

Introduction

When it comes to a city as famous and infamous as New York, everybody has an opinion, often based on indelible film images or evocative song lyrics. What remains the same is that it is still a place where the only thing you can count on is change. New Yorkers like the shock of the new — it's where the city gets its trademark energy. We have short attention spans; a restaurant, show, club, or store may be the hottest thing to hit the city for a couple of months, and then another opens, and that once-hot place quickly becomes yesterday's news.

On the other hand, New Yorkers don't always appreciate change, because it means we may have lost something we had come to love. New Yorkers respect the old standards that have become a part of the city's core identity. What would we do without that reassuring sight of the Lady in the harbor? Or the gleaming spire of the Empire State Building? Or the perfect pizza slice? Or a Sunday in Central Park? Or the rumbling of the train beneath our feet? Or the sounds of jazz from a Village club? So, even though New York is ever-changing — in the past decade, we've bid adieu to the subway token, Yankee and Shea stadiums, Tavern on the Green, and H&H Bagels — certain essential features remain the same. And we wouldn't have it any other way.

In the pages that follow, I do my best to guide you to what's fresh and new, without leaving out some beloved standards. I tell you where to find the best that New York has to offer, both on and off the beaten path. But really, I want to present New York as simply as possible so you can decide what paths *you* want to follow during your visit.

About This Book

Maybe this is your first trip to New York, or maybe you're a repeat visitor; in either case, I assume that you want to find out the basics, plus a little bit more. But I don't want to overload you with information, which is easy to do when you're talking about New York.

This is both a guidebook *and* a reference book. You can read it cover to cover, or you can jump in anywhere to find the information you want about a specific task, such as finding a hotel or working out your budget. Whether you're sitting in your living room trying to make a reservation or standing on the corner of 42nd Street and Fifth Avenue wondering where to eat, *New York City For Dummies*, 7th Edition, is set up so that you can quickly get the facts and recommendations you want.

Please be advised that travel information is subject to change at any time — this is especially true of prices. Therefore, I suggest that you

write or call ahead to confirm prices and details when making your travel plans. The author, editors, and publisher cannot be held responsible for readers' experiences while traveling. Your safety is important to us, however, so I encourage you to stay alert and be aware of your surroundings. Keep a close eye on cameras, purses, and wallets, all favorite targets of thieves and pickpockets.

Conventions Used in This Book

In this book, I include lists of hotels, restaurants, and attractions. As I describe each, I often include abbreviations for commonly accepted credit cards. Take a look at the following list for an explanation of each.

AE: American Express

DC: Diners Club

DISC: Discover

MC: MasterCard

V: Visa

I've divided the hotels into two categories: my personal picks of the top accommodations the city has to offer and those that don't quite make my preferred list but still get my hearty seal of approval. I also include some general pricing information to help you as you decide where to unpack your bags or dine on local cuisine. I've used a system of dollar signs to show a range of costs for one night in a hotel (the price refers to a double-occupancy room) or for a meal at a restaurant (included in the cost of each meal is soup or salad, an entree, dessert, and a nonalcoholic drink). Check out the following table to decipher the dollar signs.

<i>Cost</i>	<i>Hotel</i>	<i>Restaurant</i>
\$	\$209 or less	\$34 or less
\$\$	\$210–\$309	\$35–\$59
\$\$\$	\$310–\$449	\$60–\$84
\$\$\$\$	\$450–\$599	\$85–\$99
\$\$\$\$\$	\$600 or more	\$100 or more

For those hotels, restaurants, and attractions that are plotted on a map, a page reference is provided in the listing information. If a hotel, restaurant, or attraction is outside of Manhattan, it may not be mapped.

How This Book Is Organized

This book is divided into six parts covering the major aspects of your trip. Each part is further broken down into specific components so you can go right to the subtopic you want — for example, you don't have to

read all about nightlife if you're just looking for a jazz club. Following are brief summaries of the parts.

Part I: Introducing New York City

In this part, I give you my opinion on the very best of New York when it comes to hotels, attractions, events, and restaurants. This part also includes some basic information on culture, history, architecture, and food, along with the differences the seasons make in determining when you may want to visit, and a yearly calendar of major events.

Part II: Planning Your Trip to New York City

This part covers the nitty-gritty of trip planning: how to manage your money and plan your budget for your visit, how to get to New York, whether you should join an escorted tour or choose a package tour, what to do if you have special needs, and other nuts 'n' bolts details.

Part III: Settling Into New York City

This part is all about getting around, from the moment your plane lands or you step off the train or bus. I cover ground transportation into Manhattan, the public-transit system, and sights to see on foot. This part also includes information about many New York neighborhoods and what makes them distinctive. From there, I give an overview of the New York lodging scene and how to find the best room rate; I list my favorite hotels along with a few very good runners-up. Finally, this part includes a chapter on eating in New York; here, I give you an idea of the food scene in New York, along with yummy snacking options.

Part IV: Exploring New York City

This part describes what to see and do, from touring famous buildings to attending the taping of a TV show. This part also includes a chapter on shopping the local stores. Here, I point out the best shopping neighborhoods and the city's best stores. To help you fit in all that you want to see while you're here, I also provide some sample itineraries to help you organize your time in the city.

Part V: Living It Up After Dark: New York City Nightlife

This part covers New York's major arts attractions, from Broadway shows to clubs, and gives you an idea of what each activity costs and how to get discount tickets. I also include a chapter on nightclubs, places to have a drink, and other more- or less-civilized forms of relaxation.

Part VI: The Part of Tens

The Part of Tens gives you a few of my top tens of New York. You can take them seriously, or you can take them for what they are — fun. Either way, I think you'll enjoy them.

Quick Concierge

At the back of this book, I include an appendix — your Quick Concierge — containing lots of handy information you may need when traveling in New York, such as phone numbers and addresses for emergency personnel, protocol for sending mail or finding taxis, and more. You can easily find the Quick Concierge because it's printed on yellow paper.

Icons Used in This Book

Keep your eyes peeled for icons, which appear in the margins throughout the book. These little pictures serve as a kind of shorthand or code to alert you to special information. Here are the icons I use in this book and a description of each.



Keep an eye out for the Bargain Alert icon as you seek out money-saving tips and/or great deals.



The Best of the Best icon highlights the best that New York has to offer in all categories — hotels, restaurants, attractions, activities, shopping, and nightlife.



Watch for the Heads Up icon to identify annoying or potentially dangerous situations, such as tourist traps, unsafe neighborhoods, budgetary rip-offs, and other things to be aware of.



Find out useful advice on things to do and ways to schedule your time when you see the Tip icon.



Look to the Kid Friendly icon for attractions, hotels, restaurants, and activities that are particularly hospitable to children or people traveling with kids.



The Worth the Search icon highlights secret little finds or useful resources that are worth the extra bit of effort to get to or find.

Where to Go from Here

New York can seem overwhelming, but it doesn't have to be. It can seem budget busting, but it doesn't have to be. In New York, you can find something for everyone — and that's what makes it so special. This book, and all it offers, helps assuage any fears or apprehensions you may have as it guides you to a fun, stress-free trip to the Big Apple.