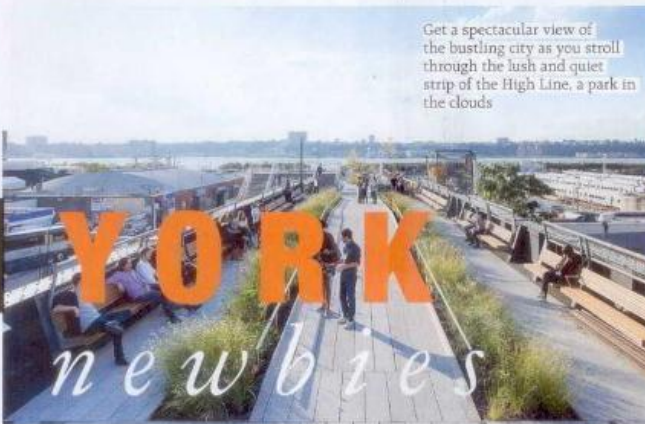


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Get a spectacular view of the bustling city as you stroll through the lush and quiet strip of the High Line, a park in the clouds

NEW for

YORK newbies

Unless you've grown up under a rock, New York is the kinda city that can feel instantly familiar. We give you a fresher's course in the sights, the stores and the stay for a memorable first time

New York has been a silent extra and sometimes a not-so-silent one in almost every single one of our favourite TV shows and movies. So if you fancy pulling a Carrie Bradshaw and strutting down 5th Avenue or wanna slum it in Brooklyn like Hannah Horvath, you're in the right place.

Few cities conjure up the kind of excitement New York does. Especially if like me you're an avid TV buff with all your favourite characters calling it home. In a way, a trip to New York is like visiting a TV set only to find a pulsating metropolis in its place. Home to about 8.5 million people all playing the lead in their own film. Thanks to our over-exposure to this great city it's easy to think of New York as a small stylish town with popular hotspots restricted to the likes of Times Square and Central Park. Rookie mistake, be warned. Spanning across five boroughs namely Manhattan,

the Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn, and Staten Island, the city can be a maze without the right planning. Adding to its large expanse is the fact that there is so much to see here. Luckily for you I've got a tried and tested list of recommendations. All you have to do is click 'buy' on those tickets. Things in this city sell out quickly so booking in advance is highly recommended and when it comes to budgeting I say take the YOLO route and loosen those purse strings, it's well worth it.

THE SIGHTS

The One World Observatory
Built right by the site of the fallen World Trade Center it's the tallest building in the western hemisphere and New York's newest experiential offering. It's a great starting point as it truly encapsulates the essence and resilience of this ever-evolving city. Get started with the Global Welcome

Center – a video wall welcoming visitors in 10 different languages and celebrating America's diversity. Next comes The Voices, another video wall relaying the stories of the men and women who built the One World Trade Centre. It can be heart wrenching so try and find a good lonely spot if you, like me are prone to tear up.

After that comes my favourite part – the Sky Pod Elevator. A 60-second immersive virtual time-lapse that crams in 500 years of the city's evolution starting from the bedrock to the 102nd floor. Well, if that doesn't blow your mind you're in for a real treat as you enter the aptly named 'See Forever Theatre'. Without giving away too much, we advise you not to hold back the hooting and cheering when you're done with the experience because this is like nothing you have ever seen before. Fair warning: Vertigo patients might wanna take it easy. »

Words: DANIEL FRANKLIN



Rubin Museum

One of New York's lesser known treasures, The Rubin in the city's Chelsea neighbourhood is a cultural hub that aims to connect contemporary life and art to the ideas that originate in the Himalayas and neighbouring regions including India. On until the 28th of January, 'The India in Full Frame' by Henry Cartier Bresson exhibit is a definite must visit. A beautiful slice of our country's history has been showcased through Bresson's images taken on his trips to India through the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s.

Gulliver's Gate

Few places can make you feel as small as Times Square does. The scale, the lights and the bustle (of mostly tourists if we're being honest) but is still everything you've seen in the movies. Bang across the road from Times Square is the Gulliver's Gate and it's hard to miss the irony. This high-tech interactive world of miniatures really puts the city into perspective or maybe skews it completely depending on your vantage point. If visiting

The popular Chelsea Market is a delight for all foodies who want to sample carefully curated gourmet grub. This is also the perfect place to pick up handcrafted knick-knacks that make for great presents for those back home!



with kids it's a great place to catch your breath while the little ones have a gala time taking in the city in a palatable size.

Brooklyn Botanical Garden

Just when you think the city is a concrete jungle the BBG offers you 52 acres of the most beautifully curated landscape, the park making for a great antidote to the city's craziness. Save it for the latter part of your trip or a hung-over Sunday maybe. Spend some time in the rose garden or stroll through the 100-year-old Japanese garden. Just ensure you check on the park timing before stepping out.

THINGS TO DO

Broadway shows

A short trip to the city and that too a first; Broadway needs to be high on your to-do list. In fact it should be the second thing you book after your tickets #pencilthedatein. For newbies, we recommend sticking to a lighthearted classic. *The Lion King* would be

my first choice, it's got the nostalgia of a story known, and all bells and whistles of a larger-than-life Broadway production, plus some incredible voices that will stay with you for days.

Chelsea Market food tour

On my next recommendation I'm gonna take you a little off the beaten path.

www.foodsofny.com offer some of the best tours in the city. Do a little digging and find one that fits you best. If you're undecided just take my word for it and go for the Chelsea Market Food Tour. You're going to eat some delicious and consciously produced food and find out that America actually does have history, and a rather interesting one at that. But if nothing else, go for Cindy, your tour guide/ stand-up comic. The sides of your stomach will be hurting with all the food and laughing by the end. The tour leaves you at the spectacular High Line from where you can see the port where the Titanic was meant to dock. Or for an even better view take a peek up at the glass facade of the Standard Hotel, you never know what you might see #personalexperiencespeak. Note: It's New York and these tours sell out quick so make sure it's the thing you book after the Broadway show, you'll thank me later.

Shakespeare in the Park

It goes without saying that for a proper New York experience you have to spend a day at Central Park, with a supermarket-bought meal (your options are limitless) and a frisbee perhaps. It's a New Yorker thing to do, plus it's inexpensive. End the day with a play; Shakespeare in the Park is one of the city's most beloved summer traditions. This summer, *The Public Theatre* staged a modern adaptation of Julius Caesar with Trump as Caesar. There was drama, with pro-Trump protesters (not part of the act) coming out on cue. America is nothing if not entertaining.

SHOPPING

Give your shopping an entire day. Everything and I mean EVERYTHING is available here. Use the subway to get around, and getting a metro card for the duration of your trip is the best. If you want to get away from the larger labels head down to Brooklyn for some great vintage and quaint boutiques, I'd recommend Beacon's Closet, Awake Vintage and Thriftwares. But if the overwhelming choices are getting to you just head down to Macy's and book yourself a personal stylist. It will open your eyes to a whole new world of style.

WHERE TO STAY

If in New York for the first time, you *have* to stay in mid town. It offers you the easiest access to all the hot-spots and here, your options are limitless.

Lotte New York Palace

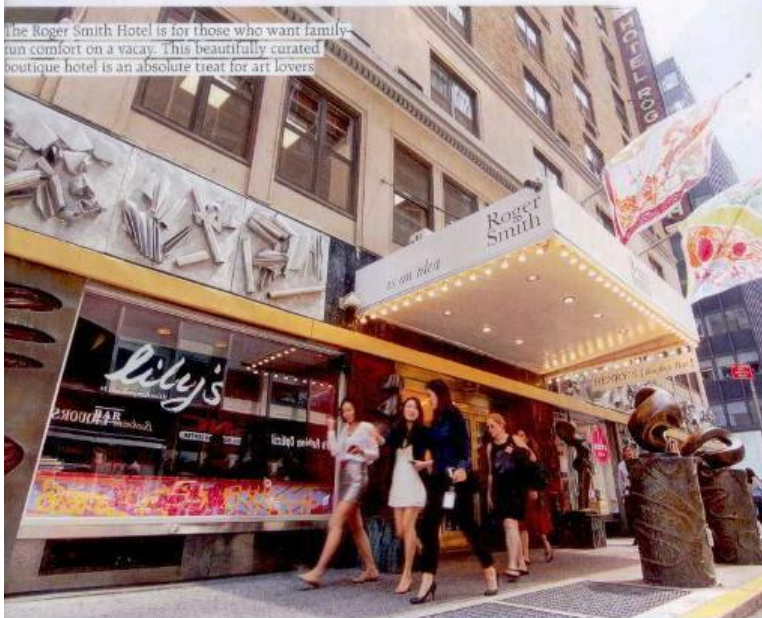
Steeped in history, this should be your first choice when picking where to stay. It's the city's largest luxury hotel and attracts some of the most discerning guests from around the world. The day I checked in security was extra tight and I later found out that Obama was checking out, (*#humblebrag*). The hotel houses the iconic Villard Mansion with its gold walls and a menu that will leave you breathless. This is also the sight where multiple scenes of the hit show *Gossip Girl* were shot so you know it comes Blair Waldorf-approved.

The hotel boasts of some of the best views of the city and if you're in a mood to splurge it offers some of the most luxurious rooms money can buy, ask for one with a view of St. Patrick's Cathedral, you'll be left picking your jaw off the floor.



The gilded interiors of the majestic Lotte New York Palace provide a truly luxurious first stay in the Big Apple.

The Roger Smith Hotel is for those who want family-run comfort on a vacay. This beautifully curated boutique hotel is an absolute treat for art lovers

*Roger Smith Hotel*

This charming family-run boutique hotel in the heart of mid town Manhattan is a great option if you're looking for something a bit more personal. Owned by artist and sculptor James Knowles the hotel was the former home of his wife from whose father he inherited the property. His work can be seen at the entrance of the Hotel with the two brass statues that now double up as a charging station for his high-end Tesla. The rooms are super spacious for New York standards and boast of very lived-in personal furniture that Mrs Knowles has curated. Each room houses a great collection of art and decor that has a certain old world charm.

Spend some time at the hotel's rooftop bar — Henry's named after the owner's dog — and catch up with some of the hotel staff, they're always happy to show you a good time. With a slew of international students working at the hotel as interns you're sure to make a friend or two. **W**