

Welcome to New York

We hope the information here is helpful as you explore and continue to settle in.

As spring arrives and as your time allows, you can step out your front door, pick a direction and walk for hours! You will always discover something new and interesting along the way. The five boroughs offer incredible richness of culture and diversity in one concentrated geographic area and yet you can travel just two hours north for peaceful mountain settings or two hours east for some of the most beautiful beaches anywhere. Whatever you choose, we hope you enjoy it all!

Throughout your time at Columbia, the [Office of Work/Life](#) will always be here to support you with needs that you may have now or in the future.

New York City Resources

March 2025

General Tips for Living in New York City

[Moving to New York Advice](#)

Advice from locals about apartment hunting, costs, and expectations.

[A Beginner's Guide to NYC](#)

Tips for choosing a neighborhood, exploring hidden gems, and navigating public transit.

[Secret NYC](#)

Lots of interesting tips about things to do that might not be in most guidebooks.

Culture & Entertainment

[NYC Arts & Culture Guide](#)

Featured content includes New York's free (and sometimes free) museums, Broadway, performing arts, and more.

[Time Out City Guide](#)

Multiple guides for NYC attractions, entertainment, travel tips and more. Possible to view by borough.

[Thrillist – Things To Do in NYC](#)

Thrillist's guide to activities in New York.

[TDF – TKTS](#)

Discounted Broadway and Off-Broadway shows. Join TDF for online access to discounted tickets in advance. Through TKTS, tickets can be picked up at Lincoln Center and Times Square Locations.

[Arts Initiative – Columbia University](#)

Stay connected with the arts at Columbia and throughout NYC through weekly email updates from the Arts Initiative.

[The Wallach Art Gallery – Columbia University](#)

The Wallach Art Gallery is located in the Lenfest Center for the Arts building on the Manhattanville campus.

[Miller Theater – Columbia University](#)

A variety of music and theater performances are offered throughout the fall and spring semesters.

[Music Performance Program – Columbia University](#)

Talented and inspired undergraduate musicians perform on campus throughout the fall and spring semesters.

[The Manhattan School of Music](#)

Student musicians perform throughout the academic year.

Dining

Reservations can be made through [Open Table](#) or [Resy](#). If there isn't availability for the day and time needed, call the restaurant directly.

See below for some recommendations from Columbia colleagues.

Transportation

[MTA](#)

Schedules, maps and fares for the NYC subway system, NYC buses, Long Island Railroad and Metro-North commuter rails.

[Transit](#) Public Transportation App

Download the Transit app for information about the closest bus and subway lines and current wait times.

[Exit Strategy](#) App

Lets you know where you should be on the subway platform in order to exit faster when you arrive at your stop. Designed for the iphone.

[Park NYC](#)

When parking on the street, this app lets you know how long you have before needing to move your car and allows you to pay directly for metered parking.

[Uber](#) and [Lyft](#)

When a car is the easiest and fastest way to get around town, Uber and Lyft are usually reliable.

[Curb](#)

Use the Curb app when you want to call a NYC taxi to your door.

Walking Tours and Local History

[Big Onion Walking Tours](#)

Founded in 1991 by GSAS students (PhD in History graduates), these unique tours are filled with facts, legends, and historical perspectives. The Office of Work/Life collaborates with this group as well as with Columbia faculty to offer occasional tours, too.

[Bloomingdale Neighborhood History Group](#)

A local community group that sponsors events and free walking tours.

[Landmark West](#)

Landmark West sponsors a variety of public programs such as walking tours, insiders' house tours, and book talks focusing on the Upper West Side.

Museums

There are over 100 museums in New York City, of varying size and scope. Here are a few that are not to be missed:

[American Museum of Natural History](#)

[Asia Society](#)

[Brooklyn Museum](#)
[Cooper Hewitt](#)
[Ellis Island Immigration Museum](#)
[The Frick Collection](#)
[Green-Wood Cemetery Gate House](#)
[International Center of Photography](#)
[Japan Society](#)
[The Jewish Museum](#)
[The Met Cloisters](#)
[Metropolitan Museum of Art](#)

Note: Columbia Affiliates can enter the Met for free, based on a Columbia-Met partnership

[The Morgan Library & Museum](#)
[Museum of Arts & Design](#)
[Museum of Chinese in America](#)
[Museum of the City of New York](#)
[The Museum at FIT](#)
[Museum of Jewish Heritage](#)
[The Museum of Modern Art](#)
[Museum of the Moving Image](#)
[National Museum of the American Indian](#)
[National September 11 Memorial & Museum](#)
[Neue Galerie](#)
[New Museum](#)
[New York Historical Society](#)
[The Noguchi Museum](#)
[Rubin Museum of Art](#)
[The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum](#)
[The Whitney Museum](#)

Libraries and Bookstores

In addition to the globally recognized Columbia University [Libraries](#), there is also the excellent [NYPL](#). With over 90 branches and expansive collections, [NYPL](#) has been an essential resource for all NYC residents for more than 100 years. Sign up for a library card and request books online to either receive an electronic version (if available), or to pick up a hard copy at one of over 50 grab-and-go locations. The closest location to Columbia is the Morningside Heights branch located at 2900 Broadway, between 113th and 114th Streets.

There are many notable bookstores in NYC, but here are a few favorites:

[Columbia Bookstore](#) – located inside Lerner Hall and accessible from Broadway and 115th Street.
[Book Culture](#) – two locations, 114th Street and Broadway, and 112th Street between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue.
[Shakespeare & Co.](#) – currently three locations, Broadway and 105th Street, Broadway between 69th and 70th Streets, and Lexington Avenue between 68th and 69th Streets.
[Strand Bookstore](#) – two locations, the main one on Broadway and 12th Street, and Columbus Avenue between 81st and 82nd Streets.
[The Corner Bookstore](#) – located on Madison Avenue and 93rd Street, noted for its many author readings and book signings.

Green and Farmers' Markets

With over 50 green markets and 15 farm stands, [Grow NYC](#) ensures that all New Yorkers have access to the freshest, most nutritious locally grown food the region has to offer. Some of the best ones are located at Union Square (M, W, F, Sa), Inwood (Sa), and outside of Columbia's gates on Broadway from 114th – 116th Streets (Th, Sun).

There is another local farmers' market not connected to Grow NYC located on the southeast corner of Morningside Park at 110th Street and Manhattan Avenue on Saturday mornings.

Some Local Recommendations (and some further afield)



Source: <https://www.cityneighborhoods.nyc/manhattan-neighborhoods>

Map of the immediate area with neighborhood names

Places

- Take a walk through [Brooklyn Bridge Park](#). Start at Atlantic Ave (Pier 6) and head toward the DUMBO/Brooklyn Bridge area. It has amazing views of Manhattan and is a lovely place to take a stroll and people watch.
- All of [Central Park](#) – but in particular, the [Central Park Conservatory Garden](#) (located at 105th Street and Fifth Avenue in the park), and all the seasonal activities - particularly [Shakespeare in the Park](#) (re-opening in summer 2025 after renovations), Summer Stage, free concerts from The New York Philharmonic, and The Metropolitan Opera – just to name a few.
- [The Museum of the City of NY](#) - right across the street from the Conservatory Garden.
- [Cathedral of St. John the Divine](#) and the Peace Fountain – concerts and art exhibits are held throughout the year inside the cathedral's cavernous space (Amsterdam Avenue between 111th to 113th Streets).
- [The Highline](#)
- [New York Botanical Garden](#) (in the Bronx)
- [Brooklyn Botanic Garden](#) (in Brooklyn)
- The [rooftop terrace](#) of The **Metropolitan Museum of Art** offers spectacular views of Central Park, the New York skyline, and a featured artist exhibit. Usually open April through October with a small drink and snack bar available.
- [The Cloisters](#) and the [Heather Garden](#) in Ft. Tryon Park
- [Wave Hill](#) (Bronx)
- Walk around **Chinatown** and be sure to go for dim sum—there's usually a long wait but worth it—just check when they are serving, as timing varies (these are fun for big groups and for kids, too, because you can share and taste lots of options).
[Jing Fong](#): They have a small location on 78th and Amsterdam and a huge one in Chinatown.
[Golden Unicorn](#): The largest and most famous.

[Nom Wah](#): Smaller but great food.

- Go all the way crosstown and walk along the **East River promenade** from around the mid-'70s to the low '90s, great views of the river, Queens, Roosevelt Island and more. (There's also a great playground, dog run and places to picnic around [Carl Schultz Park](#) that runs from 84th Street to 86th Street off East End Avenue). You can also check out [Gracie Mansion](#), the home of the mayor.
- Walk around the **Lower East Side** – although it has changed a lot in the past few years, there are still some places that have been around for generations:
[Economy Candy](#)
[Knishery](#)
[Katz's Delicatessen](#)
[Russ and Daughters](#)
- Just north of the LES is the East Village, home of the not-to-be missed Ukrainian diner, [Veselka](#), 9th Street and 2nd Ave. Open 24 hours. Try the perogies and potato pancakes.

Utilitarian Concerns

- Andrade Shoe Repair, corner of 105th Street and Broadway
- [University Hardware and Housewares](#) – great for a variety of kitchen, bathroom and closet needs, as well as a basic hardware store, Broadway between 113th and 114th Streets.

Grocery Shopping

- [Westside Market](#), Broadway and 110th Street
- [H Mart](#), Asian market, corner of Broadway and 110th Street
- [Lidl](#), Frederick Douglass Blvd. between 114th and 115th Streets
- [Whole Foods](#), Columbus Avenue between 97th and 98th Streets
- Whole Foods, 125th Street and Malcolm X Blvd.
- [Trader Joe's](#), Columbus Avenue between 92nd and 93rd Streets
- [Trader Joe's](#), 125th Street between Adam Clayton Powell Jr. and Malcolm X Blvds.

Restaurants and other eating establishments

Morningside Heights and the Morningside Campus

- [Nous Espresso](#), Philosophy Hall
- Joe Coffee, [Pulitzer](#), [Dodge](#), [NWC Building](#)
- [Pisticci](#), La Salle Street, between Broadway and Claremont Ave. (A Morningside Heights favorite!)
- [Tartina](#), corner of Amsterdam Ave. and 111th Street (Another Morningside Heights favorite!)
- [Le Monde](#), Broadway between 112th and 113th Streets
- [Community Food and Juice](#), Broadway between 112th and 113th Streets
- [Hungarian Pastry Shop](#), Amsterdam Avenue between 110th and 111th Streets
- [V & T Pizzeria](#), Amsterdam Avenue between 110th and 111th Streets

Manhattan Valley and the Bloomingdale District on the Upper West Side

- [The Ellington](#), Broadway and the corner of 105th Street
- [Fumo](#), Italian restaurant on Broadway between 107th and 108th Streets
- [Awash](#), Ethiopian restaurant on Amsterdam Avenue between 106th and 107th Streets
- [Banh](#), Vietnamese restaurant on Amsterdam Avenue between 106th and 107th Streets
- [Mama's Too! Pizzeria](#), Broadway between 105th and 106th Streets
- [Café du Soleil](#), French restaurant on Broadway between 104th and 105th Streets
- [Zaad](#), small falafel place on Amsterdam Avenue between 108th and 109th Streets

On or Close to the Manhattanville Campus

- [Dear Mama Coffee](#) – Manhattanville campus
- [Manhattanville Market](#) – Manhattanville campus
- [Bus Stop Diner](#), corner of Broadway and 135th Street
- [Dinosaur Bar-B-Que](#), 12th Avenue and 125th Street
- [Home Sweet Harlem](#), Amsterdam Avenue between 135th and 136th Streets
- [Makana BBQ](#), two locations – Amsterdam Avenue and 106th Street and Amsterdam Avenue and 134th Street
- [Amsterdam Sushi](#), Amsterdam Avenue and 135th Streets
- [Jin Ramen](#), Broadway between 125th Street and Tiemann Place
- [Skinny's Cantina on the Hudson](#), Mexican cuisine located on 12th Avenue and 133rd Street

South Harlem

- [Clay](#), Fine American dining on the corner of Manhattan Avenue and 123rd Street
- [Melba's](#), Southern comfort food on the corner of Frederick Douglass Blvd. and 114th Street
- [Pikine](#), intimate restaurant with authentic Senegalese cuisine on 116th Street between Frederick Douglass Blvd. and Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Blvd.
- [Silvana](#), 116th Street between Manhattan Avenue and Frederick Douglass Blvd.
Great Middle Eastern dining upstairs, and an intimate Speakeasy downstairs with a revolving roster of world class musical acts. Food and drinks are served downstairs as well.
- [Vinateria](#), corner of 119th Street and Frederick Douglass Blvd.
Upscale Spanish and Italian inspired dining with a nice selection of wines and cocktails
- [Levain Bakery](#), Frederick Douglass Blvd. between 116th and 117th Streets
Known for their fresh out-of-the-oven cookies.
- [Sugar Hill Creamery](#), Lenox Avenue between 119th and 120th Streets
Locally owned with featured flavors as Chairperson of the Board (blueberry cheesecake flavor) and Nunu's Peach Cobbler. Can be delivered.

Disclaimer

The entities included here are for general informational purposes only and Columbia University does not screen any services that may be available through these resources. Inclusion does not constitute a recommendation or endorsement of any specific business, product, provider, or organization. Columbia University assumes no responsibility in connection with listed entities.