



My Adventures in the Big Apple

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As an Oklahoman, I used to believe that New York City was a destination I'd never want to explore: The traffic, bustling streets, crowded subways, and overall urban frenzy seemed daunting. However, my perspective has since evolved and now I appreciate the city's unique energy, diversity, iconic landmarks; resilience, and vibrant culture.

During my initial summer visit, I discovered the true essence of culture through Broadway shows and witnessed the city that truly never sleeps. My first visit included:

STATUE OF LIBERTY/ELLIS ISLAND: Don't miss the iconic Lady Liberty. You can take a ferry to Liberty Island and enjoy breathtaking views of the city skyline. Visit Ellis Island and learn about its significance in American history.

TIMES SQUARE: Brightly lit by digital billboards and advertisements and offers 24/7 services. As one of the world's busiest pedestrian areas, it's the heart of the Broadway Theater District and a major center of the entertainment industry.

CENTRAL PARK: Take a leisurely stroll, take a horse and carriage ride, or rent a bike in Central Park. It's an oasis of green in the heart of the city.

EMPIRE STATE BUILDING: This Art Deco skyscraper built in 1931 with its 102 floors has the best views. Head to the observation deck on the 66th floor for panoramic views of NYC. Don't miss the view at sunset!

BROADWAY SHOWS: Catch one of the world-renowned musicals like The Lion King, Wicked, and Hamilton.

MUSEUMS: Explore world-class museums like the Metropolitan Museum of Art (the Met) and the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA).

FOOD ADVENTURES: NYC is a food lover's paradise: Try a classic New York-style pizza slice or indulge in diverse cuisines from around the world.

SUBWAY: Get a MetroCard and ride the subway - the fastest way to get around.

However, my second visit during the holidays was nothing short of magical, providing countless additional opportunities to explore and enjoy. New York City during the holiday season is enchanting, and there's no shortage of festive activities. Here are some of my experiences and some other must-do experiences:

HOLIDAY MARKETS: Explore the famous Union Square Holiday Market and other markets across the city.

ICE SKATING: Glide across iconic rinks like Wollman Rink in Central Park, Rockefeller Ice Rink, or Bryant Park.

BROADWAY SHOWS: Warm up indoors with world-renowned musicals. A must see is the Christmas Spectacular starring the Radio City Rockettes, with its 140 performers capturing the spirit of Christmas.

NEW YEAR'S EVE: Join the iconic Times Square celebrations to ring in the new year.

ROCKEFELLER CENTER CHRISTMAS TREE: Witness the iconic 80-foot Norway Spruce adorned with 50,000 multi-colored LED lights at Rockefeller Plaza.

BRYANT PARK WINTER VILLAGE: Explore over 180 vendors selling food and gifts, glide on the free ice rink; and soak in the holiday atmosphere.

ENCHANTING WINDOW DISPLAYS: After dark explore the windows of Saks Fifth Avenue, Macy's Herald Square, Bloomingdale's, Bergdorf Goodman, and Cartier.

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