

New York City on \$550 a Day for Two

By Paula G. Cullison from Arizona, Summer 2011

Trip Description: June 20 -24 2011

My husband and I had a wonderful time in New York City. We averaged \$550 a day for the two of us, including hotel, meals, shows and other activities.

Destinations: Countries - North America; Regions/Cities - New York City
Categories: Hotels/B&Bs; Art Trip; Sightseeing; Independent Travel; 2 People
<http://www.slowtrav.com/tr/tripreport.asp?tripid=1944>

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Times Square is the 'heartbeat' of NYC

It is possible to actually 'Do NYC on \$550 a day for Two' and hit the highlights. As a native New Yorker (lived there for over 30 years) who has been a desert dweller in the Land of Arizona since 1974, I need a NYC fix every once in a while. From time to time, I need to reenter my New York 'state of mind'. This year was no exception. So, I set out to plan five days and four nights (with my husband) in the city of my birth. With years of experience and many travel miles under my belt, I know that with careful planning all things are possible.

Wanting to be close to Central Park, Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, Radio City Music Hall, Broadway and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, I have found that a hotel location near 7th Avenue and 55th Street works best for me. From there I can walk to all of the mentioned destinations. This time I decided to include a meal at restaurants of my three favorite TV chefs, in addition to one of our standby favorites.

NYC never disappoints; our trip was awesome. My advanced planning worked to our satisfaction.

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Horse Carriages at Central Park

With my objective of NYC on \$550 a day for two, I selected the Wellington Hotel at 7th Ave and 55th St. as just about every subway line is within one to three blocks. I requested a quiet room and was given one on the 20th floor. The hotel is popular with European groups, so you can practice your foreign language skills. The staff is friendly and attentive. Computer use is available for a modest fee. The hotel is close to Central Park.

We were in NYC for five days and four nights at the end of June. The tempo was good and we were able to rest for an hour in our room before the evening performances. Before departure, I searched the Internet and secured tickets to: American Ballet (Coppelia) at the MET Opera House at Lincoln Center, Jersey Boys on Broadway, Ravi Coltrane at Birdland, Cirque du Soleil at Radio City Music Hall, and the Shearwater Schooner boat ride on the Hudson River.





Only in NYC - Me and My Gal

We had lunch with friends at the Boat House Restaurant in Central Park; Italian pastry and cappuccino with my cousin at Rocco's in Greenwich Village; dinner at the Petrossian Restaurant; breakfast at Anthony Bourdain's Les Halles; dinner at Mario Batali's Babbo; and lunch at Bobby Flay's American Bar.

We visited the Metropolitan Museum of Art (MMA) and Frick Collection. We walked across Central Park twice: once to visit Strawberry Fields, since Imagine - Yoko Ono's memorial to John Lennon - is on the way to the MMA; and the other time as we headed for the Boat House to meet friends for lunch. Showers were intermittent on two of the days, but we had umbrellas in tow. MMA still honors its (unadvertised) 'pay what you wish' policy. Most tourists are unaware of this option. We almost saw President Obama; he was two blocks away from our hotel at a fundraiser. The street was barricaded and the demonstrators were orderly. The NYPD were in full force. Justin Bieber was also in NYC at Macy's that same day, so the NYPD had plenty to do. It goes without saying that NYC is a great town. Be prepared for the unexpected.

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Zen on the E Train

The NYC subways are the best. We took the E train to the plane for our return flight, as it is the quickest way to JFK (fare \$7.50). Our trip total of \$2110 included: four nights at the Wellington Hotel, two tickets for all of the above mentioned events; a schooner boat ride on the Hudson for two; two gourmet dinners (for two), two gourmet lunches (for two), one salad lunch (for two), one deluxe breakfast (for two) and pastries (for two). At \$550 a day that left us with \$90. Our basic travel budget could be tweaked for your needs. Once a New Yorker - always a New Yorker. Now to unpack ... and plan the next trip.