

Angela's Guide to NYC

Arriving

JFK is a huge airport but it's not too tricky. Just follow all the signs, answer the nice man with the gun's questions and then get your bags. There's a taxi rank right outside all the terminals and an official medallion cab is \$52 to anywhere in Manhattan plus tolls, tips and the congestion charge. Should be about \$75 to \$80 all-in to get to your hotel safe and quick. You could take the airtrain if you're happy to do the subway or call an Uber but who doesn't want to cruise into Manhattan in a yellow taxi? It just feels right.

Finding Your Way Around

1. Always know the cross street of where you're going, especially if you're taking a cab. Rolling in and saying 1350 Avenue of the Americas will get you nowhere. You want Sixth Avenue and 55th Street – get a map from your hotel, it will save you so much hassle.
2. Hailing a cab is super easy as long as you know what to look for. If the number on top of the car is lit up, the taxi is available. If the lights on either side of the number are lit, then the cab is off-duty, he won't stop for you. If there are no lights illuminated on top of the cab at all, then there's already someone inside. Bah.
3. Avenues run north and south, the streets east to west. If you're headed uptown, don't hail a cab going downtown, you'll just piss off the taxi driver (who has to take you once you're in the cab). Instead, walk the short block across and get a cab going in the same direction as you. Unless you're wearing really high heels or it's raining, in which case, claim tourist ignorance.
4. Uber and Lyft both operate in the city and they're great to have as a backup but you probably won't need them. If you want to make sure you have a car back to the airport at the end of your trip, ask your hotel to book one for you.
5. The subway might seem intimidating but it's super easy, incredibly affordable and the fastest way to get around town. Download a trip planner app, plan ahead and save that taxi money for shopping!

Hotels

Soho Grand

The Soho Grand was one of the first hotels I visited when I moved to NYC (I met a guy at the bar who turned out to be a complete douche but the cocktails were great) and it's still one of my favourite places to recommend to friends. Amazing downtown location, friendly staff and still excellent cocktail options. Pro-tip – the oatmeal on their breakfast menu comes in a really shallow bowl making it impossible to eat. But why would you be ordering oatmeal anyway?

CitizenM

There are two CitizenM hotels in New York now: Times Square and on the Bowery. The Bowery location is close to Brooklyn, Soho, the Lower Eastside and the East Village plus it has a super cool rooftop bar for people staying at the hotel (or people prepared to pretend they're staying there then blag their way upstairs). The rooms are really small and have pod bathrooms inside the bedrooms so you probably don't want to share with someone unless you're already intimately acquainted (WINK). But the beds are super comfy and there's a little fridge in the room and its super affordable compared to most NYC hotels.

The Wythe Hotel

When I first moved to NYC, there weren't any hotels in Williamsburg at all. Now, the neighbourhood has changed so much, and there are five really fancy ones all within a block of each other and they cost practically the same as a Manhattan hotel. Mental. The Wythe was one of the first to open and they have a really lovely rooftop bar that even Jenny can be lured to. The McCarren Hotel has more of a party vibe if that's what you're after. From what I can tell, the William Vale is a mix of both. I haven't been yet but very cool people have told me it's very cool so, you know... sure.

Shopping

Bloomingdale's www.bloomingdales.com You've got to go, right? Bloomingdale's is an institution. Go, buy your Big Brown Bag, come home smug.

Century 21 www.c21stores.com The exchange rate isn't as good as it used to be but there are still bargains to be had at Century 21. It's like some kind of designer Primark, chockablock with designer clothes and accessories at knockdown prices. I've picked up Marc Jacobs stuff at less than half-price, Equipment shirts for under \$80, and oodles of bargainous cashmere. My top tip? Get there early, wear thin layers and don't arse about with the changing rooms. No one will look at you funny for trying on a ball gown over your smock top.

Sephora www.sephora.com Beauty fanatics, prick up your ears. All your favourite brands, no pushy sales staff (although there are people to help you if you need it) and lots of stuff is still a lot cheaper than it is anywhere else – Bobbi Brown, Hourglass, Fenty Beauty, Drunk Elephant – it's all here, sisters, it's here.

Catbird www.catbirdnyc.com One of my favourite shops in all of Brooklyn, this little den of treasures is most famous for its jewellery selection but they've also got heaps of candles and trinkets and general treat-yo-self gifts that a girl can't live without.

Shen Beauty www.shen-beauty.com If Sephora is a bit too mainstream, check out Shen in Carroll Gardens. The owner has been curating an amazing selection of natural brands for what feels like forever – she was definitely ahead of the curve and still picks up the next big thing before it has a chance to get big. I love the multisticks by Ilia Beauty because it doesn't matter how cack-handed you are, you can't really mess them up. There's also lots of other brands Jenny says are good so I do as I'm told and buy them.

Hudson Mall www.shopHUDSONMALL.com It seems so wrong to recommend a mall when you're coming to NYC but this is like a New York City Super Mall, full of intensely cool shops and amazing eateries. Also, it's just practical – lots of shops in one location = maximum shopping in the minimum time. Absolute score.

Eating Out

Balthazar www.balthazarny.com I feel like I've been going to Balthazar forever now. It's a gorgeous French brasserie that packs many a celeb into its chic dining room but never feels intimidating or awkward. At the first chance of a breakfast meeting (where they're paying) I'll suggest Balthazar for their wonderful, wonderful brekkies. French toast with home-made brioche. Mmm. Lunch is also good. As is dinner. Or just baked treats from their patisserie next door. Oh god, now I really want to go to Balthazar. NOM.

Supper www.supperrestaurant.com Supper is the perfect Italian restaurant for any occasion. Looking for a cosy place to stuff yourself with burrata and pasta? Go to Supper. Need a private room for a birthday celebration? Go to Supper. Cool place for a hot date that doesn't look too try hard but will have excellent wine and cocktails to lubricate your nerves away? Go to Supper. I have yet to have a bad meal here and I think I've tried everything on the menu. Top points to the Spaghetti Limone and the roast chicken. I'm salivating right now.

La Esquina www.esquinanyc.com If you want no-frills Mexican food with a cool sceney atmosphere, try La Esquina. Everything is delicious and there are so few things on this planet that cannot be solved by a margarita and a taco. I am pretty sure that's a scientifically proven fact.

Dominique Ansel Bakery www.dominiqueansel.com Home of the Cronut and the Cookie and Milk shot where the shot glass is an actual cookie. This is all you need to know.

Milk Bar www.milkbarstore.com There are a bunch of Milk Bars all over NYC now which makes getting a slice of Milk Bar Pie or Cereal Milk Ice Cream far too easy.

Things to Do

Classic Tourist Attractions

There are just some things in some places you've just got to do and happily New York has some of the top tourist attractions in the world. Go to Liberty Island to see the Statue of Liberty and stroll around Central Park on a sunny day. The Empire State Building is still completely awesome (although I recommend Top of the Rock in Rockefeller Centre because then you actually get to see the Empire State Building). Walk Brooklyn Bridge if the weather is good (preferably with a hot dog or a slice of pizza). Times Square can be A Lot but it's still really cool to see. Taking an open top tour bus around the city is one of my guilty pleasures, Alex makes fun of me constantly but I love it So Much.

Broadway

Why would you come to New York and *not* see a Broadway show? We all know how I feel about Les Mis but I'm falling hard and fast for Hamilton as well. We've also got the Harry Potter play now which people are going bonkers for but really, you can see anything on Broadway and have a great time. Check out the TKTS booth on Times Square to score a bargain.

The High Line

The High Line is an elevated park built on an old freight railway line that snakes along the Westside of Manhattan. It's been open since 2009 and even though it always has heaps of people wandering around, it never feels too packed. Great place for an ice cream and a wander.

Prospect Park

Obviously Central Park is amazing but I'm going to show favouritism to my local park. Prospect Park is brilliant: we have a lake and a zoo and a band shell that has awesome music all through the summer and an ice rink in the winter. Plus my friend once saw Patrick Stewart jogging there and if that's not enough to get you there, I don't know what is.