

NEW YORK

SCHOOL GUIDE

Plan Your Trip



How to Plan the Perfect Student Trip to New York City

Brought to you by Evolve Tours

Welcome! Evolve Tours has designed this guide as a helpful resource for those interested in organizing a trip for their students to New York City. In the following pages, you'll discover how to decide on the type of trip for you, the right destination, some of the activities your students can enjoy in NYC, where to sleep, where to eat, an explanation of travel insurance, travel tips and more! Our goal is to make the trip planning process as seamless and as stress free for you and your colleagues as possible.

Why should my student group visit New York City?

A trip to New York City can be a great way for elementary classes to experience travel, discover art, learn American history and visit one of the most fascinating cities in the world. It is perfect for any age group from elementary school graduation trips to high school Drama or Music class trips.

As New York City has so much to offer, the best first step is to determine the intended focus of the trip. For example:

Educational Student Trip- Curriculum-related activities that bring to life the subjects of the classroom.

Arts – Fill your itinerary with museum and gallery visits, theatre performances, live music and more.

Mixed focus – A balance of educational activities, outdoor activities, and entertainment.



What time of the year should my student group visit New York City?

The busiest time of year for student trips to New York City is towards the end of the school year, in April, May and June. Many schools consider this as the graduation trip for their middle school students, and therefore run the trip at the end of the semester. Most New York City trips are 4 or 5 days long, though trip length varies depending on distance from the school and activities planned. New York City typically has great weather during this time period as well, allowing the potential to walk between destinations around the downtown area.

Click here for some more information on New York City weather:

<https://weatherspark.com/averages/31081/New-York-United-States>

What are the Best Student-Friendly Activities in New York City?

Check out this list of Evolve Tour's favourite and most popular activities for school groups

9/11 Memorial – A moving tribute to the fallen victims of the 9/11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, built on the area formerly referred to as 'Ground Zero' in the aftermath of the events. New in 2015: The 9/11 Memorial Museum on site. <http://www.911memorial.org/>



Broadway Comedy Club – Laugh until your bellies are sore, at an audience interactive improv comedy show. Always a highlight.

Broadway Performance – Watch a magical theatre performance in the heart of the city's legendary theatre district. For current Broadway listings, visit <http://www.broadway.com/>

Broadway Workshop – Learn some of the tricks of the trade in a hands-on Drama workshop.

Carnegie Hall – Catch a performance at this legendary music venue. For concert schedule, see <http://www.carnegiehall.org/Calendar/>

Empire State Building – The classic New York City experience, offering an incredible view of the city. Be prepared for long lines and wait times. <http://www.esbnyc.com/>

Guggenheim – This iconic building on Museum Mile hosts rotating exhibits and a permanent collection featuring modern and contemporary art. <http://www.guggenheim.org/new-york>

Central Park Tour – Following a personable, expert local guide through Central Park to hear some stories and the history of the United States' most visited urban park.



Madison Square Garden Tour – Take a peek behind the scenes of one of the most famous arenas in the world. Home to the New York Rangers, and a great concert venue. <http://www.thegarden.com/tours.html>

Metropolitan Museum of Art – The largest art museum in the United States has extensive collections of ancient art, including Greek and Roman pieces. Make sure to take a group photo on the famous steps at the front of the building! For more info on current exhibitions, visit: <http://www.metmuseum.org/>

Museum of Modern Art – The most influential museum of modern art in the world. Students will be able to browse modern and contemporary collections and should be on the lookout for works by Vincent van Gogh, Pablo Picasso and Claude Monet. <http://www.moma.org/>

Museum of Moving Image – Located in Queens, this fascinating museum focuses on film. Through hands on displays, props and more, students will learn about the innovation and history of film. Be sure to remind students to create their own ‘flipbook’! <http://www.movingimage.us/>

Museum of Natural History – After spending some time in Central Park, cross the street and visit one of the largest and most celebrated museums in the world! Inside, find over 32 million specimens of plants, animals, humans, fossils, minerals and more – so many that only a small percentage can be exhibited at once. Students will recognize the building at the set for the popular film, ‘Night at the Museum’! <http://www.amnh.org/>

Museum of Tolerance – An educational program here uses interactive workshops, exhibits and videos for students to explore issues of prejudice, diversity, tolerance and cooperation. A moving and powerful activity for school groups. <http://www.museumoftolerancenewyork.com/>



NBC Studio Tour – Located inside 30 Rockefeller Plaza, this tour is led by a team of hilarious pages and will show your school group the behind the scenes workings of NBC studios. Highlights include a visit to the Saturday Night Live studio. Perfect for fans of the Tonight Show starring Jimmy Fallon, or Late Night with Seth Myers. <http://www.nbcstudiotour.com/>

New York Rangers – Catch some National Hockey League action at Madison Square Garden with a New York Rangers hockey game. <http://rangers.nhl.com/>

New York Yankees – Take your students out to the ball game, and cheer on one of baseball’s most supported clubs. A guaranteed home run of an activity. http://newyork.yankees.mlb.com/index.jsp?c_id=nyy

Radio City Music Hall Tour – A must for Drama class trips to Manhattan, this tour of the famous music hall gives groups an insider’s look at the venue that hosts the annual Radio City Christmas Spectacular. Learn how the ‘Great Stage’ works and meet a Rockette! <http://www.radiocity.com/tours.html>

Top of the Rock – This multi-level observation deck atop the 70th floor of the building offers an incredible view of city. Students can see Central Park, all of Manhattan, the other boroughs, and New Jersey. The ability to see the Empire State Building in your photos makes this a must-do activity for your student trip to New York. <http://www.topoftherocknyc.com/>

Statue Cruises – Hop aboard a ferry over to Liberty Island to visit the Statue of Liberty, and learn about the iconic representation of American freedom. Also, make sure to stop at Ellis Island for self-guided exploration of what was United States busiest immigration inspection station. Explore the database of over 51 million passenger records – see if you can find your relatives!

<http://www.statuecruises.com/> **Temple Emanuel** – Located on 5th Avenue in New York’s Upper East Side, this synagogue is widely admired as the largest, and one of





the most beautiful, in the world. Guided tours and group discussions are available on request.

<http://www.emanuelnyc.org/>

United Nations – Tour the official headquarters of the United Nations, located on the banks of the East River. Discover and get a behind the scenes view of the intergovernmental organization dedicated to promoting international co-operation. Visits include the General Assembly Hall, Security Council Chamber and more. Learn about the United Nations’ work in disarmament, peace and security and human rights.

For more information about all of the above attractions and more, visit:

Family and Student-Friendly Attractions:

<http://www.timeout.com/new-york-kids/museums-attractions/family-attractions>

List of New York City’s Museums: <http://www.ny.com/museums/all.museums.html>

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/usa/new-york-city/things-to-do/new-york-s-top-museums-and-galleries>

Lonely Planet’s ‘Top Things to do in New York City’:

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/usa/new-york-city/things-to-do/top-things-to-do-in-new-york-city>

Traveling from the Greater Toronto Area? Here’s a great stop on your way to New York City

Corning Glass Museum – Located in Corning, NY, this unique museum is a great stop for students to get off the bus, eat lunch and break up the long drive to New York City. An impressive collection of over 40,000 glass objects and exhibits detailing the 3500 year old history of glassmaking. Watch a live glass blowing demonstration!

Should I work with a travel company?

Our next step is deciding whether you will plan the trip on your own, or use the help of a student travel provider. Some teachers are used to planning the trip themselves, but many enjoy the less stressful and time consuming route of hiring a travel company that will expertly take care of all the pre-trip planning. To make the decision easier, we’ve made some comparison charts, comparing the pros and cons of doing a trip on your own vs. with a tour provider.

ON YOUR OWN

Pros	Cons
✓ Cheaper	✗ A lot of stressful planning. Organizing the hotels, transportation, meals, activities and more.
✓ Plan exactly what you want, without sticking to a schedule	✗ Missing out on professional, time-tested itineraries.
	✗ No on-ground tour director with local knowledge who oversees the trip.



WITH A TOUR COMPANY

Pros	Cons
✓ Having a guide(s) with local knowledge. As with any form of travel, whether it be museum hopping or outdoor activities, you're bound to learn more, gain a greater understanding of the local community, and just get more out of the whole experience when following a knowledgeable expert.	✗ Set itinerary: although some travel companies like Evolve Tours are flexible and dedicated to customizing their trips, many others offer no customization.
✓ Safety and Security- A travel provider will ensure all supplier companies (restaurants, hotels, activities) are safe, reputable and provide quality services. As well, emergency protocols and first-aid trained tour staff.	
✓ No details to worry about! You're free to focus fully on the ride, and have someone else sweat over the small, yet paramount details.	✗ Generally, planning with a tour company is more expensive than doing it on your own.
✓ Allergy, food restrictions communicated to all the suppliers (hotels, restaurants and activities)	
✓ Group rates on transportation and accommodation since they work with suppliers year round with many student groups	
✓ Years of expertise	

How to choose the perfect student travel company

(Adapted from "How to Choose a Reputable Adventure Travel Company or Guide" at <http://gadling.com/2011/08/05/a-guide-to-choosing-adventure-travel-companies-and-guides/>)

There are many student travel companies that run New York City trips; not all are created equal. There are some key things you should look for when choosing a company to plan and run your student trip. Here are tips on what to look for or avoid when choosing a company or guide.

Reputation and Safety

Even a brief online search will bring to light any serious breaches in safety or conduct. Safety doesn't just apply to those who plan to scale the Andes or kayak the Zambezi. Even the tamest "adventures" require guides who are knowledgeable about the area and activity. Make sure you have someone on hand that is currently certified in emergency first aid and rescue procedures. Ensure that the company has emergency protocols and risk management policies in place and that they truly value safety over all else.



Client Communication

How clear and accurate is the company's literature or website? How long does it take them to respond to your emails or phone calls? A few days is standard, but if you find yourself having to follow up repeatedly, move on. A reputable travel company will detail exactly what is included and what is not for the price. All services should be clearly spelled out and agreed upon.

Customized Itineraries

A legitimate student travel provider will have trip itineraries that they have successfully run time and time again. They know what works and developed what they believe to be a flawless itinerary.

However, there is a big plus when finding a travel company who is flexible with their itineraries. Find someone who will work with you to create the best possible custom itinerary for your group's needs.

Guide qualifications

Are their guides knowledgeable about the region you are visiting? Do they have experience leading trips there? Ideal guides will have experience travelling in the cities you are visiting and will be energetic, informative, entertaining and organized.

Ask for referrals

We suggest asking a tour company for referrals of other schools who they have run New York City trips for before. You can also look at reviews on sites like TripAdvisor.com, or search travel blogs.

"In the end, sometimes it just comes down to how comfortable a person feels with the company and their interactions with them."

Where should my student group stay in New York City?

When choosing where your group will stay, it's important to keep a few factors in mind. Depending on your group, some factors may be more important than others. For example: location and proximity to activities, price, room types and sizes or youth hostels vs. hotels, or volunteer housing. That being said, some accommodations that Evolve Tours frequently uses in this area include:

Manhattan Hotels – *For school groups that want to stay in the heart of the city, within walking distance to Times Square and other close attractions. More expensive, smaller rooms than a stay in New Jersey but unbeatable location. Best paired with a subway pass as means of transportation.*

Long Island City – A great compromise between location and value. Located only a short subway ride from most Manhattan attractions, hotels in Long Island City or other neighborhoods allow more breathing room than a Manhattan hotel as well. Works well for either a coach bus trip or a group with subway passes.

Browse these and other New York City area hotels, here:

<http://www.expedia.ca/New-York-Hotels.d178293.Travel-Guide-Hotels>

http://www.tripadvisor.ca/Hotels-g60763-New_York_City_New_York-Hotels.html

New Jersey – *These hotels are located in the neighborhoods of Secaucus or Meadowlands and offer larger, cheaper rooms than their Manhattan counterparts. With ample bus parking, this is the perfect choice for student groups planning on using a coach bus for their travels in the city.*

http://www.tripadvisor.ca/Hotels-g46812-Secaucus_New_Jersey-Hotels.html

What are the best student-friendly restaurants in New York City?

When deciding on a restaurant for your student group, make sure the venue can accommodate large student groups. There should be plenty of options for students to choose from, or a buffet. Ensure the restaurant knows about any allergies or dietary restrictions your students may have.

Breakfast

Often, hotels will include a breakfast with room bookings, or offer one for an additional charge. This can range from a continental breakfast to a full hot breakfast buffet. Having breakfast at the hotel can save a ton of time, as you don't need to travel to another restaurant and can head straight to activities after leaving the hotel.

Great areas for Lunch

If giving students free time for lunch, choose an area where there are plenty of dining options to suit everyone's taste and diet.

Rockefeller Center— Underneath the Rockefeller Center is a great spot for groups to stop for lunch. Plenty of options and public seating available. <http://www.rockefellercenter.com/>

Grand Central Station — The transit hub features a large selection of food vendors for students to choose from. <http://www.grandcentralterminal.com/>

Food Trucks — It seems as if there is a food truck for foods of all kinds and to please anyone. Nothing says a big city lunch like a bite to eat from an authentic food truck. <http://nyctruckfood.com/>

Dinner

Hard Rock Times Square	http://www.hardrock.com/cafes/new-york/
Heartland Brewery	http://www.heartlandbrewery.com/new-locations-2/
Guy's American Kitchen and Bar	http://guysamerican.com/
Planet Hollywood	http://www.planethollywoodintl.com/locations/new-york/

Kosher Dinner Options

Ben's Deli	http://www.bensdeli.net/
18 Restaurant	http://www.eighteenrestaurant.com/
Katz's Deli	http://katzsdelicatessen.com/
Circa NY	https://www.circa-ny.com/location.asp
Mr Broadway	http://www.mrbroadwaykosher.com/
Rafaellos Pizza	http://www.raffaellokosherpizza.com/
Bravo Kosher Pizza	http://www.bravokosherpizza.com

Broadway Dining

Headed to a Broadway show? Reserve at one of these nearby restaurants for the perfect pre-show dinner:

Applebee's	http://www.applebees.com/locations
Becco	http://becco-nyc.com/

Angus Café and Bistro	http://www.anguscafebistro.com/
Bubba Gump	http://www.bubbagump.com/
Carmine’s Restaurant	http://www.carminesnyc.com/
Dave and Busters	http://www.daveandbusters.com/default.aspx
Ellen’s Stardust Diner	http://www.ellensstardustdiner.com/
HB Burger	http://www.heartlandbrewery.com/hb-burger2/



Satisfying group meals are an important part of a successful student trip. It’s important to make sure that the restaurant you are visiting is student friendly and works well with large (and hungry) school groups.

What kind of transportation should we take to New York City?

Plane

Flying is the fastest option and allows your group the most time to spend in the Big Apple. While travelling by plane, you can get another full day of activities rather than being stuck on a bus. However, this is obviously the much more expensive option. Transportation method for those schools located further than a bus drive away from New York will have to arrange inner city transportation.

Bus

The most popular option for student groups is to rent a coach bus to travel to New York City. This is the most economical method for large groups, and you can rent the coach for the duration of the tour to use for transportation between activities within New York City. Standard coach buses have 56 passenger seats, A/C, TVs and DVD players, as well as an on-board washroom.

Should my school group use a Coach bus or the Subway while in New York City?

This question is directly related to where your hotel is located. If you are staying in New Jersey, you'll need the Coach bus to take in to and from the city centre each day. You could purchase subway passes, but as you already are paying for a full time bus for the duration of the trip, this is a wasted expense.



If you're staying in Manhattan, buying subway passes for your group is a great idea. Firstly, it's incredibly hard to find bus parking at or near Manhattan hotels. Parking throughout the city is scarce, so bus pick up and drop offs need to be quick and well planned. As one of the most extensive subway systems in the world, you can easily get your group anywhere in Manhattan. It's also much cheaper to travel by subway. Plus, you'll feel like a local New Yorker!

The price of a weeklong Unlimited Ride MTA pass is \$31 USD

For more information about MTA passes and the NYC subway system, visit:

<http://web.mta.info/metrocard/mcgtreng.htm>

Some student-friendly bus companies Evolve Tours in Ontario works with:

Denny's Bus Lines - <http://www.dennysbuslines.ca/>

Luxury Coach - <http://luxury.to/>

Coach Canada - <http://www.coachcanada.com/info/coachcanada/chs.schools.asp>

Pacific Western - <http://www.pacificwesterntoronto.com/>

Cherrey Bus Lines - <http://www.cherreybuslines.com/>

Should we purchase Travel Insurance?

Purchasing the correct travel insurance can help in the event someone becomes sick or injured before, or during, a trip. Most travel insurance providers' coverage includes cancellation, trip interruption, and lost baggage. If families purchase travel insurance and the student falls ill before the trip, they may receive reimbursement for costs paid towards the trip. You can either order insurance for everyone in the group and include this in the trip cost, or provide it as an optional addition to families who would like to purchase.



Your Next Steps to Making this Dream Student Trip a Reality!

1. Deciding on working with a tour company, or commit to organizing the trip on your own
2. Promote the trip!
 - o Send letter home to parents, make announcements, tell you colleagues, put up posters (available from Evolve Tours) and think creatively to get the word out!
3. Hold a Parent information night
4. Distribute a Registration package to students- Waivers, Packing lists, other forms
5. Decide on a payment schedule
6. Collect deposits, registration package and payments
7. Complete rooming lists and other lists
8. Finally, board the bus or train and get the show on the road!

Additional resources for planning the perfect school trip to New York City:

<http://www.tripadvisor.ca/> - Helpful user based review site. Check here for honest reviews of attractions, museums, hotels and travel companies.

<http://www.yelp.ca/> - A great resource for checking out restaurants without having to have a meal there first. User based reviews.

<https://weatherspark.com/averages/31081/New-York-United-States> - New York City weather

<http://www.classtrips.com/region-landing/1845/school-field-trips-in-new-york-city> - A helpful list and descriptions of popular New York City attractions and activities



Evolve Tours

At Evolve Tours, we've been running student trips around the world since 2006 and have been perfecting the trip planning process ever since. After deciding you want your students to experience educational travel, there's a lot involved in organizing a trip before hopping on that bus. There's the logistics of accommodations, transportation, meals, activities and more- when planned properly they come together to ensure an incredible and memorable student trip.

If you have any questions about any of the content in this guide, please email us at info@evolvetours.com, or call us at 1.888.222.5066 (Toll Free)

You can also check out sample itineraries of our trips online at www.evolvetours.com

We'd be happy to work together to plan your student trip, or just talk travel!

Happy Travels!

Evolve Tours

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