



New York's buzz

New York City is one of the most famous cities in the world, so no wonder it is a popular language travel destination. BETHAN NORRIS finds out just what students can get up to in the Big Apple.

New York is an international metropolis like no other," claims Sarah Hutman from Zoni Language Centers.

"It's American, European, Asian and Latin American all at once. It's one of the most diverse places on earth. Students come to New York to experience the world inside a little slice of America."

Few international students go to study English in New York without already having a number of preconceptions about the city and this is because of its huge international profile. As William Jex, Director of the

worldwide and many language schools find it difficult to pick one attribute that students are particularly attracted to. "Many students see New York City as a famous city, such as London, Paris and Tokyo, and want to visit at least once in their lifetime," says Jesse Ro from American Language Communication Center. "They are also aware of famous landmarks such as the Empire State Building, Statue of Liberty and countless museums."

Ro relates that many female students see New York as a shopping Mecca, with stores lining Fifth Avenue (1) and Madison Avenue, and concentrated in neighbourhoods such as Soho (2) and Greenwich Village. Iva Radosevic from Kaplan adds that educational opportunities are also a major draw. "Many [students] come because they will eventually study in universities in New York," she says.

New York boasts a particularly wide range of well known and well respected universities, colleges and language schools. The sheer number of students, both American and international, living in New York adds to its young, trendy, cutting-edge atmosphere and generates an entertainment industry focused on the young and hip. In addition, many of the most famous attractions and museums offer discounts to students and Bonita Vander from Manhattan Language says that there are many activities in the city that are completely free. "[These include] free movies in Bryant Park and on Chelsea Piers, [and] free theatre, opera and concert performances in Prospect Park [in Brooklyn], Times Square and Central Park," she says. "Also many of the museums are free – donation requested – including the Metropolitan Museum (3) and the Brooklyn Museum of Art."

Evening entertainment is also almost limitless in a city famed for its 24-hour culture. "Students can sample food from around the world at restaurants throughout the city, day and night and, for the over-21 crowd, bars and lounges such as the famous New York City punk club CBGBs to little-known jazz clubs are open until 4am," says Hutman.



Lincoln Center Metropolitan Opera House

The home of opera in New York, "the Met" has a grand interior and is infamous for its modern touches such as crystal chandeliers that rise up prior to performances

American Language Institute (ALI) at New York University points out, the city is "continually reported upon in the news media in every country". He adds, "For the student-aged generation, it is the centre – or one of the world centres – for youthful fashions, music and events."

With a reputation that surpasses national boundaries, New York sells itself to students

Ro adds that one of the “hottest neighbourhoods” in New York at the moment is the Meatpacking District (4), which was originally an area where the butchering trade dominated the landscape. “Today you will see many hotels, restaurants and famous shops in this neighbourhood where celebrities, singles, as well as tourists gather,” she explains.

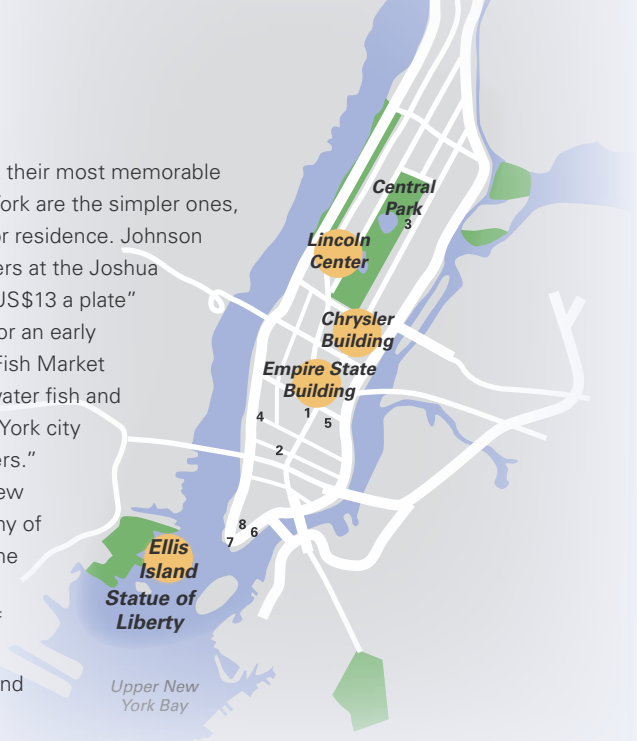
With so many different neighbourhoods to explore, each with its own unique vibe and attractions, Wrenford Johnson from Rennert Bilingual says that students often spend their free time taking walks around the city. “In particular they like strolling and shopping in Soho and East Village (5),” he says. “[And] going to Central Park is a favourite [pastime] among our students. You will find acrobats, bands, singers, joggers, extortionists and other strange and wonderful surprises.”

Many students find that their most memorable experiences while in New York are the simpler ones, often close to their school or residence. Johnson advises “fresh lobster dinners at the Joshua Tree Boston restaurant for US\$13 a plate” and adds, “Set your alarm for an early morning visit to the Fulton Fish Market (6) and discover the deep water fish and creatures provided by New York city restaurants for seafood lovers.”

Students at Aspect's New York branch can admire many of the city's attractions from the comfort of their classroom, situated on the 63rd floor of the Empire State Building. “From the student lounge and classrooms, students enjoy magnificent vistas across the whole of New York City, and views of the neighbouring states of

New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Connecticut and Massachusetts,” says Kate Mishcon.

Not content with its wealth of permanent attractions, New York also hosts an array of festivals, carnivals and celebrations. Vander lists the “Sakuri Matsuri (New York’s cherry blossom festival), Dragon Boat festival, Chile Pepper Festival, Ukrainian Festival, Turkish Festival



Immigration Museum - Ellis Island

This museum charts the history of immigration to the USA and is the site of the original checkpoint for immigrants arriving in search of a new life. Over 100 million Americans have links to Ellis Island



and Brazil Festival” as just some of the events that take place year round. A recent event to be added to New York’s already full festival calendar is the River to River Festival in downtown Manhattan, which was created to help revitalise Lower Manhattan since the events of September 11, 2001. The festival features over 500 free cultural events from May to September in the area between Battery Park (7) and City Hall (8).

Many students have unique experiences in the city. Hutman relates an occasion when a student on the editorial team of the school’s student newspaper turned up without an invitation to Fashion Week NYC in order to interview someone famous. “After the show, she followed the other journalists to the press tent and awaited her turn to interview German designer Wolfgang Joop. Not only was she prepared for the interview, she got into the shows and interviewed in English. You really can do anything here!” she says.

Nevertheless, mixing with local New Yorkers can be a challenge. Johnson explains that a recent survey of students at Rennert Bilingual revealed that they often found it difficult to meet and connect with locals. “Indeed, New Yorkers often find it difficult to meet and mix with one another,” he says, adding that their accommodation arrangements help to overcome this.

“Students who have their housing arranged through us either live with an American family or live in a dormitory residence with other students from all over the world – including a large number of American university students.” ●



Empire State Building & Chrysler Building

Two of the tallest buildings now in New York, the Chrysler Building is in Art Deco style, and the Empire State Building offers 360° views of the city. Both are in central Manhattan

Agent viewpoint

“Known as the most cosmopolitan and cultural American city for Brazilians, New York is a dream for students who want to improve their English and watch the great Broadway shows, walk in Central Park, party at night and see the most important corporations and shops in the world. Kaplan has a great location and students can finish classes and walk around Manhattan and meet many tourists and students. In the evenings [there are] lots of pubs and bars for the young and business students in the Soho area. New York is a great city for dancing and students can enjoy [this] all weekend long.”

Juliana Thomaz, STB – Student Travel Bureau, Brazil

“Many Korean students are interested in New York City. There are lots of city attractions and English schools, colleges, universities and fashion institutes. New York City is more like Seoul as a big city. Korean students adapt easily to life – such as the transportation, searching for housing and making friends. Also businessmen choose New York City because of the demanding [nature] of the internship programmes for these people.”

Young Jang, BCM International Exchange Association, Korea

“New York City is the centre of the world for business, fashion and many things. Many Japanese students enjoy living there. They enjoy going to see musicals, and baseball and basketball games. Shopping is popular [too]. Many students are interested in New York but the number of students we have sent is down because of student visa problems.”

Daisuke Niibe, Last Resort Corp., Japan