

New York

*A virtual Guide to New York
during the Festive Season*



**Eat, Drink and be Merry in the
style of a real New Yorker**

.....

**The city's best Christmas Lights
and Christmas Shopping**

.....

**A little bit of culture and
lots of fresh air and fun**

2 Virtually Perfect Days in New York

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How to Get the Most From Your Virtual Trip

You're off to New York!

Christmas is a magical time but nowhere more so than in New York, New York.

Indulge yourself on this 2 day virtual tour of the city that never sleeps.

Wrap up warm and discover The Big Apple transformed into a dazzling winter wonderland which is guaranteed to fill even the gloomiest Grinch with Christmas cheer.

Our virtual itinerary offers an immersive guide to New York, full of cultural insights and travel tips which we hope will inspire a real trip in the future.

We've done all the research so you don't have to! Included are lots of links to enable you to delve deeper, including some short video clips to really bring the experience alive. [Try this one.](#)

Or, for the true **'holiday from home'** experience, why not set aside a day or two, and get fully involved with our 'At Home' suggestions?



Look out for the **'At Home' orange boxes** and [click the links](#) to discover virtual tours, suppliers, recipes, online entertainment and tutorials, music playlists, book recommendations and more. You'll be able to experience some of the best of New York without even leaving the house!

So take a little time to get those baking ingredients and cocktail shaker at the ready, go all out on the Christmas decorations to create your very own Winter Wonderland and settle down to enjoy a magical, all American, festive weekend.

You've Arrived!



Where to Stay: New York's Most Festive Hotels

The Pierre

This New York hotel occupies a pride of place on the corner of Central Park and the Upper East Side, an area where upscale shopping seamlessly blends with residential elegance. La Guardia Airport is a mere 20 minutes away.

From here you can enjoy magnificent views of Central Park, midtown Manhattan and the famed New York skyline. In keeping with its reputation for impeccable opulence and exceptional hospitality, The Pierre lavishly and tastefully decks every corner with holiday trees and garlands as befits the season.

Enjoy some of the scrummiest hot chocolate at Two E, the hotel's Art Deco bar and lounge for high tea in the afternoon and cocktails and live music in the evening.



At Home

[Click here](#) to experience a little bit of The Pierre style pampering at home with their chosen toiletry brand Etro

Where to Stay: New York's Most Festive Hotels

The Peninsula

You can tell from the moment you arrive that The Peninsula loves Christmas!

The hotel wows from the outside with hundreds of feet of garland, ornaments, lights, small trees, poinsettias and winter flowers, and reindeer statues. Inside, carollers regularly sing in the bedecked lobby (think: lots more garlands, reindeer and trees) and they are a perfect choice enjoying a family Christmas with your good boys and girls.

Their roof top bar is transformed into the Chalet de Ning, transporting guests to the intimate snow-capped peaks of the Swiss Alps right in the heart of Manhattan and is perfect for those seeking to experience the magic of New York from above.



At Home

Imagine yourself in the Peninsula Spa enjoying a Subtle Energies holistic facial founded on Ayurveda principles.

Where to Stay: New York's Most Festive Hotels

Dream Downtown

This is a quirkier option located in the trendy Meatpacking District of Downtown Manhattan.

When it comes to their famous rooftop bar, they let their imagination run wild to create some stunning festive conversions. One year they tuned it into a 'Midwinter night's Dream', complete with a Christmas light tunnel and candy cane cocktails.

Other years have seen the lobby morph into an alpine lodge with a taxidermied polar bear and snow leopard, as well as an 'Outdoor Ice Bar' with life-sized moving penguins dressed in suits at an igloo bar.

Like New York City itself, Dream is a destination where you can get into a little mischief – but only if you want to!



At Home

Want to transform your home into a Dream Downtown style winter wonderland? [Watch here for ideas.](#)

Where to Stay: New York's Most Festive Hotels

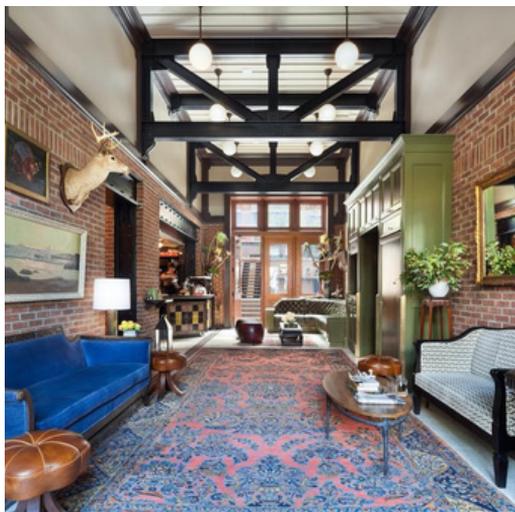
The Highline Hotel

Nestled in the heart of Chelsea's buzzing gallery district, The High Line Hotel is a completely unique and inspiring respite from the harried pace of downtown Manhattan.

The building was constructed in 1895 as a dormitory for the General Theological Seminary on land donated by Clement Charles Moore. In fact, he penned his famous **'Twas the night before Christmas'** poem on this site in 1823 making it the perfect festive choice!

The term "Big Apple" is thought to be derived from the location, nicknamed from when Moore grew apples on the property.

if you time your stay right you can enjoy the traditional Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony with crafts, carollers, hot chocolate from the inimitable [Intelligensia](#) and hot toddies.



At Home

Learn how to brew the perfect cup of Highline Hotel coffee with Intelligensia here.



Day 1



Day One

Good morning NYC!

It's a beautiful, crisp day in Manhattan with the light dusting of snow glistening in the winter sunshine so it's easy to jump out of bed and start the day.

Wrap up warm (it's a wee bit chillier at this time of year in NYC) and get ready to take in some culture, make the most of this weather with a stroll in Central Park, hit the high-end shops, visit a swanky cocktail bar and catch a glitzy show. We've got a busy day ahead so the first stop has to be breakfast.

gam Bagels and Coffee

New York and bagels go together like Paris and croissants. It is widely acknowledged that bagels originated way back when in Poland and arrived in New York with the migration of Eastern European Jewish immigrants in the late 1800s. NYC bagels are considered to be the best of the best and apparently this is attributed to the softness of New York's water. The water works perfectly with the gluten, creating a chewy bagel with a shiny crust.

There's nowhere better than [Ess-a-Bagel](#) to set yourself up right for the day. Their freshly made bagels are popular with tourists and New Yorkers alike so prepare to queue.



At Home

Want to make your own New York Style Bagels from scratch? The food writer Edd Kimber has done all the trial and error for you.

[CLICK HERE FOR RECIPE](#)

Day One

10am Time for a Stroll

New York is such a walkable city. Take a stroll past St Patrick's Cathedral and up 57th street to the southern entrance to the iconic [Central Park](#).

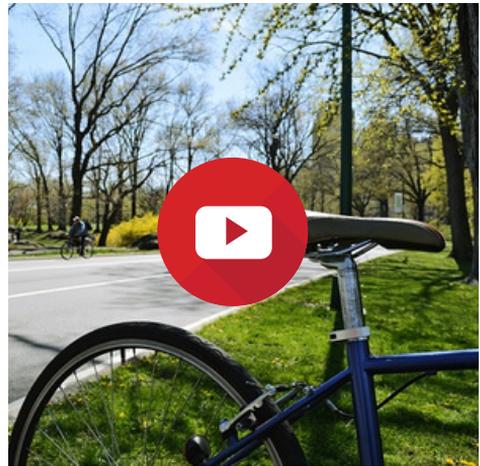
Central Park is lovely at anytime of the year. Treat yourself to a ride on the famous Carousel before going on a meander. Beatles fans might want to explore the west side, passing through the Strawberry Fields area dedicated to John Lennon before heading up to Belvedere Castle.

The east side will take you to the Zoo, on past the Bethesda Terrace fountain to the charming Alice in Wonderland Statue



Alternatively, why not pick up a bike? There are several bike hire centres located near the southern entrance to the park. [centralparknyc.com](#) offer bike hire, guided cycle tours and even a rickshaw tour if you want to conserve some energy.

The full loop of Central Park is about 6 miles and allows you to take in all the main sights and breathtaking views in about an hour.



At Home

Not sure if a cycle ride is for you?
Get a feel for what to expect by
watching the video above.

Day One

11.30am Amuse-um

Even if museums aren't usually your thing, New York has some world class options you won't want to miss.

From the west side of the park, the [American Museum of Natural History](#) is a short hop, skip and a jump across the road from Belvedere Castle.

Particular highlights are the The Willamette Meteorite in the Hall of universe, weighing 15.5 tons. This iron meteorite, which was found in Oregon, is the largest ever found in the United States and the sixth-largest in the world. In January 2016, the Museum added another must-see exhibit to its world-famous fossil halls: a cast of a 122-foot-long dinosaur. At the time, the species was so new, that it had not yet been formally named. The scientific name, Patagotitan mayorum, was announced in August 2017.

At Home

[Click here to take a virtual walk right around the AMNH with Google Arts and Culture.](#)

Set right in the park on the east side is [The Metropolitan Museum of Art](#), affectionately known as the Met. The largest art museum in the USA, it presents over 5,000 years of art from around the world for everyone to experience and enjoy.

Their fabulous Christmas tree will welcome you into this stately building. Exhibitions are numerous and varied so take your pick!

The [New British Galleries](#) are a fascinating opportunity to experience Britain through American eyes. The collection focuses on its bold, entrepreneurial spirit and complex history. The everyday objects you'll see tell a remarkably international story.

At Home

[Click here to visit the Met's 'Art at Home' page to learn, explore or be inspired. Check out the Met's most iconic spaces in 360° video, listen to audio guides or attend one of their drop in drawing classes on their media channel](#)

Day One

1.30pm Lunch in the Park

Central Park offers a variety of dining options, from quick snacks on-the-go to formal sit-down meals at cafes and restaurants.

Tavern on the Green is an iconic, landmark restaurant unlike any other. Decorated for Christmas, this cosy, warm space captures the spirit of Central Park and the energy of New York City. Expect a hearty, rustic menu shaped by local, seasonal ingredients. Tavern on the Green is a New York institution that has proudly served locals and visitors since 1934 and regularly features in movies depicting New York life (including Mr Popper's Penguins).



Another star of the Silver Screen (including *When Harry Met Sally*) is **The Loab Boathouse**, located on The Lake in Central Park and where rowing boats can be rented during spring, summer and fall.

Open daily for lunch and dinner, they also serve brunch on the weekends. There is a formal dining room with a beautiful view so it's a good idea to book a window seat in advance (but prepare to queue on Saturdays and Sundays as they don't take reservations for weekend brunch).

Or the Columbus Circle Holiday Market has great food stalls so join the tradition and eat and browse.

Day One

3pm Christmas Shopping

Whether you are looking for that unique gift for someone special, some of those amazing decorations to bring a bit of American Christmas to your own home or just want to go window shopping, New York has it all and won't disappoint.

New York City's glittery, enchanting department store windows are a sight to behold during the Christmas season. Exit Central Park the same way you came in and take a left on 59th to [Bloomingdales](#). Retrace your steps back to 5th Avenue, one of the world's most expensive and glamorous streets. Take a left and head down to take in the magic of [Bergdorf Goodman](#), [Saks](#) and others in between. [Macy's](#), the first retailer to start the trend, has two sets of windows with holiday displays, one set on Broadway between 34th and 35th streets, and another set along 34th Street.

If you have any children on your list you won't want to miss [FAO Swartz](#), the New York Hamley's with gifts for kids of all ages.



It has provided wonder and excitement to families for more than 150 years. For anyone who loves dolls, [American Girl](#) dares to do things a bit differently. These are modern dolls with character and an inspiring story to tell. The American Girl of the Year doll makes a great gift.



NYC Christmas Shopping from Home

Macy's is the store where all New Yorkers love to shop for Christmas decorations and tree ornaments. They now ship to the UK so you can join them!

[Click here to shop](#)

Day One

As well as glitzy stores, New York has some great **holiday markets**. They're crammed with local designers selling the type of gifts that your family may actually thank you for, as well as NYC-themed Christmas cards and tree baubles. The Columbus Circle Holiday Market delights with handcrafted items, specialty foods, and other artisan goods. The Grand Central Terminal Holiday Fair, which inhabits part of the lavish Vanderbilt Hall, focuses on socially conscious businesses and handmade gifts using locally sourced materials. The market at Bryant Park is more food-oriented, while the one at Union Square is good for well-priced quirky gifts.



5.30pm Twinkling Lights & Skating Rinks

Night has fallen so it's the perfect time to head for the **Rockefeller Center** to witness New York's largest Christmas tree in all its illuminated glory. Then simply turn around to catch Saks' famous Christmas light show taking place at regular intervals until late.

There are several ice skating rinks in town but none quite so lovely as at the Rockefeller Centre. Set amid a sparkling scene featuring the Christmas tree, it's something that everyone should experience. If you'd rather grab a hot chocolate and watch, head to Bryant Park where it's free to skate which attracts all the very best skaters with their own boots.

Day One

6.30 pm Cocktail Hour

There is no better way to start to an evening than with cocktail and in NYC you are spoilt for choice.

As we are in such close proximity and it is Christmas, we are going to indulge ourselves at The

Rainbow Room's Bar SixtyFive.

Located on the 65th Floor of the Rockefeller Plaza sky scraper it is one the highest venues in the city.

Since opening one year after the end of Prohibition, in 1934, the Rainbow Room has significantly influenced American cocktail culture. Bar SixtyFive invites you to toast a rich history with the Classic list, a homage to past favourites; and the Contemporary list, with a nod to the future.

Enjoy the view of New York's skyline at night with a Classic Manhattan in hand. Cheers.



At Home

[Click here](#) to learn how mix the perfect Manhattan with one of New York's best bartenders



Bar SixtyFive

Classic Manhattan Recipe

2oz Bourbon or Rye
1oz Sweet Vermouth
2 dashes of Angostura bitters
1 dash of Orange bitters
Candied cherry for garnish

7.30pm Broadway Show

For the perfect end to day in the city, why not enjoy a pre-theatre supper along with your cocktail and then head to Broadway to see your favourite show?



At Home

Now you can stream your favourite Broadway Hits to enjoy from the comfort of your own home.

[Click Here](#)

Day One

7.30 pm Or Dine like a Local

If you fancy lingering longer over dinner, jump in a yellow NYC cab for the short hop to [Cafe](#)

[Luxembourg.](#)

This classic French-American Bistro on Upper West Side of 'When Harry met Sally' fame, is a great place to rub shoulders with the locals and maybe even a celebrity or two. It's popular so you will need to make a reservation in advance.

The menu focusses on doing the standard bistro classics well - french onion soup, roast chicken, various burger options and the ever popular steak frites. Be sure to go for the parmesan on your shoestring fries.



At Home

Want to know how to cook the perfect steak at home? The late Anthony Bourdain, former executive chef of NYC's Brasserie Les Halles was a master of the art. His following videos will soon get you up to speed:

[How to choose a good steak](#)

[How to season your steak](#)

[How to cook your steak](#)

For more culinary inspiration, treat yourself to one of Anthony Bourdain's cookbooks. Les Halles Cookbook features over a hundred recipes from Tony's restaurant, the legendary Brasserie Les Halles in New York, this is guaranteed to be as much a good read, as to help you cook up a storm in the kitchen.

At Home

[Click here to buy Les Halles cookbook.](#)

Day 2



Day Two

10am Sunday Stroll

After a well deserved lie in, we're going to head south today to experience the different vibes of mid and downtown Manhattan.

First we're going to wake ourselves up with a walk along the [High Line](#). The High Line is a public park built on a 1.45-mile-long elevated rail structure running from Gansevoort St. to 34th St. on Manhattan's West Side. You can walk through gardens, view art, experience a performance, savour delicious food, or connect with friends and neighbours while enjoying a unique perspective of New York City.



11am Sunday Brunch

Brunch is a bit of a New York ritual. The High Line runs along the former home of National Biscuit Company, (aka Nabisco) now home to [Chelsea Market](#). This is where the Oreo cookie was invented, using flour delivered by trains in this passage. It's now an open-air food court and the perfect place to refuel.

At Home

Explore the High Line yourself using the wonder of Google Streetview.

[Click Here](#)

Original Christmas Present
Idea for Plant Lovers.

[Adopt a High Line Plant](#)



Best Chelsea Market Eats

Day Two

Or, for an especially festive brunch venue, the [Gallow Green roof top bar](#) at the Mckittrick Hotel turns into a warm winter haven with the arrival of its seasonal Lodge - an indoor-outdoor ski cabin, perched high above the bustling city streets in a secluded forest of pine trees.

12.30pm Greenwich Village

The tree-lined streets of Greenwich Village are a perfect spot for a Sunday afternoon wander. It is a hub of popular cafes, bars and restaurants. Jazz clubs and Off-Broadway Theatres can also be found amid the brownstones and New York University buildings.

At its heart is Washington Square Park, famous for the Washington Square Arch which is a replica of the Arc de Triomphe in Paris. There's always lots on and people mingle around the central plaza.

Families and college students mainly make up the population here. If you're a fan of 'Friends' you can see the famous exterior of their apartment at 90 Bedford Street.



Greenwich village is a great place for sweet treats. The [Magnolia Bakery](#), star of Sex in the City, is on Bleeker Street. Greenwich Village was also one of the popular areas for Italian immigrants to settle which is fantastic news for food lovers! For a real Italian gelato head to [Amorino](#). You can customise your own Amorino gelato 'Rose' with as many flavours as you like.



At Home

There's nothing nicer than a freshly baked cupcake. Find the Magnolia Bakery's prized [recipe here](#) to bake your own

&

[Click here for tutorial on how to frost your cupcakes just like Magnolia's](#)

Day Two

If you would like to learn more about this side of New York's history, the [Tenement Museum](#) is a great opportunity to explore the uniquely American story of immigration and the rich, diverse landscape it continues to create.

5pm Big Pizza Pie

As well as gelato, this part of town is great for enjoying a proper New York pizza. [Joe's Pizza](#) is a Greenwich Village institution. Considered NYC's quintessential slice, they are slapped onto white paper plates and eaten standing up inside or on a bench across the street.

If you'd rather eat in, [John's of Bleeker Street](#) is a better option. Founded in 1929 by Italian immigrant John Sasso, they are still making the same traditional coal fired pizza in the original brick oven. The old-school ambiance with original wooden booths and black and white art deco floors tell tales of a bygone era. Sit back, relax, enjoy the smell of simmering tomatoes and hot pizza and camaraderie of happy diners.



7pm Jazz it up a little

Greenwich Village may not be as bohemian as it was in its beatnik heyday, but it's still home to some of the city's best old-time jazz clubs. [Smalls Jazz Club](#) is internationally renowned as one of the best places in the city to see rising talent in the New York jazz scene. The perfect end to your festive trip.



At Home

Smalls Jazz Club began streaming shows live from the venue in 2007. There is no cost to watch.

Grab a beer & [Click Here](#) to transport yourself across the pond for a real treat.

Literary Inspiration: Great New York Reads

[The Beautiful And Damned \(F. Scott Fitzgerald\)](#)

Fitzgerald is, of course, most celebrated for *The Great Gatsby* - but it is the predecessor to that 1925 masterpiece which best captures New York in the Jazz Age. Published as the author's second novel in 1922, *The Beautiful And Damned* is a portrait of a glamorous but dysfunctional couple, always on the verge of collapse as they career around the city's many bars and cocktail jaunts in the build-up to and the aftermath of the First World War.

[I'll Drink To That \(Betty Halbreich\)](#)

The stunning true story of Bergdorf Goodman's legendary personal shopper. Eighty-six-year-old Betty Halbreich has spent nearly forty years as the legendary personal shopper at Bergdorf Goodman, where she works with socialites, stars, and ordinary women off the street. She has helped many find their true selves through fashion, frank advice, and her own brand of wisdom. This memoir comes with a large slice of Fifth Avenue sophistication, and a fair dollop of gossip.

[A Little Life \(Hanya Yanagihara\)](#)

Shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize, this million copy bestseller is an immensely powerful and heartbreaking novel of brotherly love and the limits of human endurance. Four graduates from a small Massachusetts college move to New York to make their way in the world. Over the decades, their relationships deepen and darken, tinged by addiction, success, and pride.

Must Watch Festive Films to set the Scene

Miracle on 34th Street (1947)

This is the original classic version of the Christmas film centred around Macy's in New York. When the kindly old man hired as the store Santa insists he's the real thing, No one believes him but he is willing to go to court to prove his case. This is a feel good movie packed full of Christmas magic with a little romance thrown in for good measure. Give this original version a try.

Elf (2003)

Possibly the most perfect of family Christmas movies: funny, charming and romantic in equal measure. When Buddy (raised as one of Santa's elves) discovers he's human, he travels to New York in search of his biological father. Will Ferrell playing an elf getting to grips with New York life is a sight to behold!

Metropolitan (1990)

A more under the radar choice, this indie film is a satirical rom-com concerning the lives of a group of wealthy young socialites in Manhattan. Home for the Christmas season, debutante balls and 'after-parties', a less well-to-do newcomer joins the set and stirs them up.

New York Soundtracks

Click on the Spotify links below for some suggestions to set the New York vibe.

[All American Christmas Classics](#)

[New York Songs](#)

[New York Cafe](#)

[Classic Big Apple Jazz](#)

[New York City Sounds Playlist by NYC Museum of Modern Art](#)

[Missing Sounds of New York by New York Public Library](#)

[The New York Times Daily Podcast](#)

[Only in New York Podcast](#)



Queensferry Travel
0800 090 3710
hello@queensferrytravel.com
<https://queensferrytravel.com>