

New York Relocation Guide



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Moving to New York



When it comes to iconic cities, few are as iconic as New York City. With its bright yellow cabs, it's medley of famous landmarks and renowned 24-hour hustle and bustle, it's one of the most exciting and recognisable cities on the planet.

But being easily distinguishable and having a fast-paced style of living isn't all that New York has to offer. From watching shows on Broadway, being inspired at the MET, catching a game at Madison Square Garden or eating at some of the world's best restaurants, it's easy to see why it has a reputation as a cultural capital. There truly is something for everyone to enjoy here.

While all these factors make New York a fantastic place to visit on holiday, it can also be a great place to relocate to if you're looking for new career opportunities and wanting to live at the epicentre of all the action. In fact, 'The Big Apple' is highly welcoming of expats, with 23% of its eight million strong population hailing from other countries.

So, if you're considering moving to New York City but aren't sure where to start, we've created this handy guide which includes everything you need to know before you go.

Things to know about New York City:

Population 

8.85 million (2022)

Boroughs 

New York is made up of five boroughs \\
\\

Brooklyn, Manhattan,
Queens, Staten Island and
The Bronx.

Time zone 

Winter: EST (5 hours behind
the UK)

Summer: EDT (4 hours behind
the UK)

Currency 

US dollar

Why New York



It can be easy to think that New York City is exactly how it's depicted on-screen. But there's a lot more to New York than just Manhattan and its popular tourist haunts. The city is made up of hundreds of neighbourhoods, each with its own style, culture, and personality, thanks to NYC's multi-cultural population. The variations between the neighbourhood are so vast that they can often feel like entirely different countries or states, all within the same city.

Convenience is certainly another draw to this amazing city.

Whether you need to do a food shop after a late shift at work or want to go to the gym before an early meeting, you'll always be able to conveniently find somewhere open. They don't call it the 'city that never sleeps' for no reason. There's also a variety of ways to get around, from cabs and the subway, to walking and biking, and you'll be able to get around quickly. If you're an expat planning a trip back home, John F. Kennedy International (JFK), and Newark Liberty International (EWR) airports are also both in close proximity to the city.

Work culture in New York



New York City's work culture is work-centric, fast paced, and highly competitive. But that shouldn't put you off from relocating here. Working hard and playing harder is certainly the NYC mantra. While long hours are often to be expected, New Yorkers make up for it with regular socialising and networking opportunities where you can really let your hair down.

As well as having an enthusiastic working culture, New York is a booming hub for several industries, including construction. Recent studies have found that New York had the fourth-largest construction sector in the US, as well as being the fourth highest paying employment sector. In addition to this, construction spending in New York City reached \$86 billion in 2022, which is an all-time high for the sector and could offer more job opportunities to expats in the not-so-distant future.



If you're interested in what potential property and construction job opportunities are currently available in New York City, you can get in touch with a member of our team. They will be able to help you kickstart your job search and find a role that is specifically tailored to your skills, experience, and career goals.

Visas and Permits



If working in New York sounds right up your street, visas and permits should be the next thing on your to-do list. There are several visa options to apply for, but it's important to remember that many employment-based US visas require you to be sponsored by a US employer who have offered you a job before moving here.

Firstly, there's the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) which enables UK residents to stay in the US visa-free for 90 days. While this visa doesn't allow you to work during this time, it will enable you to attend interviews, go to careers fairs, and attend industry networking events. Plus, it will also give you the opportunity to get a feel for the city and its work culture to see if it's a good fit for you and your family.

Another option is to apply for an immigrant visa. These employment-based visas typically last for two-years before they require renewal. However, they can be renewed continuously, so long as you meet the visa's requirements. Once you've found a licensed company to work for and sponsor you, they will file a visa petition on your behalf with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

There are three work-based immigrant visa options available, from highest to lowest priority:



**E1 First Preference \\
People of "extraordinary ability"**



**E2 Second Preference \\
Professionals with advanced degrees and 5+ years of experience**



**E3 Third Preference \\
Professionals with 2+ years of training/experience or unskilled workers whose skills are in short supply**

Alternatively, there's also a non-immigrant visa which can be ideal if you aren't planning on working and living in New York permanently.

The most popular visa options within the category are:



H1-B Visa (Skilled Worker) \\

For professionals performing services in a prearranged professional job for a US employer, who have a bachelor's degree or higher.

→ Visa lasts for 3 years but can be extended.



H2-B Visa (Skilled and Unskilled Workers) \\

For people going to the States to perform seasonal work or fill a temporary labour shortage.

→ Visa lasts between 1-3 years.



L-1 Visa (Intra-Company Transferee) \\

For managers and executives with specialist knowledge moving to the US within the same company.

→ Visa lasts between 5-7 years.

To find out more information on employment-based immigrant and non-immigrant visa process, you can visit the [USCIS website](#).

The last option you might want to consider is the Permanent Residence Card (PRC), more commonly known as 'The Green Card'. As the name suggests, this visa will allow you to permanently live and work within the United States, without having to renew your visa every few years. However, many people don't manage to get approval for a PRC until they have spent several years working in the US on a temporary visa.

There's no denying that the visa process can be a lot to get your head around. Thankfully, you don't have to tackle it alone. Our [consultants](#) are on hand to help guide you through the process and answer any questions you may have.



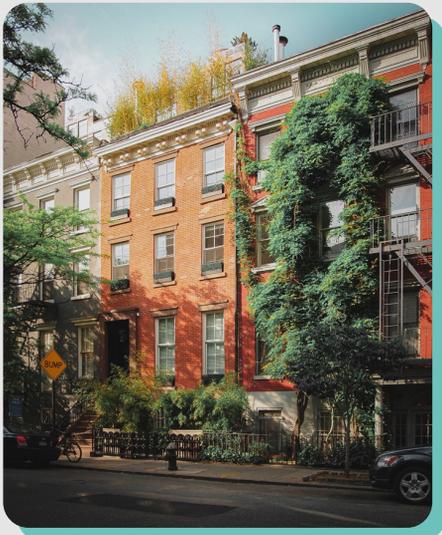
You can find out more about the Permanent Residence Card process by visiting the [USCIS website](#).

Cost of Living



It should come as no surprise that to live in New York, you'll have to pay a premium. Considered one of the most expensive cities on earth, the cost of living in New York is 23% higher than London, according to recent studies. So, before you make the decision to move here, you might want to assess your finances very carefully.

To give you an idea of how much you could be spending per month, here's a list of some everyday essentials and their current approximate prices:



Utilities

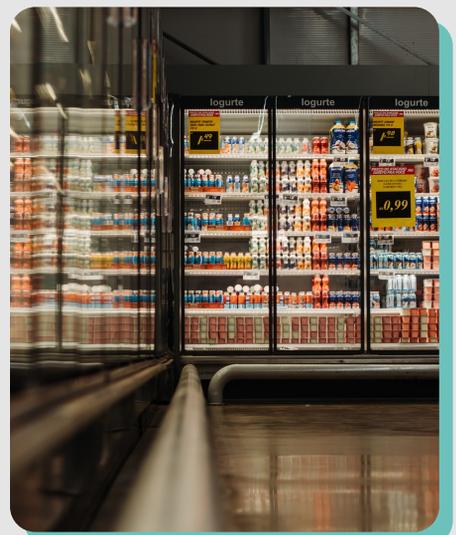


The average cost of a basic, monthly utilities package is around **\$171.01 (£139.95)**, which includes electricity, gas, cable and internet. Generally, water and heating are included in your rent, but many landlords won't include electricity, which can be upwards of **\$100 (£82.17)** per month, depending on your usage.

Groceries



For one person, you can expect to pay between **\$50-\$100 per week** on groceries depending on where you choose to shop. Generally, a litre of milk is around **\$1.21 (£1.10)**, a loaf of bread is **\$4.01 (£3.60)** and a carton of 12 eggs is currently **\$3.99 (£3.28)**.





Eating out

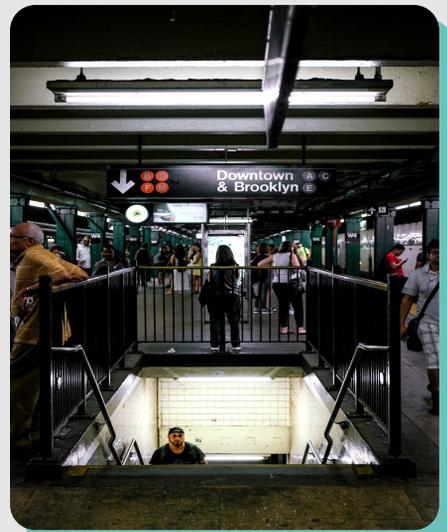


Again, this varies greatly on where you choose to eat. A regular cappuccino is usually around **\$5.33 (£4.78)** and a meal at an inexpensive restaurant would come to around **\$25 (£22.44)** per person.

Transport



If you're a driver, a litre of gasoline will cost you around **\$1.08 (£0.89)**, whilst a MetroCard, which you can use on the subway and local buses, will cost around **\$127 (£104.36)** per month.



Finding a home



Once you've secured a job, it's time to start think about where you're going to live. With so many neighbourhoods to choose from, it can be challenging to know exactly where to start looking, particularly if you've never been to New York before.

To help you out, we've compiled this list of great places in New York City for both families and for singles to give you some much needed inspiration.

Families



Carroll Gardens



A quaint living area, with historic brownstones, beautiful parks, and an abundance of family-friendly restaurants such as the Brooklyn Farmacy & Soda Fountain. It's also home to the board game hotspot, Brooklyn Strategist, which is the perfect place for kids to hang out with their friends or sign up to camping adventures.



Families



Battery Park City



A region that is close enough to the action, but still far away enough for those who like peace and quiet from time to time. There's plenty of parks that run along the waterfront with amazing views of the Hudson and Lady Liberty, as well as activities for the kids to enjoy like the SeaGlass Carousel and Battery Park Urban Farm.



Families



Upper West Side



Between the famous Central Park and Riverside Park, lies the Upper West side- a firm favourite for families. Its tree lined streets are a haven for parents and children alike with shops, libraries and museums such the American Museum of Natural History all in walking distance from your front door.



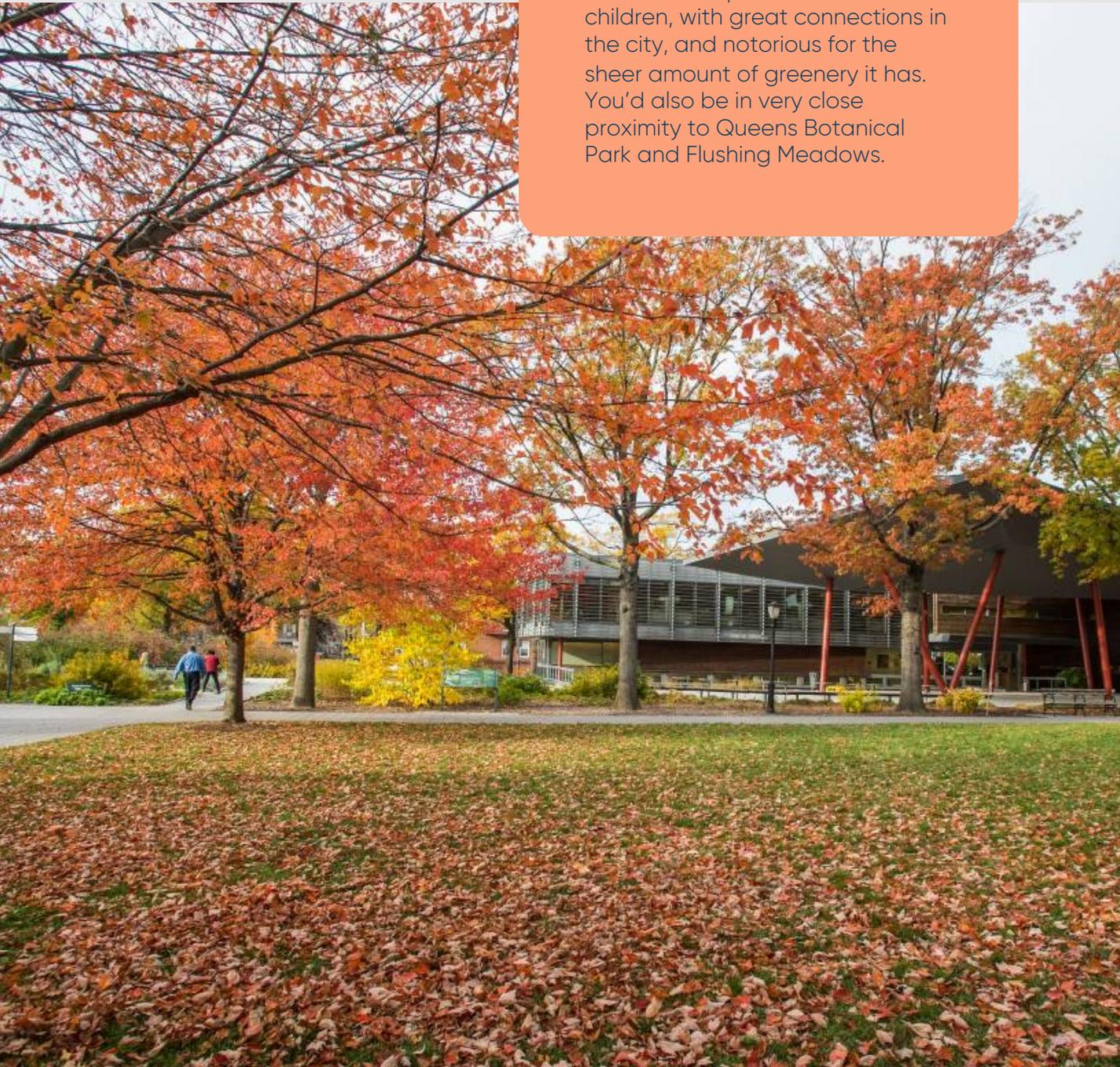
Families



Flushing



Perfect for expat adults and their children, with great connections in the city, and notorious for the sheer amount of greenery it has. You'd also be in very close proximity to Queens Botanical Park and Flushing Meadows.



Singles



Astoria



Nestled in Queens and perfect for those wanting to escape the hustle and bustle of Manhattan, Astoria is a cultural hotspot with an exciting, yet casual vibe. This is home to the Museum of the Moving Image, as well as a plethora of open-air beer gardens and restaurants serving cuisines from around the globe.



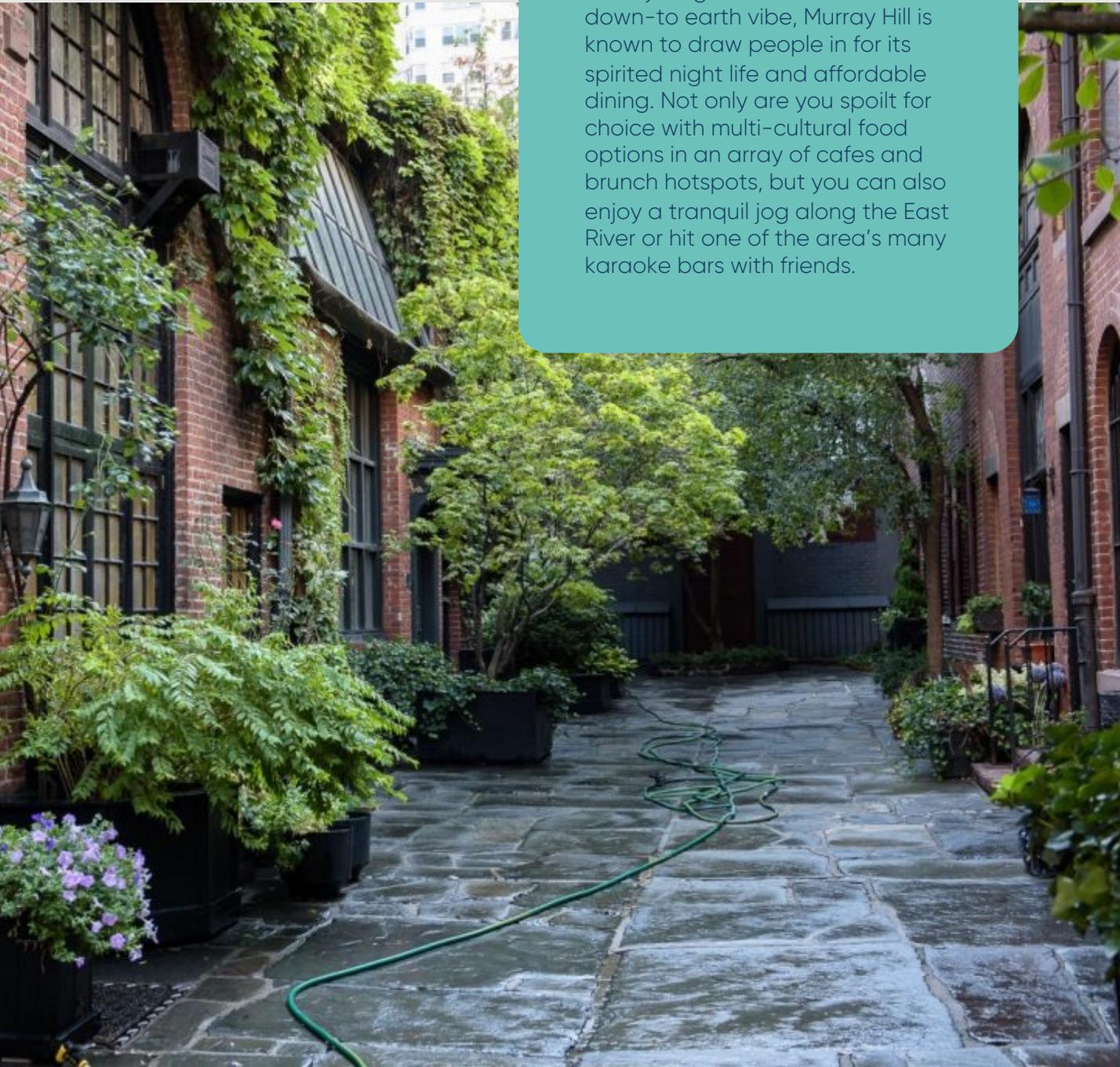
Singles



Murray Hill



A lively neighbourhood with a down-to-earth vibe, Murray Hill is known to draw people in for its spirited night life and affordable dining. Not only are you spoilt for choice with multi-cultural food options in an array of cafes and brunch hotspots, but you can also enjoy a tranquil jog along the East River or hit one of the area's many karaoke bars with friends.



Singles



Williamsburg



Known for its creative and artsy vibe, Williamsburg is made up of trendy boutique shops, a vibrant nightlife and some of the best bars and restaurants in the city. You'll also find plenty of outdoor pop-up parties and a thriving music scene, with large venues such as Brooklyn Bowl hosting regular events.



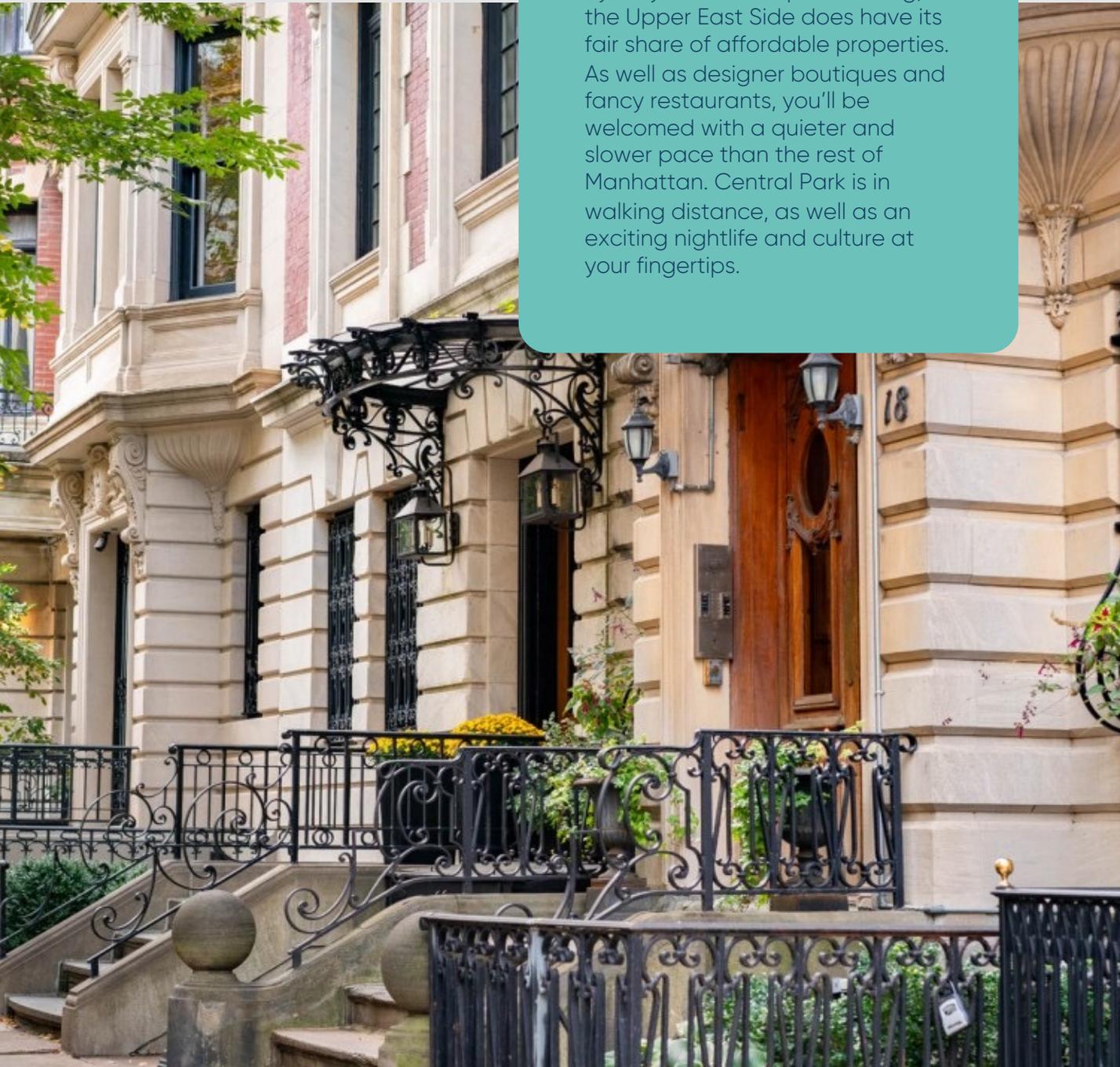
Singles



Upper East Side



Synonymous with upscale living, the Upper East Side does have its fair share of affordable properties. As well as designer boutiques and fancy restaurants, you'll be welcomed with a quieter and slower pace than the rest of Manhattan. Central Park is in walking distance, as well as an exciting nightlife and culture at your fingertips.



Renting



For many people who decide to move to New York, renting is the most viable option. In fact, rental apartments make up approximately 63% of the housing stock in the city. However, as we've already explained, the Big Apple can be pricey, and rent is no exception. So, to make the process of finding your first rental property in New York as streamlined as possible, here's some important things to consider before you start.

Rent prices can vary dramatically depending on the borough or neighbourhood you choose to live in.

For instance, a studio apartment in Manhattan could cost you anywhere between **\$2,000–\$3,000 per month**, with a one-bedroom apartment costing between **\$2,700–\$3,900**. If you're bringing your family, you could be paying around **\$5,200 for a 2-bedroom property or \$5,800 for a 3-bedroom property**, according to recent reports.

To help bring rent prices down, many people opt to either flat share or move further out of the city and commute longer to get to work. So, if you decided to move to areas such as Queens or Brooklyn, your rent in a shared apartment could drop to around \$800–\$1,000 per person.

You'll generally be asked to provide at least one month's rent and a security deposit to your new landlord in the US to secure a rental property. It's crucial that you find out what's included in your rent and to ask about utilities such as heating, water, electricity, and internet fees before you sign your rental contract. Maintenance and repair fees should also be covered by your rent so make sure this is included.

One of the best perks of renting, as opposed to buying in New York, is that it gives you flexibility.

Most leases tend to last a year, but some landlords are happy to provide shorter-term options. This can be ideal if you dislike where you live or discover that another area is more suitable to your wants and needs.

Another bonus is that renting also has fewer upfront cost. Relocating can be costly so we understand you'll want to save money where you can. While broker fees can cost up to 15% of the annual rent, once you combine it with the first month's rent and security deposit, it's still much less than a down payment on an apartment. There are also many no-fee apartments on the market, which can help to bring your costs down even further.

Some landlords in New York have been known to look for potential tenants who make 40 times the monthly rent, as well as having a credit score of at least 700. Thankfully, there's no need to panic. You can usually get around this by finding a guarantor to co-sign your lease and act as a backup to pay the rent if you're unable to.

As a NYC renter you might also need to consider how you're going to wash and dry your clothes, as most apartments in the city don't come with washing machines or dryers. The easiest solution is to do what the locals do and start using a public laundromat



To start your search for rental properties in NYC, you can visit sites like [StreetEasy](#) or [Apartments.com](#) to see what is currently available and within your budget.

Buying



If you're planning on staying in New York for the long haul and are financially able to, buying an apartment could be a good alternative to renting. Before you start hunting for available properties online, there are some differences between the US and UK property markets that you should be aware of.

Firstly, properties in New York City are divided into three categories:

Condominiums, Cooperatives and Townhouses.

A condominium is an apartment building where each apartment owner owns a real estate title for their individual apartment. This is highly recommended for expats because they can buy, sell, or renovate the property without needing approval from a board.

A cooperative is an apartment building where each apartment owner owns shares in the building and has a proprietary lease. Unlike a condominium, you will need permission from the coops board if you wish to buy or sell and these requests can be denied for no reason in some cases. There's also the option of buying a townhouse, which are classed as landed property, but these come with a much higher price tag, particularly if you're looking to buy in Manhattan.

It's likely you will have little contact with the property seller themselves and there's a chance you might not see them at all during the buying process. Everything will typically be done through their real estate agent, who will act as a middleman between you and the seller. They will deal with all the negotiations, contracts etc and then take a commission from the sale of the property upon completion.

In the US, once a buyer's offer is accepted, the contract is fixed so there's less chance of arrangements falling through. This is different than in the UK, where the sale isn't finalised until the last minute. As it's harder to set a definite date for completion, you'll need to be able to guarantee the sale of your UK home in order to complete the purchase of your new US home.



So, if you think buying could be a good option for you and your family, you can find NYC properties for sale online, on sites like [Zillow](#) and [RightMove](#).

Once you
arrive



Yes, you've made it to New York, **now what?**

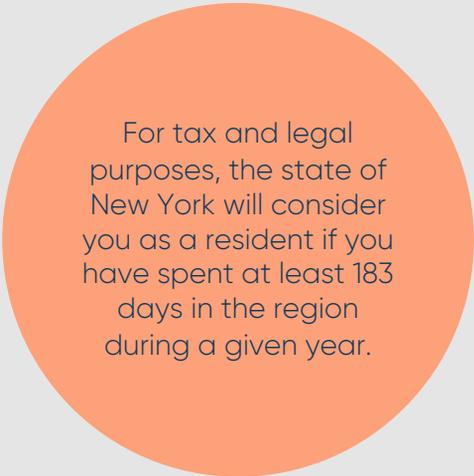
Well, before you settle down into your new life as a New Yorker, there are some formalities you'll need to take care of. One of the most important things to do when you arrive is to establish your residency in your new state of New York. This will allow you to get your driver's license, register any vehicles you may have and enable you to pay tax.

Thankfully, this is a relatively easy process. Anything that demonstrates that you intend on staying in New York will establish residency, such as:

- \\ **Renting/buying a house or apartment.**
- \\ **Being employed within the city.**
- \\ **Being registered to vote.**
- \\ **Having a business in the city.**

Here are some other important things you'll need to get sorted once you arrive in NYC:

- \\ **Get health insurance.**
- \\ **Sort out your finances, such as loans, bank accounts, pensions, and taxes.**
- \\ **Enrol your child into a school.**
- \\ **Get a license for your pets and find a local veterinarian.**
- \\ **Set up your utilities.**
- \\ **Register your car.**
- \\ **Get your New York's driver's license.**
- \\ **Update your address with the USPS.**
- \\ **Get car insurance policy, if needed.**
- \\ **Set up your social security (you can do this when you apply for your visa).**



For tax and legal purposes, the state of New York will consider you as a resident if you have spent at least 183 days in the region during a given year.

Healthcare



It's no secret that the healthcare system in the US is very different to the UK.



In America, healthcare is not considered to be a universal right as it is in the UK, and they don't have an NHS equivalent there. Instead, the industry is fully privatised, which means that all medical facilities are run by independent companies and medical help comes at a cost.

Many Americans sign up for private health insurance via an insurance provider or their employer. By paying them a contribution each month, they can reduce their medical costs should they get into an accident or become ill. Estimates suggest that the average American spends around 5% of their gross income on medical expenses.

It's important that you do your research into healthcare insurance providers and the types of medical cover that are available for you and your family as expats before you arrive. Most expats tend to go for an Individual Private Medical Insurance policy, otherwise known as an IPMI, because it offers global health coverage and is tailored to suit each person's medical needs. This can be particularly beneficial if you or a member of your family requires ongoing treatment for an existing medical concern.

Don't forget to ask your new employer if they offer any form of healthcare contributions too. Generally, companies with 50+ employees must offer ACA-compliant health insurance to their employees who work over 30 hours per week. However, if this doesn't apply to you, you will have to find your own health insurance.

Schools



If you're relocating to New York with your children, getting them enrolled into a school is crucial.



In New York, any child between the ages of 5-21 and without a high school diploma is entitled to free public education, which also applies to expats who are residents in the city. Like many cities around the world, school eligibility for public schools is generally determined by which zone your home is located. This could mean that schools are a big factor in which area you decide to relocate to.

Once you've decided which public school you would like your child to go to, you'll need to enrol them and look out for registration dates posted by the school. These are usually shared several months in advance, but this varies depending on the school. To enrol your child, you will have to provide a birth certificate or passport, immunisation records, proof of your New York City residency, and their latest school reports.

Alternatively, there's also the option of international or private schools in New York, which understandably will cost more. The average price to send your child to a private school in New York is approximately \$19,667 (£16,242) per year. However, as you're paying for your child's education, you won't need to prove you live in a specific catchment area/zone.

The education system in the US has a slightly different format to the UK:

Elementary school

\\

Kindergarten to
5th grade -
ages 5-10

Middle school

\\

6th to 8th
grade – ages
11-13

High school

\\

9th to 12th grade –
ages 14-18



To help you get to grips with what school your child should attend once you've relocated to New York, you can visit sites like [Inside Schools](#) or [Great Schools](#).

Moving pets over



Naturally, you won't want to leave your beloved pets behind when you relocate to New York. After all, they are part of the family too. Thankfully, thousands of people move to New York with their pets each year so it's certainly possible. But there are some things you need to consider beforehand.

If you're renting, you might need to double check the conditions of your lease as some places won't allow pets at all. If they do allow pets, is there enough space for them? You'll also need to consider who is going to look after your pet while you're at work. You might have to factor in the cost of a dog walker, plus getting your pet registered at a new vet surgery and pet insurance.

More importantly, it's important to think about how your pet will be during the transportation phase. There are multiple ways your pet can travel to New York from the UK. The first option is to have them accompany you on the plane, either in-cabin or as baggage or cargo, but this can vary depending on the airline you are travelling with. Another option is to enlist the help of a pet travel company who can arrange the transportation of your pet for you.

According to the US Embassy, cats and dogs do not require a permit or rabies vaccination to enter the US. They will, however, need to have a health certificate from their vet that states that they are fit and healthy to travel. It can also be wise to contact your airline and New York's Department of Agriculture to clarify just what documents you need to provide and how to register your pet once you've landed in NYC.

For more tips and advice on safely relocating your pet to New York, you can visit the [CDC website](#).

Settling in





You're never going to settle into your new home in New York if you just hide away in your apartment.

The key to really feeling comfortable in a new place is by meeting new people and immersing yourself in everything it has to offer. That being said, we know it can be daunting to just go out and meet people, especially if you don't know where to start.

If you're eager to build a social network once you've moved to NYC, here's a variety of ways you can get started:

Join Expat groups \ \

Joining an expat group is a simple way of meeting fellow people from the UK. Not only will you have a shared life experience of moving to another country, but the people you meet can also offer invaluable tips and advice because they've already done it all before. Expat Facebook groups and websites like [InterNations](#) or [Meetup](#) will give you the chance to chat with other expats and find out about local events you can attend in your area.

Children \ \

Schools are a fantastic place to make friends with other parents. There's always plenty of events such as bake sales, school plays, and sports games to attend which can provide plenty of opportunities for you to introduce yourself.

Start a new hobby \ \

Whether it's joining the gym, learning a new language, or getting creative at a pottery class, starting a new hobby and attending regular classes will automatically connect you with like-minded people with similar interests. Ask for help at work: Let your new colleagues know that you're new in town and ask for advice on the best places to grab lunch or go for a drink. They will undoubtedly share their favourites and may even offer to show you around. Work parties can also be a great way to get to know people in a less-formal setting.

Getting around



How to get a driving license \ \

If you're planning on driving when you get to New York, you'll be pleased to know that you can use your UK driving licence for up to 90 days. However, you'll have to apply for a US licence during this time, which will involve an application, theory test, and practical test.

To get the process started with the [New York DMV](#), you'll need to have your visa and proof of residence and you'll have to pay a fee. Once you've passed your tests and obtained your new license, it will be valid in every US state.

Driving in New York is not the for the faint of heart. For starters, Americans drive on the right-hand side of the road and undertaking is legal. This means you'll have to be extra careful when changing lanes. There's also heavy traffic most days, heavy fines for blocking intersections and road signs that limit left turns into specific roads during certain times of the day. Unless you have a designated parking space, it can also be challenging to find parking and it's also expensive. With all this combined, it's easy to see why most New Yorkers opt to use the Subway instead.

Public Transport \ \

The subway is the most popular form of public transport in the city and is often considered the quickest way to get around. Widely used by the locals, it runs 24/7 and is one of the cheapest forms of transport in the city. You can buy a MetroCard for \$127, which will provide you with unlimited travel on the subway and buses for 30 days. Children are also provided with student MetroCard by the city itself. Studies have found that most New Yorkers only walk 1 mile on average to get to their nearest subway stop, making it highly convenient for many.

Alternatively, there is also a bus service and a bike share programme in most boroughs in the city, as well as the classic New York taxis. Taxis typically charge an initial fare of \$2.50 with a \$0.40 additional charge every four blocks.

There is also the option of renting a car, which can give you flexibility without the commitment of owning your own car. The city has a wide range of car rental companies such as [RealCar](#) and [Share Now](#) that you can utilise, with the added bonus that petrol is cheaper in NYC than most places in Europe, making this another budget friendly option.

Top attractions



If you've never been to New York before, here is a list of our favourite attractions that you absolutely must visit at least once to immerse yourself in New York Culture:



Statue of Liberty \ \

Standing at 93 metres tall, Lady Liberty guards the entrance to New York Harbour on Liberty Island and is an absolute must-see for expats in NYC.



Empire State Building \ \

Standing at 102 metres tall, Lady Liberty guards the entrance to New York Harbour on Liberty Island and is an absolute must-see for expats in NYC.



Central Park \ \

This famous park is 800 acres of beautiful gardens and is home to the Central Park Zoo, the Bethesda Fountain, the Strawberry Fields monument and the Conservatory Water Pond.



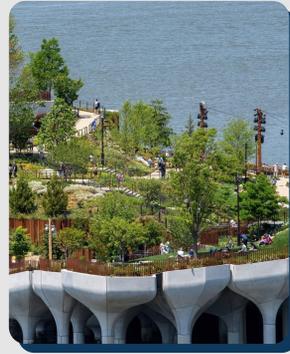
9/11 Memorial & Museum \ \

Constructed where the Twin Towers once stood, the 9/11 Memorial and Museum features sunken fountains and a garden to remember those who were lost during the 9/11 terror attacks.



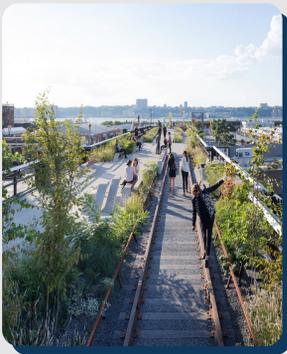
Metropolitan Museum of Art \\

The MET has one of the largest collections of art in the world and is home to over two million artworks, from paintings and sculptures to historical clothing and weapons.



Little Island \\

One of the newest attractions to come to the city, Little Island is a public park on the Hudson River that looks like a floating island. It's the perfect place to escape the city for some peace and tranquility, without actually having to leave.



The High Line \\

This wonderful public park is built on historic freight train line, which is elevated above the streets of Manhattan's West Side, and combines design, nature and art..



Broadway \\

New York's theatre district has showcased some of the best plays and musicals, from The Phantom of the Opera to Hamilton across 41 professional theatrical venues.

Culture shocks



When moving to the US, there are a few general things that are specific to American culture that you might not be used to:

Tipping



Tipping 15–20% of your total bill in bars, restaurants, and taxis is customary and expected in America, so make sure you don't forget to do so.

Jaywalking



Crossing the road wherever you want is illegal in the US, and you can end up with a fine of up to \$250 if caught by the police.

Sales Tax



While the price tag of an item may say one thing, these prices don't generally include tax, like they would in the UK. So don't be shocked if the price of an item is higher once you take it to the checkout. The sales tax on most goods and services in New York City is around 8.875%.

Greeting people



Despite their reputation for being unfriendly, it is customary in New York to greet people while riding an elevator, particularly in an apartment building or while waiting at a bus stop or subway station.

Holidays \ \



Americans mostly acknowledge the same holidays that we have in the UK, like New Year's and Christmas Day. Though, there are some American specific holidays you should be aware of, such as:



Independence Day

The Fourth of July is a federal holiday that commemorates the US declaring its independence from the UK. It's associated with fireworks and parades.



Thanksgiving Day

The 4th Thursday of November is a family holiday, with origins as a harvest festival. It's usually celebrated with a feast of turkey, cranberry sauce, and pumpkin pie.



Martin Luther King Jr. Day

The third Monday of January is a federal holiday to commemorate the life and work of Dr. King, who was a prominent leader in the American civil rights movement.



Memorial Day

The last Monday in May is dedicated to remembering all the people that have died in the US military.



For more information
about relocating for
work, please get in
touch with the team.

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