



TimeOut

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The Times

# New York

TimeOut  
New York

**Updated annually**  
Written by local experts

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# *Welcome to New York*

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Produced by the Works Progress Administration's Federal Writers Project in the late 1930s, the *WPA Guide to New York City* cites the 'problem of keeping pace, in print, with a dynamic metropolis that overnight replaces a century-old institution with a new triumph in modernity'. Even in the depths of the Great Depression, there were '40 to 50 legitimate theatres in Manhattan... patronised yearly by about 8,500,000'; 'something like 300 nightclubs in more or less continuous operation'; and 326 hotels, 29 museums and 73 art galleries.

We feel their pain, and then some. Those figures have increased significantly over the past 70-odd years; now that fashions play out in fast-forward, keeping pace is a positively Olympian challenge. The ersatz speakeasy that thrilled a few months back? Eclipsed by half a dozen others, each with a more elaborate concealed entrance than the last. The sizzling-hot restaurant with an impenetrable reservations policy? The crowd's moved on. Even the cityscape itself is in flux, as Mayor Bloomberg forges ahead with his plans for improved public spaces and work begins on filling the gaping chasm in lower Manhattan.

Of course, New York's unpredictability generates its electricity. On any given day, you might pass a movie shoot or witness an equally compelling civilian drama (New Yorkers are rarely shy about voicing their opinions), get wind of a word-of-mouth warehouse bash or discover a time-warp diner. Every week, a new line-up of events fills the city's calendar, from Broadway premières to mango-eating parties in Brooklyn performance spaces.

For all the changes, perhaps more remarkable than the disparities between the WPA's guide and ours are the similarities in the descriptions of the city and its key attractions. In 21st-century New York, businessmen still get shoe-shines while enthroned in chesterfield armchairs at Grand Central before heading downstairs to slurp martinis in the Oyster Bar. Children still float toy sailboats on the small pond in Central Park, much as their great-grandfathers did. Lower East Siders and Upper West Siders still buy smoked salmon where their ancestors shopped a century ago. Ultimately, for those of us who relish life in this mercurial metropolis, keeping up with what's new while celebrating what's constant might be hard work, but it's very much a labour of love. *Lisa Ritchie, Editor*



## IN CONTEXT

To open the book, this series of features tells the city's fascinating back story, covering everything from the immigrant influx that helped create its modern identity to the evolution of its iconic skyscrapers. We also look at the legacy of controversial mayor Michael Bloomberg, before going on to profile other key figures who've made their mark on the metropolis.

▶ see [In Context](#).



## SIGHTS

As well as in-depth insights into the city's best-known attractions – the Statue of Liberty and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, to name a couple – the Sights section illuminates the shifting character of local neighbourhoods. Here's where you'll find pointers about the latest art districts and fashionable areas, underrated small museums and less celebrated architectural highlights.

▶ see [Sights](#).



## CONSUME

One of the most exciting eating and drinking playgrounds is also among the most changeable, but that doesn't mean you should neglect old favourites. We've combined the best of the recent openings with trusty classics and wallet-friendly pit stops, all reviewed by critics from *Time Out New York* magazine. Insider guides to shops, bars and hotels round out this section.

▶ see [Eat, Drink, Sleep, Shop](#).



## ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Beyond the razzle-dazzle of Broadway, this culture capital is also home to top-notch repertory theatre and fearless fringe companies. The underground club scene may have shrunk, but live music still thrives and the city holds a prominent place in rock and jazz history. Also in this section, you'll find details of everything from literary salons to gay nightclubs, children's museums to sports stadiums.

► see [Arts & Entertainment](#).



## ESCAPES & EXCURSIONS

If you need respite from the non-stop activity that defines New York City, or if you simply want to explore further afield, you're in luck. Whether you crave culture in a country setting, bracing wilderness walks, a beach day, or the retro glamour and gaming tables of Atlantic City, there are many worthwhile destinations within easy reach of the city.

► see [Escapes & Excursions](#).

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# New York in 48 Hours

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## DAY 1: DOWNTOWN HISTORY & HOT SPOTS

8AM Start your New York odyssey Downtown, where Manhattan began and where millions of immigrants embarked on a new life. Get an organic caffeine jolt at Jack's Stir Brew Coffee , then stroll down to Pier 17 for great views of the harbour and the Brooklyn Bridge. Head further south if you want to hop on the free Staten Island Ferry for classic Manhattan panoramas.

11AM To get a sense of how many New Yorkers' ancestors lived, take the subway to Delancey Street for a tour of one of the reconstructed immigrants' apartments at the Lower East Side

Tenement Museum . For a more literal taste of the old neighbourhood, order a pastrami on rye at the classic Katz's Delicatessen , or take a detour into Chinatown for superior dim sum at Dim Sum Go G

3PM The Lower East Side has changed considerably since its 19th-century squalour. Not only is it bursting at the seams with idiosyncratic shops – boutique-cum-bar the Dressing Room , gothic-tinged clothier Thecast and new-wave hatters Victor Osborne (see Hat Tricks ) and Still Life (see Hat Tricks ) – but it's also now a booming art district. Once you've checked out the New Museum of Contemporary Art , gallery-hop the art spaces in the vicinity, especially on Chrystie, Orchard and Rivington Streets (for highlights, see [Lower East Side](#)). When you've worked up an early-evening thirst, sleuth out one of the many speakeasy-style bars: the Back Room or PDT .

8PM At this juncture, you can either stay on the island or exit to Brooklyn. You'll take Manhattan? If you've managed to secure a table, head west for Keith McNally's latest hotspot, the Minetta Tavern , and a musical pot-pourri at eclectic (Le) Poisson Rouge . Alternatively, cross the East River for what many consider to be New York's best steakhouse, Williamsburg's Peter Luger , before bar-crawling across to overlooked indie-music gem Pete's Candy Store .





# DAY 2: UPTOWN- MIDTOWN CULTURE CRAWL

9AM A short break in the Big Apple involves some tough choices: the Upper East Side alone is home to a dozen world-class institutions. Fortify yourself with doorstep slices of French toast at old-school diner [Lexington Candy Shop](#), near the Museum Mile, before making your decision. If you opt for the [Metropolitan Museum of Art](#), you can either take a brisk two-hour essentials tour or forget the rest of the itinerary entirely – it’s a vast place. In the warm-weather months, don’t miss the view over Central Park from the Iris & B Gerald Cantor Roof Garden. But if the Met seems too overwhelming, opt instead for the more manageable [Frick Collection](#), a hand-picked cache of masterpieces in an exquisite early-20th-century mansion.



NOON From the Met, slip a few blocks north to admire the gleaming façade of the [Solomon R Guggenheim Museum](#). Then stroll south through Central Park. Exit at the south-east corner of the park and window-shop your way down Fifth Avenue to [Museum of Modern Art \(MoMA\)](#) – but before you start taking in more art, lunch at the more affordable of its two exemplary eateries: the [Bar Room at the Modern](#).

5PM Once you’ve had your fill of Alsatian-inspired fare and modern masterworks, it’s time to get high. Top of the Rock at the [Rockefeller Center](#) is a less-mobbed alternative to the Empire State Building – and affords a good view of the latter iconic structure.

8PM Evening, though, brings more dilemmas. Should you head back uptown for soul food at [Amy Ruth’s](#) and jazz at [Lenox Lounge](#) in Harlem? Or stick to Midtown for a dozen Long Island oysters at the [Grand Central Oyster Bar & Restaurant](#), followed by a Broadway or Off-Broadway show (see [Theatre](#)) and a nightcap at any number of Midtown bars (see [Midtown](#))? It’s simply a matter of taste.

# New York by Area

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## DOWNTOWN

The oldest part of Manhattan is also the most happening. The tip of the island is the seat of local government and the epicentre of capitalism, but to the north-east, trendy bars, boutiques and galleries have moved into the tenement buildings of erstwhile immigrant stronghold the **Lower East Side**. Former bohemian stomping ground **Greenwich Village** still resounds with cultural associations; to the west, leafy, winding streets give way to the **Meatpacking District**'s warehouses, now largely colonised by designer stores, while the once-radical **East Village** brims with bars and cheap eateries. Former art enclave **Soho** is now a prime shopping and dining destination, along with well-heeled neighbour **Tribeca**. Meanwhile, **Little Italy** is being squeezed out by ever-expanding **Chinatown** and, to the north, **Nolita**.

▶ see [Downtown](#).



## MIDTOWN

Now New York's main gallery district, **Chelsea** is also the city's most prominent gay enclave. Along with **Union Square**, which hosts the city's best-known farmers' market, the nearby **Flatiron District** has now become a fine-dining destination. Among the skyscrapers of Midtown's prime commercial stretch are some of NYC's most iconic attractions, such as the Empire State Building. Here, **Fifth Avenue** is home to some of the city's poshest retail, while **Broadway** is the world's most famous theatreland. Garish **Times Square** is a must-see spectacle.

▶ see [Midtown](#).



## UPTOWN

Bucolic **Central Park**, with its picturesque lakes, expansive lawns and famous zoo, is the green divider between the patrician **Upper East Side** and the more liberal but equally well-heeled **Upper West Side**. Between them, these wealthy districts contain the lion's share of the city's cultural institutions: the majority of museums are on the Upper East Side – the mammoth Metropolitan Museum of Art, plus others on Fifth Avenue's **Museum Mile**, housed in the stately former mansions of the 20th-century elite – but the Upper West Side has the Metropolitan Opera, the New York Philharmonic and the New York City Ballet at Lincoln Center. Famed designer strip **Madison Avenue** offers more materialistic thrills. Further uptown, regenerated **Harlem** offers vibrant nightlife, soul



food and plenty of history.

▶ see [Uptown](#).



## BROOKLYN

Giving Manhattan a run for its money as the hippest part of town, the second borough contains some of New York's best nightlife, dining and shopping. **Williamsburg** is the uncontested hipster hub, brimming with music spots, galleries, retro eateries and interesting shops, but it's also worth exploring **Boerum Hill**, **Carroll Gardens**, **Cobble Hill** and **Red Hook**. Former industrial district **Dumbo** affords great views of Manhattan, while **Brooklyn Heights** and **Park Slope**, where leafy streets are lined with classic brownstones, are the habitats of the intelligentsia. **Prospect Park** is the borough's answer to Central Park, and the amazing Green-Wood Cemetery is the final resting place of the great, the good and the notorious.

▶ see [Brooklyn](#).



## QUEENS

The melting pot personified, this diverse borough serves up a slew of ethnic dining opportunities. **Long Island City** is also a burgeoning art district, with the MoMA-affiliated P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center and one of the most eye-popping displays of graffiti you've ever seen. Queens is also home to the rambling Flushing Meadows-Corona Park.

▶ see [Queens](#).



## THE BRONX

One of the country's poorest districts, the Bronx is slowly improving through government initiatives, and provides studio space for the latest wave of priced-out artists. The inner-cityscape has some

standout features: the art deco architecture of the Grand Concourse, the sprawling Bronx Zoo, the lush greenery of the New York Botanical Garden and the gleaming new Yankee Stadium.

▶ see [The Bronx](#).



## STATEN ISLAND

Best known for the free ferry that serves it, which offers stunning harbour views to an unusual mix of tourists and commuters, Staten Island has a small-town vibe and a handful of historic sites (the city's oldest concert venue, centuries-old fortifications). With an abundance of parkland, it also offers a tranquil urban escape.

▶ see [Staten Island](#).





## THE ESSENTIALS

For practical information, including visas, disabled access, emergency numbers, lost property, useful websites and local transport, please see [Directory](#).

## THE LISTINGS

Addresses, phone numbers, websites, transport information, hours and prices are all included in our listings, as are selected other facilities. All were checked and correct at press time. However, business owners can alter their arrangements at any time, and fluctuating economic conditions can cause prices to change rapidly.

The very best venues in the city, the must-sees and must-dos in every category, have been marked with a red star (★). In the Sights chapters, we've also marked venues with free admission with a **FREE** symbol.

## PHONE NUMBERS

New York has a number of different area codes. Manhattan is covered by 212 and 646, while Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx and Staten Island are served by 718 and 347. Even if you're dialling from within the area you're calling, you'll need to use the area code, always preceded by 1.

From outside the US, dial your country's international access code (00 from the UK) or a plus symbol, followed by the number as listed in this guide; here, the initial '1' serves as the US country code. So, to reach the Metropolitan Museum of Art, dial +1-212 535 7710.

## FEEDBACK

We welcome feedback on this guide, both on the venues we've included and on any other locations that you'd like to see featured in future editions. Please email us at [guides@timeout.com](mailto:guides@timeout.com).

## NAVIGATING THE CITY

Thanks to the famous grid system of conveniently interconnecting streets, much of Manhattan is relatively easy to navigate. However, the older, more complex layout in Lower Manhattan and the less orderly arrangements in the outer boroughs are more of a challenge. When heading to a particular address, find out its cross-street: it may be more useful than the street number. We've included cross streets in all our listings.

The subway is the simplest way to get around town, while the bus system is reliable. Be sure to pound the sidewalk: New York is best experienced from street level. And then there's the water: boats run all day around Manhattan.

## SEEING THE SIGHTS

Your first problem when sightseeing in New York will be deciding which sights to see: the choice is immense. Don't try and do too much. Your second problem will be finding the money. As most of the city's museums are privately funded, admission prices can be steep. However, a number of them either waive admission fees or make them voluntary once a week. Check the listings for details.

## PACKAGE DEALS

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If you're planning to visit a number of attractions, it's worth considering a pair of cards that offer free entry to a number of attractions. The New York CityPass ([www.citypass.com](http://www.citypass.com)) gives pre-paid, queue-jumping access to six big-ticket attractions, among them the Empire State Building and the Met; it lasts nine days and costs \$79 (or \$59 for under-18s). Meanwhile, the New York Pass ([www.newyorkpass.com](http://www.newyorkpass.com)) grants admission to over 50 museums, sights and tours. The card is time-tied: it costs from \$75 for a one-day pass up to \$190 for seven days (\$55-\$150 for under-13s).

## TIME OUT GUIDES

Founded in 1968, *Time Out* has grown from humble beginnings into the leading resource for anyone wanting to know what's happening in the world's greatest cities. Alongside our influential weeklies in London, New York and Chicago, we publish more than 20 magazines in cities as varied as Beijing and Beirut; a range of travel books, with the City Guides now joined by the newer Shortlist series; and an information-packed website. The company remains proudly independent, still owned by Tony Elliott four decades after he launched *Time Out London*.

Written by local experts and illustrated with original photography, our books also retain their independence. No business has been featured because it has advertised, and all restaurants and bars are visited and reviewed anonymously.

## ABOUT THE EDITOR

Manhattan-born Lisa Ritchie lived in London for two decades before returning to her native city. As well as editing numerous *Time Out* titles, she has written for publications including London's *Evening Standard*.

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## In Context

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History

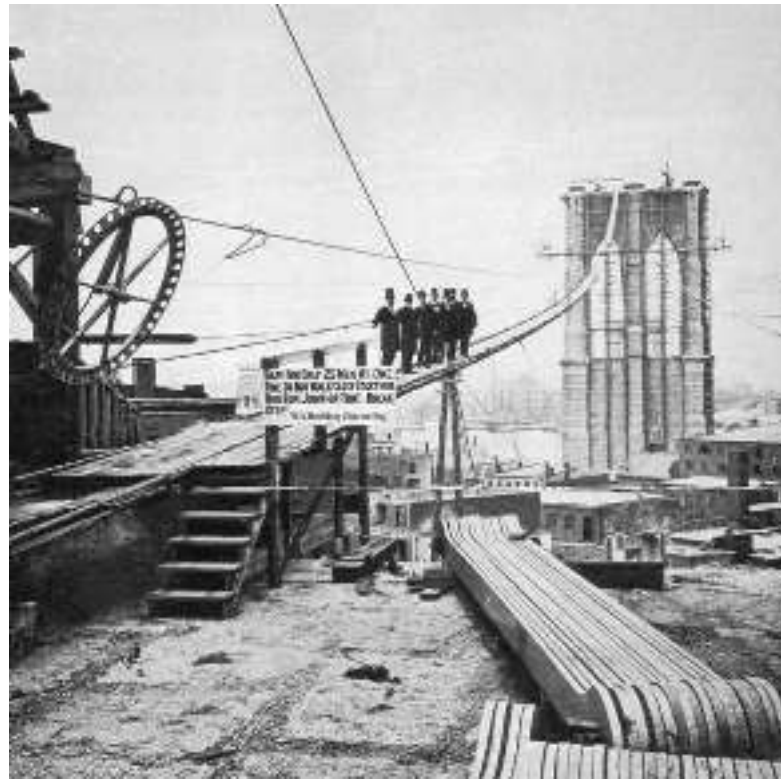
New York Today

Architecture

Local Legends

# History

More than 400 years ago, Henry Hudson, an English explorer in the service of the Dutch East India Company, sailed into New York Harbor, triggering events that would lead to the creation of the most dynamic and ethnically diverse city in the world. A steady flow of settlers, immigrants and fortune-seekers has seen New York evolve with the energy and aspirations of each successive wave of new arrivals. Intertwining cultural legacies have produced the densely layered character of the metropolis, from the wealthy and powerful Anglos who helped build the city's riches to the fabled tired, poor huddled masses who arrived from far-off lands and faced a tougher struggle. It's perhaps an exaggeration to suggest that New Yorkers' brash, outspoken reputation was formed from the expatriate's bold resolve to succeed in his adopted land. But from its beginnings, this forward-looking town has been shaped by a cast of hard-nosed, ambitious characters, and continues to be so today.



## NATIVE NEW YORKERS

The area's first residents were the indigenous Lenape tribe. They lived among the forests, meadows and farms of the land they called Lenapehoking, pretty much undisturbed by outsiders for thousands of years – until 1524, when their idyll was interrupted by European visitors. The first to cast his eyes upon this land was Giovanni da Verrazano, an Italian explorer commissioned by the French to find a shortcut to the Orient. Instead, he found Staten Island. Recognising that he was on the wrong track, Verrazano hauled anchor nearly as quickly as he had dropped it, never actually setting foot on dry land.

Eighty-five years later, Henry Hudson, happened on New York Harbor in the same way. After trading with the Lenape, he ventured up the river that now bears his name, thinking it offered a north west passage to Asia, but halted just south of present-day Albany when the river's shallowness convinced him it didn't lead to the Pacific. Hudson turned back, and his tales of the lush, river-crossed countryside captured the Dutch imagination. In 1624, the Dutch West India Company sent 110 settlers to establish a trading post here, planting themselves at the southern tip of the island called Mannahatta and christening the colony New Amsterdam. In many bloody battles against the local Lenape, they did their best to drive the natives away from the little company town. But the tribe were immovable.

In 1626, a man named Peter Minuit, New Amsterdam's first governor, thought he had solved the Lenape problem by pulling off the city's very first real-estate rip-off. He made them an offer they couldn't refuse: he 'bought' the island of Manhattan – all 14,000 acres (56 square kilometres) of it – from the Lenape for 60 guilders' worth of goods. Legend famously values the purchase price at \$24, but modern historians set the amount closer to \$500. (These days, that would only cover a fraction of a month's rent for a closet-size studio apartment.) It was a slick trick, and set a precedent for countless



future ungracious business transactions.

The Dutch quickly made the port of New Amsterdam a centre for fur trading. The population didn't grow as fast as the business, however, and the Dutch West India Company had a hard time finding recruits to move to this unknown island an ocean away. The company instead gathered servants, orphans and slaves, and other more unsavoury outcasts such as thieves, drunkards and prostitutes. The population grew to 400 within ten years, but drunkenness, crime and squalor prevailed. If the colony was to thrive, it needed a strong leader. Enter Dutch West India Company director Peter Stuyvesant.

## PEG-LEG PETE

A one-legged, puritanical bully with a quick temper, Stuyvesant – or Peg-leg Pete, as he was known – may have been less than popular but he was the colony's first effective governor. He made peace with the Lenape, formed the first policing force (consisting of nine men), cracked down on debauchery by shutting taverns and outlawing drinking on Sunday, and established the first school, post office, hospital, prison and poorhouse. Within a decade, the population had quadrupled, and the settlement had become an important trading port.

Lined with canals and windmills, and dotted with gabled farmhouses, New Amsterdam finally began to resemble its namesake. Newcomers arrived to work in the fur and slave trades, or to farm. Soon, a dozen and a half languages could be heard in the streets – a fact that made Stuyvesant nervous. In 1654, he attempted to quash immigration by turning away Sephardic Jews who were fleeing the Spanish Inquisition. But, surprisingly for the time, the corporate honchos at the Dutch West India Company reprimanded him for his intolerance and overturned his decision, leading to the establishment of the earliest Jewish community in the New World. It was the first time that the inflexible Stuyvesant was made to bend his ways. The second time put an end to the 40-year Dutch rule for good.

## BRITISH INVASION

In late August 1664, English warships sailed into the harbour, set on taking over the now prosperous colony. To avoid bloodshed and destruction, Stuyvesant surrendered quickly. Soon after, New Amsterdam was renamed New York (after the Duke of York, brother of King Charles II) and Stuyvesant quietly retired to his farm. Unlike Stuyvesant, the English battled with the Lenape; by 1695, those members of the tribe who weren't killed off were sent packing upstate, and New York's European population shot up to 3,000. Over the next 35 years, Dutch-style farmhouses and windmills gave way to stately townhouses and monuments to English royals. By 1740, the slave trade had made New York the third-busiest port in the British Empire. The city, now home to more than 11,000 residents, continued to prosper for a quarter-century. But resentment was beginning to build in the colony, fuelled by the ever-heavier burden of British taxation.

One very angry young man was Alexander Hamilton, the illegitimate son of a Scottish nobleman who arrived in New York from the West Indies in 1773. A fierce intellectual, Hamilton enrolled in King's College (now Columbia University) and became politically active – writing anti-British pamphlets, organising an artillery company and serving as a lieutenant colonel in General George Washington's army. In these and many other ways, he played a central role in a movement that would change the city – and the country – forever.

Fearing revolution, New York's citizenry fled the city in droves in 1775, causing the population to plummet from 25,000 to just 5,000. The following year, 100 British warships sailed into the harbour of this virtual ghost town, carrying with them an intimidating army of 32,000 men – nearly four times

the size of Washington's militia. Despite the British presence, Washington organised a reading of the Declaration of Independence, and patriots tore the statue of King George III from its pedestal. — Revolution was inevitable.

The battle for New York officially began on 26 August 1776, and Washington's army sustained heavy losses; nearly a quarter of his men were slaughtered in a two-day period. As Washington retreated, a fire – thought to have been lit by patriots – destroyed 493 buildings, including Trinity Church, the tallest structure on the island. The British found a scorched city, and a populace living in tents.

The city continued to suffer for seven long years. Eventually, of course, Washington's luck turned. As the British forces left, he and his troops marched triumphantly down Broadway to reclaim the city as a part of the newly established United States of America. A week and a half later, on 4 December 1783, the general bade farewell to his dispersing troops at Fraunces Tavern, which still stands to this day on Pearl Street.

For his part, Hamilton got busy in the rebuilding effort, laying the groundwork for New York City institutions that remain vital to this day. He started by establishing the Bank of New York, the city's first bank, in 1784. When Washington was inaugurated as the nation's first president in 1789, at Federal Hall on Wall Street, he brought Hamilton on board as the first secretary of the treasury (*see [Profile Alexander Hamilton](#)*). Thanks to Hamilton's business savvy, trade in stocks and bonds flourished, leading to the establishment in 1792 of what would eventually be known as the New York Stock Exchange.

## THE CITY TAKES SHAPE...

New York continued to grow and prosper for the next three decades. Maritime commerce soared, and Robert Fulton's innovative steamboat made its maiden voyage on the Hudson River in 1807. Eleven years later, a group of merchants introduced regularly scheduled shipping (a novel concept at the time) between New York and Liverpool on the Black Ball Line. A boom in the maritime trades lured hundreds of European labourers, and the city – still entirely crammed below Houston Street – grew more and more congested. Where Dutch farms and English estates once stood, taller, far more efficient structures took hold. Manhattan real estate became the most expensive in the world.

The first man to conquer the city's congestion problem was Mayor DeWitt Clinton, a brilliant politician and a protégé of Hamilton. Clinton's dream was to organise the entire island of Manhattan in such a way that it could cope with the eventual population creep northwards. In 1807, he created a commission to map out the foreseeable sprawl. It presented its work four years later, and the destiny of this new city was made manifest: it would be a regular grid of crossing thoroughfares, 12 avenues wide and 155 streets long.

Then Clinton literally overstepped his boundaries. In 1811, he presented a plan to build a 363-mile canal linking the Hudson River with Lake Erie. Many of his contemporaries thought it was simply an impossible task: at the time, the longest canal in the world ran a mere 27 miles. But the silver-tongued politician pressed on and raised a truly staggering \$6 million for the project.

Work on the Erie Canal began in 1817 and was completed in 1825 – three years ahead of schedule. It shortened the journey between New York City and Buffalo from three weeks to one, and cut the shipping cost per ton from about \$100 to \$4. Goods, people and money poured into New York, fostering a merchant elite that moved northwards to escape the urban crush. Estates multiplied above Houston Street – all grander and more imposing than their modest colonial forerunners. Once slavery was abolished in New York in 1827, free blacks became an essential part of the workforce. In 1831,

the first public transport system began operating, pulling passengers in horse-drawn omnibuses to the city's far reaches.

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## ... AND SO DO THE SLUMS

As the population grew (swelling to 170,000 by 1830), so did the city's problems. Tensions bubbled between immigrant newcomers and those who could trace their American lineage back a generation or two. Crime rose and lurid tales filled the 'penny press', the city's proto-tabloids. While wealthy New Yorkers were moving as far 'uptown' as Greenwich Village, the infamous Five Points neighbourhood – the city's first slum – festered in the area now occupied by City Hall, the courthouses and Chinatown. Built on a fetid drained pond, Five Points became the ramshackle home of poor immigrants and blacks. Brutal gangs with colourful names such as the Forty Thieves, Plug Uglies and Dead Rabbits often met in bloody clashes in the streets, but what finally sent a mass of 100,000 people scurrying from Downtown was an outbreak of cholera in 1832. In just six weeks, 3,513 New Yorkers died.

In 1837, a financial panic left hundreds of Wall Street businesses crumbling. Commerce stagnated at the docks, the real-estate market collapsed, and all but three city banks closed down. Some 50,000 New Yorkers lost their jobs, while 200,000 teetered on the edge of poverty. The panic sparked an era of civil unrest and violence. In 1849, a xenophobic mob of 8,000 protesting the performance of an English actor at the Astor Place Opera House was met by a militia that opened fire, killing 22 people. But the Draft Riots of 1863, known as 'the bloodiest riots in American history', were much worse. After a law was passed exempting men from the draft for a \$300 fee, the (mostly Irish) poor rose up, forming a 15,000-strong force that rampaged through the city. Fuelled by anger about the Civil War (for which they blamed blacks), the rioting gangs set fire to the Colored Orphan Asylum and vandalised black homes. Blacks were beaten in the streets, and some were lynched. A federal force of 6,000 men was sent to subdue the violence. After four days and at least 105 deaths, peace was finally restored.

## ON THE MOVE

Amid the chaos of the mid 19th century, the pace of progress continued unabated. Compared to the major Southern cities, New York emerged nearly unscathed from the Civil War. The population ballooned to two million, and new technologies revolutionised daily life. The elevated railway helped extend the population into what are now the Upper East and Upper West Sides, while other trains connected the city with upstate New York, New England and the Midwest. By 1871, train traffic had grown so much that rail tycoon Cornelius Vanderbilt built the original Grand Central Depot, which could accommodate no fewer than 15,000 passengers at a time. (It was replaced in 1913 by the current Grand Central Terminal.)

One ambitious project was inspired by the harsh winter of 1867. The East River froze over, halting water traffic between Brooklyn and Manhattan for weeks. Brooklyn, by then, had become the nation's third most populous city, and its politicians, businessmen and community leaders realised that the boroughs had to be linked. The New York Bridge Company's goal was to build the world's longest bridge, spanning the East River between downtown Manhattan and south-western Brooklyn. Over 16 years (four times longer than projected), 14,000 miles of steel cable were stretched across the 1,595-foot (486-metre) span, while the towers rose a staggering 276 feet (84 metres) above the river. Work deaths and corruption dogged the project, but the Brooklyn Bridge opened in triumph on 24 May 1883.

## THE GREED OF BOSS TWEED

As New York recovered from the turmoil of the mid 1800s, William M 'Boss' Tweed began pulling the strings. Using his ample charm, the six-foot-tall, 300-pound bookkeeper, chair-maker and volunteer firefighter became one of the city's most powerful politicians. He had been an alderman and district leader; he had served in the US House of Representatives and as a state senator; and he was a chairman of the Democratic General Committee and leader of Tammany Hall, a political organisation formed by local craftsmen to keep the wealthy classes' political clout in check. But even though Tweed opened orphanages, poorhouses and hospitals, his good deeds were overshadowed by his and his cohorts' gross embezzlement of city funds. By 1870, members of the 'Tweed Ring' had created a new city charter, granting themselves control of the City Treasury. Using fake leases and wildly inflated bills for city supplies and services, Tweed and his cronies may ultimately have pocketed as much as \$200 million.

Tweed was eventually sued by the city for \$6 million, and charged with forgery and larceny. He escaped from debtor's prison in 1875, but was captured in Spain a year later and died in 1878. But Tweed's insatiable greed hurt many. As he was emptying the city's coffers, poverty spread. Then the stock market took a nosedive, factories closed and railroads went bankrupt. By 1874, New York estimated its homeless population at 90,000. That winter, *Harper's Weekly* reported, 900 New Yorkers starved to death.

## IMMIGRANT DREAMS

In September 1882, a new era dawned brightly when Thomas Alva Edison lit up half a square mile of lower Manhattan with 3,000 electric lamps. One of the newly illuminated offices belonged to financier JP Morgan, who played an essential part in bringing New York's, and America's, economy back to life. By bailing out a number of failing railroads, then merging and restructuring them, Morgan jump-started commerce in New York once again. Goods, jobs and businesses returned to the city, and very soon aggressive businessmen with names like Rockefeller, Carnegie and Frick wanted a piece of the action. They made New York the HQ of Standard Oil and US Steel, corporations that went on to shape America's economic future and New York's reputation as the centre of capitalism.

A shining symbol for those less fortunate immigrants also made New York its home around that time. To commemorate America's freedom 100 years after the Declaration of Independence, the French gave the Statue of Liberty to the United States. Between 1892 and 1954, the statue ushered more than 12 million immigrants into



Immigrants arriving at Ellis Island



New York Harbor, and Ellis Island served to process many of them. The island had opened as an immigration centre in 1892 with expectations of accommodating 500,000 people annually, but it processed twice that number in its first year. In the 34-building complex, crowds of would-be Americans were herded through examinations, inspections and interrogations. Four million got through, turning New York into what British playwright Israel Zangwill called ‘the great melting pot where all the races of Europe are melting and reforming’.

Many of these new immigrants crowded into dark, squalid tenements on the Lower East Side, while millionaires such as the Vanderbilts constructed huge French-style mansions along Fifth Avenue. Jacob A Riis, a Danish immigrant and police reporter for the *New York Tribune*, made it his business to expose this dichotomy, scouring filthy alleys and overcrowded tenements to research and photograph his 1890 book, *How the Other Half Lives*. Largely as a result of Riis’s work, the state passed the Tenement House Act of 1901, which called for drastic housing reforms.

## SOARING ASPIRATIONS

By the close of the 19th century, 40 fragmented governments had been formed in and around Manhattan, creating political confusion. So, on 1 January 1898, the boroughs of Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island and the Bronx consolidated to form New York City, the largest city in America. More and more companies started to move their headquarters to this new metropolis, increasing the demand for office space. With little land left to develop in lower Manhattan, New York embraced the steel revolution and grew steadily skywards. Thus began an all-out race to build the world’s tallest building.

By 1902, New York boasted 66 skyscrapers, including the 20-storey Fuller Building (now known as the Flatiron Building) at Fifth Avenue and 23rd Street, and the 25-storey New York Times Tower in Longacre (now Times) Square. Within four years, these two buildings would be completely dwarfed by the 47-storey Singer Building on lower Broadway, which enjoyed the status of tallest building in the world – but only for 18 months. The 700-foot (213-metre) Metropolitan Life Tower on Madison Square claimed the title from the Singer Building in 1909, but the 793.5-foot (241-metre) Woolworth Building on Broadway and Park Place topped it in 1913 – and, amazingly, held the distinction for nearly two decades.

If that weren’t enough to demonstrate New



Flatiron Building

Yorkers' unending ambition, the city burrowed

below the streets at the same time, starting work on its underground transit system in 1900. The \$35-million project took nearly four and a half years to complete. Less than a decade after opening, it was the most heavily travelled subway system in the world, carrying almost a billion passengers on its trains every year.

## CHANGING TIMES

By 1909, 30,000 factories were operating in the city, churning out everything from heavy machinery to artificial flowers. Mistrusted, abused and underpaid, factory workers faced impossible quotas, had their pay docked for minor mistakes and were often locked in during working hours. In the end, it took a tragedy to bring about real changes.

On 25 March 1911, a fire broke out at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company. Although it was a Saturday, some 500 workers – most of them teenage girls – were toiling in the Greenwich Village factory. Flames spread rapidly through the fabric-filled building, but as the girls rushed to escape, they found many of the exits locked. Roughly 350 made it out on to the adjoining rooftops before the inferno closed off all exits, but 146 young women perished; many jumped to their deaths from windows on the eighth, ninth and tenth floors. The two factory owners were tried for manslaughter but acquitted, yet the disaster did at least spur labour and union organisations, which pushed for and won sweeping reforms.

Another sort of rights movement was taking hold during this time. Between 1910 and 1913, New York City was the site of the largest women's suffrage rallies in the United States. Harriet Stanton Blatch (the daughter of famed suffragette Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and founder of the Equality League of Self-Supporting Women) and Carrie Chapman Catt (the organiser of the New York City Women's Suffrage party) arranged attention-getting demonstrations intended to pressure the state into authorising a referendum on a woman's right to vote. The measure's defeat in 1915 only steeled the suffragettes' resolve. Finally, with the support of Tammany Hall, the law was passed in 1919, challenging the male stranglehold on voting throughout the country. With New York leading the nation, the 19th Amendment was ratified in 1920.

In 1919, as New York welcomed troops home from World War I with a parade, the city also celebrated its emergence on the global stage. It had supplanted London as the investment capital of the world, and had become the centre of publishing, thanks to two men: Pulitzer and Hearst. The *New York Times* had become the country's most respected newspaper; Broadway was the focal point of American theatre; and Greenwich Village had become a world-class bohemia, where flamboyant artists, writers and political revolutionaries gathered in galleries and coffeehouses.

The more personal side of the women's movement also found a home in New York City. A nurse and midwife who grew up in a family of 11 children, Margaret Sanger was a fierce advocate of birth control and family planning.

She opened the first ever birth-control clinic in Brooklyn on 16 October 1916. Finding this unseemly, the police closed the clinic soon after and imprisoned Sanger for 30 days. She was not deterred, however, and, in 1921, formed the American Birth Control League – the forerunner of the organisation Planned Parenthood – which researched birth control methods and provided gynaecological services.

## ALL THAT JAZZ

Forward-thinking women such as Sanger set the tone for an era when women, now a voting political

force, were moving beyond the moral conventions of the 19th century. The country ushered in the Jazz Age in 1919 by ratifying the 18th Amendment, which outlawed the distribution and sale of alcoholic beverages. Prohibition turned the city into the epicentre of bootlegging, speakeasies and organised crime. By the early 1920s, New York boasted 32,000 illegal watering holes – twice the number of legal bars before Prohibition.

In 1925, New Yorkers elected the magnetic James J Walker as mayor. A charming ex-songwriter (as well as a speakeasy patron and skirt-chaser), Walker was the perfect match for his city's flashy style, hunger for publicity and consequences-be-damned attitude. Fame flowed in the city's veins: home-run hero Babe Ruth drew a million fans each season to the New York Yankees' games, and sharp-tongued Walter Winchell filled his newspaper columns with celebrity titbits and scandals. Alexander Woollcott, Dorothy Parker, Robert Benchley and other writers met up daily to trade witticisms around a table at the Algonquin Hotel; the result, in February 1925, was *The New Yorker*.

The Harlem Renaissance blossomed at the same time. Writers Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston and James Weldon Johnson transformed the African-American experience into lyrical literary works, and white society flocked to the Cotton Club to see genre-defining musicians such as Bessie Smith, Cab Calloway, Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington. (Blacks were not welcome unless they were performing.)

Downtown, Broadway houses were packed out with fans of George and Ira Gershwin, Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, Lorenz Hart, Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II. Towards the end of the '20s, New York-born Al Jolson wowed audiences in *The Jazz Singer*, the first talking picture.

## AFTER THE FALL

The dizzying excitement ended on Tuesday, 29 October 1929, when the stock market crashed. Corruption eroded Mayor Walker's hold on the city: despite a tenure that saw the opening of the Holland Tunnel, the completion of the George Washington Bridge and the construction of the Chrysler and Empire State Buildings, Walker's lustre faded in the growing shadow of graft accusations. He resigned in 1932, as New York, caught in the depths of the Great Depression, had a staggering one million unemployed inhabitants.

In 1934, an unstoppable force named Fiorello La Guardia took office as mayor, rolling up his sleeves to crack down on mobsters, gambling, smut and government corruption. The son of an Italian father and a Jewish mother, La Guardia was a tough-talking politician who was known for nearly coming to blows with other city officials; he described himself as 'inconsiderate, arbitrary, authoritative, difficult, complicated, intolerant and somewhat theatrical'. La Guardia's act played well: he ushered New York into an era of unparalleled prosperity over the course of his three terms. The 'Little Flower', as La Guardia was known, streamlined city government, paid down the debt and updated the transportation, hospital, reservoir and sewer systems. New highways made the city more accessible, and North Beach (now La Guardia) Airport became the city's first commercial landing field.

Helping La Guardia to modernise the city was Robert Moses, a hard-nosed visionary who would do much to shape – and in some cases, destroy – New York's landscape. Moses spent 44 years stepping on toes to build expressways, parks, beaches, public housing, bridges and tunnels, creating such landmarks as Shea Stadium, Lincoln Center, the United Nations complex and the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge.

## BIRTH OF BOHEMIA



Despite La Guardia's belt-tightening and Moses' renovations, New York began to fall apart financially. When World War II ended, 800,000 industrial jobs disappeared from the city. Factories in need of more space moved to the suburbs, along with nearly five million residents. But more crowding occurred as rural African-Americans and Puerto Ricans flocked to the metropolis in the 1950s and '60s, only to meet with ruthless discrimination and a dearth of jobs. Robert Moses' Slum Clearance Committee reduced many neighbourhoods to rubble, forcing out residents in order to build huge, isolating housing projects that became magnets for crime. In 1963, the city also lost Pennsylvania Station, when the Pennsylvania Railroad Company demolished the site over the protests of picketers in order to make way for a modern station and Madison Square Garden. It was a wake-up call for New York: architectural changes were hurtling out of control.

But Moses and his wrecking ball couldn't knock over one steadfast West Village woman. Architectural writer and urban-planning critic Jane Jacobs organised local residents when the city unveiled its plan to clear a 14-block tract of her neighbourhood to make space for yet more public housing. Her obstinacy was applauded by many, including an influential councilman named Ed Koch (who would become mayor in 1978). The group fought the plan and won, causing Mayor Robert F. Wagner to back down. As a result of Jacobs's efforts in the wake of Pennsylvania Station's demolition, the Landmarks Preservation Commission – the first such group in the US – was established in 1965.

At the dawning of the Age of Aquarius, the city harboured its share of innovative creators. Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac and others gathered in Village coffeehouses to create a new voice for poetry. A folk music scene brewed in tiny clubs around Bleecker Street, showcasing musicians such as Bob Dylan. A former advertising illustrator named Andy Warhol turned images of mass consumerism into deadpan, ironic art statements. And in 1969, the city's long-hidden gay communities came out into the streets, as patrons at the Stonewall Inn on Christopher Street demonstrated against a police raid. The protests, known as the Stonewall riots, gave birth to the modern gay rights movement.

## MEAN STREETS

By the early 1970s, deficits had forced heavy cutbacks in city services. The streets were dirty, and subway cars and buildings were scrawled with graffiti; crime skyrocketed as the city's debt deepened to \$6 billion. Despite the huge downturn, construction commenced on the World Trade Center; when completed, in 1973, its twin 110-storey towers were the world's tallest buildings. Even as the WTC rose, the city became so desperately overdrawn that Mayor Abraham Beame appealed to the federal government for financial assistance in 1975. Yet President Gerald Ford refused to bail out the city, a decision summed up by the immortal *Daily News* headline: 'Ford to city: drop dead'.

Around the same time, Times Square degenerated into a morass of sex shops and porn palaces, drug use rose and subway use hit an all-time low. In 1977, serial killer Son of Sam terrorised the city, and blackout one hot August night that same year led to widespread looting and arson. The angst of the time fuelled the punk culture that rose in downtown clubs such as CBGB. At the same time, celebrities, designers and models converged on Midtown to disco their nights away at Studio 54.

The Wall Street boom of the '80s and fiscal petitioning by Mayor Ed Koch brought money flooding back into New York. Gentrification glamorised neighbourhoods such as Soho, Tribeca and the East Village. But deeper ills persisted. In 1988, a protest against the city's efforts to impose a strict curfew and displace the homeless away from Tompkins Square Park erupted into a violent clash with the police. Crack use became endemic in the ghettos, homelessness rose and AIDS emerged into a new scourge.



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