

Offbeat NYC Locations for Inspiration

If you're stuck for a setting, here are some well beyond the city's top 10 tourist destinations. Of course, "backstage" knowledge of a well-known locale also counts as an unusual, NYC insider's view. You might also swap an oft-used version of a location for a less-exposed one. For example, Manhattan doesn't have exclusive rights to Chinatown, there's a huge one in Flushing, Queens. We offer the below merely as jumping-off points, not proscriptions. The site at <http://www.forgotten-ny.com/> has even more unsung and interesting venues.

BRONX

- 1) Bronx Equestrian Center- public stables on expansive acres of green waterfront.
- 2) Grotto at St. Lucy's church- Miraculous waters modeled after Lourdes
- 3) Arthur Ave.- Bronx's own Little Italy
- 4) City Island- tiny boat-building and Yankee fishing enclave right off the Bronx
- 5) Hart Island- Location of police gun range and Potter's Field, used as a prison cemetery and also as a POW camp during the Civil War. More than 800,000 dead are buried here

BROOKLYN

- 1) Ebbitts Field- Former home of the New York Dodgers, now a housing project
- 2) Fort Hamilton- currently operating Army Base
- 3) Prospect Park- Designed by the architect of Central Park, it has a zoo, riding stables, Grand Army Plaza, and other beautiful locales
- 4) Brooklyn Promenade- walkway along the East River with amazing Manhattan skyline views among the tony, historic town homes of Brooklyn Heights
- 5) Brooklyn Academy of Music- major venue for avant-garde performance

MANHATTAN

- 1) The Cloisters- museum within medieval abbeys and gardens imported stone by stone by patron John Rockefeller.
- 2) Apollo Theater- showplace for stars in historic Harlem
- 3) Lower East Side Tenement Museum- Orchard Street building from 1863, outfitted as when immigrant families lived and worked there.
- 4) Museum of Sex- Legit museum on 5th Avenue, virtual tours available :)

QUEENS

- 1) Rikers Island- the city's largest and legendary municipal prison
- 2) Queens County Farm Museum- working farm dating from 1697, where they grow grapes for wine and popularly hold country weddings
- 2) Chinatown, also note that Queens is the most ethnically diverse county in the nation.
- 3) Breezy Point- a gated beachfront community at the tip of the Rockaway Peninsula. Who needs the Hamptons?
- 4) Freedom Mile- Historical route that embodies constitutional freedoms, including a Quaker Meeting House and sites on the Underground Railroad

STATEN ISLAND

- 1) Alice Austen House- Museum of one of America's earliest professional female photographers
- 2) Historic Richmond Town- 100-acre living history village from the 1700's
- 3) Staten Island Zoo- enormous rattlesnake collection, also home of Staten Island Chuck, local competition for groundhog Punxsutawney Phil
- 4) Snug Harbor- Greek Revival landmark and botanical garden
- 5) Sandy Ground- Dating from the early 19th century, the oldest North American community established by freed black slaves
- 6) Richmond County Bank Ball Park- Home of the Staten Island Yankees.