many of Miami's attractions are accessible, as are some of its bus routes. Miami buses are equipped with a lift. To arrange transportation, call Medical Care Transportation at 305-633-0553.

People with disabilities who are not able to use the regular transit system can apply for the County STS paratransit system (phone 786-469-5000; <http://www.miamidade.gov/departments/transportation>). This should be done in advance of your trip.

Scoot Around offers scooter rentals in Miami and Miami Beach (toll-free 888-441-7575; <http://www.scooteraround.com>). Wheelchair Getaways offers accessible van rentals (toll-free 800-642-2042; <http://www.wheelchair-getaways.com>). Most rental car companies offer hand-controlled vehicle rentals.

Miami-Dade Emergency Management has a special needs registry (phone 305-468-5400, TDD 305-468-5402; <http://miamidade.gov/fire/emergency-management.asp>).

Wheelchairs on the Go is a great resource for disabled travelers. The book, by Michelle and Randy Stigelman with Deborah Van Brunt, covers accessibility details for the entire state of Florida, including Miami.

Perez Art Museum Miami has special touch tours for the visually impaired. Crandon Park and Haulover Beach feature accessible ocean-bound pathways as well as special beach wheelchairs that can easily navigate the sand and even go in the water. The 10th and 72nd streets beaches have accessible matting. There's even a sailing program for disabled people, Shake-a-Leg; call 48 hours in advance. (Phone 305-858-5550. <http://www.shakealegmiami.org>).

Facts

Dos & Don'ts

Don't waste your time looking for a free parking spot in Miami Beach or Coconut Grove at night or on the weekend. Just use a pay lot (or valet parking).

Do turn on your headlights if you drive in the rain—it's required by state law.

Do make sure to pack plenty of sunscreen and insect repellent if you plan on exploring South Florida's great outdoors.

Don't disturb sea turtles if you're lucky enough to see them nesting along Atlantic beaches. Undisturbed nesting and egg laying are crucial to the survival of this endangered species.

Do use caution on the road. There are lots of elderly and international drivers in Miami, and that often means creative interpretations of traffic laws.

Don't stay in the water if the waves turn rough and high—you could get carried out to sea. Lifeguards post warning flags when the sea is not safe.

Don't litter. There are fines for littering the streets.

Do move over one lane or reduce your speed to 20 mph/32 kph below the speed limit if you are driving on the highway and see a disabled vehicle, emergency vehicle or police car with flashing lights on the shoulder; it's the law.

Don't purchase tickets for tours or events from street peddlers. Consult your hotel concierge or cruise line.

Don't leave valuables or your cell phone on the beach when you go swimming.

Geostats

Passport/Visa Requirements: All U.S. citizens must have a passport when traveling by air to or from Bermuda, Canada, the Caribbean, Central and South America and Mexico. Citizens of Canada, Mexico and the British Overseas Territory of Bermuda also must have a passport or other designated secure document to enter the U.S.

Passports are required for land crossings at the Canadian and Mexican borders with the U.S. and for cruise passengers returning to the U.S. from Mexico, the Caribbean, Canada or Bermuda. Reconfirm travel-document requirements with your carrier prior to departure.



Population: 413,892.

Languages: English and Spanish.

Predominant Religions: Christian (Roman Catholic, Protestant), Jewish, Islamic.

Time Zone: 5 hours behind Greenwich Mean Time (-5 GMT). Daylight Saving Time is observed from the second Sunday in March to the first Sunday in November.

Voltage Requirements: 110 volts.

Telephone Codes: 305, and 786 area codes;

Money

Currency Exchange

The best way to get money is at one of the many ATMs located around the city. Miami Beach has a bank on just about every corner, and almost every bank has an ATM. If you're downtown, head for the area around Brickell Avenue, one of Miami's major banking strips. Most ATMs accept major credit cards and bank cards if you have a PIN.

Exchanging foreign currency for U.S. dollars or vice versa is surprisingly difficult in Miami, considering the number of foreign visitors the city gets. Before visiting Miami from abroad, buy U.S. currency or U.S. dollar-denominated traveler's checks at home. Once you're in Miami, you'll find currency exchanges offering tolerable rates at the airport but not throughout the city.

Taxes

Combined city and state taxes on most purchases total 6.5%. An additional 4% tax is levied on some restaurant meals in Miami Beach, Bal Harbour, Surfside and unincorporated areas of Miami-Dade County. Taxes on accommodations can be as much as 13%, depending on the location of the hotel.

Tipping

In most restaurants (especially those in South Beach), you'll find that an 18% tip has already been added to the bill. Check first before adding a 15%-20% tip yourself.

Weather

Winter is the ideal time to go to Miami, when temperatures average 59-76 F/15-24 C. Days are warm, the humidity is reasonable and nights are comfortably cool (take along a sweater). Visitors heading to Miami as early as November or as late as April will find comfortable temperatures (low 80s F/high 20s C) and bearable humidity.

Summers tend to be hot and quite humid, with frequent rainfall and lightning. The heaviest rainfall is usually May-October. It rains in brief scattered showers most afternoons July-September. Hurricane season is June-November.

What to Wear

A mix of clothing styles has evolved in Miami—partly because of the weather, partly because of a prevailing casual atmosphere. It ranges from power suits in the immediate downtown area to stylish-yet-casual dress in all other parts of town. Clothing that would be somewhat showy in a business setting in New York City or Washington, D.C., is more kindly regarded in Miami.

Leisure travelers will find that relaxed attire is acceptable almost everywhere. Light, bright colors are worn year-round, though black is always in style. Wintertime visitors should be prepared for rare cold snaps that can send the temperature close to freezing at night. Men rarely need a jacket in restaurants.

Charleston

Overview

Introduction

Fierce local pride is a Charleston institution. It has helped sustain the city for more than 300 tumultuous years—from colonial times, through the Revolutionary and Civil wars, to the present. Pride has also sustained thousands of historic Charleston buildings—a big reason that travelers visit today. Be sure to take a stroll down East Bay Street (especially the section known as Rainbow Row) to admire the pastel houses bedecked with their breeze-cooled piazzas.



Spend some time lolling in the near-tropical warmth of Charleston's beaches, admiring the stoic architecture of The Citadel (the state's military college) or exploring the Charleston historic district, and you'll likely find this a very pleasing corner of the cosmos.

Highlights

Sights—The woodwork at the Heyward-Washington House; the work yard at the Aiken-Rhett House; the Old Exchange and Provost Dungeon; the Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge.

Museums—Sterling silver and sweetgrass baskets at the Charleston Museum; the miniature collection and gift shop at the Gibbes Museum of Art; the floating, circular staircase at the Nathaniel Russell House.

Memorable Meals—Fried chicken, sweet tea and Coca-Cola cake at Jestine's Kitchen; anything Chef Sean Brock makes at Husk; lunch specials at Gaulart and Malicet Cafe Restaurant; Sunday brunch on the shaded terrace at Hominy Grill; suckling pig confit at FIG.

Late Night—Jazz at Charleston Grill at the Charleston Place Hotel; late-night Irish coffee and pie at Kaminsky's Cafe; relaxing with a craft beer at Elliotborough Mini Bar; a midnight snack at 39 Rue de Jean.

Walks—A stroll along Rainbow Row, the line of colorful houses on East Bay Street; the gardens at Middleton Place; a walk along the water's edge at Folly Beach; breathtaking views of the harbor from the promenade along Waterfront Park, plus swings for the kids.

Geography

Charleston is on a peninsula bordered by two rivers, the Ashley and the Cooper, which provide a natural, watery barrier that has pushed growth and development toward the north. For instance, King Street, the city's main shopping strip, is now bustling not only on its lower end (long famous for high-quality antiques) but also on its upper end (known for home furnishings and cafes that appeal to the younger set).

The city's original settlers laid out the streets in a checkerboard plan, beginning with the intersection of King and Broad streets, which remains the premier address of old Charleston law and real estate firms. The corner of Broad and Meeting is aptly called the "Four Corners of Law" because of the four types of law represented on each corner: the U.S. Post Office (U.S. law), City Hall (municipal law), South Carolina State Courthouse (state law) and St. Michael's church (God's law).

South of Broad (nicknamed SOB), the residential neighborhood encircled by the harbor, is still the most expensive spot to call home (a few bed-and-breakfasts allow you to do this, if only for a short time). You'll probably hear locals refer to the area around and in between North and South Market streets as "the Market," a popular spot that includes many eateries, touristy shops and the historic covered market, where vendors sell various goods.

Areas such as East Cooper and West Ashley carry the implicit phrase "of the" (as in East of the Cooper), which explains their locations with respect to the city's two rivers and provides visitors with a useful trick to get their bearings.

Various islands dot Charleston's harbor and coast, such as Isle of Palms, Sullivan's Island, James Island and Daniel Island, some of which have historic sites, beaches or other attractions.

History

In 1670, a group of English colonists traveled up the Ashley River and settled Charles Towne, named in honor of King Charles II of England. Ten years later, the colony relocated across the river to a more desirable site—the peninsula. By 1690, the city had become the fifth-largest in North America—a market town with busy wharves and a harbor full of sailing ships. But it was the area's tremendously successful rice-cultivation industry that made it rich. The Lowcountry rice plantations proved so profitable that their owners filled the city and countryside with elegant mansions.

At the outbreak of the Revolutionary War in 1776, Col. William Moultrie's fort on Sullivan's Island held against the firing of British forces, giving the new nation one of its first victories. After the war, Charles Towne became the city of Charleston, and its native sons played a key role in the formation of the new national government.

The city prospered and grew tremendously in the antebellum period. Charleston's rich plantation economy depended on an enslaved labor force. Africans and African Americans not only worked on the plantations, but also served as domestic servants and craftspeople in the city. Most of the antebellum structures that remain today were likely built by slaves.

Tensions over states' rights and slavery led the state of South Carolina to secede from the U.S. in December 1860. Charlestonians cheered from the rooftops as the first shots of the Civil War were fired at Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor. Though the Confederates won that battle, the ensuing siege nearly destroyed Charleston. The war brought an end to slavery and forever changed the city's way of life. By the early 1900s, phosphate mining and a navy yard were bringing jobs and new residents to Charleston.



The city's wealth of architectural gems survives in no small part because of local citizens who, during the 1920s and '30s, formed the country's first historic district with regulatory control, thus preserving the structures. In the 1970s, the abundance of historic buildings and rich legacy were finally tapped by the Charleston Chamber of Commerce. Travelers still visit Charleston for its architecture, southern charm and appealing seaside climate.

Port Information

Location

Cruise ships dock at Charleston's Union Pier Passenger Terminal, located by the harbor at Market Street and near the center of the city's Historic District. Representatives from the convention and visitors bureau staff the terminal during port-of-call arrivals, offering information and visitors guides.

Transportation services are easily accessible, with taxis lined up on nearby Concord Street. Short-term parking is available for the general public. Reservations are not required for long-term parking, but it's only available for cruise line passengers. A shuttle service operates between the terminal and parking lots. Several restaurants are located within walking distance of the terminal. Phone 843-958-8298. http://www.port-of-charleston.com/cruises/passengers/passenger_info.asp.

Potpourri

According to Charleston legend, an African American butler by the name of William Deas created the world-renowned she-crab soup at the John Rutledge Inn.

Charleston hasn't only been prone to the ravages of civil war and hurricanes. On 31 August 1886, a 7.6-magnitude earthquake rocked the city, killing 110 people and causing major damage to the city's buildings.

During the colonial era, Charleston was enclosed by a fortification wall with defensive bastions to protect it from invasion by pirates and enemies of the English empire. The wall was later removed. But, wall or no wall, Charleston shares its history with some of the most infamous pirates of all time, including Irish-born Anne Bonney, Edward Teach (known as Blackbeard) and "gentleman" pirate Stede Bonnet.

The Charleston, a famous 1920s-era dance, started in Charleston and was patterned after Gullah dance steps.

Comedian Stephen Colbert of *The Colbert Report* grew up in Charleston and attended Porter-Gaud, a prestigious local prep school.

The Charleston area is home to a large number of best-selling novelists, including Pat Conroy, Sue Monk Kidd, Dorothea Benton Frank, Mary Alice Monroe and fantasy author Robert Jordan.

Sullivan's Island, home of Fort Moultrie, which sits at the mouth of Charleston Harbor and was the site of significant action during the Revolutionary War, has been featured in works by both contemporary novelist Pat Conroy and dark poet Edgar Allan Poe. Poe's story *The Gold Bug* was set there.

Charleston is also known as the "Holy City" because of the prevalence of church steeples on the city skyline. There are more than 400 houses of worship throughout the city. The oldest church, St. Michael's, dates back to 1761.

See & Do

Sightseeing

In 1931, Charleston became the first city in the U.S. to establish a historic district to preserve its architectural heritage. It was obviously a good place to start: Of the 2,000 or so buildings in the district, 73 predate the Revolutionary War and 736 were constructed in the late 1700s and early 1800s.

For a quick introduction to the city's historic sites, stop at the visitors center on the north side of the Historic District for brochures and information. If you have a car, consider leaving it at the parking garage at the visitors center and taking a DASH (Downtown Area Shuttle) to the sights. Riding DASH is free, and parking within the Historic District is difficult and extremely limited.

We think a guided walking tour (either with a group or via a pamphlet) is an excellent way to become familiar with the city. One dominant piece of architecture to look for is the single house—a tall, narrow structure that's just one room wide. Built in various architectural styles, single houses generally have piazzas attached to one side.

Several of the major historic houses function as museums and are open to the public. The Calhoun Mansion has a particularly impressive ballroom with a skylight. Look for the magnificent woodwork in the Heyward-Washington House. You should also plan to take a walk along Rainbow Row—a collection of colorful houses on East Bay Street that show the influence of the West Indies on Charleston's architectural style.

Churches offer more examples of historic architecture—city architectural codes decree that buildings in the Historic District may not rise above the steeples. We also recommend taking the boat tour to Fort Sumter National Monument.

Historic Sites

The H.L. Hunley

1250 Supply St. (Warren Lasch Conservation Center, Old Navy Base; take Interstate 26 to Cosgrove Avenue North and follow signs)

North Charleston, SC

Phone: 843-743-4865. Toll-free 877-448-6539 for tickets

<http://www.hunley.org>

Conservation work continues on the *H.L. Hunley* at the Warren Lasch Conservation Center, located at the Old Navy Base. The Civil War submarine was discovered in waters off the Charleston coast in May 1995. In August 2000, it was recovered. The *H.L. Hunley* was the first submarine to sink an enemy Union warship in combat. After this mission, the sub disappeared.

Tours are available Saturday 10 am-5 pm and Sunday noon-5 pm. Gift shop open Monday-Friday 9 am-5 pm and on weekends during tours. US\$12 adults, US\$10 seniors and military, free for children age 5 and younger.

Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge

Highway 17
Charleston, SC

<http://www.cooperriverbridge.org>

This landmark signature bridge hovers from two diamond-shaped towers and connects Charleston with Mount Pleasant across the Cooper River. The bridge is the longest single-cable stay bridge in North America. It accommodates eight lanes of north-south traffic and offers a bike and pedestrian path that's popular among locals.

Free.

Calhoun Mansion

16 Meeting St.
Charleston, SC 29401

Phone: 843-722-8205

<http://calhounmansion.net>

Completed in 1876, this 24,000-sq-ft/2,700-sq-m landmark is Charleston's largest privately owned home. It's an architectural blend of Victorian, Italian Renaissance and Caribbean colonial styles. The opulent interior boasts domed ceilings, a sweeping staircase, walnut woodwork and gas chandeliers.

Guided tours are provided daily every 30 minutes 11 am-5 pm. Guests may view the gardens at their leisure after the tour. US\$15 adults, free for children younger than 11. A more in-depth, 90-minute tour is also available for US\$75 per person, but only by advance reservation.

College of Charleston

66 George St.
Charleston, SC 29401

Phone: 843-805-5507

<http://www.cofc.edu>

Many shady trees, brick walkways and historic Charleston houses form the graceful campus of this college, founded in 1770 and centered on the corner of George and St. Phillip streets. The Avery Research Center for African-American History and Culture on the restored site of Avery School is also part of the College of Charleston campus. It traces the heritage of Lowcountry African Americans through exhibits that include a restored 19th-century classroom.

The Avery Research Center is open for guided tours on the half-hour 10:30 am-3:30 pm, except 12:30-1:30 pm, when the Center is closed. Other times may be available by appointment. Free.

Drayton Hall

3380 Ashley River Road (about 9 mi/14 km northwest of the Historic District)
Charleston, SC 29414

Phone: 843-769-2600

<http://www.draytonhall.org>

Built in 1738, this impressive brick plantation house is considered one of the finest examples of Georgian-Palladian architecture in the U.S. Drayton Hall is the only plantation home along the Ashley River that

wasn't vandalized or destroyed during the Civil War. Today, it is still close to the original condition. The house has never been wired for electricity or equipped with running water. It's unfurnished, and you can still see original layers of paint and intricate woodwork throughout the house.

Open daily. Tours run on the half-hour Monday-Saturday 9 am-3:30 pm, Sunday 11 am-3:30 pm. Exit gate closes at 5 pm. The "Connections" program, which focuses on the site's African-American history, is available daily at 12:45 and 2:45 pm. US\$20 adults, US\$10 children ages 12-18, US\$8 children ages 6-11, free for children age 5 and younger. Family packages for two adults and two children available for US\$44.

Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church

110 Calhoun St.
Charleston, SC

Phone: 843-722-2561

<http://www.emanuelamechurch.org>

The oldest AME church in the South was founded in 1791 by a religious group of free blacks and slaves. In 1822, the church was investigated for its involvement with a planned slave revolt; 35 members, including church founder Denmark Vesey, were executed. During the Vesey controversy, the original church was burned, and the congregation met in secret until 1865. Today's structure was built in the Gothic Revival style in 1891 and retains its original altar, pews and light fixtures.

Hours vary. Call ahead.

Fort Sumter National Monument

360 Concord St., Suite 201
Charleston, SC

Phone: 843-722-2628. Toll-free 800-789-3678 for boat reservations

<http://www.nps.gov/fosu>

In April 1861, the forces of the Confederate States of America fired on the federal troops stationed on the island fort, marking the start of the Civil War. The soldiers within the fort surrendered to the Confederates after more than a day of shelling, although no one was killed in the attack. Visitors can tour the island by private boat (hours vary, call ahead) or take the National Parks concessioner-operated ferry, which includes 30-minute narrated cruises both ways and a 75-minute historian-led tour of the fort. To get there, board a boat at Fort Sumter Tours from Liberty Square, located next to the South Carolina Aquarium, or from Patriots Point in Mount Pleasant.

Departure times vary by season. Call or check website. The monument is closed Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. US\$17 adults, US\$15 seniors, US\$10 children ages 6-11, free for children younger than 6 (ticket includes boat trip and monument admission).

Magnolia Cemetery

70 Cunningham Ave. (about 3 mi/5 km from the Historic District)
Charleston, SC 29405

Phone: 843-722-8638

<http://www.magnoliacemetery.net>

Dedicated in 1850, this cemetery is the final resting place of many of the town's illustrious citizens and characters. It contains a section dedicated to Confederate soldiers killed in the Civil War. When arriving, stop at the office to get a free map detailing many of the burial sites.

Open daily November-March 9 am-5 pm, April-October 8 am-6 pm. Office open Monday-Friday 8 am-4 pm. Free.

Old Exchange and Provost Dungeon

122 E. Bay St.
Charleston, SC 29401

Phone: 843-727-2165

<http://oldexchange.org>

During the Revolutionary War, the British held American patriots in the Old Exchange building. In 1965, an excavation of the dungeon revealed a portion of Charles Towne's original fortification. Today, the exhibits focus on military history. The Great Hall is where South Carolina declared independence from Great Britain in March of 1776.

Daily 9 am-5 pm, with guided tours every half-hour. US\$9 adults, US\$4.50 children ages 7-12, free for children age 6 and younger. Ask about military, senior and other discounts.

Old Powder Magazine

79 Cumberland St.
Charleston, SC 29401

Phone: 843-722-9350

<http://www.powdermag.org>

Built in 1713, this is the oldest public building in Charleston. It once stored munitions for the city's defense against Spanish vessels based in St. Augustine. The restored building has exhibits about early Charleston and periodic living history programs (call ahead for schedule).

Monday-Saturday 10 am-4 pm, Sunday 1-4 pm. US\$5 adults, US\$2 children age 12 and younger.

Rainbow Row

83-107 E. Bay St.
Charleston, SC 29401

No matter where you go in the City of Charleston you will see photographs, paintings and other forms of artwork commemorating Rainbow Row. During the 1700s, this row of colorful homes was the city's center for trade and business. The strip of 14 tightly packed, colonial-era houses, each a different pastel hue, was built between 1740 and 1790, many in the Federal brick style. The area where they stand once constituted the Charleston waterfront district.

St. Michael's Episcopal Church

71 Broad St.
Charleston, SC 29401

Phone: 843-723-0603

<http://www.stmichaelschurch.net>

The sounds of St. Michael's bells are beloved in Charleston—they can be heard throughout the day. Completed in 1761 (with the bells imported from England and added in 1764), this church was modeled after London's St. Martin-in-the-Fields and is Charleston's oldest surviving house of worship.

Open to the public Monday-Friday 9 am-4:30 pm, occasionally on Saturday 9 am-noon. A brief service is held daily at 12:10 pm. Free.

St. Philip's Episcopal Church and Cemetery

142 Church St.
Charleston, SC 29401

Phone: 843-722-7734

<http://www.stphilipschurchsc.org>

Once known as the lighthouse church because a light placed in its steeple helped guide ships to port, St. Philip's was constructed 1835-38. Charlestonians are buried in the graveyard next to the church. Non-Charlestonians, including John C. Calhoun, are buried on the opposite side of the street.

Volunteer-guided tours are offered on weekday mornings and some afternoons (call ahead for availability). Services are held in the chapel on Wednesday at 8 and 10 am. Free.

The Citadel

171 Moultrie St. (on the Ashley River near Hampton Park)
Charleston, SC

Phone: 843-225-3294

<http://www.citadel.edu>

Military-history buffs will enjoy a visit to the historic Citadel Military College. The public is welcome to attend dress parades on Friday at 3:45 pm during the academic year. (Check the school calendar before you go, however, as dress parades aren't held during exams and holidays.) You can also visit The Citadel Museum, which is open year-round daily noon-5 pm.

The Citadel is closed for all national, religious and institutional holidays. Free admission to the museum located on the third floor of the Citadel's library.

Museums

Aiken-Rhett House

48 Elizabeth St.
Charleston, SC 29403

Phone: 843-723-1159

<http://www.historiccharleston.org/Visit/Museums/Aiken-Rhett-House-Museum.aspx>

Built in 1818, this historic house is considered one of the most complete illustrations of antebellum life in the South. The lot located in the back offers a rare glimpse into 19th-century urban life for African Americans.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-5 pm, Sunday 2-5 pm. US\$10, or purchase a combination ticket with entrance to the Nathaniel Russell House for US\$16.

Charleston Museum

360 Meeting St.
Charleston, SC 29403

Phone: 843-722-2996

<http://www.charlestonmuseum.org>

This museum explores the cultural and natural history of the Lowcountry from prehistoric times to the present. The museum's collection of more than 500,000 items includes Charleston silver, toys, snuff boxes and more. Don't miss the early silver collection featuring George Washington's christening cup.

Monday-Saturday 9 am-5 pm, Sunday 1-5 pm. Open Thursday 9 am-7 pm in July and August. Closed major holidays. US\$10 adults, US\$5 children ages 3-12. Ask about combination tour tickets.

Confederate Museum

188 Meeting St.
Charleston, SC

This tiny museum is worth a closer look if you're interested in Civil War weaponry (it has plenty of swords), or postal history—the postage stamp collection is fascinating. The white handkerchief used by Charleston to surrender to the Union is in there, as well. The museum is operated by the United Daughters of the Confederacy.

Open Tuesday-Saturday 11 am-3:30 pm. US\$5 adults, US\$3 children 6-12, free for children younger than age 6.

Edmonston-Alston House

21 E. Battery
Charleston, SC

Phone: 843-722-7171

<http://www.edmondstonalston.com>

This stately mansion on High Battery is a repository of family treasures, including Alston family silver and furniture, as well as civil war history: It was there that Confederate Gen. Beauregard watched the cannons' smoke from Fort Sumter in 1861. Gen. Robert E. Lee also stayed in the mansion. Guided tours

give visitors an insight into the lifestyle of merchant Charles Edmondston, who built the house in 1825, and Georgetown County rice planter Charles Alston, who later bought the house in 1838.

Sunday and Monday 1-4:30 pm, Tuesday-Saturday 10 am-4:30 pm. US\$12 adults, US\$8 students and children.

Gibbes Museum of Art

135 Meeting St.
Charleston, SC 29401

Phone: 843-722-2706

<http://www.gibbesmuseum.org>

The Gibbes has a notable collection of American and European paintings depicting past and present Charleston. It also features more than 400 miniature portraits, miniature rooms and special traveling exhibits.

Tuesday-Saturday 10 am-5 pm, Sunday 1-5 pm. Closed Monday and national holidays. US\$9 adults; US\$7 seniors, students and military; US\$5 children ages 6-12; free for children younger than 6.

Heyward-Washington House

87 Church St.
Charleston, SC 29401

Phone: 843-722-2996

<http://www.charlestonmuseum.org/heyward-washington-house>

Wealthy planter Daniel Heyward built the house in the late 1700s, and his son, Thomas, was a member of the first Continental Congress and a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Washington was added to the name after U.S. President George Washington stayed at the home during a tour of the 13 colonies in 1791. Although the multistory brick structure is impressive, it's the period furniture that really draws your attention: Much of it was constructed by English-trained artisans replicating Chippendale designs. The Holmes Bookcase, a five-sectioned piece of magnificent craftsmanship, is considered among the finest American pieces of the period.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-5 pm, Sunday 1-5 pm. Closed major holidays. US\$10 adults, US\$5 children ages 3-12. Combined Charleston Museum and Heyward-Washington House tickets available for a discount.

John Rivers Communications Museum

58 George St.
Charleston, SC

Phone: 843-953-5810

<http://jrmuseum.cofc.edu>

This small but fascinating museum is part of the Communications Department on the campus of the College of Charleston. It's named after Charleston area AM Radio and, later, TV broadcaster, John Rivers. The museum displays include antique radios, TVs, record players, telephones and movie projectors—it is fascinating to see just how far technology has advanced in the past few decades.

Open Monday-Friday noon-4 pm. Free admission.

Joseph Manigault House

350 Meeting St.
Charleston, SC 29403

Phone: 843-722-2996

<http://www.charlestonmuseum.org/joseph-manigault-house>

This house museum is an outstanding example of Adam-style architecture, which is closely related to American Federal-style architecture. Built in 1803, the house also has an impressive collection of American and English furniture.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-5 pm, Sunday 1-5 pm. US\$10 (ask about combination tickets to the Charleston Museum, which owns the house).

Mace Brown Museum of Natural History

202 Calhoun St. (located in the School of Sciences and Mathematics)
Charleston, SC

Phone: 843-953-5589

<http://geology.cofc.edu/natural-history-museum>

Dinosaur lovers, take note! This museum displays more than 3,000 fossils, including dinosaurs, mastadons, mammoths and cave bears. As part of the College of Charleston's Department of Geology and Environmental Geosciences, student geology majors staff the museum and also serve as docents.

Open Thursday-Tuesday 11 am-4 pm. Free admission.

Nathaniel Russell House

51 Meeting St.
Charleston, SC 29401

Phone: 843-724-8481

<http://www.historiccharleston.org/Russell.aspx>

Wealthy shipping merchant Nathaniel Russell built this mansion so that he could look out over the city's bustling wharves, although the wharves disappeared from view as the city grew. Completed in 1808, the house was designed in the American Federal style. Its most prominent feature is a three-story staircase that seems to float without any means of architectural support.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-5 pm, Sunday 2-5 pm. US\$10, or US\$16 for combination ticket with entrance to the Aiken-Rhett House.

Old Slave Mart Museum

6 Chalmers St.
Charleston, SC

Phone: 843-958-6467

<http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/charleston/osm.htm>

This small but significant museum is housed in what was once Ryan's Mart, a large auction complex where slaves were sold from 1856 to 1863. Documents, photographs, artifacts and powerful audiovisual components shed light on the horrors of the trans-Atlantic and domestic slave trade in Charleston.

Open Monday-Saturday 9 am-5 pm. US\$7 adults, US\$5 children.

Patriots Point Naval and Maritime Museum

40 Patriots Point Road (about 4 mi/6 km from the Historic District)
Mount Pleasant, SC 29464

Phone: Toll-free 866-831-1720

<http://www.patriotspoint.org>

At this museum across the Cooper River in Mount Pleasant, you can see the aircraft carrier *Yorktown*, a Cold War submarine, a destroyer, a Coast Guard cutter and a full-scale replica of a Vietnam Naval Support Base Camp. The Congressional Medal of Honor Museum at Patriots Point also is there.

Daily 9 am-6:30 pm. Closed Christmas Day. US\$20 adults, US\$17 seniors and active-duty military with ID, US\$12 children ages 6-11; parking is US\$5 per vehicle.

Thomas Elfe House

54 Queen St.
Charleston, SC 29401

This pre-Revolutionary War single house was built by Thomas Elfe, one of Charleston's renowned furniture makers. Still a private home, it has fine, rare woodwork including cabinetry and cornice moldings.

Monday-Friday 10 am-noon, or at other times by appointment. US\$8 adults, US\$4 children.

Parks & Gardens

Boone Hall Plantation and Gardens

1235 Long Point Road
Mount Pleasant, SC

Phone: 843-884-4371

<http://www.boonehallplantation.com>

Not only is Boone Hall a delightful testament to another time, it continues as a working plantation to this day. The much-photographed Avenue of Live Oaks dates back nearly three centuries. History buffs will enjoy touring the Georgian-style mansion, gin house and slave cabins that house exhibits on the African-American experience. There are also beautiful gardens and a butterfly pavilion on-site. After sightseeing on the plantation, be sure to visit Boone Hall Farms to sample market-fresh local produce, wines, cheeses and other specialty items.

Open Labor Day-March Monday-Saturday 9 am-5 pm, Sunday 1-4 pm; April-Labor Day Monday-Saturday 8:30 am-6:30 pm, Sunday 1-5 pm. US\$20 adults; US\$18 seniors, military and AAA members; US\$10 children ages 6-12; free for children age 5 and younger.

Riverfront Park

Located on the former Charleston Naval Base
North Charleston, SC

North Charleston's Riverfront Park is a 10-acre/4-hectare recreational park with access to the Cooper River. Developed as a naval base in 1901, the park now includes river vistas, an amphitheater, a meadow, a pavilion and stage, walkways, a computer-controlled fountain, a fishing pier and much more to delight the family.

Charles Towne Landing State Park

1500 Old Towne Road
Charleston, SC 29407

Phone: 843-852-4200

<http://www.southcarolinaparks.com/ctl/introduction.aspx>

Charles Towne Landing is the site of the first permanent settlement in South Carolina in 1670. Features an interactive visitors center, museum, archaeology exhibits, and a replica of a 17th-century ship, as well as MP3-player-guided audio tours (MP3 players available for rental on-site). The site also features 80 acres/32 hectares of gardens and a natural-habitat zoo with animals indigenous to the Carolinas at the time of settlement.

Open daily 9 am-5 pm. US\$10 adults, US\$6 children ages 6-15, free for children younger than 6.

Cypress Gardens

3030 Cypress Gardens Road (about 25 mi/40 km north of Charleston off Highway 52)
Moncks Corner, SC

Phone: 843-553-0515

<http://www.cypressgardens.info>

Simply put, a freshwater swamp is a flooded forest. And only the heartiest trees that can withstand periodic flooding, such as the bald cypress and swamp tupelo, grow in this 163-acre/66-hectare swamp garden. Alligators, turtles and snakes live in the swamp's black waters, and several bird species can be spotted. There are self-guided and guided boat tours, nature trails and a butterfly garden.

Open daily 9 am-5 pm. US\$10 adults, US\$9 seniors, US\$5 children, free for children younger than 6. US\$5 guided boat. Self-guided boats free, but availability is limited.

James Island County Park

871 Riverland Drive
Charleston, SC

Phone: 843-795-7275

<http://www.ccprc.com/index.aspx?nid=68>

Grassy open meadows, playgrounds, a climbing wall, camping facilities, a seasonal splash park and miles/kilometers of hiking and biking trails await at this county-run park. Bicycle, paddle boat and kayak rentals are also available.

Open 8 am-sunset in the spring and summer, 8 am-5 pm November-February.

Magnolia Plantation

3550 Ashley River Road (about 12 mi/19 km northwest of downtown on Highway 61)
Charleston, SC 29414

Phone: 843-571-1266. Toll-free 800-367-3517

<http://www.magnoliaplantation.com>

The highlight of this plantation is the gardens, which are more than 300 years old. You'll find a riot of colorful flora, an herb garden, a horticultural labyrinth and a topiary garden. The attached Audubon Swamp Garden is a cypress and tupelo swamp with an appropriately southern Gothic air. Bridges, dikes and boardwalks traverse the swamp so that visitors can make eye contact with the inhabitants. Magnolia Plantation is a favorite with children, who can come face-to-face with a snake at the reptile house, pet animals at the petting zoo or take a boat ride through the 125-acre/50-hectare Waterfowl Refuge. History lovers will enjoy a tour of some of the original slave cabins as part of the Slavery to Freedom guided tour.

Open daily November-February 9 am-4:40 pm; March-October 8 am-5:30 pm. US\$15 adults, US\$10 children ages 6-12, free for children younger than 6. Additional US\$8 each for house, train, boat, Slavery to Freedom tour, or self-guided swamp tours.

Middleton Place

4300 Ashley River Road (about 14 mi/23 km northwest of downtown)
Charleston, SC 29414

Phone: 843-556-6020. Toll-free 800-782-3608

<http://www.middletonplace.org>

We're especially enamored of this 1740s former rice plantation and the incredible beauty of its gardens. Middleton Place's English-style gardens are among the U.S.'s oldest landscaped grounds. Camellias, azaleas, roses and other flowering shrubs form alleyways along terraced lawns and an ornamental butterfly-shaped pond. The plantation home, much of which was destroyed in the Civil War, displays silver, furniture and other valuable artifacts from the Middleton family. The adjacent stable yard provides an opportunity to visit with chickens, goats and other period-appropriate animals, while costumed craftspeople demonstrate blacksmithing and weaving. Go hungry, as the plantation's restaurant serves delicious Lowcountry fare. Picnics are not permitted anywhere in the formal gardens.

Daily 9 am-5 pm. Admission US\$28 adults, US\$10 children ages 6-13, free for children younger than 6. An additional US\$15 for a tour of the House Museum; US\$5 for African-American-focused tour; US\$18 for a carriage-ride tour; US\$55 adults, US\$44 students with ID, US\$39 children for a combination Spend the Day package (includes admission, house tour and carriage ride). Combination tickets with Edmondston Alston House also available.

Shopping

Look in the many specialty shops for real Carolina treasures—native crafts such as handmade pottery, handcrafted furniture and sweetgrass baskets. They are often made on the same Market and Broad street corners where they're sold. (Don't expect bargains: These native crafts have become highly prized, and their prices have escalated accordingly.) You'll also find open-air crafts stalls in the Old City Market.

Charleston is well-known for its selection of antiques. Many of the shops are located on lower King Street and in the surrounding area. Galleries and boutiques are also common, and nearby Mount Pleasant has

some good specialty shops, as well as Mount Pleasant Towne Centre—an outdoor shopping complex designed to replicate shopping on King Street, with lots of chain stores and a movie theater.

On the second Sunday of each month, the popular King Street shopping district transforms into a pedestrian mall. Several well-known antiques shops that are normally closed on Sunday open for this special event. Many shops move their wares out on to the sidewalk as shoppers stroll along the street.

For those seeking standard shopping, Charleston has its share of department stores and malls.

Shopping Hours: Shops downtown and in other neighborhoods are generally open Monday-Saturday 9 or 10 am-5 or 5:30 pm. Shopping centers and strip malls are open until 8 or 9 pm Monday-Saturday. On Sunday, many shops downtown, particularly those that are part of a chain, are open noon-5 pm.

Dining

Dining Overview

Charleston's dining scene has undergone a major renaissance. The number and diversity of top-quality restaurants has blossomed and, as a result, an annual celebration of the culinary arts called Wine + Food has been added to the city's event calendar (in early March).

The emphasis is often on Lowcountry recipes, sometimes given a contemporary slant. And as might be expected of a seaside city, Charleston is a great place for seafood. Shrimp, oysters and crab turn up in a variety of dishes, including the local favorite, she-crab soup (cream-based and laced with sherry). You should also try Carolina red rice and fried green tomatoes. Look for Beaufort or Frogmore stew (named for the towns just down the coast), a combination of sausage, corn, potatoes and shrimp.

Shrimp and grits, a celebrated Lowcountry dish, can be found on almost every menu in the city. And hoppin' John (an African-inspired mixture of rice and field peas) also should not be missed.

Note that smoking is not allowed in restaurants or bars.

General dining times are 7-10 am for breakfast, 11:30 am-2:30 pm for lunch and 7-9 pm for dinner. If you're trying to get into a popular restaurant, call ahead for reservations.

Expect to pay within these general guidelines, based on the cost of a dinner for one, not including drinks, tax or tip: \$ = less than US\$20; \$\$ = US\$20-\$30; \$\$\$ = US\$31-\$40; and \$\$\$\$ = more than US\$40.

Local & Regional

82 Queen

82 Queen St.
Charleston, SC

Phone: 843-723-7591

<http://www.82queen.com>

Sit under the old magnolia tree and indulge in a bowl of delectable she-crab soup, made with crab roe and sherry. The fish is fresh, the grits are great, and the fried green tomatoes are crispy; it's no wonder 82 Queen has earned such high praise. Try to save room for the bourbon pecan pie.



Monday-Friday for lunch and dinner, Saturday and Sunday for brunch and dinner. Reservations recommended. \$\$-\$\$\$.

Fleet Landing

186 Concord St.
Charleston, SC

Phone: 843-722-8100

<http://www.fleetlanding.net>

Housed in a former U.S. Navy building, this restaurant has a casual maritime theme and offers a beautiful view of Charleston Harbor. Lowcountry dishes, such as Carolina lump crab cake and she-crab soup, are specialties. You'll also find fried seafood—and burgers for the land lovers.

Daily for lunch and dinner, Saturday and Sunday for brunch also. Reservations recommended. \$-\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Hominy Grill

207 Rutledge Ave.
Charleston, SC 29403

Phone: 843-937-0930

<http://www.hominygrill.com>

Formerly a barbershop with a pressed-tin ceiling, this bright eatery has unpretentiously great food and free downtown parking. It's a neighborhood bistro where you can get chicken and dumplings, an almighty vegetable fix or sesame-crusting catfish with fried okra. Other good bets include the fried green tomatoes, shrimp and grits, and buttermilk pie.

Open Monday-Friday for breakfast, lunch and dinner, Saturday for brunch and dinner, Sunday for brunch only. \$. Most major credit cards.

Husk

76 Queen St.
Charleston, SC

Phone: 843-577-2500

<http://www.huskrestaurant.com>

Local celebrity chef Sean Brock's newest venture is all about the south. Everything on the menu is indigenous to the southern states. The result is an ever-changing menu that celebrates heirloom ingredients, local growers and the tremendous bounty and seasonality of southern cooking. Some of the inventive dishes you may find: benne and honey-lacquered duck with pickled blueberries and chanterelles or wood-fired pork belly with pickled-peach brown butter. The atmosphere is casual and convivial. You can even watch the chefs work their magic in the open kitchen.

Open daily for lunch and dinner, Sunday for brunch also. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Jestine's Kitchen

251 Meeting St.
Charleston, SC

Phone: 843-722-7224

<http://www.jestineskitchen.com>

Locals flock to this casual downtown eatery to get their fix for cravings of old-fashioned southern foods, such as macaroni and cheese, fried fish, meat loaf and sweet tea. Famous for its fried chicken, sinfully rich Coca-Cola cake and hot, honey-drizzled cornbread.

Open daily except Monday for lunch and dinner. \$-\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Magnolias

185 E. Bay St.
Charleston, SC 29401

Phone: 843-577-7771

<http://www.magnolias-blossom-cypress.com>

A magnolia theme runs through this restaurant, which is housed in a former warehouse in the Historic District. Opened in 1990, it is considered a pioneer in Charleston's culinary renaissance. Lowcountry classics reinterpreted and updated are at the core of the menu's "Down South" selections, while "Uptown" selections are more international in origin. The buttermilk-fried chicken breast is a favorite.

Daily for lunch and dinner, Sunday for brunch also. Reservations recommended. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Slightly North of Broad

192 E. Bay St.
Charleston, SC 29401

Phone: 843-723-3424

<http://www.mavericksouthernkitchens.com/slightlynorthofbroad>

Chef Frank Lee creates inventive dishes at this brick-and-stucco-walled restaurant. Visitors dining alone can sit at a long counter, which looks directly into the busy, open kitchen. Specials include jumbo lump crab cakes, oyster stew, a southern vegetable plate and a nicely priced wine list. Save room for dessert.

Open Monday-Friday for lunch and dinner, Saturday and Sunday for dinner only. \$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Security

Personal Safety

Charleston has a somewhat higher crime rate per capita than the average U.S. city, but the local police and community have worked to make it a safer place. The key to visiting Charleston, like any other metro area, is to pay attention to what is going on around you. Most of the areas traveled by visitors are reasonably safe, but use common sense and be alert after dark, especially downtown where street lights do not illuminate areas as well as they should.

Be aware of pickpockets and purse snatchers in crowded areas, such as the Old City Market area, along George Street and areas near the College of Charleston. Unlit, deserted areas in the parks and downtown should be avoided at night. Be especially cautious in North Charleston—certain areas have a reputation for being particularly crime-ridden.

Ask your hotel's concierge or front-desk staff for advice about the areas and attractions you wish to visit.

Health

Charleston is hot, humid and, because of its proximity to the coast, an incubator for mosquitoes. It's a good idea to have bug repellent handy, particularly if you plan on visiting wooded areas such as parks, gardens, marshes and wildlife habitats. Sunscreen is a good idea year-round, even on cloudy days. Be careful at area pools and beaches, particularly if you aren't used to a lot of sun—it's easy to blister or become dehydrated when you aren't accustomed to it. When you do go out into the sun during the summer months in Charleston, make sure you have plenty of water along and sip it often.

Charleston is home to many hospitals, including the Medical University of South Carolina, located at 171 Ashley Ave. (phone 843-792-2300; <http://academicdepartments.musc.edu/musc>). Whenever you travel, always check to see the closest hospital emergency room in relation to your hotel room or rental. Most Charleston hospitals have 24-hour emergency rooms and 24-hour pharmacies. Chain drugstores such as CVS and Walgreens also have pharmacies, some of which remain open late.

In a medical emergency, dial 911.

Disabled Advisory

Some historic buildings, attractions and business locations are still not handicapped accessible, but many are. Be especially careful if you need wheelchair accessibility in several downtown locations. Some of the city sidewalks are made of slate and are slippery; others are bumpy and hard to maneuver.

The Disabilities and Special Needs Board of Charleston County provides services and support to disabled people (phone 843-805-5800). South Carolina Department of Social Services is a central source of information about services available in South Carolina, including transportation, used equipment and personal care for people with disabilities and seniors older than 60. Toll-free 800-768-5700.

Transportation sources include Rural Transportation Management Association, which runs the TriCounty Link bus service (toll-free 800-966-6631), and CARTA's Tel-A-Ride (phone 843-747-0007). Contact agencies prior to arriving, as there is usually an application process involved.



The Official Visitors Guide to the Charleston Area, available through the visitors center and the Convention and Visitors Bureau, rates attractions to provide degrees of accessibility and also notes many area restaurants that are handicapped accessible.

Facts

Dos & Don'ts

Do take along your best manners—Charleston residents pride themselves on their politeness to strangers and expect the same in return.

Don't take photographs of the Sweetgrass Basket Makers while walking downtown or at other locations. These ladies cherish their privacy and do not like to pose for photographs.

Don't park a car in a residence-only zone in downtown Charleston. Though parking is limited in the city, consider parking in a garage.

Don't feed the birds at the restaurants on Shem Creek.

Don't knock on the doors of houses in the historic district to ask about tours. These are private residences. Information on which houses offer tours is available in the visitors center.

Do remember that if you reserve a room in a historic property, the rooms—including the bath—will be smaller, much like European hotel rooms.

Don't refer to the Market as the "Slave Market." This is both historically inaccurate (slaves were never sold there) and offensive to many residents.

Do pay attention to those tropical storms and hurricanes off the coast. Hurricane season runs June-November, and Charleston has been a target in the past.

Do pack flat shoes. Many historic home tours do not allow heeled shoes because they damage wood floors.

Geostats

Passport/Visa Requirements: All U.S. citizens must have a passport when traveling by air to or from Bermuda, Canada, the Caribbean, Central and South America and Mexico. Citizens of Canada, Mexico and the British Overseas Territory of Bermuda also must have a passport or other designated secure document to enter the U.S.

Passports are required for land crossings at the Canadian and Mexican borders with the U.S. and for cruise passengers returning to the U.S. from Mexico, the Caribbean, Canada or Bermuda. Reconfirm travel-document requirements with your carrier prior to departure.

Population: 127,999.

Time Zone: 5 hours behind Greenwich Mean Time (-5 GMT). Daylight Saving Time is observed from the second Sunday in March to the first Sunday in November.

Voltage Requirements: 110 volts.

Telephone Codes: 843, area code;

Money

Currency Exchange

The best ways to exchange money are at banks or ATMs. ATMs are located outside most banks and in most convenience stores and supermarkets and generally take credit or debit cards. Banks are generally open Monday-Friday 9 am-5 pm, with drive-through service usually available a half-hour earlier or later.

Taxes

Sales tax in Charleston County ranges 7%-7.5% on all items. An 8.5% tax is added to food purchases in restaurants. A 13.5% hospitality tax is added to hotel bills.

Tipping

The average tip on a meal, taxi ride or other service is 15%-20%.

Weather

Charleston's climate, like the rest of coastal South Carolina, is mild and humid up until the beginning of summer, when the heat index jumps. January temperatures are moderate, but most range 37-59 F/3-14 C. Expect temperatures to run 53-76 F/11-24 C along the coast in April, 61-83 F/16-27 C in May. Severe thunderstorms can occur in spring.

Visitors expecting to enjoy the beaches will find pleasant conditions through the summer, though July and August are hot (high 80s F/30 C to above 90 F/32 C) and humid. Humidity at 60%-80% in high heat can take a lot out of you, so pace your sightseeing. Drink plenty of water and dress lightly. Be aware that the season for hurricanes and tropical storms is June-November.

The fall sees less humidity, and temperatures range 55-84 F/12-28 C. Indian summer lasts through November, with dry days and temperatures from the low 40s F/5 C to the upper 60s F/18 C.

What to Wear

Hot and humid springs and summers call for light, breathable clothes. Sunscreen and hats are essential, both for the beach and for walking downtown. Beachwear stays at the beach or pool for Charlestonians, however. Air-conditioning is everywhere, so even on swelteringly hot days a light sweater or jacket is handy for the office, a mall, the movies or other well-chilled places.

Although it rarely snows, winter days can bite because it's a damp, "to the bone" cold. Heavy wool items are not as important as layering, which seems to do the trick in any weather. Unless you're walking around on the coldest of days, you won't ever need more than light gloves, a scarf and a medium-weight coat.

Business attire is probably more casual than in most major cities in the South. Many men wear khaki or linen pants with a button-down collar or polo shirt, and women wear slacks and sweaters. Only the most conservative industries or meetings require business suits. Although locals don't always dress in formal wear to dine in the area's best restaurants, they generally opt for something more elegant than jeans and T-shirts.

New York, New York

Overview

Introduction

New York City has always been a city of superlatives: largest, tallest, trendiest, best. It's also one of the world's most dynamic places. The skyline seems to be ever-changing, and exciting new restaurants and shops continue to pop up in unexpected neighborhoods. First-time visitors and natives alike will experience variety at every turn.



New York offers more to see and do than you can manage in one visit. You'll find the finest selection of entertainment, museums and restaurants in the world. Some stunning new attractions have opened, and some old favorites have been rebuilt and refurbished like an old Broadway musical. But the New York City skyline is still the awe-inspiring star. Two amazing icons are still mourned, but the new Freedom Tower has already taken its place among the city's other world-famous landmarks: the Empire State Building, the Chrysler Building, Lincoln Center, the Flatiron Building and the bridges—Brooklyn, Queensboro, Verrazano—to name just a few. Most reassuring of all: The Statue of Liberty is still there, waiting to say hello.

Highlights

Sights—The Statue of Liberty; the Empire State Building; the World Trade Center Site and National September 11 Memorial Museum; Times Square; Grand Central Terminal; a ride on the Staten Island Ferry; Ellis Island National Monument; the Brooklyn Bridge; The United Nations; Central Park; Chinatown; Rockefeller Center; the New York Public Library.

Museums—Metropolitan Museum of Art; Museum of Modern Art; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum; Brooklyn Museum; Studio Museum in Harlem; New Museum of Contemporary Art; Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum; Frick Collection; The Morgan Library & Museum; Whitney Museum of American Art.

Memorable Meals—Daniel or Jean Georges for quintessential upscale New York dining; spectacular views of nighttime Manhattan from the River Cafe in Brooklyn; Bouley for inspired French cuisine; Italian-style seafood at Marea; Lupa for boisterous Italian.

Late Night—A performance at Joe's Pub; a Broadway show or an evening of music at Carnegie Hall or Lincoln Center's Metropolitan Opera House; stand-up comedy at Caroline's on Broadway; cool new jazz at Smoke.

Walks—Window-shopping along Fifth Avenue in the 50s and Madison Avenue from 59th to 86th streets; a daytime stroll through Central Park from 59th Street to the Metropolitan Museum of Art; walking up Broadway in SoHo from Grand Street to Greenwich Village; exploring the narrow streets and great shops of the Lower East Side; the Chelsea art galleries and bars from 13th to 27th streets between 10th and 11th avenues; Brooklyn Bridge Park.

Geography

When most people think of New York City, they think of Manhattan, a skinny island about 13 mi/21 km long and just over 2 mi/3.5 km across at its widest point. Manhattan is bordered on the west by the Hudson River and on the east by the East River (which is actually a tidal estuary rather than a true river). The Harlem River defines the northern tip, and New York Bay, which leads out to the Atlantic, is at the south end of the island.

New York City includes four other boroughs: Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island and The Bronx. Brooklyn and Queens are on the western end of Long Island. Only The Bronx (the definite article is part of the official name) is located on the mainland. New Jersey is just across the Hudson River from Manhattan.

Manhattan can be roughly divided into three regions: Downtown is the southern end of the island, including Wall Street; Midtown begins around 31st Street and extends north to the southern end of Central Park (59th Street); Uptown is anywhere farther north. The city is further divided into numerous sections within these regions. Chelsea, Gramercy Park, SoHo, the East and West villages, Hell's Kitchen (in today's trendiness, it's called Clinton) and Harlem are just a few of the famous areas of New York.

Manhattan streets generally follow a simple grid pattern, with a few notoriously confusing exceptions, such as the twisty streets of lower Manhattan, Greenwich Village and the diagonal swath cut by Broadway. Numbered streets (15th Street, 16th Street) run east-west with the numbers increasing as you go north. Numbered avenues (Fifth Avenue, Sixth Avenue) run north-south with the numbers increasing as you go west. Fifth Avenue is conventionally the dividing line between the East and West sides of the city. This grid system makes getting around quite easy. If you're ever lost, just look for the cross streets, and you will inevitably find your way.

A few avenues with names can cause additional confusion. In Midtown and on the Upper East Side, the avenues east of Fifth are, in order: Madison, Park, Lexington, Third, Second, First, York (north of 60th Street) and East End (north of 79th Street). At Columbus Circle (59th Street) on the Upper West Side, Eighth Avenue becomes Central Park West. West of that you'll find Columbus (it's Ninth Avenue south of there), Amsterdam (10th), Broadway, West End (11th) and Riverside Drive. And south of Houston Street (in SoHo and TriBeCa—"South of Houston" and "Triangle Below Canal"), the numbered streets are replaced by names. This lower part of Manhattan has been known to cause confusion for even the most steadfast New Yorker.

History

Ships have been crucial to the city's development since Italian explorer Giovanni da Verrazano landed on Staten Island in 1524. Henry Hudson, an Englishman employed by the Dutch East India Co., was the first European (in 1609) to set foot on the island now known as Manhattan—the Dutch named the place Nieuw Amsterdam. They went on to buy it from the native population at a now infamous bargain-basement price (supposedly worth about US\$24 in today's dollars). Rule over the colony changed hands between the Dutch and English three times, until England won final possession in the late 1660s. By 1700, some 7,000 people lived in the city now called New York.

Manhattan played a key role in the American Revolution. It was designated the new country's temporary capital in 1785, and George Washington assumed the presidency there in 1789. The city's excellent natural harbor led to its increasing importance, as it became a commercial shipping center and a major port of entry for immigrants. By 1800, the city's population had swelled to 60,000—more than any other city in the U.S.

The area around Manhattan grew at the same time, of course. With the completion of bridges that spanned the area waterways (the Brooklyn Bridge was the first in 1883), the door was opened for the creation of today's five-borough New York City. The union of Manhattan with Brooklyn, Queens, The Bronx and Staten Island in 1898 made it a metropolis—an engine that would lead the continent and the world in such diverse realms as finance, banking, shipping, advertising, art, theater, media, garment and other manufacturing, and, of course, tourism.

Of course, the city has faced its share of adversity. Traffic jams, crime and pollution are all persistent issues, though most New Yorkers will be quick to point out that the city is a good bit safer than it was even 15 years ago—and if you happen to come across a photo of New York subways in the 1970s-80s, today's absence of graffiti will seem like a shock.

The 2001 terrorist attacks caused profound trauma to New York. A memorial at the site—and ones at firehouses and other locations throughout the city—serve to remind families, friends and New Yorkers of the human cost. In 2012, Hurricane Sandy caused considerable destruction across the region, flooding nearly one-fifth of the city and damaging more than 150,000 homes. The city has showed its resiliency and has now completed over US\$1 billion worth of recovery efforts. Most of the restaurants and buildings that had been closed have opened their doors again, although parts of Manhattan's South Street Seaport, especially the Pier 17 shopping district, were damaged beyond repair. (The historic ships and the interactive exhibits have reopened.) The Howard Hughes Corporation announced a controversial plan in late 2013 to tear down Pier 17 and build a new shopping district there by 2015.

Port Information

Location

The modern and comfortable Manhattan Cruise Terminal on Manhattan's West Side handles as many as five cruise ships at once at piers 88-94. There is easy access from the West Side Highway (12th Avenue) by car, taxi or bus. Each pier is equipped with rooftop parking, a snack bar, waiting area, phones, taxi stand, public bus stop, tour-bus stop and complete customs processing. Phone 212-246-5450. <http://www.nycruise.com>.

The pier area (12th Avenue, 48th-55th streets) is strictly a place to get on and off your ship, as this far West Side neighborhood does not lend itself to walking. Twelfth Avenue itself is a wide, multilane boulevard that is normally heavy with traffic. However, Manhattan Waterfront Greenway, a bicycle and pedestrian path, does run along the Manhattan shore. If you arrive in the city by ship, don't fear: Most of the city's sights, including Fifth Avenue, the Theater District and Times Square, are only a short cab ride away.

Many ships, including the elegant Queens of the Cunard Lines, now dock at the Brooklyn Cruise Terminal at Pier 12 in Red Hook, a slowly developing but newly trendy neighborhood. There is a convenient and secure outdoor parking lot a short walk away (US\$23 overnight, US\$20 per day thereafter). Taxis and authorized town-car services are available; it's about US\$51 to midtown Manhattan. Some cruise lines also provide bus transportation. Within a few minutes' walk from the terminal, there are two city bus lines: the B77 and the B61. With either line, it is a short ride to subway stations, and then a quick trip into Manhattan. These are fairly straightforward connections, but it is worth having a map or asking directions at the terminal.

Though this Brooklyn terminal is smaller (it services one ship at a time), it has plenty of amenities for travelers—an on-site food truck, vending machines, ample seating and climate control. Bowne and Imlay Streets, Brooklyn. <http://www.nycruise.com>.

Potpourri

New York City has 840 mi/1,352 km of subway track and 1,745 mi/2,808 km of bus routes.

Manhattan comes from the Delaware Indian name Man-a-hat-ta, meaning "island of the hills."

Up until World War II, 1 May was specified by New York law as the city's "moving day," as all leases in the city expired on that date. "May Day" became the delight of many 19th- and early-20th-century illustrators, who captured the chaotic frenzy and gridlocked streets to humorous effect.

Macy's Department Store is the world's largest store, with 2.1 million sq ft/195,096 sq m of storage and shopping space. It is also the world's second-largest consumer of helium (for balloons in the Thanksgiving Day parade), after the U.S. government.

The far eastern corner of the East Village is also known as Alphabet City because the avenues east of First Avenue are named avenues A, B, C and D.

Aretha Franklin, Lauryn Hill, James Brown and Ella Fitzgerald are past winners of Apollo Theater's Amateur Night—but Luther Vandross was booed off the stage four times before his career took off.

The site where the United Nations headquarters sits today was a slaughterhouse until the late 1940s. The Tudor City complex, across First Avenue, has few windows facing the United Nations because when the buildings were completed in 1928, there were still slaughterhouses to the east.

Nearly 30 men perished in the building of the Brooklyn Bridge, including designer John Roebling, who suffered what was ultimately a fatal accident during the sinking of the bridge's western support.

See & Do

Sightseeing

There's more to see in New York City than ever before, and all five of the city's boroughs have things to offer.

Manhattan still reigns supreme in terms of tourist attractions. Beginning at the southern tip of the island, near the financial district and Wall Street, you can hop a free ride on the Staten Island Ferry. The chunky orange boats offer views of the city as well as the Statue of Liberty. Although many tourists simply get right back on the boat for the return trip, Staten Island offers centuries of architecture to admire, great museums, minor-league baseball, lush parks to stroll through and spectacular views of the Manhattan skyline.

You can take a trip to Ellis and Liberty islands for tours of the city's original immigration center and the Statue of Liberty. Note that the Ellis Island Immigration Center, which temporarily closed after being damaged in Hurricane Sandy, has reopened, although parts of the island continue to undergo restoration. While downtown, many visitors pay their respects at the National September 11 Memorial and Museum that opened on the 10th anniversary of the 2001 terror attacks.

Also in the area are the venerable Brooklyn Bridge, which enters Downtown on the southeast side of the island, and two striking, if lesser known, sites—the African Burial Ground National Monument and the Irish Hunger Memorial. A little farther north, spend at least one afternoon strolling the streets of SoHo to

admire the art galleries and upscale boutiques, or explore Greenwich Village for excellent cafes and restaurants.

East of SoHo and the Village are the East Village and the Lower East Side. Once a first stop for poor immigrants and crammed with crowded tenements, small shops and warehouses, the area is now home to chic restaurants and boutiques and some of the city's coolest nightclubs, bars and music venues.

In Midtown, the heart of the city, pay a visit to Grand Central Terminal (be sure to look up at the magnificent arched ceiling, decorated with images of the constellations of the zodiac). Walk through Rockefeller Center. Join the throngs gawking at the huge neon signs of Times Square (most impressive at night). If you're traveling with kids, catch a ride through the air on the massive Ferris wheel inside Toys "R" Us. Great museum choices in Midtown include the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and the Paley Center for Media.

Uptown you'll find Central Park, where there are green meadows, grand rock formations, lakes, the carousel and the Central Park Wildlife Center (better known as "the Zoo"). Many of the city's best museums flank Central Park, along Fifth Avenue and Central Park West. We highly recommend seeing at least some of the enormous, all-encompassing collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art; modern art at the Guggenheim; and bones, fossils and planets at the American Museum of Natural History and its Rose Center for Earth & Space.

Farther north is Harlem, with the historic African-American neighborhoods that nurtured the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s, as well as walking tours, gospel brunches and several worthwhile museums. At the northern tip of Manhattan is the Cloisters, a building constructed from sections of several European monasteries and containing unique treasures from the Metropolitan Museum of Art's medieval collections.

Across the Harlem River above Manhattan, the city's northernmost borough, The Bronx, has several enclaves worth exploring—including the New York Botanical Garden and the "other" Little Italy—located along Belmont and Arthur avenues just south of Fordham Road. The Bronx Zoo is a great place to take children. The Yankees earned their nickname "Bronx Bombers" from the venerable Yankee Stadium, "the house that Ruth built," which was replaced by a new stadium right next door in 2009.

Brooklyn, across the East River from Downtown, has changed in recent years—some areas have become as popular and chic as Manhattan. Baby boomers in search of more affordable housing moved across the Brooklyn Bridge to the elegant brownstone neighborhoods of Park Slope, Cobble Hill and Brooklyn Heights, while younger artists and musicians headed for lofts and rehabbed industrial spaces in Williamsburg and DUMBO ("Down Under the Manhattan Bridge Overpass"). Williamsburg, especially, has become a bohemian hot spot, boasting some of the city's most interesting up-and-coming art galleries, music venues and boutiques—with many places starting to open in Bushwick, just to the east, as well.

The borough is home to the beautiful Brooklyn Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Brooklyn Academy of Music (or BAM), Prospect Park (which houses a small zoo), and the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Arch. Many consider Prospect Park as fine as Central Park—though on a less grand scale. Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux designed both parks in the 19th century.

North of Brooklyn and just across the East River from Midtown, Queens has neighborhoods full of historic houses, amazing ethnic restaurants and a plethora of intriguing museums, such as P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, the Museum of the Moving Image (a must-see for movie buffs) and The Isamu Noguchi Sculpture Museum. The Mets call Citi Field home, and the U.S. Open is held late every summer at the Arthur Ashe Stadium of the USTA Billy Jean King National Tennis Center.

Historic Sites

African Burial Ground National Monument

290 Broadway (the memorial is around the corner on Duane Street; subway line 4, 5 or 6 to Brooklyn Bridge; R to City Hall; or J or Z to Chambers Street)
New York, NY

Phone: 212-637-2019

<http://www.nps.gov/afbg>

During the decade between the 1690s to the 1790s, some 15,000 free and enslaved Africans were buried in a 6.6-acre/2.7-hectare burial ground that was outside the then-boundaries of New Amsterdam, as New York City originally was called. The grounds were rediscovered in 1991 when construction began on a federal office building in lower Manhattan. In 2006, a portion of the burial ground was designated a National Monument. The memorial has seven elements, including a Wall of Remembrance, a Re-Interment Grove and a Circle of the Diaspora.

Nearby, the visitor center contains exhibits and replica artifacts, shows a 20-minute explanatory film and provides interpretation of commemorative art commissioned for the African Burial Ground.

The outdoor memorial is open Monday-Saturday 9 am-5 pm. Visitor center hours Tuesday-Saturday 10 am-5 pm (winter hours until 4 pm). Closed Sunday and Monday. Free 90-minute walking tours about the African presence in New York upon request. Request in advance by calling 212-637-2019.

Apollo Theater

253 W. 125th St., between Adam Clayton Powell Jr. and Frederick Douglass boulevards (subway line A, B, C, D, 2 or 3 to 125th Street)
New York, NY

Phone: 212-531-5300 or 212-531-5337 for tours

<https://www.apollotheater.org/programs/tours>

Harlem's longest-running theater, the Apollo, is where Billie Holiday and Ella Fitzgerald (among others) got their starts. The landmark theater hosts concerts by known stars, as well as offering newer artists a chance during the long-standing (since 1934) Amateur Night, held every Wednesday. One-hour tours are offered for groups of 20 or more by appointment (call several months in advance) Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday at 11 am, and 1 and 3 pm; Wednesday at 11 am only; Saturday and Sunday at 11 am and 1 pm, but you may join a tour on your own if there's room.

Box office and gift shop open Monday-Friday 10 am-6 pm, Saturday noon-5 pm. Tours cost US\$16 per person Monday-Friday, US\$18 Saturday and Sunday. US\$2 discount for groups of 20 or more.

Brooklyn Bridge

New York, NY 11201

http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/bridges/brooklyn_bridge.shtml

When it was completed in 1883, the Brooklyn Bridge was the world's longest suspension bridge, the city's tallest structure and the first bridge to be lighted using electricity. A muscular giant of stone and steel linking Manhattan and Brooklyn, this engineering marvel took 13 years to build. The bridge makes a wonderfully scenic place for a stroll or a bike ride, offering stellar views of both boroughs. Adhere to the pedestrian lanes if you are walking, as bikers are outspoken when their lane is blocked. Plaques posted along the walkway relate the bridge's history.

The Manhattan side is near the Brooklyn Bridge-City Hall subway station (subway lines 4, 5 or 6) or the Chambers Street station (lines J or Z). The Brooklyn end is near the Clark Street station on subway line 2 or 3; or the High Street station on subway line A or C.

http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/bridges/brooklyn_bridge.shtml.

Carnegie Hall

154 W. 57th St., at Seventh Avenue (subway line A, B, C, D or 1 to 59th Street-Columbus Circle; N, Q or R to 57th Street; F to 57th Street-Seventh Avenue)

New York, NY 10019

Phone: 212-247-7800. For tour updates, call 212-903-9765

<http://www.carnegiehall.org>

Ever since Tchaikovsky presided over the neo-Renaissance structure's 1891 debut, Carnegie Hall has been the best-known concert venue in the U.S. Comprising three halls, it's primarily a classical music venue, showcasing the greatest soloists and orchestras in the world. The big names fill the main Isaac Stern Auditorium, and younger artists may debut in the facility's Weill Recital Hall. Jazz and new music are often featured in the underground Zankel Hall, which opened in 2003.

The Rose Museum, which has exhibits of the hall's history and archival treasures, is open daily 11 am-4:30 pm (admission is free; closed during summer months, when the hall does not have concerts).

One-hour tours of Carnegie Hall are offered September-June Monday-Friday at 11:30 am, and at 12:30, 2 and 3 pm; Saturday 11:30 am and 12:30 pm; Sunday at 12:30 pm. Tours are US\$10 adults, US\$8 seniors and students, US\$4 children younger than 12. Purchase tickets at the box office starting at 11 am Monday-Saturday and at noon on Sunday (no advance reservations needed except for groups of 20 or more).

Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine

1047 Amsterdam Ave., at 112th Street (subway line 1 to 110th Street-Cathedral Parkway)

New York, NY 10025

Phone: 212-316-7540 for general information, 212-932-7347 for tours

<http://www.stjohndivine.org>

A religious building project on par with the medieval cathedrals, St. John the Divine is the largest Gothic Revival cathedral in the world. Construction began in 1892, and it *still* isn't finished. Stone carvers are often repairing the structure. The church is the seat of the bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of New York. Inside you'll find priceless tapestries by Barberini. Guided tours take you through the cathedral's ins and outs and explain the history and architecture of this great space. The cathedral hosts concerts and other events throughout the year.

Services daily, open to visitors 7:30 am-6 pm. Tours are held Monday at 11 am and 2 pm, Tuesday-Saturday at 11 am and 1 pm. The standard tour is US\$6 adults, US\$5 seniors and students. One-hour "Vertical Tours," in which visitors climb spiral stone staircases to the top of the cathedral, are offered Wednesday at noon, and Saturday at noon and 2 pm. From there, you stand on a buttress, and the nave's grandeur is revealed. Then visitors move to the roof for spectacular city views. Cost is US\$15 adults, US\$12 seniors and students. Reservations are recommended, and visitors are asked to take a flashlight. Space is limited to 20 people age 12 and older. Additional special tours are frequently offered, usually on Saturday and Sunday; check the website for details. Entrance to the cathedral is free.

Chrysler Building

405 Lexington Ave., at 42nd Street (subway line S, 4, 5, 6 or 7 to 42nd Street-Grand Central)
New York, NY 10017

This iconic art-deco structure, completed in 1929, is one of the most elegant skyscrapers in New York. A decorative eagle head juts out near the summit, and the building's pinnacle resembles a gleaming modernist crown—all crafted by hand in chrome-nickel steel. Though you can't ride to the top, you can get a great look at its elegant profile from the observation deck of the nearby Empire State Building. The beautiful lobby is also worth checking out.

City Hall

250 Broadway (subway line J or Z to Chambers Street; 4, 5 or 6 to Brooklyn Bridge-City Hall; R to City Hall; 2 or 3 to Park Place)
New York, NY 10007

Phone: 212-788-2656

http://www.nyc.gov/html/artcom/html/tours/reserve_tour.shtml

Built between 1803 and 1812 in Federal style, and the oldest such structure in the U.S. that remains home to its original purpose, City Hall features a number of pleasing architectural details, including a dome and cupola. The interior houses the mayor's office and the city council, as well as a permanent art and history collection. At the northern end of City Hall Park, you'll find the stunning Tweed Courthouse, built in 1870 by the notorious "Boss" Tweed—construction costs were originally budgeted at US\$250,000 but ballooned to more than US\$14 million. You'll find the entrance to the pedestrian ramp of the Brooklyn Bridge there, too.

Tours of City Hall are offered for individuals Thursday at 10 am; group tours are available Monday-Wednesday at 10:30 am. A first-come, first-served City Hall tour, limited to 20 people, is offered Wednesday at noon. Sign up at the tour kiosk 9-11:45 am the day of the tour. Tweed Courthouse tours for individuals are offered on select Fridays at noon; group tours are given Tuesday at 10 am. Tours are free; reservations are necessary and may be made online. Tours may not run on or around holidays.

Eldridge Street Synagogue/Museum at Eldridge Street

12 Eldridge St. (subway line B or D to Grand Street; F to East Broadway)
New York, NY

Phone: 212-219-0302

<http://www.eldridgestreet.org>

Built in 1887, this synagogue was the first major place of worship for the massive Jewish immigrant community on the Lower East Side. Today, the area is home to many Asian immigrants, and Eldridge Street itself offers a fascinating glimpse of the ever-changing and absorbing nature of the American immigrant experience.

The building has been restored and reopened to the public as the Museum at Eldridge Street.

Tours are offered every hour Sunday-Thursday 10 am-5 pm and Friday 10 am-3 pm. US\$10 adults, US\$8 students and seniors, US\$6 children ages 5-18, free for children younger than 5. Free tours are offered Monday every hour 10 am-5 pm.

Ellis Island National Monument

(You can get to Battery Park by subway line N or R to Whitehall Street; 4 or 5 to Bowling Green; 1 to South Ferry)
New York, NY

Phone: 212-363-3200 for park information. Toll-free 877-523-9849 for ferry information

<http://www.nps.gov/elis>

Note: Ellis Island is open on a limited basis because of damage from Hurricane Sandy. Some exhibits remain closed but it is expected to fully reopen by the end of 2014.

Ellis Island was the gateway through which more than 12 million immigrants passed between 1892 and 1954. The Ellis Island Immigration Museum is housed in the old immigration station and ranks as perhaps the city's No. 1 must-see tourist site. In addition to seeing the building itself, you can view hundreds of photos of immigrants and exhibits of items they brought with them to the U.S.

In the Oscar-winning 30-minute film *Island of Hope, Island of Tears*, immigrants tell their stories of pulling up roots and going to America. The audio tour tells the stories of immigrants in their own words. Check at the information desk for tickets as well as film and performance schedules.

The American Immigrant Wall of Honor commemorates more than 600,420 first-generation Americans. Computers inside the museum allow you to see if your last name appears anywhere on the wall. You can also search ships' manifest records for your ancestors. If your search is successful, you'll get a reproduction of the original manifest along with a picture of the ship of passage.

You can get to Ellis Island only via the Statue of Liberty ferry, which sails from Battery Park about every 45 minutes (<http://www.statuecruises.com>). Be prepared for tight security measures, including airport-style X-ray machines and metal detectors, and for long lines to access the ferry during weekends and peak tourist seasons.

Reserve tickets, good for reaching Ellis Island and Liberty Island, may be ordered ahead of time at the ferry service website; advance purchase is recommended to avoid ferry lines. A Flex Ticket allows unreserved entry anytime during a three-day period.

The monument is open daily 9:30 am-5:15 pm (closed Christmas Day); hours are extended during peak seasons, so check the website for updates. The last ferry leaves Manhattan for the island at 2 pm. Admission is free, but there are separate fees for the audio tour (US\$8 adults, US\$7.25 seniors and children) and performance (US\$6 adults). The ferry ride costs US\$18 adults, US\$14 seniors, US\$9 children ages 4-12, free for children younger than 4. Note that the ferry ticket fee also includes the audio tour.

Empire State Building

350 Fifth Ave., at 34th Street (subway line B, D, F, N, Q, R, 1, 2 or 3 to 34th Street)
New York, NY

Phone: 212-736-3100. Toll-free 877-692-8439

<http://www.esbnyc.com>

This quintessential New York landmark was once the tallest building in the world and the tallest in the city—but the newly-opened 1 World Trade Center tower now holds that title. From the 86th-floor Main Observation Deck of the Empire State Building, you have the best view of other enduring landmarks, such as the Chrysler Building and the Brooklyn Bridge. Try to go at night, when the view is absolutely spellbinding and the lines for the elevators are a bit shorter (though you should expect a wait even then).

There are actually three different lines to wait on—security, ticket and elevator; prepurchasing tickets eliminates the ticket-line wait. The 102nd-floor Top Deck Observatory requires an additional ticket (which can be purchased upon arrival or online) in addition to the admission fee. Another attraction in the building is the New York Skyride, a 30-minute flight simulation that makes you feel as if you're soaring over the city—it's a bit hokey but fun to do with kids.

Both observation decks are open daily 8 am-2 am (last elevator goes up 45 minutes before closing time). The simulator is in operation daily 8 am-10 pm (phone 212-279-9777;).

Flatiron Building

175 Fifth Ave., at 23rd Street (subway line F, M, N, R or 6 to 23rd Street)
New York, NY 10003

Built in 1902, the much-photographed, 21-story Italian-Renaissance Flatiron Building (officially, the Fuller Building) was, despite local lore, neither the city's first skyscraper nor its first steel-skeleton building. Its wedge-shaped footprint—it's only 6.5 ft/2 m wide at its narrowest point—was designed to fit a triangular piece of land. The interior cannot be toured—it's now the home of publishing firms and offices—but there are many cool shops in the vicinity to make a stop worthwhile.

General Grant National Memorial

122nd Street, at Riverside Drive (subway line 1 to West 116th Street, then walk six blocks north and two blocks west)
New York, NY

Phone: 212-666-1640

<http://www.nps.gov/gegr>

We all know this site as Grant's Tomb, but it's actually a National Memorial operated by the National Park Service. It is the largest tomb in North America and a mausoleum containing the bodies of Civil War general and 18th U.S. President Ulysses S. Grant and his wife, Julia Dent Grant. The building sits well above the Hudson River, and it's also a memorial to Grant's life and accomplishments. The main lobby overlooks a sanctuary in which Grant and his wife are entombed in twin granite sarcophagi.

Busts of Civil War generals William T. Sherman, George H. Thomas, James B. McPherson, Philip H. Sheridan and E.O.C. Ord line the space. There are commemorative mosaic murals and other sculptures—including *Victory* and *Peace* by J. Massey Rhind. Open-air concerts and community activities are offered at the park. Ranger-guided walking tours are offered daily at 11:15 am, and 1:15 and 3:15 pm.

Open Thursday-Monday 9 am-5 pm; the mausoleum opens at 10 am, noon, and 2 and 4 pm, and remains open for one hour each time. Closed Thanksgiving and Christmas Day.

Grand Central Terminal

42nd Street at Park Avenue (subway line S, 4, 5, 6 or 7 to 42nd Street-Grand Central)
New York, NY

Phone: 212-340-3404 for event information

<http://www.grandcentralterminal.com>

One of the busiest train stations in the world, this architectural monument to American transportation was saved from destruction in 1978 by a U.S. Supreme Court decision. Its Renaissance-style architecture creates a strangely peaceful backdrop for the dance of thousands of frenetic commuters. The creamy-rose, Tennessee-marble floors gleam, as do the hundreds of bulbs in the brass chandeliers.

The Sky Ceiling is a heart-stopper: The aquamarine image of the night sky is speckled with tiny lights for stars, and major constellations are outlined in gold. There are more than 68 shops and 35 restaurants, including the famed Grand Central Oyster Bar. Don't miss the Whispering Gallery outside the entrance to the Oyster Bar, where two people standing at opposite corners of the busy gallery can face the corners, whisper and hear one another clearly. The Grand Central Market has vendors selling produce, cheeses, baked goods and gourmet treats from around the world, and is a great place to stock up on food for a picnic in Central Park.

Group tours offered by the Municipal Art Society (flat rate of US\$400 for up to 35 people) must be booked at least two weeks in advance (inquire by e-mail: afarkas@mas.org). The Municipal Art Society conducts 90-minute walking tours on Wednesday at 12:30 pm. They meet at the information booth at the center of the main concourse, and a donation of US\$20 per person is requested (phone 212-935-3960 for information). A self-guided tour is available on the terminal's website, and an audio tour app can be purchased for US\$4.99; a map and directory can be obtained at the information booth on the Main Concourse.

The terminal is open daily 5:30 am-2 am. Hours for shops and restaurants vary.

Irish Hunger Memorial

290 Vesey St., at North End Avenue (subway line E to World Trade Center; 1, 2 or 3 to Chambers Street)
New York, NY

<http://www.batteryparkcity.org/new/Visit/Museums-And-Memorials/Irish-Hunger-Memorial.php>

One of the least known and most surprising Manhattan sites, this 0.25-acre/0.10-hectare memorial was created by artist Brian Tolle to raise awareness of the events that led to the great Irish famine of 1845-62, in which more than 1.5 million people died and millions more left Ireland.

The memorial is elevated on a limestone plinth. Its base is made of frosted glass separated by layers of Kilkenny limestone containing fossils from the ancient Irish seabed. On it, text combines the Great Famine story and contemporary reports on world hunger. A pathway to the top of the area is surrounded by native Irish vegetation and runs past a ruined fieldstone cottage and stone walls, ending at a pilgrim's standing stone.

At the western end, a cantilevered overlook reveals superb views of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, emblematic of America's welcome to the Irish and to all immigrants.

Always open, although the overlook closes after nightfall.

Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts

Columbus Avenue, at 64th Street (subway line 1 to 66th Street-Lincoln Center)
New York, NY

Phone: 212-875-5000 for information, or 212-875-5350 for tours

<http://www.lincolncenter.org>

This large complex, considered America's first performing-arts center, is home to the Metropolitan Opera, the New York City Opera, the Film Society of Lincoln Center, the New York Philharmonic, Jazz at Lincoln Center, the Juilliard School, the School of American Ballet, the American Ballet Theatre and the New York City Ballet.



A dizzying array of performances is presented in the center's numerous theaters and auditoriums, which include Avery Fisher Hall, the Metropolitan Opera House, the Vivian Beaumont Theater, the Mitzi E. Newhouse Theater, the David H. Koch Theater, Alice Tully Hall at the Juilliard School, Frederick P. Rose Hall and the Walter Reade Theater.

In addition, Lincoln Center is jam-packed with special events year-round, including Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week held in February and September. Tours of the center explore its architecture and history and offer behind-the-scenes visits to the Metropolitan Opera House, Avery Fisher Hall and the Koch Theater. Meet-the-artist opportunities and visits to rehearsals-in-progress are also available.

There are free performances on Thursday at 7:30 pm, as well as free performance and question-and-answer sessions with artists on the first Saturday of each month at 11 am. There are several dining options, including the acclaimed Italian restaurant Lincoln, in a dramatic setting next to the center's reflecting pool.

Tours are available Monday-Saturday 10:30 am-4:30 pm (flexible scheduling and discounts for groups) and Sunday noon-4:30 pm. Check the website for exact times when you make reservations, as the tour schedule varies. Reservations recommended. Tours are US\$18 adults, US\$15 students under 30 with valid ID, US\$8 children ages 6-12.

New York Public Library

Fifth Avenue, between 40th and 42nd streets (subway line B, D, F or M to 42nd Street-Bryant Park; 7 to Fifth Avenue)
New York, NY 10018

Phone: 917-275-6975

<http://www.nypl.org/locations/schwarzman>

The New York Public Library system is more than just one of the world's great research libraries. Its two-block-long main branch (in the Stephen A. Schwarzman building) lures residents and visitors alike with its two stone lion mascots (dubbed Patience and Fortitude by the late Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia, and familiar from the movie *Ghostbusters*), and its beautiful beaux-arts facade, grand entrance hall, changing exhibits and 132 mi/213 km of shelves. The Main Reading Room stretches the length of a football field.

The library's 15 million items, including rare illuminated manuscripts, can be used in the reading rooms—but no books leave the premises. Bags are inspected when you enter and depart. The library shop is one of the best places to find good New York souvenirs, as well as books about the city.

Open Monday and Thursday-Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Tuesday and Wednesday 10 am-8 pm, Sunday 1-5 pm (closed on Sunday during the summer). Separate tours of the library and exhibits are offered Monday and Saturday at 11 am and 2 pm, Sunday at 2 pm.

New York Stock Exchange

20 Broad St., between Wall Street and Exchange Place (subway line J or Z to Broad Street; 2, 3, 4 or 5 to Wall Street)

New York, NY 10005

Phone: 212-656-3000

<http://www.nyse.com>

The beginnings of the New York Stock Exchange are rooted in the agreement among 24 brokers who decided in 1792 to trade securities only among themselves. The pledge they signed, called the

Buttonwood Agreement, was named for their meeting place under a buttonwood tree that faced 68 Wall St. The exchange no longer offers public tours, but the imposing facade is worth viewing.

Radio City Music Hall

1260 Sixth Ave., at 50th Street (subway line B, D, F or M to 47th-50th Streets-Rockefeller Center; N, R or Q to 49th Street)

New York, NY 10020

Phone: 212-247-4777 for general information

<http://www.radiocity.com>

This gorgeously ornate art-deco theater presents just about everything, from the synchronized moves of the Rockettes to pop-music shows and the annual Christmas extravaganza. The Rockette Experience lets dancers age 10 and older take a three-hour master class and mock audition with a real Rockette. Workshop fee is US\$120; observers pay US\$45. For general information, visit <http://www.broadwaydancecenter.com/workshops/rockette/index.shtml>. To reserve a spot, call 212-582-9304.

The one-hour Stage Door tours take you behind the scenes daily 11 am-3 pm, on the half-hour. Tour tickets are US\$24.45 adults, US\$19.50 seniors and children 12 and younger; to purchase tickets in advance, phone 866-858-0008.

Rockefeller Center

Fifth Avenue, from 47th to 52nd streets (subway line B, D, F or M to 47th-50th Streets-Rockefeller Center; N, R or Q to 49th Street)

New York, NY 10017

Phone: 212-332-6868 for general information

<http://www.rockefellercenter.com>

Built in grand style in the 1930s, this massive art-deco complex is perhaps most famous for its annual Christmas tree-lighting ceremony and its ice-skating rink (open October-April—skates available for rental). A 90-minute Art & Observation Tour explores Rockefeller Center's art, architecture and sculpture, finishing with a visit to the observation deck. US\$40 (US\$17 to take the tour without visiting the observation deck). Tours depart daily 10 am-7 pm on the hour except for 6 pm.

The six-level observation deck, Top of the Rock, is open every day 8 am-midnight (last elevator at 11 pm); US\$29 adults, US\$27 seniors, US\$18 children ages 6-12. A Sunrise-Sunset ticket, which allows two visits in one day, is US\$42 adults, US\$24 children. To purchase tour and Top of the Rock tickets, enter on West 50th Street between.

Statue of Liberty

(You can get to Battery Park by subway line N or R to Whitehall Street; 4 or 5 to Bowling Green; 1 to South Ferry.)
New York, NY 10004

Phone: Toll-free 877-523-9849 for ferry information

<http://www.nps.gov/stli>

A universal symbol of freedom and democracy, the Statue of Liberty is located in New York Harbor. Lady Liberty's imposing height (305 ft/93 m) and her symbolic welcome are seen by all who sail past her. Visitors can admire the view from the observation deck (at the statue's toe level), look up inside the statue from below a glass ceiling, and visit a museum chronicling the monument's history and construction.

France donated the Statue of Liberty as a gesture of international friendship to commemorate the centennial of the Declaration of Independence. The interior of the statue was closed after the September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center, but the crown is open for visitors who make a reservation to see it. Liberty Island is open for tours; be aware that extensive security measures are in place on the Statue of Liberty ferry and again on the island.

It is only accessible by the Statue of Liberty ferry, which leaves from Battery Park about every 45 minutes (<http://www.statuecruises.com>). Tours of the Statue of Liberty are free, but you will need advance reservations (called a "Monument Access" pass and given when you reserve your ferry ticket). Reserve tickets, good for reaching Ellis Island and Liberty Island, may be ordered ahead of time at the ferry service website; advance purchase is recommended to avoid ferry lines. A Flex Ticket allows unreserved entry any time during a three-day period.

The ferry costs US\$18 adults, US\$17 seniors, US\$9 children ages 4-12.

The statue is open daily 9:30 am-5 pm (with extended hours in peak seasons). The last ferry to the island sails from Manhattan at 2 pm.

St. Patrick's Cathedral

Fifth Avenue, between 50th and 51st streets (subway line B, D, F or M to 47th-50th Streets-Rockefeller Center; E to Fifth Avenue-53rd Street)
New York, NY 10022

Phone: 212-753-2261

<http://www.saintpatrickscathedral.org>

St. Patrick's Cathedral is the seat of the Roman Catholic archdiocese of New York. The nave of this enormous, ornate, Gothic-style building opened in 1879, and construction was completed in 1931. It now seats 2,200 people. The cathedral was designed by architect James Renwick Jr., and the St. Michael and St. Louis altars were made by Tiffany & Co. The soaring columns, brilliant stained-glass windows—including the dramatic rose window over the west entrance—and sculptures are breathtaking.

The cathedral hosts a variety of organ and choral concerts, and walk-in tours are offered—usually at 10 am, but the day varies. Visit the cathedral website for an event schedule.

Daily 6:30 am-8:45 pm.

St. Paul's Chapel

209 Broadway (subway line A, C, J, Z, 2, 3, 4 or 5 to Fulton Street-Broadway-Nassau; E to World Trade Center; R to City Hall; 6 to Brooklyn Bridge-City Hall)
New York, NY

Phone: 212-233-4164

<http://www.trinitywallstreet.org/congregation/spc>

St. Paul's Chapel is part of Trinity Church, and it resembles London's St. Martin-in-the-Fields in its Georgian-classical-revival style. Erected in 1766, it is the oldest surviving public structure in Manhattan and has witnessed many historic events. George Washington worshipped there on his inauguration day in 1789 and attended services there for the two years that New York was the national capital. Other notable worshippers have included King William IV of England and U.S. presidents Grover Cleveland and Benjamin Harrison.



Following 9/11, the chapel served as a round-the-clock ministry for World Trade Center rescue workers for more than eight months. An exhibit documents the Ground Zero relief efforts. There is a labyrinth available for the public to walk; call ahead to be sure it's open.

Chapel open Monday-Saturday 10 am-6 pm (gift shop closes at 4:45 pm), Sunday 7 am-9 pm.

Temple Emanu-El

1 E. 65th St., at Fifth Avenue (subway line N or R to Fifth Avenue-59th Street; F to 63rd Street-Lexington Avenue; 6 to 68th Street)

New York, NY 10021

Phone: 212-744-1400

<http://www.emanuelnyc.org>

Built in 1929, this Moorish-Romanesque temple with its vaulted roof is one of the largest synagogues in the world. The 2,500-seat sanctuary has a marvelous bronze ark in the shape of a Torah scroll, decorated in spectacular mosaics. Be sure to note the radiant stained-glass windows, one of which is an original designed by Louis Comfort Tiffany. The temple regularly hosts concerts and lectures. Free tours for groups of 10 or more are offered at 10:30 am Sunday-Thursday, after morning services. To sign up for a tour, fill out the form on the website.

The temple also houses the Herbert and Eileen Bernard Museum of Judaica, open Sunday-Thursday 10 am-4:30 pm; free admission.

The United Nations

First Avenue, at 46th Street (subway line S, 4, 5, 6 or 7 to 42nd Street-Grand Central)

New York, NY 10017

Phone: 212-963-8687

<http://visit.un.org>

The U.N. headquarters houses the world's largest international governmental organization, and its three connecting buildings were designed by an international team of architects. The boxy Dag Hammarskjold Library, the glass-walled Secretariat tower and the low-slung General Assembly dominate the site, which is considered international territory. The colorful flags from nearly 200 countries flying along First Avenue are one of New York's best photo ops. There is also a bookshop.

Forty-five-minute guided tours are offered every half-hour Monday-Friday 9:45 am-4:45 pm, Saturday and Sunday 10 am-4:15 pm. Reservations are required for groups of 15 or more. Note that the UN is closed on several U.S. holidays, and on certain international holidays. Call ahead for hours. Tours cost US\$18 adults, US\$11 for seniors and students, US\$9 children ages 5-12. Children younger than age 5 are not permitted on tours. Credit cards not accepted.

Trinity Church

74 Trinity Place, near the corner of Broadway and Wall Street (subway line R or 1 to Rector Street; 2, 3, 4 or 5 to Wall Street; J or Z to Broad Street)

New York, NY 10006

Phone: 212-602-0800

<http://www.trinitywallstreet.org>

The first Trinity Church, built in 1698, was once considered the tallest building in the colonies. After fires destroyed the two previous churches on the site, Richard Upjohn built the current structure in 1846—it includes flying buttresses, vaulted ceilings and doors modeled after Ghiberti's bronze Gates of Paradise on the Baptistery in Florence, Italy.

The original burial ground includes the graves of many historic figures, including Alexander Hamilton. The church's museum has a permanent collection of historical documents and artifacts. Special exhibitions give you a sense of what life was like during the American Revolution, the Civil War and even the turbulent 1960s.

Open Monday-Friday 7 am-6 pm, Saturday 8 am-4 pm, Sunday 7 am-4 pm. Hours of worship services vary. Free guided tours Monday-Friday at 2 pm, Sunday following the 11:15 am service. For groups, guided tours by the head verger are also available by appointment (phone 212-602-0756 or 212-602-0872). Trinity churchyard hours are Monday-Saturday 10 am-4 pm (until 5 pm mid-March to early November), Sunday 7 am-3 pm. Trinity Choir performs a regular concert schedule.

World Trade Center Site and National September 11 Memorial and Museum

1 Albany St., at Greenwich Street (subway line 4, 5, J or Z to Fulton Street; A or C to Broadway-Nassau; E to Chambers Street; 2 or 3 to Park Place; R to City Hall)

New York, NY

Phone: 212-266-5211

<http://www.911memorial.org>

The tall, wire-mesh fence is being dismantled around much of the Memorial Plaza, which means, for the first time in 13 years, pedestrians can cross West Street and be connected to the World Trade Center Site from Battery Park Plaza. Liberty Street's has come down as well, while fencing will remain on Fulton Street as long as it's still an active construction site.

Much of the surrounding area is back to normal, with street vendors around the main site doing brisk business selling T-shirts, flags and other souvenir memorabilia. The overall plan for the new buildings at the site was selected after extensive debate and publicity. There will be five buildings that comprise the new World Trade Center plaza, with 1 World Trade Center (also known as the Freedom Tower) as the centerpiece. It completed construction in the spring of 2014. A slender structure made of glass and steel, it twists as it rises from the ground and is topped with a distinctive spire. At 1,776 feet in height (designed to reflect the year of the country's independence), it is the tallest building in the Western Hemisphere. It has already become a dominant feature of the New York skyline. <http://www.wtc.com/about/freedom-tower>.

The National September 11 Memorial, which has pools sunk in the footprints of the Twin Towers, is a moving display of national grief and a tribute to the nearly 3,000 people who lost their lives in the 2001 attacks and the six people who perished in the buildings' 1993 bombing. (You can leave mementos or flowers in front of the Memorial pools.)



The National September 11 Museum opened in May 2014 and presents exhibits about the events that happened on that day in 2001 at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon in Northern Virginia, and in the plane crash in rural Pennsylvania. The museum's design leads visitors seven stories underground, beneath the memorial basins to the building's very bedrock, which has become known as Ground Zero, and contains unidentified human remains. One exhibition retraces the day's events as they unfolded. Another displays objects belonging to the victims, airplane fragments, memorial items left on-site after the attacks, equipment used in the search and rescue efforts, and more.

The museum has been surrounded with controversy since its very beginning, with the harshest criticism directed at the opening of a gift shop on-site and plans for a cafe. Detractors say commercial ventures should not take place on the same location as the burial ground. Museum officials have responded by pulling the most egregious merchandise from the shop's shelves. The cafe's operator, famed chef Danny Meyer, promises the cafe will be a place for rest and reflection and will feature a "subdued, seasonal, mostly vegetarian menu."

Memorial open daily 8:30 am-8:30 pm. The Museum is open daily 9 am-8 pm, with last entry at 7 pm (until 8 pm with last entry at 6 pm from late September-December). The Memorial is free. General admission to the museum is US\$24 adults, US\$18 seniors, U.S. veterans and college students, US\$15 ages 7-17. Admission with hour-long guided tours is US\$42 adults, US\$36 seniors, U.S. veterans and college students, US\$33 ages 7-17. There is a US\$2 service fee for tickets. Free admission Tuesday 5 pm-8 pm. There are a limited number of tickets available each month, so you must book your tickets in advance on the website and select the time you wish to visit.

Museums

You'll find world-class museums in all five boroughs, but make time for the stretch of Fifth Avenue on Manhattan's Upper East Side known as Museum Mile. It's home to a group of top choices, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, the Frick Collection, the Jewish Museum, the Neue Gallerie New York, Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, El Museo del Barrio and the Museum of the City of New York.

Every June, nine museums host the Museum Mile Festival from 85th to 104th streets. Fifth Avenue closes to traffic, and live bands and musicians play everything from jazz to Broadway tunes. Outdoor art activities for children, mapmaking at the Museum of the City of New York, figure-painting at the Cooper-Hewitt and chalk-drawing in the streets combine in an explosion of public art. For more information, visit <http://www.museummilefestival.org>.

Museums inspect many items carried by visitors. Most do not allow luggage, large backpacks or laptops in their galleries and will not store such items in their coat checks. Strollers and wheelchairs are usually allowed; some museums may provide wheelchairs. Some museums may allow photography, though usually only with the flash turned off; ask before taking pictures.

American Folk Art Museum

2 Lincoln Square; Columbus Avenue at 66th Street (subway line 1 to 66th Street-Lincoln Center; A, B or C to 72nd Street)

New York, NY 10019

Phone: 212-265-1040

<http://www.folkartmuseum.org>

You don't need to be a lover of folk art to appreciate this museum. Its angular, metal-panel facade is a striking presence on 53rd Street, and the building's interior is noteworthy, too. Much of what's on display

came from the collector Ralph Esmerian, who specialized in works that draw upon European craft traditions. The book-and-gift shop offers a selection of fine crafts.

Open Tuesday-Thursday 11:30-7:30 pm, Friday noon-7:30 pm, Saturday 11:30-7 pm. Free.

American Museum of Natural History/Rose Center for Earth & Space

Central Park West, at 79th Street (subway line B or C to 81st Street-Museum of Natural History)
New York, NY

Phone: 212-769-5100

<http://www.amnh.org>

The Museum of Natural History is best known for having the largest collection of dinosaur fossils and skeletons in the world. The Dinosaur Hall is everyone's favorite, and visitors can learn more about dinosaurs through interactive computers that are part of the exhibits. Elsewhere, there are informative exhibits of early Asian, Mexican and precolonial North American life. In the Discovery Room, young visitors can hunt for hidden creatures in a two-story replica of an African baobab tree filled with tropical birds, insects, reptiles and small mammals. Suggested admission to the museum is US\$22 adults, US\$17 seniors and students, US\$12.50 children age 12 and younger. Open daily 10 am-5:45 pm.

The Rose Center for Earth & Space, which includes the Hayden Planetarium, is stunning: a giant metallic orb 87 ft/27 m in diameter, enclosed within a huge, nine-story-high glass structure. In the Space Theater, see a show that takes you on an exhilarating trip through space and time. Shows are every half-hour Monday-Friday 10:30 am-4:30 pm (except Wednesday when the first show is at 11 am), Saturday and Sunday 10:30 am-5 pm.

Admission to the Rose Center is included with a museum ticket, but additional fees are charged for the Space Theater and IMAX films.

Brooklyn Museum

200 Eastern Parkway, at Washington Avenue (subway line 2 or 3 to Eastern Parkway-Brooklyn Museum)
New York, NY 11238

Phone: 718-638-5000

<http://www.brooklynmuseum.org>

The city's second-largest museum is housed in an impressive beaux-arts building just a block from the Brooklyn Botanic Gardens and Prospect Park. Its Egyptian, African and Native American collections are some of its strongest points, and it also exhibits significant works by John Singer Sargent, Winslow Homer, Claude Monet and Edgar Degas. Don't miss the Rodin sculpture gallery. There are also exceptional holdings in American fine and decorative arts from the colonial era to the present. The Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art includes a permanent display of Judy Chicago's ceramic work *The Dinner Party*.

Open Wednesday and Friday-Sunday 11 am-6 pm, Thursday 11 am-10 pm. On the first Saturday of each month, the museum remains open until 11 pm, with free admission after 5 pm. Suggested donation US\$12 adults, US\$8 seniors and students, free for children younger than 12. Additional fees for special exhibitions. An Art & Garden Ticket allows entry to the museum and the Brooklyn Botanic Gardens; US\$20 adults, US\$11 seniors and students.

Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum

First Avenue between 45th and 46th streets (subway line S, 4, 5, 6 or 7 to 42nd Street-Grand Central)
New York, NY 10128

Phone: 212-849-8400

<http://www.cooperhewitt.org>

Housed in the beautiful Andrew Carnegie Mansion, this branch of the Smithsonian Institution is devoted to historic and contemporary design. Its collection of decorative textiles, porcelain and wallpaper traces the development of design through the centuries. *Note:* The galleries at 91st Street and Fifth Avenue are closed for renovations until fall 2014. All exhibits are being shown at the visitors center of the United Nations building at First Avenue and 46th Street.

Open Monday-Friday 9 am-5:30 pm (last admission 4:45 pm), Saturday and Sunday 9:30 am-5:30 pm (last admission 4:45 pm). US\$15 adults, US\$10 students and seniors, free for children younger than 12.

El Museo del Barrio

1230 Fifth Ave., at 104th Street (subway line 6 to 103rd Street)
New York, NY

Phone: 212-831-7272

<http://www.elmuseo.org>

This museum, founded in 1969, is about 20 blocks north on Fifth Avenue from the Metropolitan Museum of Art and is a collection of Latin American art including sculpture, painting and photography. It offers special programs including films and performances.

Open Tuesday-Saturday 11 am-6 pm. Suggested admission is US\$9 adults, US\$5 seniors and students, free for children younger than 12; free for seniors on Wednesday. Free every third Saturday.

Federal Reserve of New York

33 Liberty Street (subway line A, C or J to Fulton Street)
New York, NY

Phone: 212-720-5000

<http://www.newyorkfed.org/aboutthefed/visiting.html>

Unlike in Washington D.C., you can't see money being printed there. But you can tour a vault 80 ft/24 m below ground, where 6,700 tons of gold bars are stored (multiply that by the value per ounce of gold, and you'll understand its enormous value). This is—quite literally—about 25% of the reserves of the world's gold. There is also an exhibit of rare and precious coins. Guided tours are required and last about an hour. Reservations are recommended up to a month in advance; fill out your request (including all of the names of individuals in your group) online. Arrive 30 minutes before your scheduled tour to allow time for security.

Tours are available September-May Monday-Friday at 1 pm and 2 pm. June-August, tours are available at 10 am, 1 pm and 2 pm.

Fisher Landau Center for Art

38-27 30th Street, Long Island City (subway line N or Q to 39th Avenue)
New York, NY

Phone: 718-937-0727

<http://www.flcart.org>

The center houses an intriguing and diverse contemporary art collection, as well as innovative temporary exhibitions—and, along with P.S. 1, provides an anchor to the emerging Long Island City art scene.

Thursday-Monday noon-5 pm. Free admission.

Frick Collection

1 E. 70th St., at Fifth Avenue (subway line 6 to 68th Street-Hunter College)
New York, NY 10021

Phone: 212-288-0700

<http://www.frick.org>

The 1910 mansion of U.S. industrialist Henry Frick faces Central Park and is now a museum that houses his stunning collection of 14th- to 19th-century European paintings, objets d'art and furniture. It includes Holbein's *Sir Thomas More* and Degas' *The Rehearsal*, as well as paintings by Goya, Vermeer and others. The courtyard, with its fountain, ivy and stone benches, is a fine place to rest.

Open Tuesday-Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Sunday 11 am-5 pm. US\$20 adults, US\$15 seniors, US\$10 students. Children ages 10-16 admitted only with adult; children younger than 10 not admitted.

International Center of Photography Museum

1133 Sixth Ave., at 43rd Street (subway line B, D, F or M to 42nd Street-Bryant Park; 7 to Fifth Avenue)
New York, NY 10036

Phone: 212-857-0000

<http://www.icp.org>

This museum has a collection of more than 100,000 photographs, most of which document 1930s-60s Europe and the Americas. It also offers well-regarded photography courses and workshops. The gift shop has an extensive collection of books about the art and practice of taking pictures.

Open Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday 10 am-6 pm; Thursday and Friday 10 am-8 pm. US\$14 adults, US\$10 students and seniors. Admission by voluntary contribution Friday 5-8 pm.

Intrepid Sea-Air-Space Museum

Pier 86, 12th Avenue at 46th Street (subway line A, C, E, N, Q, R, S, 1, 2, 3 or 7 to 42nd Street, then walk or take the M42 bus to the Hudson River)
New York, NY

Phone: 212-245-0072

<http://www.intrepidmuseum.org>

The aircraft carrier USS *Intrepid* was tugged out of the muck of the Hudson River and spent a couple of years at Sullivan Pier in Staten Island for refurbishment. Simultaneously, its home at Pier 86 had extensive renovations. Now the ship has re-docked. The *Intrepid* aircraft carrier was commissioned for

duty in World War II and served in the Korean and Vietnamese conflicts, as well as being used as a primary NASA space capsule recovery ship. Exhibits include a 4-D motion-ride theater, a jet cockpit simulator and a variety of aircraft, including fighter planes, helicopters and the supersonic passenger jet Concorde.

In 2012, the space shuttle Enterprise was brought to the museum and is now the main attraction in the Space Shuttle Pavilion, which also houses exhibits about the shuttle program.

Open daily 10 am-5 pm (until 6 pm during spring and summer); closed on Monday November-March. Last tickets sold one hour before closing. US\$24 adults; US\$20 seniors and college students with ID; US\$19 children ages 7-17; US\$17 veterans; US\$12 children ages 3-6; free for children younger than 3, and retired and active-duty military. A US\$2 facility fee is added to every ticket purchased, either online or on location (this fee is included in the price). US\$2 discount for ordering tickets online. 3-D simulators cost US\$9.

Isamu Noguchi Sculpture Museum

9-01 33rd Road, at Vernon Boulevard (subway line N to Broadway-31st Street; F to Queensbridge-21st Street; check the website for walking directions from the subway)

New York, NY

Phone: 718-204-7088

<http://www.noguchi.org>

Created by world-renowned sculptor Isamu Noguchi and one of the first museums in the U.S. to be devoted to the work of a single artist, the museum presents a comprehensive collection of Noguchi works in stone, metal, wood and clay. It also holds models for many of the public projects and gardens, dance sets and Akari Light Sculptures he designed. The museum's 13 gallery spaces set within an old factory were also designed by Noguchi, as was a remarkable rock garden that contains major granite and basalt sculptures. A cafe and a gift shop are on-site, too, and free gallery talks are offered Wednesday-Sunday at 2 pm.

Open Wednesday-Friday 10 am-5 pm, Saturday and Sunday 11 am-6 pm; closed Monday and Tuesday. US\$10 adults, US\$5 seniors and students with valid ID, free for children younger than 12. Pay what you wish on the first Friday of every month. The museum operates a Sunday shuttle-bus service that leaves from the northeast corner of Park Avenue and 70th Street in Manhattan (in front of the Asia Society) every hour on the half hour 12:30-3:30 pm. It departs the museum on the hour 1-5 pm. Shuttle fare is US\$5 one way, US\$10 round-trip.

Jewish Museum

1109 Fifth Ave., at 92nd Street (subway line 4, 5 or 6 to 86th Street; 6 to 96th Street)

New York, NY 10128

Phone: 212-423-3200

<http://www.thejewishmuseum.org>

This is one of the nation's pre-eminent institutions dedicated to Jewish history and culture. It offers works of art, ceremonial objects, archaeological evidence, photographs and more. Cafe Weissman serves kosher cuisine.

The museum is open Saturday-Tuesday 11 am-5:45 pm, Thursday 11 am-8 pm, Friday 11 am-4 pm. Closed Wednesday and major Jewish holidays. US\$15 adults, US\$12 seniors, US\$7.50 students, free for children younger than 12. Free admission on Saturday; pay what you wish Thursday 5-8 pm.

Lower East Side Tenement Museum

103 Orchard St., south of Delancey Street (subway line B or D to Grand Street; F, J, M or Z to Delancey Street-Essex Street)

New York, NY 10002

Phone: 212-982-8420

<http://www.tenement.org>

Located in what was once a predominantly Jewish immigrant neighborhood, this 1863 tenement house has been re-created to depict families' apartments as they would have looked in the 19th century, the Great Depression and the mid-20th century. It's one of the city's best museums and presents insight into immigrant life and how it affected New York City, but it's not well-known. The museum can only be experienced by guided tour, and you can view an informative film about immigrant life while you wait for your tour to begin.

The museum offers several tours, including "Getting By," "Piecing It Together," "The Moores: An Irish-American Family in America," "Immigrant Soles" (a neighborhood walking tour) and "The Confino Apartment Tour." This last tour gives children the chance to try on period clothing and chat with interpreters portraying immigrants who lived there more than a century ago. Phone or check the website for an exact tour schedule. Reservations for tours are highly recommended.

Purchase advance tickets on the website or by phone at 866-606-7232; same-day tour tickets must be purchased at the visitors center. The museum is open daily 10 am-6 pm; last tour at 5 pm. US\$25 adults, US\$20 seniors and students, free for children age 5 and younger. The apartment tour is suitable for children ages 5 and older. All tours begin at the museum's visitors center.

Metropolitan Museum of Art

1000 Fifth Ave., at 82nd Street (subway line 4, 5 or 6 to 86th Street)

New York, NY

Phone: 212-535-7710

<http://www.metmuseum.org>

If you visit only one museum in New York, this is the one. It covers 5,000 years of art and culture from all over the world, with more than 3 million works of art. The Egyptian art rivals any collection outside of Cairo (the Temple of Dendur, built about 15 BC, is among the museum's most-visited sites), and the Greco-Roman galleries contain some of the most important sculptures in the world.

You can see such wonderful treasures as a Rembrandt sketch of Da Vinci's *The Last Supper*, Botticelli's painting of *The Annunciation*; and fabulous works by Vermeer, Monet, Renoir, Manet, Degas, Gauguin and Van Gogh. The Met's arms and armor collection, which includes some 15,000 pieces from around the world, fascinates children and adults alike. The extensive Islamic Art galleries, which reopened after a multiyear renovation, are captivating. The Cantor Roof Garden displays modern sculpture and offers wonderful views of Central Park and the surrounding skyline. The space has a cafeteria, cafes, and a bookstore and gift shop.

Open Tuesday-Thursday and Sunday 9:30 am-5:30 pm, Friday and Saturday 9:30 am-9 pm. Galleries are cleared 15 minutes before closing; some galleries may not open before 11 am on Sunday. Suggested donation US\$25 adults, US\$17 seniors, US\$12 students, free for children younger than 12. Admission includes same-day admission to the main building at The Cloisters on the northern tip of Manhattan. The museum offers several free tours and lectures.

Museum of Arts & Design

2 Columbus Circle (subway line A, B, C, D or 1 to 59th Street-Columbus Circle; N, R or Q to 57th Street-Seventh Avenue)

New York, NY 10019

Phone: 212-299-7777

<http://www.madmuseum.org>

This museum focuses on contemporary crafts, from tapestries to teapots. It represents a variety of media, including fiber, wood, clay and metal. There's also a terrific menu of weekend workshops available (many are free with museum admission), meet-the-artist programs, a 155-seat auditorium and a ninth-floor restaurant with Central Park views. Delightful objects are for sale in the gift store.

Open Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday 10 am-6 pm; Thursday and Friday 10 am-9 pm. US\$16 adults, US\$14 seniors and students (pay what you wish Thursday 6-9 pm), free for children 12 and younger.

Museum of Chinese in America

215 Centre St., between Howard and Grand streets (subway line J, N, Q, R, Z or 6 to Canal Street)

New York, NY

Phone: 212-619-4785

<http://www.mocanyc.org>

This small museum in the heart of Chinatown began as a community project and has developed into a valuable educational and cultural resource. Changing exhibitions, guided walking tours of Chinatown and other programs make this small gem a worthwhile addition to any Chinatown visit.

Open daily except Monday 11 am-6 pm (Thursday until 9 pm); hours may vary slightly in July and August. US\$10 adults, US\$5 students and seniors; free for children younger than 8. Free admission Thursday.

Museum of Jewish Heritage-A Living Memorial to the Holocaust

Edmond J. Safra Plaza (subway line 1 to South Ferry; R to Whitehall Street-South Ferry; 4 or 5 to Bowling Green)

New York, NY

Phone: 646-437-4202

<http://www.mjhnyc.org>

The mission of this museum is to educate people of all ages and backgrounds about the 20th-century Jewish experience before, during and after the Holocaust. Exhibitions and displays are divided into three themes: Jewish life a century ago, war against the Jews and Jewish renewal. Photography is not permitted in the galleries.

Open Sunday-Tuesday and Thursday 10 am-5:45 pm, Wednesday 10 am-8 pm, Friday 10 am-3 pm (till 5 pm mid-March to early November). Closed on Jewish holidays and Thanksgiving. US\$12 adults, US\$10 seniors, US\$7 students, free for children younger than 12. Free admission Wednesday 4-8 pm, although some programs may still require a fee. A gift shop and a cafe for kosher dining are on-site.

Museum of Modern Art (MoMA)

11 W. 53rd St., between Fifth and Sixth avenues (subway line E or M to Fifth Avenue-53rd Street; B, D, F or M to 47th-50th Streets-Rockefeller Center)

New York, NY

Phone: 212-708-9400

<http://www.moma.org>

The museum soars above West 53rd Street, a work of art in itself, complete with a sculpture garden that preserves the original 1953 design by Philip Johnson. MoMA has one of the world's very best collections of 19th- and 20th-century paintings, sculpture, drawings, prints, architecture, photography, film and industrial design. Artists represented include Chagall, Klee, Magritte, Dali, Stieglitz, Wyeth, Pollock, Mondrian, Rauschenberg and Oldenburg. Famous works include Van Gogh's *Starry Night* and Picasso's landmark *Les Femmes d'Alger*.

There are two cafes, a gift shop and The Modern, a Michelin-rated, reservations-recommended restaurant (phone 212-333-1220; <http://www.themodernnyc.com>).

Open daily except Tuesday 10:30 am-5:30 pm (till 8 pm Friday). Open Thursday in July and August until 8:30 pm, featuring live music. Museum admission US\$25 adults, US\$18 seniors, US\$14 students, free for children age 16 and younger. Free on Friday 4-8 pm.

Museum of the City of New York

1220 Fifth Ave., at 103rd Street (subway line 6 to 103rd Street; 2 or 3 to Central Park North-110th Street)

New York, NY 10029

Phone: 212-534-1672

<http://www.mcny.org>

Historical New York comes alive through period furniture, miniatures and antique toys. The museum covers New York from the Dutch settlers to the present day and will teach you about the city's streets and buildings. Permanent installations include *New York Toy Stories* (with 10,000 toys that New Yorkers played with from colonial days to the present, as well as Eloise's room at the Plaza Hotel), the remarkable Stettheimer Doll House from the 1920s (filled with original miniature paintings and sculptures by notable modern artists), and exhibits of fire and police history, equipment and memorabilia. Museum shop and cafe.

Open daily 10 am-6 pm. Guided tours are offered. Suggested admission US\$10 adults, US\$6 seniors and students, free for children younger than 12 (family suggested rate US\$20).

Museum of the Moving Image

36-01 35th Ave. (subway line M or R to Steinway Street; N or Q to 36th Avenue; note that the M does not run there on weekends)

New York, NY

Phone: 718-777-6888

<http://www.movingimage.us>

A must for film buffs, the museum traces the history of film (as well as television and digital media) with great exhibits that focus on the technical and cultural aspects of movies. In addition, there are regular screenings and discussions.

Open Wednesday-Friday 10:30 am-5 pm (Friday till 8 pm), Saturday and Sunday 11:30 am-7 pm. US\$12 adults, US\$9 seniors and students, US\$6 children ages 3-12; free for children younger than 3. Free admission Friday 4-8 pm.

National Museum of the American Indian

1 Bowling Green, at the end of Broadway next to Battery Park (subway line R to Whitehall Street-South Ferry; 4 or 5 to Bowling Green; 1 to South Ferry; J or Z to Broad Street)
New York, NY 10004

Phone: 212-514-3700

<http://www.nmai.si.edu>

Also known as the George Gustav Heye Center, this branch of the Smithsonian Institution hosts exhibits about Native Americans from the U.S., Canada, Mexico, and Central and South America. Housed in a spectacular, domed beaux-arts building that was once the U.S. Customs House, it contains information and artifacts that tell the story of more than 10,000 years of Native American history and culture. Items on display range from ancient clovis-point arrowheads to modern-art installations. The museum also hosts films, music and dance performances, tours and workshops.

Open daily 10 am-5 pm (Thursday till 8 pm). Free.

Neue Galerie New York

1048 Fifth Ave., at 86th Street (subway line 4, 5 or 6 to 86th Street)
New York, NY

Phone: 212-628-6200

<http://www.neuegalerie.org>

This small museum, housed in an opulent Louis XIII-style mansion that was once a Vanderbilt home, is a world-class showcase for German and Austrian art and design from 1890 to 1940. You'll find works by Gustav Klimt—including his famous portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer—Max Beckmann, Erich Heckel and more. The museum's two restaurants, Cafe Sabarsky and Cafe Fledermaus, serve Austrian food, and the Viennese pastries are nothing less than *wunderbar*. (Cafe Fledermaus is open Thursday-Sunday September-May, and Cafe Sabarsky is open daily except Tuesday; museum admission is not required. Reservations recommended for dinner at Cafe Sabarsky; phone 212-288-0665.)

The museum is open Thursday-Monday 11 am-6 pm; closed Tuesday and Wednesday. US\$20 adults, US\$10 seniors and students. Free admission on the first Friday of the month 6-8 pm. No children younger than 12 admitted, and children ages 12-16 must be accompanied by an adult.

New Museum of Contemporary Art

235 Bowery, at Prince Street (subway line 6 to Spring Street; F to Second Avenue; N or R to Prince Street)
New York, NY 10012

Phone: 212-219-1222

<http://www.newmuseum.org>

This museum primarily shows works by living, contemporary artists, especially those whose work is political or experimental in nature. The architectural style of the museum's building—a series of stacked, offset white boxes—stands out against the grittiness of the Lower East Side and just may be more visually interesting than much of the art displayed here. But if you're a fan of contemporary art's sometimes odd works, the New Museum serves well.



Open Wednesday-Sunday 11 am-6 pm, Thursday until 9 pm. US\$16 adults, US\$14 seniors, US\$10 students, free for ages 18 and younger. Free admission Thursday 7-9 pm.

New York Hall of Science

47-01 111th St., at 47th Avenue (subway line 7 to 111th Street)
New York, NY 11368

Phone: 718-699-0005

<http://www.nysci.org>

This award-winning science museum has more than 450 hands-on exhibits that explore the wonders of science in everyday life. Separate areas teach the principles behind cyberspace, molecules, physics, sound, light and the body—different active-learning experiences are geared to preschoolers and older children. Visit the World of Microbes, surf through the Technology Gallery or hang on a 3-D spider web in the Science Playground.

Open July and August Monday-Friday 9:30 am-5 pm, Saturday and Sunday 10 am-6 pm; September-March Tuesday-Thursday 9:30 am-2 pm, Friday 9:30 am-5 pm, Saturday and Sunday 10 am-6 pm; April-June Monday-Thursday 9:30 am-2 pm, Friday 9:30 am-5 pm, Saturday and Sunday 10 am-6 pm. US\$11 adults; US\$8 seniors, students and children ages 2-17 (free admission on Friday 2-5 pm and Sunday 10-11 am September-June and during School's Out weeks). Children younger than 15 must be accompanied by an adult. Science Playground (US\$4) open March-December, weather permitting.

New York Historical Society Museum and Library

170 Central Park West, at 77th Street (subway line B or C to 81st Street; 1 to 79th Street)
New York, NY

Phone: 212-873-3400

<http://www.nyhistory.org>

Anchor your visit in the main gallery, which presents an extensive, thematic look at New York's history. But don't miss the fourth-floor Luce Center that allows you to wander through the museum's extensive collection of objects in storage. The frequent temporary exhibitions are usually quite interesting and provide unique insight into lesser-known aspects of city history.

Open Tuesday-Thursday and Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Friday 10 am-8 pm, Sunday 11 am-5 pm. US\$18 adults, US\$14 seniors and educators, US\$12 students, US\$6 children ages 5-13, free for children 4 years of age and younger. Pay what you wish Friday 6-8 pm.

New York Police Museum

45 Wall St. (subway line 2, 3, 4, 5 to Wall Street or J or Z to Broad Street)
New York, NY

Phone: 212-480-3100

<http://www.nycpm.org>

Everything you could ever want to know about the history of the NYPD, from the founding of the city through the 9/11 attacks. You can learn how the different departments interact with each other, see old uniforms and police vehicles, and find out why officers are called "cops" and their bosses called "brass." The 9/11 exhibit tells the story of the World Trade Center attacks from the perspective of two NYPD officers who lost their lives. Because of damage from Hurricane Sandy, the museum relocated to



temporary digs on Wall Street; the museum is seeking funds to repair its original building between Water and South streets.

Monday-Saturday 9 am-5 pm, closed Sunday and national holidays. US\$5 adults, free for children under 5.

New York Transit Museum

Boerum Place and Schermerhorn Street (subway line 2, 3, 4 or 5 to Borough Hall; R to Court Street; A, C or G to Hoyt-Schermerhorn Street; A, C or F to Jay Street-Borough Hall)
New York, NY

Phone: 718-694-1600

<http://mta.info/museum>

This unique underground museum—its entrance looks like the entrance to a subway station—is housed in an old subway tunnel in Brooklyn. You'll learn the history of the city's public transportation system, but the coolest part is the collection of old turnstiles, metro tokens and train cars. The museum also operates a small annex and gift shop, which is great for unique New York souvenirs such as subway map shower curtains and cufflinks made from old tokens from Grand Central Station.

Tuesday-Friday 10 am-4 pm, Saturday and Sunday 11 am-5 pm. US\$7 adults, US\$5 seniors and children ages 2-17. Free for seniors on Wednesday.

Paley Center for Media

25 W. 52nd St., between Fifth and Sixth avenues (subway line B, D, F or M to 47th-50th Streets-Rockefeller Center; E or M to Fifth Avenue-53rd Street; N or R to 49th Street)
New York, NY

Phone: 212-621-6800

<http://www.paleycenter.org>

Founded by broadcasting pioneer William S. Paley—the late founder and longtime head of the CBS network—the museum is best known for its enormous video and audio library. More than 100,000 radio and television programs and famous commercials are available for listening and viewing. Scan the database for programs that interest you (up to four screenings a visit), and a staff member will set you up in a private console room. Watch *I Love Lucy* episodes or look up more obscure relics of pop culture. From noon until closing, the museum presents a wide variety of programs from the collection—to see what's playing, pick up a daily schedule.

The museum also hosts seminars and screenings, followed by discussions led by performers, journalists, critics and artists.

Open Wednesday-Sunday noon-6 pm (Thursday until 8 pm). Closed Monday and Tuesday. US\$10 adults, US\$8 seniors and students, US\$5 children younger than 14.

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

1071 Fifth Ave., at 89th Street (subway line 4, 5 or 6 to 86th Street)
New York, NY 10128

Phone: 212-423-3500

<http://www.guggenheim.org>

The only New York City structure designed by Frank Lloyd Wright (who died before it was completed in 1959), this circular and slightly funnel-shaped building is a work of art. The museum is best experienced by taking an elevator to the top, then strolling downward along the spiraling gallery corridors. As you descend, you'll pass impressionist, postimpressionist, modern and avant-garde paintings and sculptures. Holdings include Chagall's *Green Violinist*, Picasso's *Woman Ironing* and Kandinsky's *Composition 8*.

Open daily except Thursday 10 am-5:45 pm (Saturday until 7:45 pm). US\$22 adults, US\$18 seniors and students, free for museum members and children younger than 12 (pay what you wish Saturday 5:45-7:45 pm). Admission price includes an audio tour. Special admission prices for some exhibitions.

South Street Seaport Museum

12 Fulton St., at Front Street (subway line A,C, J, Z, 2, 3, 4 or 5 to Fulton Street)
New York, NY

Phone: 212-748-8600

<http://www.southstreetseaportmuseum.org>

This museum's collection of historic working ships—schooners, merchant vessels, a lighter and a tug—is moored on the waterfront, and its gallery exhibits in historic Schermerhorn Row illuminate New York's maritime past through paintings, scrimshaw, ship models and other media.

Open daily 10 am-6 pm. US\$10 admission, US\$6 seniors and students, free for children younger than 9.

The Morgan Library & Museum

225 Madison Ave., at 36th Street (subway line 4, 5, 6 or 7 to 42nd Street-Grand Central; B, D, F or M to 42nd Street-Bryant Park)
New York, NY

Phone: 212-685-0008

<http://www.themorgan.org>

This research library and museum focuses on illuminated, literary and historical manuscripts, early printed books and old-master drawings and prints. The collection, mostly acquired by financier J.P. Morgan during his travels through Europe, includes *Biblia Latina* by Gutenberg and works by Ingres, Degas and Blake. An expansion designed by Renzo Piano added a reading room with a translucent roof that allows scholars to examine manuscripts in natural light. Historical and exhibition tours are offered daily; call for schedules. There is also a regular schedule of classical music concerts, lectures and family programs. There are two good restaurants in the building, both set in impressive rooms.

Open Tuesday-Thursday 10:30 am-5 pm, Friday 10:30 am-9 pm, Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Sunday 11 am-6 pm. US\$18 adults; US\$12 seniors, students with ID and children younger than 16; free for children 12 and younger. Free admission Friday 7-9 pm.

Whitney Museum of American Art

945 Madison Ave., at 75th Street (subway line 6 to 77th Street)
New York, NY 10021

Phone: 212-570-3600

<http://www.whitney.org>

Gertrude Whitney founded this museum in 1914 because the Metropolitan Museum of Art declined her 500-piece art collection. It is now a well-respected institution with constantly changing (and often controversial) exhibitions of 20th-century and contemporary paintings, sculpture, prints, drawings, photographs, film and video. Every two years, the much-hyped and cutting-edge Biennial exhibition attracts worldwide attention.

Open Wednesday-Sunday 11 am-6 pm (Friday till 9 pm). US\$20 adults, US\$16 seniors and students, free for those 18 and younger; pay what you wish Friday 6-9 pm. Multiple free tours offered daily.

Neighborhoods & Districts

Brooklyn

This borough is a happening destination filled with history, fantastic stores and even better restaurants. Take the subway from Manhattan or walk across the Brooklyn Bridge. Brooklyn Heights, with more than 600 houses predating the Civil War, was one of New York's first neighborhoods to be designated a landmark district. It's as peaceful as it is beautiful and grand. Stroll the Promenade for magnificent skyline views.

The Williamsburg neighborhood has made the transition from hardship and blight to trendy and chic. No longer just a magnet for artistic types, it's a dining and shopping extravaganza, with ultracool nightlife and great galleries. Once-troubled neighborhoods such as Fort Greene and Bedford-Stuyvesant have experienced a remarkable economic resurgence, with perhaps 200 active block associations and a dramatically dropping crime rate. The historic district of Stuyvesant Heights remains a premier enclave. Weeksville, an early-19th-century community of free blacks that is believed to have been a stop along the Underground Railroad, has preserved four small houses as a museum.

Stunning Victorian mansions and neo-Romanesque brownstones abound in Park Slope, particularly along Montgomery Place. Located just south of Brooklyn Heights, Cobble Hill is also filled with historic mansions and Gothic churches, as well as the Workingman's Cottages on Warren Place (among the first planned low-income housing in the nation when they were built in the 1870s). Nearby Carroll Gardens is a hip enclave of stores and restaurants, particularly on Smith Street.

Chelsea

Chelsea, named for London's Chelsea Royal Hospital, was an early home of the motion-picture industry, until the movie business moved west during and after World War I. More recently, many of New York's blue-chip art galleries (and the requisite people-watching) have relocated from SoHo to West Chelsea, west of 10th Avenue. Today, Chelsea's population is a high-energy urban mix of artists, the city's largest gay community and the downtown cool crowd. A seemingly endless list of diverse entertainment treasures—from conventional bars and restaurants to hipster-haunted spots and the next great scene—is sure to keep you amused.

The Chelsea Market is a neighborhood darling—it's an awesome collection of shops under one roof, selling everything from stockpots to lobsters so fresh you'll think they just jumped out of the ocean. The neighborhood stretches from 15th to 29th streets between the Hudson River and Sixth Avenue.

Chinatown

Chinatown is home to the largest community of Asians in the U.S. Webbed with tiny, winding, cobblestoned back streets, it's more Shanghai bazaar than American streetscape. Restaurants serve up silky stuffed dumplings, Peking duck and crispy shrimp any time of day. Along Pell and Mott streets, traditional herbal-medicine shops and kitschy novelty stores sell everything from silk pajamas to turtle jelly to Chinese board games.

One popular activity is shopping for inexpensive souvenir T-shirts, fabulous (but illegally copied) faux-designer purses, and the latest CDs and DVDs along Canal Street (be prepared to haggle)—and artists of any age will be thrilled by Pearl Paint, a large art-supply store that has hard-to-believe prices.

If you're seeking foods that you can never find back home, step into Kam Man at Canal and Mulberry streets. From quail eggs to wonderful tea sets, they have it all. On weekends, street stalls line Canal, and the crowds are five-deep scrambling for bargains. If the crowds are too much for you, have your fortune read at the Buddhist Temple or stop in at the Chinatown Ice Cream Factory on Bayard Street for a scoop of green-tea ice cream.

Those lucky enough to be in town during the Chinese New Year (late January or early February) should be prepared for a raucous street festival like none outside Beijing. For a historical perspective, visit the Museum of the Chinese in America at 215 Centre St. During the summer, it offers walking tours. Chinatown's boundaries are considered to extend from below Canal Street to Pearl and West streets and east to the Manhattan Bridge.

Coney Island

The last stop on some trains to Brooklyn and the Atlantic Ocean, Coney Island was one of the country's premier seaside playgrounds early in the 20th century. Millions of New Yorkers traveled there to enjoy its amusement parks packed with joy rides, eerie freak shows and boardwalk confections.

The parks fell into decline by the 1960s, but the beaches remained the most crowded in New York. Coney Island had rebounded in recent years, but the historic Astroland Amusement Park closed in 2008. Two years later, the Luna Park amusement park opened on the former Astroland site with a 10-year lease. With current controversial development plans to turn parts of the area into a hotel and condo complex, it's unclear just what will happen to Coney Island. Luckily, the famous Cyclone roller coaster and the 150-ft-/46-m-high Wonder Wheel are official historical landmarks. A \$10 million steel rollercoaster called Thunderbolt opened in June 2014.

For a glimpse of Coney Island's glory days, stop by the Coney Island Museum on Surf Avenue. Baseball has returned to Brooklyn with the Mets' minor-league team, the Cyclones, who play in a stadium on Surf Avenue. The New York Aquarium offers up-close sightings of walruses and Nemo look-alikes. At West 17th Street, walk more than 1,000 ft/310 m out over the Atlantic Ocean on the Steeplechase Pier. Just a 10-minute walk away is Brighton Beach, which has been dubbed Little Odessa by the Sea. It's brimming with a multitude of Russian restaurants, shops and markets.

East Village

Located on the east side of Greenwich Village, this neighborhood balances among old-world, funky and cool. Little Ukraine, Little India and Little Japan rub shoulders there: You can have pierogis for breakfast, curry for lunch and the freshest sushi in the city anytime—all within a three-block radius. Shopping along Lafayette Street is fabulous, where boutiques are stocked with everything from futuristic home decor to whimsical hats and vintage goodies.

Some say this is Manhattan's best barhopping locale. Old punk-rock hangouts and artsy wine bars are still going strong, but slick spots with velvet ropes have joined the mix. The East Village covers roughly the area from Houston Street north to 14th Street and Lafayette Street east to Avenue D.

Gramercy Park

This elegant neighborhood is a walker's paradise, especially along Irving Place. The famous gated park, accessible only by residents of the buildings surrounding it, defines the neighborhood. Pete's Tavern, one of the oldest continuously operating bars in the city, claims the distinction of being where O. Henry wrote his short story "The Gift of the Magi." The National Arts Club facing the park is a great example of New York's golden age.

Today's Gramercy bar scene is hot, from The Rose Bar at the Gramercy Park Hotel to Old Town Bar to the Living Room Lounge of the W Hotel-Union Square. The renovation of the Gramercy Park Hotel, along with gourmet restaurants such as Mario Batali's Casa Mono and L'Express, has given the area both luxury and affordable dining options. The Gramercy Park neighborhood runs north from 17th Street to Madison Square Park at 23rd Street and runs east-west between Second and Fifth avenues.

Harlem

The community of Harlem, rich in African-American history and culture, lies north of Central Park. Harlem is hip—an unbeatable combination of stylish cool and spirited sights and sounds. During the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s, upper-middle-class professionals, writers and musicians thrived there. Jazz musicians played in such legendary nightspots as the Cotton Club, Savoy Ballroom and the Apollo Theater.

Harlem's historic enclaves are a constant reminder of the glory of earlier times. Don't miss Striver's Row on 138th and 139th streets, dotted with Stanford White-designed town houses. Churches have always been a mainstay of the community: The Abyssinian Baptist Church, Salem United Methodist and Metropolitan Baptist evoke a rich history. Visit the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture or the century-old gravestones at the Trinity Cemetery and Mausoleum (770 Riverside Drive).

Dining out in Harlem ranges from the casual to far-from-casual: Kitchenette Uptown has the most incredible baking-powder biscuits and perfectly poached eggs, and Amy Ruth's has what some say is the best southern cooking north of Virginia. Harlem's boundaries are roughly from 116th Street north to the Harlem River and from the Hudson to the East River.

Hell's Kitchen

This Midtown West neighborhood, also called Clinton (which sounds better on pricey real estate), was originally a settlement of impoverished Irish immigrants escaping the 19th-century potato famine; in the 1920s, it became dominated by Irish-American organized-crime circles. Because of its proximity to the theater district, today's Hell's Kitchen is popular among actors.

As Chelsea has become more expensive, more art galleries have set up shop in the southern part of Hell's Kitchen. A slew of international cuisines in the area coined "Restaurant Row" lies on 46th Street between Eighth and Ninth avenues. On weekends, there is a lively flea market that takes place on 39th Street between Ninth and 10th avenues. Hell's Kitchen lies between 34th and 57th streets, and Eighth and 12th avenues.

Little Italy

Follow the heavenly aromas to this neighborhood between Spring and Canal streets. Its size has dwindled significantly over the years as neighboring Chinatown has expanded, but it still remains the best place in Manhattan to find authentic Italian breads, meats, pasta, cheeses, coffee and desserts.

Community life is focused on maintaining the neighborhood's cultural identity and historical character, particularly at a time when development is on the rise. Neighbors still look out for one another, but the community has a hip edge: While the many red-sauce joints of Mulberry Street pack in the tourists, hot bars and fashionable boutiques have set up shop in old vacant storefronts. If you're crazy for anything made with clams, try Umberto's Clam House on Mulberry. Pop into Mulberry Street Bar for a cold beer, as regularly seen on episodes of both *The Sopranos* and *Law & Order*. Pizza? Try Lombardi's on Spring Street—forget your usual toppings and try the exceptional garlic-clam pie.

Two musts are Alleva's Dairy, where Mr. Alleva still makes mozzarella fresh daily, and Ferrara on Grand Street, for espresso and the best cannoli you'll ever taste.

The hugely popular Feast of San Gennaro (a 10-day festival that begins the first Thursday after Labor Day) is a city favorite: Mulberry Street transforms into a fairground filled with rides, games, music and great food.

Meatpacking District

In this style-setting neighborhood, the predawn streets used to be jam-packed with trucks unloading large cuts of cow loin, but now after sunset, fashionistas are drawn like magnets to the latest and coolest places to shop, dine and imbibe. Big-name chefs are setting up shop quicker than you can say Jimmy Choo. This part of town has drawn emerging fashion icons from around the globe, from Stella McCartney (who chose this locale for her first U.S. shop) and Alexander McQueen to Carlos Miele and Diane von Furstenburg. On West 14th and Little West 12th streets, browse and splurge on such indulgences as designer shoes, chunky bracelets or a vintage Japanese sake set. The Meatpacking District lies between Gansevoort and 14th streets, and Ninth Avenue and the West Side Highway.

Murray Hill

This lovely, mostly residential neighborhood is framed by the East River and Madison Avenue from 27th to 42nd streets. The small historic district there, Sniffen Court, is a dead-end alley of 10 handsome houses behind a locked gate on 36th Street between Third and Lexington avenues. Architect John Sniffen built them in the 1850s as stables, and they were converted to town houses in the 1920s. Today, the streets are lined with lively bars and restaurants scattered throughout 19th-century town houses (of the 100 listed in the 1892 *Social Register*, more than 60 still exist).

On the modern side of Murray Hill, Scandinavia House: The Nordic Center in America organizes contemporary Scandinavian art and film exhibitions and offers language courses. The Morgan Library & Museum on Madison Avenue is a superb example of contemporary expansion of an Italianate 19th-century mansion.

NoLiIta

Tucked in between SoHo and the Lower East Side, this hip little neighborhood offers an abundance of trendy, often moderately priced boutiques. Grab a bowl of tiramisu, honey graham or French toast rice pudding from Rice to Riches on Spring Street to eat as you wander (or try one of their many other flavors).

On Prince Street, independent bookstore McNally Jackson frequently hosts author events. Across the street, a stretch of vendors sells the most unique selection of items you're likely to find on the street. The approximate boundary streets of NoLiIta ("North of Little Italy") are Houston and Lafayette streets and The Bowery and Broome Street.

Queens

This borough is connected to Manhattan by bridge and tunnel. Cross by the Queensboro Bridge and admire its ornate ironwork that dazzles day or night. (It's better known locally as the 59th Street Bridge, as in the title of the Simon and Garfunkel song.) You'll be rewarded with outstanding Manhattan skyline views and a closer look at Roosevelt Island, which is linked to the city by subway as well as a tram above the East River.

Astoria is home to a large Greek community—and Manhattanites will confirm that it's worth the trip to dine at any of the Greek, Indian and Asian diners and restaurants that line the streets. In Astoria and its neighboring enclave, Long Island City, you'll find the P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, the Isamu Noguchi Sculpture Museum, the American Museum of the Moving Image and the Fisher Landau Center for Art.

Flushing Meadows was immortalized as the "valley of ashes" in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*—but any reference to the former gray marshes evaporated when the 1939 World's Fair opened its gates there. (The same site was used for the 1964 World's Fair.) This area is home to the USTA Billy Jean King National Tennis Center, the 12-story Unisphere, the New York Hall of Science and, of course, Citi Field, new home of the Mets—it replaced the late, lamented Shea Stadium.

If you're a die-hard Louis Armstrong fan, check out where he lived from 1943 until his death, at 34-56 107th St., now a museum in his memory. The 1661 Bowne House on Bowne Street is one of the oldest houses in New York and is filled with period furniture, pewterware and restored rooms. The area's Chinese and Indian enclaves offer outstanding restaurants.

SoHo

SoHo takes its name from its location: South of Houston Street (pronounced *HOW-ston*). It borders Greenwich Village, its neighbor to the north and, like the Village, it's a place to shop, stroll and eat. Once a bohemian area, SoHo has been gentrified and burnished into one of the most expensive, chic neighborhoods in the city. Architecturally SoHo is quite distinct: It is made up of converted warehouses containing expansive loft-style apartments, artist studios and galleries. On their ground floors, these buildings hold all manner of high-end furniture stores and fancy fashion boutiques, especially on West Broadway, Prince, Spring and Mercer streets.

Lots of cozy Italian restaurants and French bistros offer good eats (many are pricey). SoHo is a favorite neighborhood for New Yorkers and tourists alike, for both window-shopping and the real thing. The art galleries that made SoHo trendy have mostly moved on to Chelsea, which leaves even more room for stores. Along Broadway, the neighborhood's eastern border, there are large shops such as Bloomingdale's, Sephora, Uniqlo and Muji. SoHo lies between West Houston and Grand streets, and Sixth Avenue and Broadway.

South Street Seaport

This historic seaport district offers cobblestoned streets, waterfront piers and a great view of Brooklyn and the New York Harbor. It's touristy, but the South Street Seaport Museum's fleet of 19th- and early-20th-century vessels is the real deal. Look out at the Brooklyn Bridge as you make sand castles and eat fish tacos at the Water Taxi Beach.

The seaport hosts a variety of special events, from spectacular music series to boat trips and charity bike tours.

Staten Island

Take a free ferry ride from downtown Manhattan to get to this borough and enjoy superb views of the Statue of Liberty and downtown Manhattan from the water. Three blocks from the ferry dock, the Staten Island Museum is home to a huge selection of bugs and botanicals, along with works of art by Warhol, Chagall, Toulouse-Lautrec and more.

The Staten Island Yankees draw huge crowds—not just for the sweeping New York Harbor views from the bleachers in Richmond County Bank Ballpark. Snug Harbor, a 200-year-old community that was once a fishing town, is full of Greek Revival, Italianate and beaux-arts buildings—including a music hall that's older than Manhattan's Carnegie Hall.

The Botanical Garden's Scholar's Garden was created by 40 Chinese artisans, and it's the only one of its kind in the country. Children will love the maze, turreted castle and peacocks in the Connie Gretz Secret Garden. Don't miss 25-acre/10-hectare Historic Richmond Town, a living-history museum whose 15 restored shops and houses trace Staten Island history since colonial times.

The Staten Island Children's Museum has hands-on art and science exhibits where children can become radio announcers, Arctic explorers, archaeologists or scuba divers for an afternoon. The Staten Island Zoo is small, but it has one of the world's finest reptile collections.

Theater District

Often called the Great White Way, this district is the epicenter of all Broadway. There you'll find the Ambassador Theater, the St. James and other grand venues. Times Square (at 42nd Street and Broadway) is in the heart of this district, which stretches from 41st Street to 53rd Street on the West Side.

The Bronx

This borough is home to the New York Botanical Garden, the Bronx Zoo and Yankee Stadium (Babe Ruth hit the first home run in the first game ever played in the old stadium there; the new one is just next door). The Bronx contains 60 landmarks and historic districts, including the Edgar Allen Poe Cottage on the Grand Concourse and the stately Van Cortlandt House Museum in Van Cortlandt Park. Get a golf fix in Van Cortlandt Park or Pelham Bay Park, or embark on a food adventure in Little Italy along Arthur Avenue.

Times Square

Times Square has had its ups and downs since the days when the Astors developed the area in the 1830s as a silk-stocking neighborhood. It got its name from *The New York Times*, which moved there in 1904. When the advent of the subway made it easier for people to go uptown for entertainment, theaters moved to 42nd Street. By the mid-20th century, however, the area was blighted by dive bars and porn palaces, and its name had become synonymous with sleaze.

The seediness is gone now, and the blinking signs advertising strip shows have been replaced by megawatt billboards, high-tech graphics and high-impact theme restaurants. Conde Nast, Reuters and 600 other companies moved into the area. Now, with 25% of the city's hotel rooms, almost 200 restaurants and 39 historically landmarked theaters, the neighborhood is a prime destination. The entertainment possibilities have multiplied, with *Good Morning America* televised from Times Square each morning Monday-Friday. Sports fans will love the ESPN Zone, where there's a television screen in each bathroom stall. Retail stores are no less entertaining: Visit the amusement-park-sized Toys "R" Us.

Times Square is still most famous for the New Year's Eve ball-drop—a tradition that began in 1906 when *The New York Times* dropped an illuminated ball from the top of its offices. For information about this and other happenings, the Times Square Information Center (Seventh Avenue between 46th and 47th streets) is open daily 8 am-8 pm. Pick up free citywide information and buy theater tickets, MetroCards and tour tickets; you can even get free Internet access.

Always wanted to be on Broadway? Now you can stroll right through the middle or sit down and take a load off your feet, as it was recently closed to vehicle traffic in Times Square to reduce congestion. Times Square is located between Broadway and Seventh Avenue and 42nd and 47th streets (take the subway to Times Square-42nd Street).

TriBeCa

This neighborhood takes its name from "Triangle Below Canal." It became trendy in the 1980s when young brokers working in the finance district, and the occasional movie star, moved into old warehouse buildings that had been converted into spacious loft apartments. Actor Robert De Niro put the 'hood on the map with his TriBeCa Film Center, home to several film and entertainment companies.

There are some experimental art galleries such as apexart and Art in General that are worth a visit. Bouley, for exquisite New French cuisine, and The Odeon, for late-night bistro food, are neighborhood landmarks. Although most of the neighborhood is gentrified, there are still some abandoned pockets with dark and crumbling cobblestoned streets. TriBeCa lies between Canal and Chambers streets and Broadway and West Street.

Upper East Side

Stretching from the East River to Central Park between 59th and 96th streets, the Upper East Side has traditionally been synonymous with old money, well-dressed ladies and exclusive private schools. The impression is bolstered by Millionaire's Row (Fifth Avenue between 58th and 81st streets), the mansions along Fifth Avenue that once belonged to the Carnegies, Whitneys and Vanderbilts (U.S. President Ulysses S. Grant wrote his memoirs at 3 E. 66th St.), and by the swanky apartment buildings framing manicured flower beds on Park Avenue. Consignment shops selling designer garments offer alternative shopping options for visitors on a tighter budget.

Everyone can enjoy Fifth Avenue's Museum Mile (a stretch that includes the Guggenheim, the Met and the Frick), prime gallery-hopping along Madison Avenue, or the exclusive shops, specialty stores and labels that line the blocks in the 60s and 70s. Two distinctive enclaves are Yorkville (79th-96th streets from Third Avenue to the East River), which was predominantly a German and Hungarian neighborhood through the 1970s, and Carnegie Hill (86th-96th streets from Fifth to Third avenues), where some of the city's most expensive apartment buildings, town houses (stroll the East 70s to see some of the best) and a select handful of top-notch shops devoted to children (think Bonpoint) are located.

The Upper East Side is also home to Hunter College, the beloved 92nd Street Y (whose menu of adult-education classes rivals that of any university), Carl Schurz Park (with a Peter Pan statue and expansive

views across the East River), the 1879 medieval-style Seventh Regiment Armory (home of the annual Winter Antiques Show and rotating art installations) and Bloomingdale's. The overpopulated singles bars along First and Second avenues add to the neighborhood fabric.

Upper West Side

Framed by Central Park and the Hudson River from 59th to 125th streets, this part of town is considered more progressive, down-to-earth and hip than its East Side neighbor. From the 1940s through the 1980s, the Upper West Side was a bastion of middle-class families, bookish intellectuals and politically active liberals who raised families in expansive prewar apartment buildings such as the Ansonia, the Dakota and the Beresford, or in classic brownstones along tree-lined streets. This community remains distinguished for its liberal intellectual and artistic activity but also ranks high among livable family-friendly neighborhoods.

Enduring icons such as Lincoln Center, the Juilliard School, the Museum of Natural History, the Children's Museum of Manhattan, the New York Historical Society, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Grant's Tomb, Columbia University and Barnard College and the Time-Warner Center at Columbus Circle contribute to this neighborhood. This district is jammed with a surplus of dining and food-shopping options, including the venerable Zabar's, Fairway and Citarella—practically on top of one another along Broadway from 74th to 81st streets.

Upper Broadway—generally referred to as Morningside Heights—from 110th to 120th streets, is Columbia University territory, more college town than uptown.

The much-loved Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade begins on Central Park West at 77th Street, with its companion tradition, the Balloon Blow Up, taking place the night before.

West Village

This historic bohemian enclave is what most people think of when they picture Greenwich Village. New York University students and the Washington Square chess-playing and skateboarding crowds coexist in this historic and far quieter neighborhood. Check out Bedford Street for idiosyncratic architecture: No. 77 is the oldest house in the neighborhood, No. 75-1/2 (once the home of poet Edna St. Vincent Millay) is the narrowest, and No. 102 is an off-kilter chalet.

Peek into exclusive enclaves such as gated Grove's Court (Grove Street between Seventh Avenue South and Hudson Street). Along Washington Square Mews, off Fifth Avenue at Washington Square Park, historic houses frame the narrow, cobblestoned road.

Off-Broadway theaters and legendary jazz spots still draw fans from everywhere, and the West Village has become a must-stop for fashionistas and foodies. Browse along Eighth Street for shoes and musical recordings or Bleecker Street for first-rate antiques, vintage records and trendy accessories.

The district, along with the Chelsea neighborhood, is also famous for its gay community. Christopher Street's Stonewall Inn (at No. 53) was the site of the Stonewall Riots in June 1969—the event that launched the modern gay-rights movement in the U.S. The building has recently been recognized as a National Historic Landmark. The West Village runs from West Houston Street north to 14th Street and from Broadway west to the Hudson River.

Parks & Gardens

Brooklyn Botanic Garden

990 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway (subway line B—only Monday-Friday—or Q to Prospect Park; 2 or 3 to Eastern Parkway; 4 to Franklin Avenue)

New York, NY 11225

Phone: 718-623-7200

<http://www.bbg.org>

This stunning jewel has 10,000 types of plants on 52 acres/21 hectares. *The New York Times* calls it the premier horticultural attraction in the region. The best time to visit is late March to mid-May, when the cherry trees are in bloom, though there's plenty to see year-round. You can steam yourself in the fern grotto inside the Warm Temperate Pavilion, stroll through the famous collection of bonsai trees, admire orchids in the Aquatic House, and check out the soaring greenhouses and the Victorian Palm House in the Steinhardt Conservatory.

The Fragrance Garden, built in 1955, was the first of its kind to be designed for the visually impaired. Inside the Cranford Rose Garden, you'll find hybrid tea roses named after Audrey Hepburn and Elizabeth Taylor.

Tour packages at different prices are offered; phone 718-623-7220 for information. Open Tuesday-Friday 8 am-6 pm, Saturday and Sunday 10 am-6 pm (November-early March till 4:30 pm). The conservatory and gift shop are open daily except Monday 10 am-5:30 pm, visitors center till 5 pm (October-March till 4 pm). The new glass and copper visitors center was ingeniously designed with plants growing from its roof.

US\$10 adults, US\$5 seniors and students with a valid ID, free for children younger than 12. Free on Tuesday all day and Saturday 10 am-noon except during scheduled events. Free for seniors on Friday. Free Monday-Friday mid-November to early March. An Art & Garden Ticket allows entry to the gardens and the Brooklyn Museum. US\$20 adults, US\$11 seniors and students.

Brooklyn Bridge Park

New York, NY

Phone: 718-222-9939

<http://www.brooklynbridgepark.org>

Still a work in progress, but the Brooklyn Bridge Park, which runs along the Brooklyn waterfront from DUMBO to Atlantic Avenue, is fast becoming one of the city's favorites. A walk through the park provides some of the best, and completely unobstructed, views of the lower Manhattan skyline. In summer, there are frequent outdoor movies and concerts, and the well-tended lawns and gardens of native plants make excellent picnic spots (there is no shortage of great places to pick up picnic supplies on both ends of the park, including Grimaldi's Pizza). The distinctive playgrounds are carefully integrated into the waterfront landscape and are a great outdoor option for kids, as is the Brooklyn Ice Cream Factory, at Fulton Landing toward the north end of the park. Subway line F to York Street provides good access, but several other lines are also convenient. It's worthwhile to have a map handy, as the streets in the DUMBO area are somewhat confusing.

Bryant Park

Sixth Avenue, between 40th and 42nd streets (subway line B, D, F or M to 42nd Street-Bryant Park; 7 to Fifth Avenue)

New York, NY

Phone: 212-768-4242

<http://www.bryantpark.org>

This park occupies the block directly behind the New York Public Library. It's a favorite spot for lunchers and people taking cat naps, who can relax amid beautifully manicured lawns, beds of flowers and statues commemorating literary figures from Goethe to Gertrude Stein. Regular features are a charming reproduction carousel, chess tables, backgammon, free yoga classes and free Wi-Fi.

The park is home to several restaurants and sandwich stands that serve meals both indoors and alfresco, and concerts, movies and festivals that keep the scene lively year-round. There is an ice-skating rink in the winter.

Central Park

Manhattan

New York, NY

Phone: 212-360-3444

<http://www.centralpark.org>

This park is a natural jewel in the center of the city. In 1856, New York officials set aside an amazing 843 acres/341 hectares of city land between Fifth and Eighth avenues and 59th and 110th streets for a park. Frederick Law Olmsted and architect Calvert Vaux (also the designers of Brooklyn's Prospect Park) based the park's design on the English landscape garden. To this day, flowing meadows, bridges, lakes, ponds and playing fields abound in the heart of this metropolis. Runners, bikers and in-line skaters zip around the trails, especially on weekends when the main perimeter road is closed to traffic.

The southeast section includes the zoo, the boat pond and, in winter, skating at Wollman Rink. John Lennon fans may pay their respects at the famous "Imagine" mosaic in Strawberry Fields, the tear-drop-shaped area dedicated to his memory, on the West Side near 72nd Street. The Sheep Meadow (just below 72nd Street) is a popular grassy expanse that draws Frisbee players, sunbathers, mingling singles and young families. (Free summer concerts are held at the nearby Band Shell.) To the north, in the low 80s, is the Great Lawn—an amalgam of sports fields and softball diamonds, and the site of occasional concerts. The Delacorte amphitheater outside the Great Lawn is used for periodic theater performances, including the free-admission and beloved *Shakespeare in the Park* summer series.

Children enjoy taking a spin on the 1908 carousel (near the 65th Street Traverse and Central Drive), playing on the humongous *Alice in Wonderland* statue (just in from Fifth Avenue and East 74th Street), watching a puppet show at the Swedish Cottage Marionette Theater (79th Street and Central Park West) or borrowing a Discovery Kit backpack for exploring (at Belvedere Castle, midpark at 79th Street).

Horse-drawn-carriage rides through the park are available at Central Park South, just west of Fifth Avenue. Walking and nature tours are offered, and The Boathouse restaurant (open daily for lunch and April-November for dinner) is a popular dining spot. It's best to stay out of the park after dark, though the area is safer than its reputation suggests.

Hudson River Park

Hudson River Greenway (subway line C, E or 1 to Canal Street)
New York, NY

Phone: 212-627-2020

<http://www.hudsonriverpark.org>

The park begins at Battery Place with a bike path and a walkway, and it continues north 5 mi/8 km to West 59th Street, where the Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail picks up. It eventually runs all the way to Troy, just north of Albany. This park occupies the Hudson River piers that lost business because they were too small for modern containerized shipping methods. Future development plans include a boathouse and a restaurant, with construction estimated to begin in 2015. The park's 550 acres/225 hectares, 13 public piers and access to the Hudson River already attract nearly 1 million visitors a year.

Activities in the park include kayaking, sailing, boating, rowing, tennis, basketball, jogging, bicycling and in-line skating, as well as ice and roller skating, golf, bowling and baseball batting cages at Chelsea Piers (between 18th and 23rd streets). The area between Battery Place and Harrison Street runs along the eastern side of Battery Park City and is the only part of the park without a river view. The waterside esplanade begins at Harrison Street and includes piers 25, 26, 32 and 34.

RiverFlicks is considered the top outdoor film event in the city: In July and August, stop by Pier 63 on Wednesday and Pier 46 on Friday (kids' movies). Films begin at dusk (generally 8-8:30 pm).
<http://www.riverflicks.com>.

Another summer treat on Pier 84 is Moondance: Take free dance lessons, then dance the night away to live music on a Sunday evening (early July to mid-August).

New York Botanical Garden

Bronx River Parkway, at Fordham Road (subway line B, D or 4 to Bedford Park Boulevard and walk about eight blocks east; Metro North from Grand Central to the Botanical Garden station)
New York, NY 10458

Phone: 718-817-8700

<http://www.nybg.org>

This garden is a 250-acre/100-hectare horticultural preserve, research laboratory, and tree and plant museum. Areas include old-world and new-world desert and aquatic plants, a rain forest, and a Children's Adventure Garden adorned with topiaries and mazes. The Enid Haupt Conservatory, a lovely cold-weather retreat that's been renovated to critical acclaim, was declared a New York City landmark in 1973. A highlight event is the Holiday Train Show, which runs from late November into early January, in which a huge model train layout runs through a series of New York City landmark buildings made of plant materials.

Gardens open daily except Monday 10 am-6 pm (mid-January to late February until 5 pm; open Monday on national holidays). Admission prices depend on which exhibits you want to see; admission to just the grounds is US\$13 adults, US\$6 seniors and students, US\$3 children ages 2-12. An all-garden pass, which includes the Children's Adventure Garden, is US\$25 adults, US\$22 students and seniors, US\$10 children. Free for members. Free to all visitors all day Wednesday and 10-11 am Saturday. Parking is US\$12 weekdays and US\$15 weekends.

Prospect Park

The main entrance is at Grand Army Plaza (subway line 2 or 3 to Grand Army Plaza; B or S to Prospect Park station; Q to Parkside or Prospect Park; F to 15th Street-Prospect Park)
New York, NY

Phone: 718-965-8999

<http://www.prospectpark.org>

The jewel of Brooklyn's biggest park is the restored Ravine, built along the terminal moraine of a glacier that retreated 10,000 years ago. It's cut through by a gorge and features three natural, burbling waterfalls—with no buildings or roads in sight. Visit the whimsical Oriental Pavilion with its formal gardens. At the Grand Army Plaza entrance, admire the 72-ft-/22-m-tall Memorial Arch, which honors the soldiers and sailors of the Union forces who died during the Civil War.

At Prospect Park Lake, you can fish, pedal a boat or stop at the romantic Italian-style boathouse along Lullwater (a narrow extension of the lake). The Audubon Center is located there, housing a Discover Nature Theater, and providing a gateway to nature trails and boat rides. The park is also home to the Lefferts Historic House, one of the few surviving farmhouses in New York, which features storytelling and sheep-shearing.

The park's zoo isn't as comprehensive as the Bronx Zoo, but it's no less charming. Summer nights mean picnics, the Celebrate Brooklyn! Festival at the band shell and rides on the carousel, which boasts 47 horses, a lion, a giraffe and a deer. On Sunday, stop by Drummer's Grove and dance to the irresistible African beats.

Hours are 5 am-1 am.

Riverside Park

Riverside Drive, from 72nd to 155th streets (subway line 1, 2 or 3)
New York, NY

Phone: 212-870-3070

<http://www.riversideparkfund.org>

The narrowest park in the city (about 630 ft/193 m wide), Riverside Park is home to Grant's Tomb (officially, General Grant National Memorial, at West 122nd Street), the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument (at 89th Street), roller-skating classes and a marina where you can launch kayaks, canoes and sailboats (at 79th Street). With beautiful plantings, monuments and views of the river, this West Side park along the Hudson is a scenic landmark.

The High Line

Access available at Gansevoort and Washington streets and at 14th, 16th, 18th, 20th, 23rd, 26th, 28th and 30th streets near 10th (subway line A, C, E or L to 14th Street-8th Avenue; 1, 2 or 3 to 14th Street; C or E to 23rd Street)
New York, NY

Phone: 212-500-6035

<http://www.thehighline.org>

Manhattan's newest park reflects the city's commitment to finding new uses for public spaces. The High Line was the site of an elevated freight-train line built in the 1930s to reduce congestion on the city's streets, but it had fallen into disrepair since the 1980s, when trains stopped using it. Today, visitors can picnic, lounge in chairs, take yoga classes or participate in the park's many other public programs. The

park is open from Gansevoort Street in the Meatpacking District to Chelsea's 30th Street, roughly above 10th Avenue.

Daily 7 am-10 pm.

Van Cortlandt Park

Van Cortlandt Park South at Broadway (subway line 1 to Van Cortland Park-242nd Street; 4 to Woodlawn)
New York, NY

Phone: 718-430-1890 or 718-655-9164 for golf information and tee times

<http://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/vancortlandtpark>

Surprising to some may be the fact that, yes indeed, you can play golf within the city limits. And this is the place. At about 1,146 acres/464 hectares, Van Cortlandt is the city's fourth-largest park. It contains both an 18-hole and a nine-hole golf course, plus a driving range. But that's just the beginning. It also contains The Bronx's oldest building, the Van Cortlandt House (built in 1748-49), a National Historic Landmark trail (Old Croton Aqueduct Trail), and a cross-country running course of national repute.

There are also baseball and softball fields, basketball courts, cricket pitches, football and soccer fields, handball and paddleball courts, the Van Cortlandt Nature Center, an equestrian center, running tracks and tennis courts. It's a touch of the nonurban life just a subway ride away.

Shopping

In this city a Chihuahua can be a fashion accessory, so expect to find anything and everything for sale. From world-famous Fifth Avenue department stores to specialty shops, charming boutiques and bargain basements, New York is truly a shopper's heaven. The city offers whole districts of stores devoted to a particular item, such as antiques along Bleecker Street in Greenwich Village; furs off Seventh Avenue in Chelsea; diamonds and jewelry on 47th Street, just west of Fifth Avenue; and musical instruments on West 48th Street.

For buttons, plumes, sequins and every sewing notion you can imagine, check out the high West 30s along Sixth Avenue. The Crystal District between 58th and 63rd streets along Madison Avenue is another great hunting ground. And just witnessing the spectacles of Tiffany & Co., Toys "R" Us Times Square, Saks Fifth Avenue and Zabar's is a souvenir in itself.

Often, rather than keying in on a specific store, try strolling down a particular commercial boulevard (e.g., West Broadway, Lexington Avenue, Sixth Avenue) or in a specific neighborhood (e.g., the West Village or East Village)—you'll be surprised by what you discover. There are very few places in Manhattan without interesting stores. You can get off the subway almost anywhere and be within walking distance of either mammoth chain stores or tiny specialty shops.

Browse in one of the many corner bookstores with a theme, from children's literature, cookbooks and mysteries to poetry. A surprising number of street vendors set up tables all over town to sell all manner of goods—wallets, socks, used books, fake Rolexes, sunglasses, pirated videos, perfume, incense and more—regardless of the weather.

Except for those who sell books and reading matter, the vendors are supposed to be licensed. But even if they are licensed, it won't help you much: Buyer beware. Plenty of locals buy from these folks—which is why you'll see so many fake Louis Vuitton bags on the street.

Shopping Hours: Generally, Manhattan stores are open Monday-Saturday 10 am-7 pm, and many shops stay open an additional hour or two on Thursday night. Sunday hours tend to be slightly shorter, often 11 am-6 pm. However, this *is* New York City—you can find anything you need at any hour of the day or night, if you're willing to search for it.

Dining

Dining Overview

At fine restaurants in New York City, it's often possible to enjoy the same divine cuisine at lunch as at dinnertime—for much less money. At the hot spots you've heard or read about, it's advisable to make dinner reservations one or two months in advance, particularly for weekend nights. Many restaurants now allow you to make reservations through their websites or through <http://www.opentable.com> for no additional charge.

Some restaurants require you to confirm a reservation a day in advance or they will release it—ask about this when you make the reservation. Other dining spots secure the reservation with a credit card and will charge a fee if you don't show.

Some of New York's most interesting culinary options are low cost—serving everything from Vietnamese sandwiches to Jamaican meat pies. There are abundant opportunities for a good, quick bite at reasonable prices. Nearly every street in Manhattan seems to have either a Greek diner or a hole-in-the-wall pizza joint, and many street corners are presided over by pushcart vendors selling hot dogs, chicken kebabs, potato knishes, pretzels and sugary-sweet roasted peanuts.

If you're fortunate enough to travel to New York during Restaurant Week, you'll have the opportunity to sample some of the city's top restaurants, such as Gotham Bar and Grill or Union Square Cafe. Special three-course prix-fixe menus at more than 100 restaurants are offered for US\$25 at lunch and US\$38 at dinner (plus beverages, tax and gratuities). This is your chance to savor the cuisine of the city's most talented chefs and to experience the quality, variety and hospitality that make New York the best restaurant city in the world.

Restaurant Week is now offered two or three times each year for a two-week period (usually late January-early February, and again in mid-July) although some restaurants have extended their prix-fixe option indefinitely. It's advisable to make reservations as soon as Restaurant Week is announced—which is generally one month prior to the event. Visit <http://www.nycgo.com/restaurantweek> for more information.

Dining times are generally 6-10 am for breakfast, 11 am-2 pm for lunch and 5-10 pm (or later) for dinner. However, New York is the city that never sleeps. You can always find a place to eat at any hour of the day or night.

Manhattan restaurants are considerably more expensive than those in other U.S. cities. Be prepared to pay almost double your normal price for a meal. Expect to pay within these general guidelines, based on the cost of a dinner for one, excluding drinks, tax and tip: \$ = less than US\$30; \$\$ = US\$31-\$75; \$\$\$ = US\$76-\$100; \$\$\$\$ = more than US\$100.

Local & Regional

ABC Kitchen

35 E. 18th St., between Broadway and Park Avenue (subway line N, Q, R, 4, 5, 6 or L to Union Square)
New York, NY

Phone: 212-475-5829

<http://www.abckitchennyc.com>

Nestled inside the ABC carpet and home store, acclaimed chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten has taken the local foods trend to new and impressive levels. The overall effect is one of a dream home that comes complete with one of the world's best chefs.

Daily for lunch and dinner. Reservations recommended. \$\$-\$\$\$.

Blue Hill

75 Washington Place, between Sixth Avenue and MacDougal Street (subway line A, B, C, D, E, F or M to West Fourth Street)
New York, NY

Phone: 212-539-1776

<http://www.bluehillfarm.com/food/blue-hill-new-york>

This urbane Village restaurant may look sophisticated, but its heart is out on the farm. Locally sourced and seasonal delicacies—mostly from the rich agricultural regions of the Hudson River Valley—are the focus of the menu there, prepared with a contemporary American touch.

Daily for dinner. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$. Offers an a la carte menu; the five-course tasting menu is US\$78 per person. Most major credit cards.

Carnegie Deli

854 Seventh Ave., between 54th and 55th streets (subway line N or R to 57th Street; B, D or E to Seventh Avenue)
New York, NY 10019

Phone: 212-757-2245. Toll-free 800-334-5606

<http://www.carnegiedeli.com>

One of the best-known New York delis, with brisk (and brusque) waiters, movie-star photos, close-packed tables and, best of all, towering corned-beef and pastrami sandwiches. Round things out with blintzes, some matzo-ball soup and a piece of cheesecake or a black-and-white cookie for dessert.

Daily 6:30 am-4 am for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Reservations accepted only for parties larger than 15. \$. There's a US\$12.50 minimum purchase, with an extra US\$3 charge for sharing. No credit cards.

Gray's Papaya

2090 Broadway, at 71st Street (subway line 1, 2 or 3 to 72nd Street)
New York, NY 10023

Phone: 212-799-0243

<http://grayspapayanyc.com>

A rite of passage for locals and tourists—this 24/7 joint is said to serve one of the better slim and snappy hot dogs in the city, for only US\$1.95. It's also known for its frothy tropical-fruit drinks. No seating, which is part of the scene. There is an additional location in Greenwich Village, but the one on Broadway is the original. After spending a fortune on opera tickets at the Met, this is a good budget bite before the curtain goes up—it's a walkable six blocks from Lincoln Center.

Daily 24 hours. \$. Cash only.

Katz's Delicatessen

205 E. Houston St., at Ludlow Street (subway line F to Second Avenue; F, J, M or Z to Delancey Street-Essex Street)
New York, NY

Phone: 212-254-2246

<http://katzsdelicatessen.com>

Katz's is massive and chaotic, with occasionally caustic service, but expect more food than you can possibly eat. This New York staple still turns out legendary hot-pastrami sandwiches, all-beef hot dogs and egg creams—just as it has since 1888 (with plenty of hype). If you can visit only one New York deli, make it this one. You can even sit at the table where Meg Ryan and Billy Crystal made a scene in *When Harry Met Sally*.

Open Monday-Wednesday 8 am-10:45 pm, Thursday 8 am-2:45 pm; 24 hours on Friday and Saturday, Sunday until 10:45 pm. \$. Most major credit cards.

Shake Shack

Southeast corner of Madison Square Park, near Madison Avenue and East 23rd Street (subway line R to 23rd Street)
New York, NY

Phone: 212-889-6600

<http://shakeshack.com>

This well-known burger joint first opened in 2004 in Madison Square Park and has since expanded to other locations in and outside of New York City. It is not only famous for its burgers, but also for its daily selection of frozen custards, even providing a live camera on the website so you can see how long or short the line is before taking off for lunch—count on the line being long (but it's worth the wait—trust us). Multiple locations throughout the city.

Open daily 11 am-11 pm. \$.

The Four Seasons

99 E. 52nd St. (subway line E or 6 to Lexington Avenue-53rd Street)
New York, NY

Phone: 212-754-9494

<http://www.fourseasonsrestaurant.com>

The modern interiors of this classic New York restaurant, designed by Mies van der Rohe and Philip Johnson in 1959, have remained true to the architects' vision. In 1989, the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission added the restaurant's interior to its list.

The Four Seasons has retained its glamour, elegance and refined cuisine since its inception—and it's one of Midtown's power-lunch places. We recommend the stunning Pool Room.

Monday-Friday for lunch and dinner, Saturday for dinner only. Reservations highly recommended. Jackets required (and available at the restaurant). \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

The NoMad Restaurant

1170 Broadway (at 28th Street; subway lines 4, 6, N or R to 28th Street)
New York, NY

Phone: 212-796-1500

<http://www.thenomadhotel.com>

You'll feel as if you're sitting in Bruce Wayne's living room when you take a seat at this plush parlor restaurant inside of the NoMad Hotel. Dark oak furniture, mood lighting and French artwork (think pressed herbs in frames) create the perfect Gotham City atmosphere. The service is exceptional, and the menu isn't bad, either: The roast chicken for two with foie gras and black truffles was one of the best meals we've have ever had. Chef Daniel Humm is also responsible for another gastronomic treat, the opulent Eleven Madison Park restaurant.

Daily for dinner. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Security

Etiquette

Professionals in New York tend to conduct meetings and working lunches with an emphasis on efficiency. The short shrift given to niceties in the city is often interpreted as rudeness by visitors used to a more leisurely style of business. Punctuality is expected, but New Yorkers will understand if you're held up by mass-transit or traffic delays. As traffic can be quite bad at certain times and in certain parts of the city, it's often quicker and more predictable to travel by subway. Don't hesitate to ask locals, as most New Yorkers are happy to opine on the best way to get from A to B.

Personal Safety

Expect heightened security everywhere you go, with special emphasis on the checking of IDs and the inspection of packages and bags. If you plan to enter an office building, you may pass several levels of security and be required to register with the front desk. You will almost always need to present picture identification. Make sure you have with you a phone number for the person you are seeing, in case there

is any mix-up at the desk. It may be necessary to be cleared in advance before entering official government buildings.

Avoid walking through Central Park after dark. For other areas, consult your hotel's front desk. If that's not an option, trust your instincts: Do not walk down any block in any part of the city that looks particularly desolate (shuttered, abandoned and dark) or otherwise sinister. When in doubt, take a cab. Crowded areas are usually fairly safe. But remember to be wary of pickpockets in such crowds. The subway is usually quite safe, even late at night—and often still crowded into the wee hours. Nevertheless, there can be crime, and as with walking, ask at the hotel about particular areas to which you may be travelling, and use your instincts.

We think New York is a fairly safe city. And at times, we agree with those who claim to feel safer walking around Manhattan—even at night—than they do driving alone on city streets in most other American cities. But crime and danger can lurk in any part of any city. So our best advice is to go about purposefully, aware of your surroundings at all times. Be careful when using smartphones, as these are increasingly a favored target of thieves—and their use usually gives away that somebody is distracted or unfamiliar with their surroundings. Police seem to be on every corner in New York, even when you don't realize they're there. They know the city that never sleeps, and they want you to enjoy it.

Health

New York can get very hot and humid in the summer, so take care to stay hydrated and get out of the sun a bit. Likewise, winters can be very cold. The city is densely populated, and a ride on the subway during cold and flu season sometimes sounds like a symphony of coughing. But as anywhere, wash your hands and hope for the best.

Pharmacies are numerous, and many have extended hours. Duane Reade pharmacies have the most locations around the city. For 24-hour locations, visit <http://www.duanereade.com>.

Hotel staff can usually help with referrals to doctors, dentists or other health care resources. In the case of an emergency, call 911.

Bellevue Hospital—Trauma, perinatal, AIDS, poison control and stroke center. First Avenue at 27th Street (subway line 6 to 28th Street), Manhattan, New York City. Phone 212-562-1000.

Mount Sinai Beth Israel Medical Center—Level 3 perinatal care and stroke center. First Avenue at 16th Street (subway line 4, 5 or 6 to 14th Street-Park Avenue South; L to First Avenue), Manhattan, New York City. Phone 212-420-2000.

Harlem Hospital Center—Trauma, level 3 perinatal, AIDS, burn and stroke center. 506 Lenox Ave., at 135th Street (subway line 2 or 3 to 135th Street-Lenox Avenue), Manhattan, New York City. Phone 212-939-1000.

Lenox Hill Hospital—Level 3 perinatal care and stroke center. 100 E. 77th St., at Lexington Avenue (subway line 6 to 77th Street-Lexington Avenue), Manhattan, New York City. Phone 212-434-2000.

Manhattan Eye, Ear And Throat Institute—Emergency services. 210 E. 64th St., between Park and Lexington avenues (subway line 6 to 68th Street-Hunter College), Manhattan, New York City. Phone 212-838-9200.

Mount Sinai Hospital—AIDS, perinatal and stroke center. 1190 Fifth Ave., at 99th Street (subway line 6 to 96th Street-Lexington Avenue), Manhattan, New York City. Phone 212-241-6500.

New York Presbyterian Hospital-New York Weill Cornell Center—Trauma, perinatal, AIDS, burn and stroke center. 525 E. 68th St., at York Avenue (subway line 6 to 68th Street-Lexington Avenue), Manhattan, New York City. Phone 212-746-5454.

St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital—Partner hospitals with facilities both uptown and in midtown. Trauma, level 1 perinatal, AIDS and stroke center. St Luke's is at 1111 Amsterdam Ave., at West 114th Street, (subway line 1 to West 116th Street-Columbia University); Roosevelt is at 1000 10th Ave., between 58th and 59th streets (subway line A, B, C, D or 1 to 59th Street), Manhattan, New York City. Phone 212-523-4000.

Disabled Advisory

Most New York City landmarks and museums have ramps, elevators and other types of access for the disabled. Some museums offer sign-interpreted tours.

Most Broadway performances provide devices for the hearing impaired; call Sound Associates for more information. Phone 212-582-7678.

You can book a wheelchair theater reservation through Telecharge (phone 212-239-6200). The Theater Development Fund offers a membership program that aids people with different disabilities. Services include sign-language interpretation and accessible seating. Apply for this free membership at <http://www.tdf.org> or call 212-912-9770 for more information. The website also lists upcoming open-captioning and sign-language-interpreting performances for members.

Hospital Audiences, a nonprofit organization, is an excellent resource for disabled travelers. It has a variety of programs detailed on its website. 548 Broadway, Third Floor, Manhattan, New York City. Phone 212-575-7676. <http://www.hospitalaudiences.org>.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority's website is an excellent resource for planning how to navigate public transportation by planning routes involving accessible subway stations (some are not), as well as other means of transportation. <http://web.mta.info/accessibility>.

Facts

Dos & Don'ts

Do take a street map along when exploring the city—and don't hesitate to ask for directions. Contrary to some stories, New Yorkers are generally quite willing to help.

Don't walk through Central Park or other parks at night.

Do get a wallet-sized subway map and check signs in the stations and at <http://www.mta.info> for changes in service. And consider buying an unlimited MetroCard (depending on the length of your stay) to save money on subway fare.

Don't turn right on a red light if you drive in New York City.

Do try to walk everywhere as much as you can, especially across the Brooklyn Bridge. There is no better way to see the city.

Don't be surprised to hear many languages spoken, including some you may not recognize.



Do ride the Staten Island Ferry. It's one of the few free things in New York.

Don't forget to tip your cab drivers.

Do pick up a free copy of *The L Magazine* for up-to-date museum and gallery shows, jazz, theater and music performances, as well as great insight into the burgeoning Brooklyn music scene.

Don't be surprised if you see celebrities out and about in stores or on the street; for many, New York is their hometown.

Geostats

Passport/Visa Requirements: All U.S. citizens must have a passport when traveling by air to or from Bermuda, Canada, the Caribbean, Central and South America and Mexico. Citizens of Canada, Mexico and the British Overseas Territory of Bermuda also must have a passport or other designated secure document to enter the U.S.

Passports are required for land crossings at the Canadian and Mexican borders with the U.S. and for cruise passengers returning to the U.S. from Mexico, the Caribbean, Canada or Bermuda. Reconfirm travel-document requirements with your carrier prior to departure.

Population: 8,336,697.

Languages: English, though many others are common, especially Spanish.

Predominant Religions: Christian (Roman Catholic, Protestant), Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist.

Time Zone: 5 hours behind Greenwich Mean Time (-5 GMT). Daylight Saving Time is observed from the second Sunday in March to the first Sunday in November.

Voltage Requirements: 110 volts.

Telephone Codes: 212, 646 and 917, Manhattan; 718, 347 and 917, The Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island. You must dial the area code before all local numbers;

Money

Currency Exchange

ATMs are located inside banks and major terminals, such as Penn Station, Port Authority Bus Terminal and Grand Central Terminal. You can also find Chase bank ATMs in Duane Reade stores. There are no ATMs in subway stations. Always be alert when retrieving money from a cash machine in the city; try to use only those in well-lit, populated areas or in the secure lobby of one of the numerous banks. There have been reports of identity theft involving some generic ATMs in small stores, so it's best to stick to those operated by banks if possible.

Banking hours are generally Monday-Friday 9 am-4 pm, but some banks open at 8 or 8:30 am and close at 5:30 or 6 pm. Many banks are open Saturday and Sunday.

Credit cards are widely accepted, including in taxis. Subway ticket machines also accept credit cards, however it's best to have a bit of cash handy, as problems sometimes arise.

Taxes

Sales tax is 8.875%, which is a combined city and state tax. Clothing and footwear purchases less than US\$110 are exempt from New York City's 4.5% sales tax, and clothing and footwear less than US\$55 are exempt from the entire sales tax. Hotel tax is an additional 5.875% plus US\$2 a night.

Tipping

The appropriate tip in restaurants is generally double the tax, about 17%-20%. You should also make sure you tip taxi drivers, tour guides and hotel porters. A few dollars can really brighten someone's day. "Pay it forward" and leave your housekeeper a \$5 tip for each day you stay.

Weather

Songwriters have idealized New York in spring and autumn for a reason—the city is most beautiful then. If you visit April-June, you'll find generally comfortable humidity, though July and August can at times be uncomfortably hot and humid. Temperatures in April range from a low of 36 F/3 C to a high of 54 F/12 C. By June, expect daytime highs of 75 F/24 C and cool nights of 56 F/12 C.

In September and October, the clear days will be comfortable in the 60-70 F/15-21 C range, with nights demanding a warm jacket or sweater. Winter can be cold and bitter in New York, and the damp wind cuts to the bone. But New York is magical and quiet after a heavy snow (until it all turns to dirty slush). In general, extremes of temperature and humidity can make winter and summer the least dependable times to visit.

What to Wear

As with all things New York, appropriate dress covers the full gamut. Bear in mind that at most public venues—Broadway theaters, concerts and so forth—one encounters every kind of fashion, from T-shirts to tuxedos. "Business casual," the standard of many restaurants and entertainment venues, means no sneakers, no shorts or jeans, and no shirts without sleeves (for men). You may want to inquire in advance, and the prohibition on sneakers—at least more stylish ones—does seem to be fading a bit. "If I'm paying this much I can wear what I want" doesn't work in New York, unless you're a celebrity with a publicist in tow.

In general, let the weather and your own comfort be your guide. This will mean wearing your sturdiest and most comfortable pair of shoes. More than any other major U.S. city, New York is a town for walking, both to see the sights and because it's often the most efficient mode of transportation. You will be walking much more than you expect, so comfortable shoes are essential.

Summertime can be extremely hot and humid, dictating light, breathable clothing. For sightseeing, shorts are certainly OK (although you'll stand out as a tourist), and for summer evenings, casual or semiformal summer wear is acceptable. In spring or fall, take an extra sweater and an umbrella. Winters can be as cold as summers are hot, and the winds are often strong and chilly. Warm shoes or boots and layered clothing are the keys to keeping warm.

As you might expect, business attire in New York is both formal and fashionable, but business casual is making significant inroads.