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36 Hours in New York City



Josh Haner/The New York Times

The “Urs Fischer: Marguerite de Ponty” exhibition at the New Museum of Contemporary Art on the Lower East Side.

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URBAN renewal. The phrase conjures up government-backed megaprojects from the '70s, but it's organic to New York, where someone is always getting off the bus, train or plane. In the last year, the city has opened a hot new park, [Lincoln Center](#) celebrated its 50th anniversary with a major face-lift that includes a new fountain with 353 custom-made, computer-controlled nozzles, and the center of cool shifted innumerable times (but it's probably still somewhere in Brooklyn).

Friday

5 p.m.

1) GET YOUR TICKETS

As part of its anniversary celebration, Lincoln Center has remade the grim Harmony Atrium just southeast of the main campus (Broadway between 62nd and 63rd Streets) into a visitors' center and ticketing space named for David Rubenstein (that's what you get when you give \$10 million). Along with a face-lift, the atrium got a new box office, selling same-day discount tickets at 25 to 50 percent off regular prices (with a two-ticket-per-person limit) for performances at Lincoln Center and all its constituent organizations — including the Metropolitan Opera, the New York Philharmonic and the City Opera (new.lincolncenter.org/live/). Check what's on and pick up a pair.

6 p.m.

2) PRETHEATER PRIX FIXE

Daniel Boulud's New York culinary empire now runs from the Bowery to the Upper East Side. Just across from Lincoln Center, his Bar Boulud (1900 Broadway near 64th Street; 212-595-0303; www.danielnyc.com) is the perfect perch for a pre-performance meal. Terrines, sliced meats and cheeses (the last divided into categories like Bloomy, Stinky and Old & Hard) are the heart of the menu, but there's also a \$42 three-course prix-fixe option that includes such classic choices as a salade niçoise, roasted chicken breast and house-made ice cream or sorbet. For the full experience, sit at the charcuterie bar where the view includes fromage de tête "Gilles Verot" (that's headcheese for those who don't speak French). Afterward, grab a drink at the Alice Tully Hall lobby bar before curtain time.



Saturday

10 a.m.

3) BREAKFAST, RETRO-STYLE

The Standard Grill is tucked under the High Line at the base of the Standard Hotel (848 Washington Street at West 13th Street; 212-645-4100; www.thestandardgrill.com). Despite the hotel's Brutalism-Meets-Miami-Beach exterior, the dining room is pure retro: a tile-vaulted ceiling, penny (as in real pennies) floor, red leather banquettes. The menu is pleasingly retro, too: Try warm cinnamon-and-sugar-crusted doughnuts made on the spot — 3 for \$6 — or maybe ultra-sweet French toast with bananas and rum sauce, \$10.



11 a.m.

4) WALK ALONG THE TRACKS

Just down the block at the corner of Gansevoort and Washington Streets are the southernmost stairs to the High Line, the immensely popular linear park created on what was once an abandoned freight rail line. After a decade-long effort, the first section of the park (running from Gansevoort to 20th Street) opened in June; on summer weekends as many as 20,000 people a day visited. Winter brings the walkway a quieter, almost derelict beauty, with bare tree limbs and the seed heads of grasses swaying in the wind off the Hudson. Winter hours are from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.; www.thehighline.org.



Josh Haner/The New York Times
The Metropolitan Opera.

1 p.m.

5) BROOKLYN BOUTIQUES

Once known as the city of churches, Brooklyn these days might be called the borough of boutiques. For a taste of the local aesthetic, check out Court Street in the Cobble Hill neighborhood (take the 2/3 or 4/5 trains to Borough Hall and then walk south along Court to Atlantic). At Serene Rose (200 Court; 718-522-5927; www.serenerose.com), a dangly pair of earrings hand crocheted from gold-filled wire (\$140) would be the perfect accent to one of the party frocks. Tiny Fork & Pencil (221a Court; 718-488-8855; forkandpencil.com) sells housewares, toys and antiques. The proceeds go to support local charities. Papél New York (225 Court; 718-422-0255; papelnewyork.com) sells sleek paper goods, including sheets of

wrapping paper (\$2.50 to \$3 a sheet) that will class up even the smallest of gifts. Need to refuel? The Stumptown Coffee at Cafe Pedlar (210 Court; 718-855-7129; cafepedlar.com) is roasted nearby in Red Hook, and you can pick up a bag of Hair Bender blend beans (\$12 for 12 ounces) along with your espresso (\$2.50). Or stop at the Chocolate Room (269 Court; 718-246-2600; www.thechocolateroombrooklyn.com), which sells its own homemade chocolate caramel popcorn (\$4.50 for a quarter-pound bag).

8 p.m.

6) SEAFOOD ON THE PARK

Sleek and highly polished, Marea (240 Central Park South; 212-582-5100; www.marea-nyc.com), in the old San Domenico space just east of Columbus Circle, is like some movie version of New York except, yes, that really is a fallen mogul pitching new investors at the table next to yours. The menu is devoted to an Italian spin on fish. Share an order of the unctuous ricci (sea urchin, lardo and sea salt draped bruschetta-like over toast; \$15), then choose among the crudo (raw fish), oysters and antipasti. For a main course you can get a whole fish roasted or sautéed, then choose your sauce (the limone is good with the Dover sole) and side dish. The four-course prix fixe is \$89.

10 p.m.

7) COCKTAILS AND CODES

and artisanal. Behind hidden entrances requiring secret codes, bartenders are mixing up concoctions with names like Corpse Reviver No. 2 (gin, Cointreau, Lillet Blanc, lemon and absinthe) that only seem old-fashioned. That particular drink (\$13) is assembled by the garter-sleeved bartenders at Little Branch (20 Seventh Avenue South at Leroy Street; 212-929-4360). Cash only.

Sunday

10 a.m.

8) COMFORT FOOD

The name's an oxymoron and the kitchen is probably smaller than yours, but Little Giant (85 Orchard Street at the corner of Broome; 212-226-5047; www.littlegiantnyc.com) turns out slightly refined comfort food that has crowds piling up on the sidewalks of the gentrifying Lower East Side. Little Giant serves a "Trucker's Breakfast" (\$16), but the bacon with it will be hand sliced and the mushrooms cremini. Cash only.

11 a.m.

9) ART SCENE STROLL

The anchor of the Lower East Side art scene is the New Museum of Contemporary Art (235 Bowery at Prince Street; 212-219-1222; www.newmuseum.org), designed by the Japanese firm Sanaa to look like a series of off-kilter boxes, which opened to raves in 2007. If Chelsea remains the hot spot for grand gesture galleries — old industrial spaces with room for massive Serras — the Lower East Side offers a growing number of storefront spots, where artists and gallerists with big ambitions work small for now. The Rachel Uffner Gallery at 47 Orchard Street (212-274-0064; racheluffnergallery.com) has been drawing strong reviews for its stable of artists, and the Bridge Gallery at 98 Orchard Street (212-674-6320; bridgegallerynyc.com) specializes in architecture and design.

1 p.m. 10) SUGAR RUSH

A giant Gummi rat. How New York is that? You can pick one up to take home, along with giant pixie sticks (99 cents), wax fangs, Mallo Cups and classics like Hot Tamales and Mike and Ikes at Economy Candy (108 Rivington Street; 212-254-1531; www.economycandy.com). Crammed with what seems like every candy bar ever known, plus hard candies by the pound, nuts and dried fruits, it's a playground for the sugar-obsessed.

THE BASICS

New York is served by three area airports: Kennedy, La Guardia and Newark Liberty. From J.F.K. to Midtown, the taxi fare is a flat \$45, plus tolls and tip. You can also take the AirTrain to Jamaica (\$5 one way), and then connect to either the Long Island Rail Road or the New York City subway to ride into Manhattan. From La Guardia, a taxi will cost from \$21 to \$30, plus tolls and tip. From Newark, the taxi fare is a flat \$50 to \$60, plus tolls and tip. Another alternative is the AirTrain, connecting Newark airport to Pennsylvania Station via New Jersey Transit (one way fare: \$15). There are also bus, shuttle van and limousine services from all three airports.

Ink48 is the latest New York hotel opened by Kimpton, known for its collection of designy boutique hotels. The location, 11th Avenue and 48th Street, is convenient only if you're planning on buying a car (auto dealerships line this stretch of 11th Avenue). But the rooms are spacious and well-designed (by the Rockwell Group). In December, the hotel was still in its "rough draft phase," which meant the restaurant and bar weren't open and construction was continuing. A king deluxe room with views to the north or east was \$207; rates will go up once the hotel is fully open (653 11th Avenue; 877-843-8869; ink48.com).

The British group Firmdale (Number 16, among others, in London) has opened its first New York offshoot, the 86-room Crosby Street Hotel in the SoHo neighborhood (79 Crosby Street; 888-559-5508; www.thecrosbystreethotel.com). A 335-square-foot superior room is \$495 a night.

Steps from Lincoln Center, the newly refurbished Empire Hotel (44 West 63rd Street; 212-265-7400; www.empirehotelnyc.com) couldn't be more convenient for opera or ballet lovers. Standard queen rooms starting at \$229 a night come with free Wi-Fi and iPod docking stations.

