

NYC Touchdown Tour

How to Save Super Bowl Dollars in Gotham

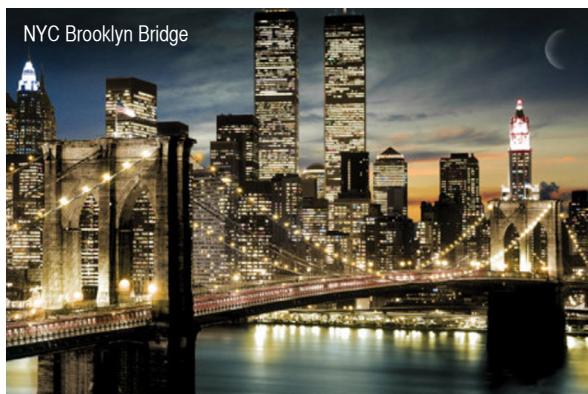
Punxatawney Phil won't be the only one sticking his head out of the ground on February 2.

Millions of football fans will be watching the first cold-weather Super Bowl, an event scheduled for Met Life Stadium in the Meadowlands, but hosted by the adjoining states of New York and New Jersey. Even if the Groundhog Day weather cooperates, the first bi-state Super Bowl will require both creativity and chutzpah from spectators as well as participants.

Finding accommodations and restaurant reservations may be challenging, but finding ways to save money on sightseeing figures to be rewarding. Manhattan, a relative stone's throw from the former Giants Stadium, has a myriad of attractions made for the frugal visitor. Many are absolutely free. Here's a baker's dozen:

1. The Staten Island Ferry, a city staple since its launch in 1905, carries 19 million people per year between Manhattan and the least-known of its five boroughs. Used mainly by commuters, it also affords fantastic photo ops, ranging from the Statue of Liberty to the New York City skyline. Board at the eastern end of Battery Park in Lower Manhattan.

2. After petting Patience and Fortitude, the oversized marble lions that guard the front steps of the **New York Public Library, enter the century-old but lovingly**



restored Beaux Arts structure to see a Gutenberg bible, a copy of the Declaration of Independence, a mountain of old maps, and microfilm of every publication imaginable. Free tours are given twice daily at 11 AM and 2 PM.

3. Visitors who don't mind early-morning shivering and shrieking can join the outdoor audience of NBC's *Today Show* in **Rockefeller Center**, a 22-acre complex where statues of Prometheus and Atlas look on in silent amazement. Erecting the GE Building, home of NBC studios, gave jobs of thousands during the Great Depression.

4. Every Friday at 12:30 PM, historians narrate 90-minute walking tours of **Grand Central Station** that include passageways with a past, the fabled Whispering Gallery, the legendary Chrysler Building, and the "original" Lincoln Memorial. Visitors can also wander the enormous terminal, a vintage 1913 structure that houses 67 rail and subway tracks on two separate levels and a main concourse ceiling of celestial bodies

By DAN SCHLOSSBERG

painted by Paul Helleu. There's no better people-watching spot in the city.

5. Visit DUMBO, an acronym for **Down Under the Manhattan Bridge Overpass**, to see where a blind Al Pacino drove a car on cobblestones in *Scent of a Woman*. Hikers can hoof it over the venerable Brooklyn Bridge, peruse the parks between the bridges, and snap fine photographs of the New York City skyline from the Brooklyn side of the East River. Galleries, bistros, shops, Jacques Torres chocolate, and the original Grimaldi's pizzeria all are steps from the fabled waterfront — and Brooklyn Heights is not far away.

6. Although Brooklyn is the biggest borough, Manhattan remains the focal point of out-of-towners with limited time. Many start in **Central Park**, where 136 acres are covered by woods, 150 by lakes, and 250 by green meadows (which might be white in February!).

When weather permits, the Central Park Conservancy offers a tour called Amble Through the Ramble. When it doesn't, visitors can stitch on their ice-skates for a fling around Trump Wollman Rink (The Donald has his name on many New York properties).

Don't miss Belvedere Castle, Vista Rock, Conservatory Garden, and Strawberry Fields, a mosaic memorial for John Lennon near the Dakota apartment he shared with Yoko Ono. That address, 1 West 72nd Street, was a historical landmark long before it passed its 100th birthday in 1984.

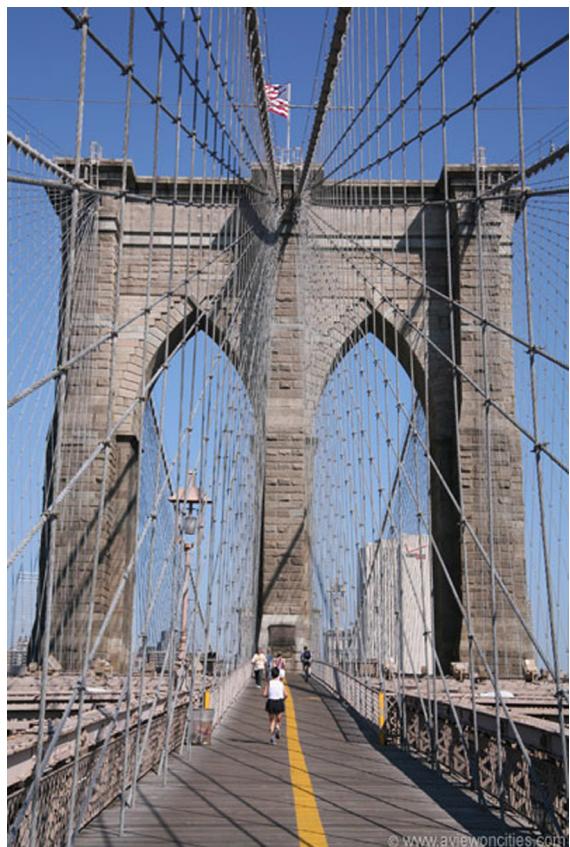
7. Although mayors of New York live

in Gracie Mansion, they work in **City Hall**, the center of city government since 1812. In addition to a maze of office space, the building is noted for a cupola dome, great hall made of marble, and a governor's room. A president has been there too; Abraham Lincoln lay in state there after his assassination in 1865. The adjacent City Hall Park faces the Brooklyn Bridge, another 19th century architectural marvel. Tours are free, but must be arranged in advance.

8. Presidents had a larger presence in **Federal Hall**, where George Washington took his first oath of office in 1789. Nearly a century later, long after the nation's capital moved from New York to Washington, Chester A. Arthur was also sworn in there. Although it's overshadowed by the New York Stock Exchange, which stands directly across the street, Federal Hall features a statue and a museum on post-colonial New York.

9. Another president not only left his mark, but also his body in Gotham. **Grant's Tomb**, the nation's largest mausoleum, contains the remains of both Ulysses S. Grant, the 18th president, and his wife Julia. The \$600,000 structure overlooks the Hudson River at 122nd Street in Morningside Heights.

10. Moving downriver are the Passenger Ship Terminal, the Intrepid aircraft carrier, the New York Waterway ferry terminal, the Jacob Javits Exposition Center, and the Chelsea Pier, where parties and special events occur almost daily. The nearby **Chelsea arts district**,



Top photo: NYC Atlas at Rockefeller
Bottom photo: NYC Brooklyn Bridge



between 10th and 11th Avenue crossed by streets in the 20s, has arts and sculpture on display daily plus wine-and-cheese parties on Thursday nights.

11. With winter weather likely to preclude a stroll on The High Line, a one-time rail line converted to urban pedestrian walkway, join a **television studio audience** for *David Letterman*, *The View*, *Live with Kelly and Michael*, *The People's Court*, *Wendy Williams*, or *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* Letterman tapes two shows on Monday. For more info, call 212-975-5853.

12. Connoisseurs of culture will kvell at the **no-admission policies** of the Museum of American Illustration, the Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace, the Harbor Defense Museum, and the National Museum of the American Indian, a branch of the Smithsonian. Also free are the Museum of Biblical Art, the Federal Reserve Bank, the Soldiers and Sailors Monument, and The Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology, among others.

13. More than any other day of the week, Friday is the jackpot for advocates of the adage, "If it's free, it's for me." **More than a half-dozen attractions that are free for at least a few hours** that day are the Museum of Modern Art and the Museum of the Moving Image (both 4-8 PM); the New York Aquarium (after 3 PM); the New York Historical Society (6-8 PM); the New York Hall of Science (2-5 PM); the Whitney Museum of American Art (6-9 PM); and the International Center of Photography (after 5 PM).

Subject to the vagaries of winter weather are free guided tours of Greenwich Village, Chinatown, the Lower East Side, Battery Park City, and Harlem's Apollo Theater, where many musicians launched their careers. Visitors can always explore on their own — with window-shopping a spectator sport on ritzy Fifth Avenue.

Super Bowl spectators with European roots shouldn't miss the 45-minute free tour of the Ellis Island Immigration Museum — even though a \$13 ferry ticket is required to get there. U.S. park rangers explain how 12 million foreigners were screened at Ellis Island — and sometimes sent back to countries of origin — from 1892-1954. A 30-minute free film has a telling name: *Island of Hope, Island of Tears*. The Statue of Liberty and the restored immigration museum occupy separate islands that lie 10 minutes apart by ferry, but require nearly six hours to make the most of both.

Super Bowl fans will find many reasons why New York is called "the city that never sleeps." It would take weeks to sample all the free attractions and dollars to explore such icons as the Empire State Building, Carnegie Hall, Hayden Planetarium, Madison Square Garden, and the UN Secretariat.

The key, in planning both time and cost, is to invest wisely. With the Super Bowl coming, Big Apple Greeters will expand its staff of 300 and a tour list that ranges from the Transit Museum to Hudson Square in the eclectic Tribeca neighborhood. Hidden gems, such as the long-closed City Hall subway station, often resurface.

For other ways to stretch dollars in New York, see www.newyorkpass.com or www.citypass.com. ■

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