



City Sidewalks, Busy Sidewalks,

Dressed in Holiday Style

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New York City is a magical place any time of year, but during the holidays, the city truly comes alive. Start planning your unforgettable holiday experience.



Carnegie Deli



City Bakery



THANKSGIVING

SEE & DO

In the melting pot of New York City, you'll find a lot more than the typical Thanksgiving turkey and dressing. Most restaurants are open Thanksgiving Day, though reservations are recommended. Go all out for what might be your most memorable holiday meal at trendy, upscale restaurants like Eleven Madison Park, Daniel or Colicchio & Sons. Or aim for something flamboyantly untraditional—sushi, Belgian waffles, tapas, Korean barbecue. New York has it all.

Post-turkey day, get an early start on your holiday shopping at Black Friday sales, or escape the crowds by going to a museum or Broadway show.

DON'T MISS

In November, the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade is the biggest happening in town by far. Mingling with the parade crowds is its own experience, but to get a good view, your best bet is from above. Splurge on a hotel along the parade route such as the Mandarin Oriental or the New York Hilton

Midtown Manhattan.

Hot chocolate is another wintertime must. City chocolatiers serve up a cup of melted bliss in every possible flavor, from thick and dark to spicy sweet. Check out favorites like The City Bakery and La Maison du Chocolat or the famous frozen hot chocolate at Serendipity 3.

TAKE IT FROM THE LOCALS

Though you'll still have plenty of company, you can miss some of the parade-day crowds by visiting the stars of the show on Macy's Inflation Eve. Get up close to snap a photo of popular classics like Kermit the Frog and Spider-Man. The inflation areas surrounding the American Museum of Natural History are open to the public from 3-10 p.m. the day before Thanksgiving.

Plan ahead—the holidays are high season in the Big Apple. Hotels along the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade route fill up fast, and restaurant reservations for Thanksgiving Day can often be made up to a month in advance.

CHRISTMAS

SEE & DO

Christmas in New York is filled with hundreds of iconic holiday to-do's. Department store window displays become curated works of art. A walk through Midtown Manhattan takes you past crowd favorites, from Macy's to Bergdorf Goodman and Barney's. Shop the Columbus Circle or Union Square holiday markets. See New York Botanical Garden's Holiday Train Show, where model trains chug through famous New York City scenes made of natural materials like twigs and bark. Drop by the toy-filled wonderland of FAO Schwartz or the ice skating rink at Rockefeller Center. For even the most stubborn Scrooge, in New York the Christmas spirit is contagious.

DON'T MISS

Take the time to see New York's most celebrated conifers. The Rockefeller Center tree, a tradition since the 1930s, is a world-famous symbol of the season. The giant-sized spruce, strung with more than 30,000 lights, towers over the picturesque ice-skating rink below. The American Museum of Natural History's Origami Holiday Tree is

another must-see, boasting 500 folded-paper ornaments inspired by museum collections.

The holidays are also the perfect time to catch a show. The Radio City Christmas Spectacular with the Rockettes and George Balanchine's *The Nutcracker* by the New York City Ballet are classic favorites.

TAKE IT FROM THE LOCALS

To celebrate Christmas like a New Yorker, you have to step off the beaten path. Often, that means leaving Manhattan. Rent a car or take the "A Slice of Brooklyn Bus Tour" to visit Dyker Heights, a Brooklyn neighborhood glittering with an incredible array of Christmas displays from illuminated topiaries to animatronic figures and elephant-sized Santas.

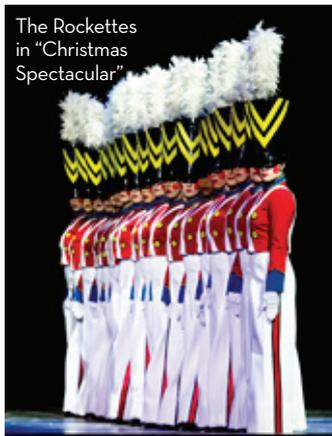
Smaller-scale but with a community atmosphere all its own, Joe DiMartino's Christmas display at his home in Staten Island is worth a look. The public installation, in memory of DiMartino's wife who died on 9/11, raises money for the children's cancer unit at Staten Island University Hospital.



Henri Bendel Holiday Window



The Rockettes in "Christmas Spectacular"



Barney's



Tripod Streets





NEW YEAR'S EVE

SEE & DO

The ball drop in Times Square may be the world's most famous New Year's Eve event, but there are plenty of other things to do in the City that Never Sleeps to ring in the New Year. Enjoy the last meal of 2013 and a champagne toast at one of New York City's top restaurants, many of which feature live music and themed courses. Or dance the night away at parties held all over town in clubs, hotels and unusual locales like Madame Tussauds wax museum. For a running start to 2014, head to Central Park for the Emerald Nuts Midnight Run.

DON'T MISS

One of the best ways to experience New Year's Eve firework displays is from the water. Harbor cruises of all types, ranging from formal to family-friendly, provide unobstructed views of the displays at the Statue of Liberty. The Bateaux New Year's Eve Fireworks Dinner Cruise offers fine dining, an open bar and live jazz on

an elegant all-glass vessel, as well as a synchronized musical accompaniment to the fireworks show.

For the ultimate upscale New Year's Eve experience, attend the New Year's Eve Gala at the Metropolitan Opera; this year's performance of *Die Fledermaus* is followed by a black-tie dinner dance.

TAKE IT FROM THE LOCALS

Rather than search out the crowds on New Year's Eve, many New Yorkers opt for a setting with some elbow room. Don't be afraid to seek out your own New Year's Eve hotspot for the countdown, whether it's an exclusive restaurant, local pub or a favorite New York attraction like the Brooklyn Bridge or Central Park.

If you're determined to see the ball drop and don't mind doing it a day early, walk by Times Square and you might catch a test drop. With passers-by looking on and cheering, it's almost as high energy as the real thing. ✦