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THE LATEST TRAVEL GUIDE TO INSPIRE YOUR NEXT TRIP

The Perfect 3 Day New York City Itinerary

Day 1: Lower Manhattan

The first day will be spent exploring Lower Manhattan, including Greenwich Village, the 9/11 Memorial & Museum, the Statue of Liberty, the Financial District, Brooklyn Bridge, Chinatown, and Little Italy.

We stayed at the [Courtyard Marriott](#) near Times Square. We are loyal to Marriott and love the location of this hotel. There is plenty to do and see within walking distance and it's easy to hop on the subway and get anywhere you need to in the city.

Greenwich Village

If you want to get an early start to your morning, head over to Greenwich Village where you can walk around one of New York's most charming neighborhoods.

Spot the famous *Friends* building from the iconic 90s TV sitcom, walk through Washington Square Park, and grab a red velvet cupcake or banana pudding at the original Magnolia Bakery before making your way down to the 9/11 Memorial and Museum.

9/11 Memorial and Museum

If you don't want to feel too rushed on your first morning in the city and want to make sure you get a full night's sleep after a long travel day, skip Greenwich Village.

Instead, enjoy a little extra sleep and grab a bite to eat at the hotel's continental breakfast, then book 11 am tickets to the [9/11 Museum](#).

You'll want to arrive about 15 minutes before your designated entry time as the security line can be long.

The museum is so well done as it pays tribute to the survivors and those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001. You'll see exhibits with salvaged remains and personal stories from the survivors and heroes of that day.

After visiting the museum, walk around the memorial reflecting pools that have been installed in the footprints of the original Twin Towers.

If you have time, you can also visit the One World Observatory to get a birds-eye view of the city at 102 stories up.

Occulus

Stop by the Occulus that is located next to the 9/11 Memorial and check out the cool architecture.

This transit station and shopping mall looks very futuristic and you can capture the best photo on the 2nd floor overlooking the main terminal.

Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island

Battery Park is located within walking distance of the 9/11 Memorial. This is where you'll catch the ferry to the Statue of Liberty Island and Ellis Island.

You'll need to [book tickets](#) in advance, and I highly recommend making reservations to visit the crown.

We booked tickets for 1 pm, that gave us enough time to spend about 1 1/2 hours at the 9/11 Museum & Memorial before walking over to the ferry terminal and arriving 15 minutes before the ferry departed.

With the Crown Reserve tickets, you'll take the ferry to the Statue of Liberty Island where you'll climb the stairs or take the elevator 10 stories up to the pedestal. You'll be able to see great views of the harbor and New York City skyline before continuing up a narrow spiral staircase to reach the inside of Lady Liberty's crown.

After visiting the crown, stop by the Statue of Liberty Museum where you'll learn more about the history and process of building the Statue of Liberty.

The ferry departs regularly about every 20-35 minutes throughout the day. Check the posted schedule by the dock and hop on the next ferry when you're ready to head to Ellis Island.

Ellis Island was once the busiest immigration inspection and processing station in the United States. Visitors will have a chance to walk through the original building and see the exhibits and displays. If you have time, you can even book tickets for a guided tour.

After spending time at Ellis Island, you'll take the ferry back to Battery Park.

Lunch at Liberty Bagel

New York is known for having the best bagels in America, and Liberty Bagels was voted as the #1 spot for bagels in New York by TripAdvisor.

After a full morning, grab a quick lunch at Liberty Bagels in the Financial District. There are a variety of bagel sandwiches you can choose from, or you can create your own custom sandwich. I like to keep it simple with the "Novie" that comes with lox, dill cream cheese, avocado, and tomato on an Everything bagel.

Liberty Bagels is also known for their colorful hand-rolled bagels. Our favorite sweet bagel is the rainbow bagel with birthday cake cream cheese.

Financial District

After lunch, explore the Financial District.

Take a photo with the famous Charging Bull Statue, walk down Wall Street and see the New York Stock Exchange Building, step into Trinity Church, and stop by Federal Hall to see the original stone that George Washington stood on when taking the oath of office.

Stone Street is also worth stopping by. It dates back to 1658 and is one of the oldest streets in New York City. It was also the first paved street in the city and has since been designated as a historical landmark. Today, this pedestrian-only cobblestone street is strung with overhead lights and lined with restaurants and bars.

Brooklyn Bridge

Walking across the Brooklyn Bridge is such an iconic thing to do in New York!

The top of the bridge is pedestrian-only access and you'll have a chance to get up close and witness the impressive architecture, as well as capture views of the city skyline.

You can also rent bikes at a few nearby retailers or rent a City Bike if you would like to bike across the 1.1 mile bridge and explore Brooklyn.

Chinatown & Little Italy

Walk over to Chinatown where you can indulge in the most delicious handmade noodles for dinner.

We love the hand-ripped biang-biang noodles at X'ian Famous Foods, followed by the brown sugar boba cream puffs at Alimama Tea.

For more restaurant recommendations, see our post, [A Foodie's Guide to the Best Places to Eat in New York City](#).

Spend the evening wandering the shops along Mott Street, picking up little trinkets and souvenirs.

If you're craving pizza and pasta instead of noodles, walk over to the nearby Little Italy where you'll have your pick of fresh handmade pasta and wood-fired pizza. Finish the evening off with a few cannolis!

If you are in the area early enough, consider visiting the [Tenement Museum](#) where you'll get a first-hand look at what life was like for early immigrants.

Day 2: Midtown

The second day will be spent exploring Manhattan's Midtown. Take advantage of the hotel's free continental breakfast before heading out to Hudson Yards, the first stop of the day.

Hudson Yards

Hudson Yards is an upscale retail and dining space with some other cool attractions. It is where you'll find The Vessel, a unique architectural structure and one of the most photographed locations in New York.

The Edge is also located at Hudson Yards. This glass observation deck juts out over the city and is the tallest observation deck in New York and the western hemisphere.

The Shed is a performance and visual arts center at Hudson Yards that hosts different events throughout the year, including New York's Fashion Week.

You'll also find the Public Square and Gardens, a pretty urban park. The Backyard is a public gathering place where they host community events. There is also a giant 30-foot screen for sports viewings and movie nights.

Chelsea

Head over to Chelsea, a fun neighborhood located in the heart of the Meatpacking District, and take a morning walk along the Chelsea Highline.

The Chelsea Highline is a 1.45 mile city park and walking path that follows along an abandoned elevated train line. It's a great way to get some exercise and see a unique view of the city.

After your walk, pop over and check out Little Island on Pier 55. This man-made island is a cool urban park that extends out over the Hudson River.

Nextdoor you'll find Pier 57 with a rooftop park situated on top of a trendy food hall.

Lunch at Los Tacos No. 1

For lunch, you'll head over to Chelsea Market. This vibrant food hall and retail space is located inside the historic Nabisco factory building that dates back to the 1890s.

Our favorite lunch spot in Chelsea Market is Los Tacos No. 1. In fact, it was even rated as the Best Taco Shop in NYC by Yelp. Order the carne asada taco on a corn tortilla with fresh pico de gallo and guacamole. You'll thank me later!

Flatiron Building, Harry Potter Store, & Empire State Building

From Chelsea, you can take the subway or walk about a mile to get photos of the famous NYC Flatiron Building.

Then head next door to Harry Potter New York. This flagship store is a favorite among wizards and muggles alike! The three-story store offers a magical shopping experience with everything from wands, to chocolate frogs, and unique collectibles. There are also plenty of photo ops!

The store is located by Madison Square Park where you'll find the original (and still the best!) Shake Shack.

Head over to the Empire State Building that once stood as the tallest building in the world for 40 years. You can purchase ticket to go to the observation deck on top of the building that was made famous in several movies such as An Affair to Remember and Sleepless in Seattle.

However, I recommend just stepping inside of the lobby of the Empire State Building and going to the Rockefeller Center observation deck or Summit One Vanderbilt instead. From these decks, you'll be able to get a view of the city skyline with the Empire State Building in it.

Dinner at Joe's Pizza

Grab a slice of quintessential New York Pizza from Joe's Pizza near Times Square. Joe's Pizza is a favorite among locals, tourists, and even celebrities!

Times Square

End your night at Times Square where the electric energy is palpable!

New York is the city that never sleeps, and there's no place that you'll find it more true than in Times Square. The lights and crowds never cease, no matter what time of day or night. You can do some shopping, watch the street performers, visit museums and attractions, or just take a seat and people watch.

I also recommend stopping by Anita Gelato for a scoop of the best gelato in New York. There is usually a line wrapped around the building, but it goes quickly and is worth the wait!

Day 3: Central Park, Upper West Side, and Midtown

Your last day will be spent at Central Park, then you'll pop over to the Upper West Side for lunch, and head back to Midtown to finish seeing the main sites in the city.

Central Park

Start your morning with a bike ride through Central Park.

We [rented e-bikes](#) for 2 hours and it was the perfect way to see the main highlights of the park, such as Gapstow Bridge, Bethesda Fountain, Strawberry Fields, Sheep Meadow, Belvedere Castle, and The Mall. Although, The Mall is pedestrian-only so you'll need to walk your bike through this area.

If you have time and want to go back and explore more of Central Park after returning the bikes, I recommend renting rowboats at the Loeb Boathouse, visiting the Central Park Zoo, renting remote-controlled model sailboats at the Conservatory Water Pond, and playing at the Heckscher Playground and Umpire Rock.

Lunch at Jacob's Pickles Upper West Side

Jacob's Pickles is probably our favorite place to eat in New York. They are known for serving classic Southern dishes with a modern twist.

We love the Chicken Biscuit Sandwich, but everything on their menu is delicious!

After lunch, pop over to Westsider Books, the cutest little independent bookshop. The American Museum of Natural History is also located nearby if you have time to visit.

5th Avenue

After lunch, take the subway over to 5th Avenue. Spend the afternoon window shopping at iconic stores such as Tiffany's, Saks Fifth Avenue, Dior, and Gucci.

There are also other popular stores that are more affordable like Urban Outfitters and Free People. If you have kids, they'll love FAO Schwarz, the Lego Store, and the Nintendo Store.

You'll also want to step inside of St. Patrick's Cathedral, the largest Gothic Revival Catholic cathedral in North America. The architectural details are truly astounding!

5th Avenue is one of our favorite spots during the holidays with its magical window displays and light shows. If you're planning to visit during that time, you don't want to miss our guide

[12 Bucket List Things to Do in New York at Christmas.](#)

New York Public Library

If you keep heading south down 5th Avenue, you'll come to the New York Public Library Stephen A. Schwarzman Building.

This is one of the most beautiful public libraries in the US. The exterior features a fountain and lion statues, and the interior features marble floors, soaring ceilings, intricate paintings, and stone archways and pillars

The Rose Reading Room is the most beautiful room in the library. It is only open to the public from 10-11 am if you want to plan accordingly.

It's also worth visiting the Treasures Room where you'll find a rotating collection of historic and priceless artifacts.

The library is located at Bryant Park where you can ride the carousel, or sprawl out on the lawn and enjoy a picnic.

Grand Central Terminal

Grand Central Terminal is one of the most beautiful train stations in the US. The Beaux-Arts building boasts a sprawling Main Concourse with the domed "celestial ceiling".

After taking a photo at the Main Concourse, stop by the Whispering Gallery and the small Transit Museum. If you have time, you can book a [guided tour](#) to learn more about the station's interesting history.

Summit One Vanderbilt or Top of the Rock

That evening, book tickets to an observation deck where you can watch the sunset over the city. Our two favorites are Summit One Vanderbilt and Top of the Rock.

I recommend booking tickets an hour before sunset so that you can experience the city during golden hour, at sunset, and at night.

Summit One Vanderbilt is a 3-level interactive art experience is located on the 91st floor where you'll have some of the best views of the city.

You'll be able to visit several different rooms during the experience. Our favorite is the two-story glass room with mirrored floors and ceilings, the room filled with silver balloons, and the rooftop observation deck.

It does feel crowded and a bit like an overpriced tourist trap, but it is a unique way to see the

city skyline.

Top of the Rock is located at the top of the Rockefeller Center. It's one of the best open-air observation decks with views of the Empire State Building and the Chrysler Building. It doesn't feel quite as crowded and has a more relaxed vibe.

Dinner at Halal Guys

Halal Guys serves some of the best street food in New York and they have a solid reputation on Yelp. They specialize in Middle Eastern chicken or beef gyro plates and wraps.

The servings are generous and they are packed with flavor!

Broadway Show

End your NYC trip at the iconic Broadway Theater. Watching talented performers on this world-famous stage is the best way to wrap up your unforgettable trip to New York.

The last show of the evening is usually at 8pm, but it depends on the day. During the winter when the sun sets earlier, you can catch sunset at the observation deck before the show.

However, in the summer when the sun stays out longer you will have to book tickets to the observation deck a little earlier so that you have time to catch the 8 pm show.

Concluding Thoughts

This itinerary is very ambitious and you'll be packing a lot into each day! If you have time, you could add a few more days to your trip to spread the activities out.

Aside from this list, there are still so many more places to see and things to do. If you like museums, you'll want to work the MOMA, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Morgan Library and Museum, or one of the other countless museums into your itinerary.

There are also plenty of underrated gems, like the Roosevelt Island Tramway and the Ghostbusters Headquarters.

However, if you only have 3 days, this itinerary will cover all of the main tourist sites so that you can go home feeling exhausted and fulfilled! Enjoy your time in the Big Apple, and safe travels!