

New York City Travel Tips from OnBoard Tours

1. You can't bring it all with you. Pack light. Your bags will get heavier the longer your trip. Getting through airports these days is a real challenge.

2. You can't take it all home with you, either. You will probably want to buy some stuff while you are here. Whether it's clothes you bought at Jersey Gardens Outlet Mall because there was no sales tax, or the giant inflatable Statue of Liberty, you will need space in your bags to bring it home. Remember that airlines charge checked bag fees for most customers that are higher than shipping costs to ship items home.

3. The original Tiffany's. The original Sak's. The original Macy's. The Apple Store. Buying one or two items on 5th Avenue at one of the top stores is a rush. We get it. But please do most of your shopping at an outlet mall like Jersey Gardens, which is in an Urban Enterprise Zone in New Jersey, so the great Outlet savings are compounded by zero sales tax on clothing and reduced tax on everything else.



4. Stay close. There's a reason why hotels in Times Square are so expensive – they are unbelievably convenient. Staying in Newark or Brooklyn or Queens is great, and you will save money on your room, but only if you commit to taking trains back and forth (or the OnBoard Shuttle). Otherwise, you may end up spending more money. For instance, if you stay in the city too late one night, and miss the last train to New Jersey, one cab ride can cost up to \$100, one way.

5. Pick your hotel wisely. Make sure you inquire as to the size of the hotel room. Most 3–star hotels in Manhattan have tiny rooms. You won't believe how tiny. Great hotels with larger rooms include the Novotel, the Benjamin, the Hilton Times Square, the Intercontinental, and the Marriott Marquis.

6. Take a tour. Get the lay of the land. This is the best way to make sure you maximize the time you have in New York City to get the most profound impact from your trip. Make sure it's an overview tour, and take advantage of having your tour guide with you so you can ask all the questions you need to know the answers to as to how to spend the rest of your visit.

7. Don't waste your time visiting the Statue of Liberty. The ticket line. The security line. The line to get on the boat to come back. As fantastic as the Statue of Liberty is, it isn't worth the wait anymore. The best way to experience Lady Liberty is to take a boat cruise that will get you up close and personal with the Statue. We think the best ones are from Harbor Experience Cruises and Circle Line Downtown, which is why we include that cruise in our NY See It All! Tours.



8. Don't waste your time visiting the top of the Empire State Building. The lines are outrageous. If you want to visit an observation deck, we suggest you purchase a timed ticket to the Top of the Rock Observatory. The views are better in general, and you can see the Empire State Building. OnBoard Tours Ambassadors can arrange tickets to be waiting for you when you arrive.

9. Don't miss the USS Intrepid Museum. Aircraft carrier. SR-71 Spy plane. Concord. Enough said.

10. Visit Central Park. One of the world's best parks. Highlights include the Strawberry Fields Memorial (on the NY See It All! Tour), the Central Park Zoo, Museum Mile, beautiful rock outcroppings, beautiful landscapes, and more.

11. Eat a slice of authentic NY Pizza. Your best bet is to go to one of the famous pizza joints, such as Grimaldis. If you don't have time for that, just pop into one of the "hole in the wall" shops that are scattered throughout Manhattan. They all make pizza that has the unique New York Style.

12. Ride the subway. Don't be afraid. Just ask a New Yorker to help you figure it out. It's an experience you won't forget.

13. Walk across the Brooklyn Bridge. This one requires you to be in pretty good shape, because it's an uphill climb. If you can walk a couple miles at a brisk pace, you should be able to cross the bridge without a problem. The views are fantastic.

14. **Listen to Those Who Have Come Before You.** If there is something you are planning to see or do, look it up online and read what other visitors wrote. TripAdvisor.com and Yelp.com are two great places to start.

15. Talk to your hotel's concierge. They have all kinds of advice on where to go, what to see, where to eat, etc.

16. Take a Night Tour. New York City really comes alive at night. Make sure you experience New York City after dark. OnBoard operates the NY See The Lights! Tour, which will give you a great overview. From Times Square to Grand Central Station to Broadway to Fulton Ferry Landing in Brooklyn, this tour is a MUST DO while you are in New York City.



17. **Insist on the Best Tour Guides.** The Department of Consumer Affairs licenses tour guides. You would be amazed how hard it is to get that license. Make sure that your guide is licensed and that he or she is one of the top tour guides in the city. Don't settle on substandard for the person who is responsible for telling you about the city.

18. Safety Tip #1: If you're not sure whether the neighborhood is safe to walk around, ask your tour guide or concierge.

19. Safety Tip #2: Make sure your tour company has the highest possible safety rating. Make sure your tour company has the highest possible safety rating from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. Find out whether customers have been injured while on their tours. Make sure that all of their drivers are certified by the Department of Transportation for passenger vehicles.

20. Safety Tip #3: There is safety in numbers. In your home town, traveling in groups of two is probably sufficient. In high tourist areas, groups of 3 or fewer are targets for thieves and violent criminals. When you are in unfamiliar areas, stay with a group. The best plan is to join an organized tour of travelers who are sightseeing together. In those situations, the tour guide can reduce the chances of you being targeted.

21. Safety Tip #4: Stay Alert. Watch around you. Make sure no one is watching you. If you turn your head and sweep your eyes over the areas around you, potential attackers will recognize that they cannot surprise you, and they will move on to some other victim.

22. Know Who (Not) To Trust. You can almost always trust your concierge. You can almost always trust your tour guide (if he or she is licensed by the Department of Consumer Affairs). Please don't trust people on the street, whether they have set up a table or whether they are walking around. If someone asks you for money because they have been robbed or have fallen on hard times, refer them to a homeless shelter or to the NYC & Co. Visitor Center.



23. Take a Fall Foliage Tour. There are several fall foliage trips you can take from New York City. The peak fall foliage around NYC is usually from mid October to Thanksgiving. Of course, we are partial to the OnBoard NY See The Foliage! Tour, which goes up the Hudson Valley to West Point.

24. **NY See It All!** The NY See It All! Tour is consistently the highest rated bus tour in New York City. It's a comprehensive tour that will show you the major sights in Manhattan in an efficient way. The tour guide hops off with the guests at each stop to point out and narrate the attractions in detail. The tour includes a boat cruise on the Zephyr, which will give you spectacular views of the Statue of Liberty and Brooklyn Bridge, not to mention the New York skyline.

25. **Stay Cool.** The OnBoard sightseeing tours are run on buses that are enclosed and climate controlled. They are cool in summer and warm in winter. Don't leave yourself subject to the weather.

26. Check the brochure rack in your hotel. There are thousands of things to do in and around New York City. Your concierge can help you also.

27. Hail a taxi. They are a cheap way to get around Manhattan. Be careful during rush hour, though. It can be much quicker to take the subway.

28. Take a walk. New Yorkers love to walk. The best places for strolls are in and around Central Park, down 5th Avenue, in Times Square, in Battery Park, and across the Brooklyn Bridge.

29. Plan for traffic. It can be brutal. This is one of the reasons we recommend you take a sightseeing tour. The tour will circumvent bad traffic jams most of the time. That way, you don't waste your valuable vacation time. The worst traffic is during rush hour and coming in and out of the Lincoln and Holland Tunnels. If you can avoid driving or riding in a cab, do so.

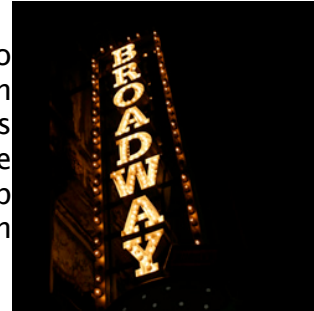
30. Plan for lines. You are likely to waste 30% of your trip if you don't plan for and/or avoid long lines. If you take a hop-on, hop-off tour, expect to have to wait in line for the next bus. The lines can be terrible, particularly at the most popular stops.



31. Don't forget that neighborhoods are attractions too! Greenwich Village, Hell's Kitchen, the Lower East Side, the Upper East Side, Harlem, and more. And that's only Manhattan!

32. **Don't Leave Your Tour Guide on a Bus!** The OnBoard tour guides hop off with you at each attraction on your tour.

33. See a Broadway Show. From musicals to plays to comedy routines, Broadway has it all. Wicked, The Lion King, Hairspray, Jersey Boys, and plenty more. There is always something for everything on the Great White Way. If you are overwhelmed, or would like help getting great tickets, let OnBoard know, and we can hook you up!



34. Ride the New York Party Shuttle. The Party Shuttle will show you where to go out at night. The service runs in a loop through NYC's most famous nightlife neighborhoods. You can hop on and hop off wherever you like to enjoy New York's nightlife. The best part is you get a wristband that will get you half price food and drink specials at a bunch of places, and help you avoid lines at places like Webster Hall. It runs Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. Get your tickets from OnBoard Tours.

35. Eat at a good New York Deli. Carnegie Deli is the most famous. You can't get sandwiches like that at home.

36. Do not waste your money on a rental car. Unless you plan to take excursions out of the city, it is a waste of time and money to rent a car. Parking is exorbitantly expensive, and the Manhattan traffic makes it extremely time consuming to travel by street. Plan to ride subways, walk, and take taxis if you need to.

37. Keep your eyes up. Most of the "run of the mill" buildings in New York City are truly fantastic. However, most people tend to walk around looking down, and never notice them. You will see normal buildings on side streets with fantastic gargoyles carved in them, copper plating on their facades, and spectacular architecture.



38. Take a helicopter tour. They are breathtaking over Manhattan. OnBoard can set up your reservation for you. If you take a helicopter tour, it will be an experience you will never forget.

39. Get a good map. Ask your concierge for one. They are several free ones that will help you get around.

40. Careful where you eat. Don't eat a restaurant if they have one near where you live. You came to New York to experience stuff you can't do at home. Find a local restaurant, preferably not in a tourist area like Times Square or South Street Seaport, and try it. How do you find it? Call us! Or, ask our tour guides, check yelp.com, zagat.com, opentable.com, or talk to your hotel concierge.

41. Ride the Zephyr. No, it's not a roller coaster, it's the best harbor cruise in New York City. You can buy tickets individually from OnBoard, or you can just purchase the NY See It All! Tour and the boat cruise is included.



42. Come back again. All of our visitors who come back for a second or third trip say they cannot believe how much new stuff they saw on their subsequent trip. There is so much to do and see in New York City that you will have plenty to do no matter how many times you come back.

43. **Get The Presidential Treatment.** Let OnBoard plan your trip to New York City. Our Customer Service Ambassadors know everything there is to know about planning memorable trips to the City. Call us anytime at 212-852-4821 or email us at nyc@onboardtours.com.