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travel: A big trip to the Big Apple

Silandara Bartlett

New York City is soon to transform into a twinkling, wintry wonderland for the holidays, beginning with the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade on Nov. 25 and continuing through the New Year's Eve celebration and ball drop at Times Square on Dec. 31. And in between — it's the Big Apple and there's tons to do.

What to do

Shop for gifts from artisans and craftsmen at the **Grand Central Terminal holiday market**. While you're there, watch the famed Sky Ceiling in the Main Concourse brought to life with a seasonal light and music celebration in the Holiday Laser Light Show beginning Nov. 23. East 42nd Street, (212) 340-2210, www.grandcentralterminal.com.

Or try Bryant Park's **old-fashioned European style holiday market** between 40th and 42nd streets and Fifth and Sixth avenues from Nov. 26 to Jan. 2, 2005. Call (212) 472-1522 or go to:

www.fetesdenoel.com

Just want to **window shop**? New York's renowned department stores offer eyefuls of festive delight. A sampling of celebrated window displays includes Saks Fifth Avenue at 611 Fifth Ave.; Macy's Herald Square at 151 W. 34th St.; Lord & Taylor at 424 Fifth Ave.; Bloomingdale's at 1000 Third Ave.; Tiffany & Co. at 727 Fifth Ave.; and a newly remodeled FAO Schwarz at 767 Fifth Ave.

A hint from savvy window shoppers — wait until after closing hours to take in the displays because the crowds will be smaller.

Strap on some skates and whiz around New York City's **skating rinks**. Try The Rink at Rockefeller Center. Admission for adults ranges from \$13-\$17, depending on date and day of week, and there's an \$8 skate rental, 601 Fifth Ave., (212) 332-7654, www.therinkatrockcenter.com

Or visit the indoor Sky Rink at Chelsea Piers. Admission is \$13.50; skate rental is \$6.25; helmet rental is \$3.25. It's at 23rd Street and the Hudson River, (212) 336-6666, www.chelseapiers.com

You also could check out two scenic outdoor rinks in Central Park: Lasker Rink at 110th



What would a trip to New York City be without a ride across the Brooklyn Bridge.



At left, catch the Radio City Rockettes kick off the 72 Annual Radio City Christmas Spectacular at Radio City Music Hall, or go to New York City's Fifth Avenue and shop until you drop.

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Street and Lenox Avenue. It's \$4.50 to skate; \$4.75 to rent skates; and Wollman Rink at 59th Street at 6th Avenue. It's \$8.50 weekdays; \$11 weekends; \$4.75 to rent skates, (212) 534-7639, (212) 439-6900, www.wollman-skatingrink.com.

Watch the **Radio City Rockettes** line up to kick off the 72nd Annual Radio City Christmas Spectacular from Nov. 4 to Jan. 2, 2005. The cost is \$39 to \$129, Radio City Music Hall, 1260 Avenue of the Americas (Sixth Avenue), (212) 307-1000, www.radiocity.com.

The **New York City Ballet** performs *The Nutcracker* at Lincoln Center's New York State Theater Nov. 24 to Jan. 2, 2005. The cost is \$20 to \$96, 20 Lincoln Center, (212) 870-5660, www.nycballet.org.

For a splurge of culture, visit the **Metropolitan Museum of Art** and gaze upon the Neapolitan Baroque crèche adorning a candlelit spruce tree in the Medieval Sculpture Hall from Nov. 23 to Jan. 7, 2005. The cost is \$12 for adults; \$7 for students. It's at 1000 Fifth Ave. at 82nd Street, (212) 535-7710, www.metmuseum.org.

Of course, there are other things to do in the big city. For more, visit:

www.nycvisit.com

NYC on a budget

Want to save the bucks for shopping?

Skip the hotel, and **stay in a youth hostel**. Shared dorms cost around \$25-\$35 a night, with private rooms in the \$40 range. Try these: Hostelling International New York at 891 Amsterdam Ave., (212) 932-2300; Jazz on the Park-Hostel, 36 W. 106th St. at Central Park West, (212) 932-1600; and Chelsea Center, 313 W. 29th St., (212) 643-0214. For more options and online booking, visit:

www.hostels.com

For a rush of New York culture, **take the subway** — it's cheaper than a taxi and quicker than walking. Cost is \$2. A one-day Fun Pass is \$7; a 7-day pass is \$21.

Join the studio audience at **The Daily Show** with Jon Stewart, which tapes at 5:45 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Call (212) 586-2477 to request free tickets. *Daily Show* studios are at 513 W. 54th St.

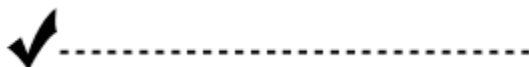
Take a cruise on the free **Staten Island Ferry** and see the lower Manhattan skyline, harbor and Statue of Liberty. The ferry leaves from the terminal at Whitehall and South streets in Lower Manhattan every 15-30 minutes from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. weekdays and every hour on weekends.

Once you're there, the regular garden at the **Staten Island Botanical Garden** is open from dawn until dusk at no charge. The garden is located at 1000 Richmond Terrace, Staten Island, (718) 273-8200, www.sibg.org.

Walk around and admire the decorations. Holiday colors top the Empire State Building, red and green for Christmas and blue and white for Hanukkah, at 350



Fifth Ave., two miles of holiday trees will illuminate Park Avenue and starting Dec. 8, the first night of Hanukkah, a flame will be lit atop the world's largest menorah at Fifth Avenue and 59th Street.



How to get to NYC Train — Amtrak: \$124 round trip. Travel time is 7 hours one way. For more: www.amtrak.com **Bus — Greyhound:** \$78 advance purchase; \$135 standard fare. Travel time is 7½ hours. For more info: www.greyhound.com **Car — drive yourself:** It's 330 miles from Rochester to Manhattan, so figure that gas will cost about \$60 for a round trip; travel time is about 6 to 7 hours — unless you speed or arrive during rush hour. Park the car once you're there: It's easier to get around on foot, by subway or taxi. Parking costs about \$30 for 24 hours, depending on where you park. For more info: www.weparknewyork.com For driving directions, go to: <http://mappoint.msn.com> **Plane — Jet Blue and USAirways** offer the best deals: Around \$120 round trip, plus cab fare (\$45 from JFK) or AirTrain/subway (\$5). Travel time is about 4 hours (check-in, flight, waiting for baggage, travel from the airport to the city). For more info: www.jetblue.com www.usair.com

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