



New York, New York!

Yep, Sinatra said it, and thousands of TV shows, Hollywood movies and commercials confirmed it. New York is THE place to be if you want to be hip and young and creative and successful – and if you don't require much sleep. The city is fast-paced and always on the move, unless you're strolling through Central Park that is. Life is pretty peaceful there.

But, yes, New York, the Big Apple, the dream destination for every *Friends* or *How I met your mother* fan and the backdrop for some of Hollywood's finest action films. But what is it about this city that makes everybody want to go there? My friend and New York local Josef claims it's the variety. You can get any kind of food at any time of the day, especially in the inner part of the city.



It's like going to another world

You can buy anything you can think of, and you can reenact scenes from most of your favorite movies. Maybe that's why I wasn't really impressed. Everything you see in New York seems like something you've seen before. Wall Street – seen it. Rockefeller Center – mostly used for romantic winter scenes on the ice skating ring. Time Square – well, we've all been there before, one way or another. And yet, no matter who you talk to, everybody seems to love New York. So I gave it a try. I admit, driving past the Statue of Liberty does get you into a rather sentimental feeling.

But otherwise, New York is just one big city full of skyscrapers and with lots of wind in those artificially created cemented canyons. Figuring out the subway system can save you minutes, if not hours of time, because no matter how close two things look on a city map, if there's a subway stop between them, it's an incredibly long walk. So make sure you know which line to take and don't forget to check for stations with similar names but different lines – they tend to be at least ten minutes apart from each other. And make time for a stroll through Central Park. It's like going to another world.

Next-Door-Neighbour



New York's direct neighbor Brooklyn is full of charming little coffee shops, Saturday afternoon flea markets and independent little designers and artists waiting for you to buy one of their unique items. If you want to find an unique gift or a once-in-a-lifetime shirt or bracelet or anything else that will always remind you of that one trip you took to Brooklyn, go to Williamsburg Flea on Saturdays between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. They also offer typical New Yorker food, such as a meaty Pastrami and Corned Beef Sandwich, or maybe just a plain Hot Dog and a Coke.

Brooklyn is connected to New York City by the infamous Brooklyn Bridge, the perfect background for one of many tourist pictures. Plus it's very close to New York's secret Subway Station that is on no maps but is still worth taking an extra loop on the 6 train. Here's how to get there: take the 6 train to the Brooklyn Bridge/City Hall station (the last stop on the line of you're heading south), but don't get off! The train takes a loop and will turn around, which will give you an once-in-a-lifetime look at the otherwise unreachable (but beautiful) old subway station "City Hall".

Of course, being in New York does have its perks. The burgers and fries at "Shake Shack" are certainly on that list. They have restaurants all over the city, but you should always plan some extra time, because they are always busy! And that says a lot in a city where food is offered in all kinds of tastes and shapes and around every other corner at any hour of the day. If you want to enjoy another quiet walk, but don't want to face all the runners in Central Park, you can check out "Highline Park" west of Manhattan.

It used to be a train line connecting some of the old factories on the river there, but it was converted into a trendy park a few feet off the ground with a nice view and hip little cafes in the neighborhood. There's also a great Pizza place called "Artichoke Brasille's Pizza" just beneath the park, in case you get hungry. And yes, you need to try the Artichoke Pizza! Washington Square Park right next to NYU is another peaceful piece of greenery in the brick-and-cement jungle.

Is there something new?



New York's Chinatown is not as impressive as its West Coast cousins, but it's certainly interesting for someone who's never been to San Francisco. I prefer the Italian quarter though, because there's just something about New York and Italian immigrants that makes little Italy seem like a southern European village. And then there's the flashy part of the city of course. Fifth Avenue, the Rockefeller Center, Lincoln Center, the Met and Broadway are definitely inviting and impressive, especially at night. But the one thing I really loved about Rockefeller Center for example was that little French Bakery right next to it: "Bouchon Bakery" is an absolute must for pastry fans! Their chocolate-almond croissant is to die for!

And although you have probably already seen it a thousand times in various films and TV shows, do yourself a favor and drive down to Times Square, preferably when it's already dark outside. Those larger-than-life commercials and endless lines of yellow cabs will finally make you feel like you're right in the middle of the world-famous New York City – and provide the perfect backdrop for your ultimate Big Apple tourist picture.

(text and pictures: Carolin Schmitt)