

MANHATTAN

# MARVELLOUS MANHATTAN

By Mark William Sheehan

"When it's three o' clock in New York, it's still 1938 in London." –  
Bette Midler (Dec. 1st 1945 - )

Empire State Building



**B**eing a New York native, I've been a walking advertisement for the "Big Apple" of Manhattan my entire life. And I'm far from being alone, considering there are over eight million of us "New Yourkas" at any given time bounding around Manhattan and New York City's other four fabulous boroughs.

In addition to the locals who love New York, more than 45 million foreign and American visitors invade each year, making New York City one of the hottest spots to bed-down on the planet. The place is a veritable smorgasbord of eats, activities, sights, sounds, and events that is without a rival anywhere – although many other cities have tried.

Manhattan Island is almost totally solid granite, which made stacking sky-scrappers alongside each other like chess pieces easy to accomplish. The city is built on solid bed-rock and for all its pace and pleasure, it's very compact. Manhattan Island is only 22.7 square miles (58.8sqkm) in area but it is a very tightly-packed and busy place.

For all its skyscrapers and tall towers, New York City also boasts over 28,000 acres of public parkland and 14 miles (22km) of free-access waterfront. Whoever would have thought? Manhattan's Central Park is the most visited city park in the entire United States with magnificent public access and generous green space. The park is loaded with year-round activities, from horse riding trails, rowboats on ponds, ball fields and bike paths, smack-dab in the middle of Manhattan. Central Park covers an area larger than the principality of Monaco.

Are you planning on conquering "the city that never sleeps"? Forget about it! What visitors often do when they invade the Big Apple is attempt to tackle it all in one bite. It's a sure fire way of causing 'visitor indigestion'. New York needs to be enjoyed and savoured in small, well-ordered bites: depending on what your palate prefers of course. There are folks who dedicate years, entire lifetimes to uncovering the real New York...and they're still trying.

*Start spreading the news  
I'm leaving today  
I want to be a part of it  
New York New York*

The thing to do when taking on New York City is to confirm, in advance, the "must do" items on your wish list. Anything else you get on top of this is the cream on the cake. Many visitors to Manhattan say they were simply dumb-founded by the options for enjoyment.

Going to NYC you're going to want to take in a Broadway play. For my first choice play, the one I don't want to try for discounted tickets on, I book beforehand and pay in advance. This way, I avoid any disappointments. I simply belly-up to the wallet and secure the must have show time and the seats of my choice.

After that, I shop around for other shows that I'd like to take in, provided I can get a 'mate's rate' ticket for entertainment. The best prices for ANY Broadway, Off-Broadway, Off-Off-Broadway or never gonna get to Broadway shows are available from TKTS – but you must rock up and buy tickets 'on the day' for matinees or that evening's performances. I've gotten myself dress circle seats at



Hotel Beacon lobby



TKTS and saved 50% to see some of the best shows in town, simply by lining up at the kiosk in the centre of Broadway, at 47th Street.

Marketers throughout America know that folks waiting on the TKTS line-up are from all over the planet and they happily hand-out free promotional items while you wait. I sometimes bring a big Macy's shopping bag with me when I go, collecting sunglasses and baseball hats, cologne and perfume samples, CDs, new release music, tickets to a live taping of the David Letterman show, frisbees and even small new-fangled electronic devices.

You'll also find beds of all types of prices and descriptions when visiting New York. My all-time favourite bedrooms are at the Hotel Beacon on Broadway. This hotel is right in the heart of a real neighbourhood where fellow New Yorkers, work, play and stay. The delis, organic markets, great eateries and proper sit down entertainment within a baseball toss of the front door are only part of its appeal when you book your very own one or two bedroom apartment here. Location, location, location is tops too, only one block from Central Park, the famous Dakota Building of John Lennon, Lisa Minnelli and Jackie Kennedy Onassis fame (to name-drop just a few). The subway is only steps away which will get you anywhere in Manhattan without spending a fortune.

Other great beds include The Wellington Hotel, The Times Square Double-Tree hotel which is an all-suite property and the Waldorf Astoria, but move the mouse around and ask your local travel agent for recommendations. If money is an issue, look to the

new chic borough of Brooklyn. This is the place where the young, artistic and upwardly mobile bunch is nesting.

**“Take me out to the ball game  
Take me out with the crowd  
Buy me some peanuts and Cracker Jack  
I don't care if I never get back.”  
(Jack Norworth 1908)**

The newest way to nail-down event tickets across the great USA, is to jump on to [www.stubhub.com](http://www.stubhub.com) - a clearing house for NY Yankee tickets, Mets tickets, hockey, basketball, female mud-wrestling, tractor pulls and almost any other event you can imagine. It works a bit like Trade Me, only better, and the site 'gar-own-tees' satisfaction.

Saving money and time for Times Square! I can't think of anyone I know who jumps up and down at the prospect of waiting in long lines or having to pay full price. That's why I love CityPASS®. Not only do I save up to 50% on the costs, but I cut the lines, which for anyone keen on conquering an American city, is worth tons! A CityPASS® for Manhattan offers the Empire State Building, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, American Museum of Natural History, MoMA (The Museum of Modern Art), The Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island or a Circle Line Cruise and Top of the Rock (Art Deco skyscraper) or The Guggenheim Museum.



Central Park





Shopping is still top of the charts for international visitors to the USA and New York is the cherry on the sundae. You'll find a shop or vendor in New York that'll have it in five different shades, at eight different price-points from diapers and diamonds, to Bentleys and bicycles you'll be sure to find a bargain.

When you're arriving into any one of the three surrounding airports that serve the lure of Manhattan (LaGuardia, Kennedy (JFK) and Newark) you've got a few choices. The most-widely known are the yellow taxis, which have been made famous in countless movies. I'm a real advocate though of leaving the yellow cabs at the curb when I make my grand entrance so nowadays I order up a limo! There is nothing better than arriving in New York as your black-tied chauffeur totes your luggage from the baggage claim area and whisks you off in a slick block-long "Towne Car". Amazingly, pre-booking a private car pick-up is not much more than the cost of the 'flag fee' for a Yellow 'Medallion' taxi from the airport.

New York is a must see and experience city whether by water taxis, on the buses, riding ferries, on foot or by subway. New York City has 722 miles of subway track so go ahead, buy yourself a closet full of new shoes and side-walk test them in the greatest city in the world; New York! The key to unlocking this town is to plan in advance, know before you go and pay-up-front for as much as possible.

Buy a bag-full of "I love New York" tee-shirts and replicas of the Empire State Building as Marvellous Manhattan is calling out, loud and clear! Go ahead - hail a cab and enjoy the ride of your life. ■■

**FACTS:**

**Central Park**

[www.centralpark.com](http://www.centralpark.com)

TKTS Discount Booths in New York City are operated by The Theatre Development Fund (TDF) in three locations:

1. The Times Square Booth sells day-of-performance tickets only
2. The South Street Seaport Booth sells tickets to evening performances on the day of the performance, and matinee tickets the day before
3. The Downtown Brooklyn Booth sells tickets to evening performances on the day of the performance, and matinee tickets the day before as well as tickets to Brooklyn performing arts events.

TKTS Times Square, TKTS Seaport and TKTS Downtown Brooklyn accept credit cards (Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Discover), cash, travellers cheques or TKTS Gift Certificates. All locations sell tickets at 50%, 40%, 30% and 20% off full-price (plus a US\$4.00 per ticket service charge, which helps support other TDF services and programs. Availability and ticket inventory change throughout the day and at the discretion of individual productions. W: [www.tdf.org](http://www.tdf.org)

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**New York CityPASS®** includes one-time admission to 6 of New York's most famous attractions. CityPASS® ticket booklets are valid for nine days starting from the first day of use. Booklets include detailed attraction information, hours, location, insider tips and a map. With your CityPASS® booklet in hand, you'll skip most ticket lines. CityPASS® is available as a shipped booklet or convenient e-ticket. Note: Starting Oct. 29, the Statue of Liberty will undergo renovations that are scheduled to be completed within a year. Visitors will have access to the grounds of the Statue of Liberty but no access inside the monument during the renovations. W: [www.citypass.com/new-york](http://www.citypass.com/new-york)

**For tickets** to sports events, concerts, theatres and arts [www.stubhub.com](http://www.stubhub.com)