





# The New York Bucket List

99 experiences to make you feel part of New York

Patrick van Rosendaal

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YORK  
.BE

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# If you think you've seen New York, think again

Are you looking for the ultimate guide for your visit to New York? This is it! Even if you've lived here your whole life, this guide will help you rediscover the city. This is it! The New York Bucket List consists of 99 unique experiences; everyone should check off at least a few of these in their lifetime. For some experiences, you might make a special trip to the city; others will simply make your stay even better.

We can get overwhelmed sometimes by the endless tips on social media and not see the forest for the trees. That's why I bundled 99 authentic, romantic, sexy, and special experiences into nine thematic chapters. These allow you to quickly and efficiently pick the experiences you most want to have and navigate your way through the choice overload presented by this metropolis. Those who can't get enough of the city will find fun facts throughout the book. And at the end of each chapter, you'll

also get a bunch of bonus tips! Whether it's your first visit or you've lived here for more than fifty years, let yourself be inspired to try something new. Choose the experiences that suit you best, or think completely outside the box for once and add those to your personal bucket list. This handy pocket guide will help you get the most out of the city. A stay in New York is not just a city trip, but immediately a journey around the world.

My motto is: *life is short, so enjoy it while you can*. That doesn't mean you have to check everything off your bucket list — as long as you keep dreaming, you're on the right track! I recommend that you dream of these 99 experiences in the *city of dreams*.

**Have you had an unforgettable experience in New York? Let me know at [patrick@newyork.be](mailto:patrick@newyork.be) and maybe your tip will be included in the next edition of this book!**

# Practical information

## Geographic

When people say New York, they often think of the Manhattan skyline. But the city is of course much larger. In total, New York consists of five major boroughs: Manhattan, The Bronx to the north, Queens to the east, Brooklyn to the southeast, and finally Staten Island to the south.

Each of those boroughs has its own neighborhoods, with Manhattan's being by far the most famous. Their names are usually ethnically or geographically inspired. For that first group, you have examples like Chinatown, Koreatown, and Little Italy. The second group includes Upper East Side, Upper West Side, the West Village, Lower East Side, SoHo (South of Houston), NoHo (North of Houston), TriBeCa (Triangle Below Canal Street), NoLita (North of Little Italy), FiDi (Financial District), DUMBO (Down under



Manhattan and Brooklyn Bridge Overpass), and so on.

A total of 8.8 million people officially live in New York. If you then add all the business people, tourists, and people without a residence permit, you arrive at a population number comparable to the entire state of Virginia — or even to a country like Austria.

## **FUN FACT**

I live in Manhattan because I can't afford Brooklyn.

We want to show you the city in its entirety even more than in the previous books. Follow the latest trend and venture deeper into the boroughs just like most New Yorkers.

### **Bronx**

You might have thought you were buying a city guide, but in reality, you're on a journey around the world. The Bronx has the lowest percentage of white residents at only 10 percent. The most spoken language is Spanish. Dos cervezas por favor!

### **Brooklyn**

'Een Draught Mackt Macht' is the official motto of this borough that seems to be plucked straight from a fairy tale for adults. A population that rivals Chicago and is now the most popular destination for New Yorkers in need of breathing space.

### **Queens**

Graveyards and garbage dumps. This borough was long New York City's dumping ground, but is now the rising star among the boroughs. Hip and trendy neighborhoods where I've put down roots with my family. Queens is absolute paradise for lovers of Asian cuisine!

### **Staten Island**

There are three bridges that connect Manhattan to Brooklyn, but none between Manhattan and Staten Island. Even a free ferry wouldn't convince me to go and live there. That said, I still enjoy taking the Staten Island Ferry from time to time. I like to buy a Stella or Heineken in a brown bag to drink on the boat trip.

## **Travel by subway**

The subway is an easy and efficient way to get around and is almost always reliable. As in any large subway network, there is of course occasional maintenance work or delays, but these are usually advertised in advance. You can buy a ticket the old school way at the machines, but you can also easily pay contactless with the OMNY system. Tap your credit card, your Apple Watch, your card in your Apple or Google wallet, or your rechargeable OMNY card against the OMNY system when entering the subway: this way you can pay easily and don't have to swipe. You can travel as long as you want and just tap your payment method against the OMNY system again when you exit.



Do you want to know more? Scan this QR code.

## **Transportation to and from the airport**

Your transportation depends on the airport where you arrive: JFK, LaGuardia, or Newark.

I suspect that getting scammed isn't on your bucket list. So do like the New Yorkers and order an Uber. Install the app in advance on your smartphone and link your credit card to it. Always request an Uber through your app. This is an efficient and easy way to get from one of the three airports to the city center or to your hotel.

If you land at JFK, you can take the Long Island Railroad (LIRR). Some \$4.4 billion has been invested in this so that travelers can quickly go from JFK to Grand Central. So make use of it!

Or take my good friend: the subway. In that case you need to prepare to transfer from the JFK AirTrain to a subway that will take you to your destination.

You can also be taken to the center by helicopter. I've arranged this for clients before, but it's still on my personal bucket list.

**The best time to visit New York**  
I recommend you visit New York in the mild autumn or spring. In the winter, it can sometimes be freezing cold here, and in the summer, it's sweltering hot. But maybe you like that? So just come to New York in your favorite season!

**How long should you stay?**  
Whether you have one weekend or a whole week – New York surprises you every day. The longer you stay, the more you discover. And even those who live here (like me) keep finding new places. This city is never finished. Amen to that.

I strongly recommend you don't try to see and do everything. I've been trying to see everything myself for fifteen years, but I'll never succeed. Every time I think I've seen the city completely, I can start all over again because everything is constantly changing. So enjoy every day and try to leave your FOMO at home!

Or just come live here and join me as a professional tourist.

### Where should you stay?

In New York, there are countless hotels. It's often difficult to give advice on this, as everyone's budget and taste are very different. I recommend that you hire a travel agent as they have much better deals and rates. If something does goes wrong, you also have a contact person who can get things sorted for you more quickly. The same principle applies to your flight. Did you book through a travel agent and your flight got canceled at the last minute? Then you're probably already on the next flight back home, which is not the case if you booked your tickets without a travel agency.

Be sure to also consider the location of your accommodation. Times Square is well located, for example, but it's still very crowded in the evening. If you want peace and quiet in the evening, then it's not the best option. Each neighborhood has its own characteristics.

**Feeling lost in a sea of choices? I'd be happy to help you find a suitable hotel and/or a good travel agent. Feel free to send me an email at [patrick@newyork.be](mailto:patrick@newyork.be).**



In this chapter, you'll find all the kinds of adventures you dream of. New York is the city where you can actually make them come true. Running a marathon on the stairs of the Empire State Building to swimming to the Statue of Liberty, from jet skiing on the Hudson River to soaring above the city in a harness: you can't imagine anything crazier. In New York, you always have to be better, bolder, and more adventurous. So brace yourself to run, jump, fly, or dive out of your comfort zone...!

**BE**  
**Adventurous**

**PRACTICAL****City Climb**

30 Hudson Yards  
+1 332-204-8500  
[www.edgenyc.com](http://www.edgenyc.com)  
@edgenyc

**Summit**

45 E 42nd St.  
[www.summitov.com](http://www.summitov.com)  
@summitov

**FUN FACT**

Did you know that there are five observation decks in New York? The Empire State, the Top of the Rock, the One World Observatory, the Edge, and the Summit.



*The sky's the limit, literally speaking.* The Empire State was the highest observation deck for years, but more recently one building after another has sprung up. Right now, The Edge and One Vanderbilt with their respective attractions City Climb and Summit are the standout towers of the city.

Do you have a fear of heights and want to overcome your anxiety? In the City Climb, you climb the final part of The Edge and hover above the city. This two-hour experience gives you value for your money. I've done it three times already and I guarantee you that it's incredibly safe, spectacular, and special, and it will also free you from your fear of heights.

Something a bit less extreme? Choose the Summit: the Swiss army knife of observation decks. Here you have five attractions in one! Matteo was the first little child ever to go up there. Now it's your turn.



# O2

## Swim to the Statue of Liberty

### PRACTICAL

#### Liberty to Freedom Swim

Washington Square  
Mon-Sun 06:00 AM-  
12:00 midnight [@nycparks](http://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/washington-square-park)

### FUN FACT

The sandals of  
Lady Liberty  
correspond to  
shoe size 879.



More at home in the water? Join the Liberty to Freedom Swim. This swim event takes place around 9/11 every year. That's not a coincidence, as the event is dedicated to American freedom. It's a 2.2 mile (or 3.5 km) journey that starts at the iconic Statue of Liberty and ends at the Freedom Tower.

Not convinced about this unique challenge? Seahorses and dolphins can show how it's done! In recent years, seahorses have found their way to the Hudson River, and dolphins have even been spotted in the East River. The revival of the underwater world is an indicator of healthier and cleaner water. You should also definitely bring your swimwear to New York! Not to swim unaccompanied in the Hudson and East River, but to enjoy the many public pools (see chapter BE Happy) or to jump in one of the many fountains. For ultimate summer vibes, my personal favorite is the one in Washington Square Park.



# 03

## Empire State Building Run-Up

### PRACTICAL

20 W 34th St.  
+1 212-736-3100  
[www.esbnyc.com/](http://www.esbnyc.com/)  
empire-state-building-run  
@empirestatebldg

Since I relocated, I live on the 40th floor and take the stairs more often. Unfortunately, I still can't make it all the way up to the 40th. If you're in top shape and a big fan of climbing stairs, I recommend the Empire State Building Run-Up. It's the most famous tower race in the world and challenges runners to complete 86 floors, totaling 1,567 steps! The record holders complete it in about ten minutes. Here you really put your endurance to the test.

### FUN FACT

On a clear day, you can see five states from the Empire State Building's observatories.

The iconic building is the epitome of American perseverance and optimism: the perfect place to embark on a crazy adventure. Built in 410 days, with 73 elevators and 6,514 windows, it gets struck by lightning about 25 times a year, resulting in spectacular photos. It also has its own zip code 10118, because more than 1,000 businesses and 21,000 employees are located there.



# 04

## Trapeze School

### PRACTICAL

Pier 40 - Roof, 353 West St.  
+1 212-242-8769  
Open from April to October  
Mon-Sun 10:30 AM -  
10:30 PM  
[www.newyorktrapezeschool.com](http://www.newyorktrapezeschool.com)  
[@tsnynewyork](https://www.instagram.com/tsnynewyork)

If you want to amaze yourself, the Trapeze School of New York is the place to be. Here you can learn all kinds of circus tricks, even flying through the air. And all of that right by the beautifully landscaped Hudson River Park. TSNY is located on the roof of Pier 40, which at over 37 acres is the largest pier along the Hudson. I'm currently training hard to glide through the air here as well. For those who are already in top shape, this is an absolute must! The school's slogan is: forget your fear, worry more about the addiction. Promises to be something else...



# 05

## Book a helicopter flight

### PRACTICAL

#### Westlight rooftop

111 N 12th St.,  
22nd floor  
+1 718-307-7100  
Mon-Thu 4:00 PM -  
12:00 midnight,  
Fri 4 PM - 1:00 AM,  
Sat 12:00 midday - 2:00  
AM, Sun 12:00 midday -  
12:00 midnight  
[www.thewilliamvale.com/dining/westlight](http://www.thewilliamvale.com/dining/westlight)  
@thewilliamvale

The five observation decks give you the chance to see New York from the air. But suppose you want to make this view even more spectacular and decadent? Then go for a helicopter tour. You can choose between short or long flights, with open or closed doors, and with a different departure point each time. You can even hang your feet above the Empire State in open helicopter flights. With the camera on your harness, you can get the most original selfie.

Don't book your tour on a Sunday. Manhattan once filed a complaint because they were fed up with the noise from the helicopters. If you depart from New Jersey, you'll fly over Manhattan. If you depart from Manhattan, you only fly around Manhattan.

I've flown with all the airlines myself at some point. Discover the best experience through the QR code.

Would that bust your budget? Then go for cocktails at the Westlight rooftop. There you're guaranteed head-spinning views.



# 06

## Experience the New York Marathon

### PRACTICAL

[www.nyrr.org/](http://www.nyrr.org/)  
[@nycmarathon](http://tcsnycmarathon)

### FUN FACT

The first New York City Marathon was run in 1970, with 127 participants who ran four times around Central Park. Fortunately they only kept to this course for five years.



The New York Marathon is a people's celebration that you just have to experience. It's a day when the city bursts with positivity and energy. Few others do it better than New Yorkers when it comes to cheering on the runners and pushing them to the finish line. And it's an event that revolves around togetherness and connection, regardless of gender, skin color, religion, and so on. Besides that, lots of people are running for good causes. In short, the New York Marathon is truly the holy grail of all marathons. Running it is definitely not my scene, even though I walk half a marathon a day as a city guide. Are you a running enthusiast though? If so, you should come to New York in November and take on this challenge along with about 50,000 others.

Is running a marathon too ambitious maybe? Then just go for a jog around Jackie Onassis Lake. Or experience the exhilarating atmosphere from the front row at the New York Marathon.



# 22

## Experience the New York energy at Madison Square Garden

### PRACTICAL

4 Pennsylvania Plaza  
+1 212-465-6000  
[www.msg.com/](http://www.msg.com/)  
madison-square-garden  
@thegarden

### FUN FACT

The locker rooms in Madison Square Garden are in a circle, so the players can look each other better in the eye. Good for team building.

Experiencing an event at Madison Square Garden is indescribable. This really has to be on your bucket list. And only here do people come to an event if they really want to be there, because there is so much to do in this city every day. Madison Square Garden is the place where the New York Knicks shoot hoops and the Rangers take to the ice. Watching a game alongside exuberant, enthusiastic New Yorkers is a fantastic experience. Sports not your thing? Then go to a concert! Billy Joel has performed here no less than 150 times, Harry Styles about 15 times, and the Dutch Armin van Buuren and the Belgian Stromae and Angèle also blew the roof off here. Who knows, you might be going to a new location soon, as the stadium has already moved a few times and there are plans for another relocation.





# Bonus tips by Patrick

01

## Economy Candy

108 Rivington St.  
+1 212-254-1531  
Mon-Sun 11:00 AM -  
6:00 PM  
[www.economycandy.com](http://www.economycandy.com)  
@economycandy

Ferrara

195 Grand St.  
+1 212-226-6150  
Sun-Thu 9:30 AM -  
10:00 PM, Fri-Sat  
9:00 AM - 11:00 PM  
[www.ferraranyc.com](http://www.ferraranyc.com)  
@ferrarabakery

02

## Ferry

4 Whitehall St.  
+1 212-839-3061  
Mon-Sun 24 hours  
[www.siferry.com](http://www.siferry.com)

03

[www.google.com/maps](http://www.google.com/maps)

04

## Di Palo

151 Mott St.  
+1 646-476-2014  
Thu-Sun 6:30 PM -  
11:00 PM,  
Mon-Wed closed  
[@dipalofinefoods](mailto:@dipalofinefoods)

You can also taste the authentic past at Economy Candy: the oldest candy store in New York. Here you'll find forgotten gems and all kinds of delicious candy. The store has been around for more than 85 years.

Do you love authentic Italian sweet things? Step into the past at Ferrara, the bringers of Italian ice to the U.S. In addition, they've been known for their fantastic cannoli since 1882. You are welcomed by large bottles of limoncello and Italian hospitality. As a professional tourist in my own city, I hardly ever travel, so it's especially nice for me to come here and daydream for a while.

While you're waiting for the ferry, you can treat yourself to a cold Heineken or Stella Artois. You can buy that in one of the small shops in the departure hall. This way you feel completely at home on the delightful crossing! Don't forget to ask for the typical brown bag, because it's still officially prohibited to drink alcohol in public.

Not sure whether it's worth it to take a taxi? Then check in the Google Maps app how long it takes by taxi, subway, or on foot.

Those who can't get enough of authentic places like Katz Deli should go to Di Palo. When you walk in here you smell *la dolce vita italiana*. It's one of the few old school New York shops for authentic Italian meats and cheeses. Most Italians can now be found in New Jersey, but there are still a few who have stayed on here to offer you real quality. That's why real New Yorkers, foodies, and the occasional lost tourist, shop here. You can also buy Nutella here that is imported directly from Italy. Apparently, it tastes different from the one made in the US, at least that's what the owners of Di Palo claim!

## **DISCLAIMER**

newyork.be is not responsible for withdrawal symptoms resulting from an overdose of fantastic experiences. Possible symptoms include an open mouth, wide eyes, a stiff neck, an expanded view and mind, the urge to walk quickly, excessive assertiveness, tolerance and helpfulness, resistance to cockroaches, and a total loss of memory regarding traffic rules.

**Texts by** Patrick van Rosendaal  
and Hannah Soenens  
**Translation** James Duncan

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[www.newyork.be](http://www.newyork.be)  
[www.lannoo.com](http://www.lannoo.com)  
[www.mirrormirror.be](http://www.mirrormirror.be)

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