

UPSTATE CANNABIS CLUB



# CANNABIS

# 101

A Member's Guide to Cannabis in New York

Everything you need to know about cannabis strains, consumption methods, dosing, and New York State law — written for curious adults, not chemists.

■ Strains & Effects

■ Consumption Methods

■ NY State Law

■ Dosing Tips

# Welcome to the Club

Whether you're brand new to cannabis or a seasoned enthusiast, this guide was written to give you a clear, honest foundation. No jargon, no hype — just what you actually need to know to enjoy cannabis safely, responsibly, and legally in New York State.

■ This guide covers: cannabis basics, strain types, consumption methods, dosing for beginners, and a plain-language breakdown of New York's cannabis laws.

## What's Inside

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# 01 Cannabis Basics

Cannabis is a plant that produces chemical compounds called cannabinoids. The two you'll hear about most are THC and CBD — but there are over 100 cannabinoids and hundreds of aromatic compounds (terpenes) that all contribute to the experience.

## THC vs. CBD

<b>THC (Tetrahydrocannabinol)</b>	The primary psychoactive compound. Responsible for the "high" — euphoria, altered perception, relaxation, increased appetite. Higher THC = stronger effects.	<b>Psychoactive</b>
<b>CBD (Cannabidiol)</b>	Non-intoxicating. Associated with calm, reduced anxiety, and physical relaxation. Won't get you high on its own, but can moderate THC's intensity when combined.	<b>Non-psychoactive</b>

## What Are Terpenes?

Terpenes are aromatic compounds found in cannabis (and most plants) that influence flavor, aroma, and effects. They're why two strains with identical THC percentages can feel completely different. Common terpenes include:

<b>Myrcene</b>	<i>Earthy, musky</i>	Relaxing, sedating — the most common terpene in cannabis
<b>Limonene</b>	<i>Citrus</i>	Uplifting, mood-elevating, may reduce anxiety
<b>Pinene</b>	<i>Pine</i>	Alertness, memory retention, counteracts THC fog
<b>Linalool</b>	<i>Floral, lavender</i>	Calming, anti-anxiety, promotes sleep
<b>Caryophyllene</b>	<i>Spicy, peppery</i>	Anti-inflammatory, may ease stress

## 02 Strains & Effects

"Strain" refers to a specific variety of cannabis. The old Indica/Sativa/Hybrid classification is a useful starting point, but experienced users know that terpene profiles matter just as much as — often more than — the plant category.

STRAIN TYPE	EFFECTS	BEST FOR	POPULAR EXAMPLES
Indica	Relaxing, body-heavy, calm, sleepy	Evening, unwinding, sleep, pain relief	Granddaddy Purple, Northern Lights, Blueberry
Sativa	Energetic, cerebral, creative, uplifting	Daytime, socializing, creativity, focus	Sour Diesel, Jack Herer, Green Crack
Hybrid	Balanced or leaning either direction	Versatile — depends on the specific hybrid	Blue Dream, OG Kush, Girl Scout Cookies
High-CBD / Low-THC	Mild to no high, calm, clear-headed	Anxiety, beginners, daytime wellness	Harlequin, ACDC, Charlotte's Web

■ Pro tip: Don't shop by Indica/Sativa alone. Ask your budtender about the terpene profile. A Sativa with lots of myrcene can be just as relaxing as many Indicas.

### Reading a Product Label

NY dispensaries are required to list cannabinoid content on all products. Here's what to look for:

- **THC %** — Higher percentage means more potent. Beginners should start below 15%.
- **CBD %** — A higher CBD:THC ratio typically means a gentler, more balanced experience.
- **Total cannabinoids** — The full picture beyond just THC and CBD.
- **Terpene profile** — Some labels list top terpenes. This is the most useful information for predicting effects.
- **Batch/lot number** — Tells you the product has been tested. Always look for a COA (Certificate of Analysis).

## 03 Consumption Methods

How you consume cannabis dramatically affects onset time, duration, and intensity. Understanding the differences helps you have a consistent, predictable experience.

<b>Flower (Smoking)</b>	The most traditional method. Ground cannabis smoked via joint, pipe, or bong. Fast onset makes it easy to gauge your dose. NY allows smoking anywhere tobacco is legal outdoors.	<b>Onset:</b> 2–10 min <b>Duration:</b> 1–3 hours
<b>Vaporizer (Vaping)</b>	Heats cannabis to just below combustion. Smoother than smoking, less smell, more discreet. Available as dry herb vapes (flower) or cartridge vapes (oil/concentrate).	<b>Onset:</b> 2–10 min <b>Duration:</b> 1–3 hours
<b>Edibles</b>	Cannabis-infused food or drinks (gummies, chocolates, beverages). Processed through the digestive system — takes longer but effects are stronger and longer-lasting. The most common source of accidental overconsumption. Start low, wait the full 2 hours.	<b>Onset:</b> 30 min–2 hrs <b>Duration:</b> 4–8 hours
<b>Tinctures</b>	Liquid cannabis extract taken under the tongue (sublingual) or added to food/drink. Sublingual absorption is faster than edibles. Easy to dose precisely with a dropper.	<b>Onset:</b> 15–45 min <b>Duration:</b> 2–4 hours
<b>Concentrates</b>	Highly potent extracts (wax, shatter, live resin, rosin). Much higher THC than flower. Best for experienced users with established tolerance. Not recommended for beginners.	<b>Onset:</b> 2–10 min <b>Duration:</b> 1–3 hours
<b>Topicals</b>	Creams, balms, and lotions infused with cannabinoids. Applied directly to skin. Do not produce psychoactive effects — used primarily for localized pain or inflammation.	<b>Onset:</b> 15–45 min <b>Duration:</b> 2–4 hours

■ ■ Edible reminder: The most common mistake is taking more because "it's not working yet." Always wait the full 2 hours before considering a second dose. Edible highs hit harder and last much longer.

## 04 Dosing Guide

"Start low, go slow" is the most important principle in cannabis dosing. Tolerance varies enormously between individuals — factors like body weight, metabolism, and prior experience all play a role. There's no shame in starting small.

### Edible Dosing by Experience Level

<b>Microdose</b>	<b>1–2.5 mg THC</b>	First-timers, anxiety-prone users, daytime use	Subtle mood lift, mild relaxation. Most people won't feel strongly high.
<b>Beginner</b>	<b>2.5–5 mg THC</b>	New users, low tolerance	Noticeable relaxation, mild euphoria. Good starting point for most people.
<b>Moderate</b>	<b>5–10 mg THC</b>	Occasional users with some tolerance	Standard recreational dose. Clear high, relaxation, possible couch lock.
<b>Experienced</b>	<b>10–20 mg THC</b>	Regular users	Strong effects. Not recommended without established tolerance.
<b>High Tolerance</b>	<b>20 mg+ THC</b>	Heavy, experienced users only	Very strong effects. Beginners should not start here.

### If You Overdo It

Cannabis overconsumption is uncomfortable but not medically dangerous. If you've taken too much, remember:

- You are physically safe. No one has ever died from cannabis overconsumption alone.
- Find a calm, comfortable place to sit or lie down.
- Stay hydrated — drink water, not alcohol.
- Black pepper: smelling or chewing a few peppercorns may help reduce anxiety (terpene interaction).
- CBD can help moderate an overwhelming THC high if available.
- Time is your friend. The feeling will pass.

## 05 New York State Cannabis Law

New York legalized adult-use cannabis in March 2021 with the Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act (MRTA). Here's what you need to know as an adult consumer.

TOPIC	WHAT THE LAW SAYS
<b>Legal Age</b>	Must be 21 or older to purchase, possess, or consume recreational cannabis.
<b>Possession Limit</b>	Up to 3 oz of cannabis flower (or 24g of concentrated cannabis) in public. Up to 5 lbs at home.
<b>Where to Buy</b>	Only from licensed NY dispensaries. Unlicensed "gray market" shops operate illegally and carry no consumer protections or lab testing requirements.
<b>Where to Consume</b>	Legal anywhere tobacco smoking is permitted outdoors. NOT in vehicles (moving or parked), federal property, schools, workplaces that prohibit it, or where signs restrict it.
<b>Driving</b>	Strictly prohibited. Cannabis DUI is enforced the same as alcohol DUI. Do not drive impaired.
<b>Home Cultivation</b>	Adults may grow up to 3 mature and 3 immature plants at home for personal use. Landlords may prohibit cultivation.
<b>Public Consumption</b>	Allowed outdoors where tobacco is permitted. Indoor consumption depends on venue rules. No designated consumption lounges are yet operating in the Capital Region (as of 2025).
<b>Gifting</b>	Adults may give cannabis as a gift (no sale) to other adults 21+. Cannot exchange cannabis for "donations" or other goods — this is still illegal.
<b>Employment</b>	Employers cannot discriminate against employees for off-duty cannabis use in most cases. Exceptions include safety-sensitive roles (CDL drivers, etc.).
<b>Federal Property</b>	Cannabis remains federally illegal. Do not possess or consume on federal land, in airports, national parks, or any federally regulated property.

■ Finding licensed NY dispensaries: Visit [cannabis.ny.gov](https://cannabis.ny.gov) for the official OCM licensed retailer map. If a shop doesn't appear there, it is not a licensed retailer.

## 06 Responsible Use

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Cannabis has real benefits, but it also carries real risks when misused. These guidelines aren't about fear — they're about making sure every experience is a good one.

### Set & Setting

- Your mindset and environment directly shape your experience.
- Consume in a comfortable, familiar place when trying something new.
- Don't try cannabis for the first time at a crowded event or stressful situation.
- Having a trusted friend with you is always a good idea for new experiences.

### Know Your Source

- Only purchase from licensed NY dispensaries — products are lab-tested for potency and contaminants.
- Unlicensed products have no quality control. Pesticides, mold, and mislabeled potency are real risks.
- Your budtender is a resource — don't hesitate to ask questions.

### Cannabis & Alcohol

- Combining cannabis and alcohol amplifies both effects significantly.
- This combination is a common cause of uncomfortable experiences.
- If mixing, use much less of both than you normally would.
- Never drive after consuming either substance.

### Mental Health Considerations

- Cannabis can increase anxiety in some people, especially at high doses or with high-THC products.
- People with a personal or family history of psychosis or schizophrenia should consult a doctor before using.
- If cannabis consistently makes you anxious, try higher CBD products or much lower THC doses.

### Tolerance & Habits

- Regular daily use builds tolerance quickly — you'll need more to feel the same effects.
  - Tolerance breaks (a week or more without use) reset sensitivity effectively.
  - Cannabis use disorder is real, though less common than with other substances. If use is affecting your work, relationships, or wellbeing, take it seriously.
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**You're part of something good.**

Upstate Cannabis Club exists to build a community around cannabis culture, outdoor adventure, and genuine connection — right here in Upstate New York.

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