



New York City's *name your own price* walking tours

Self-Guided Tour of The High Line



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Stop A - Start at the Southern entrance to the High Line on Gansevoort St. and Washington St. The Manhattan Refrigeration Company building you see before you was built in 1898. Today, the High Line starts here, but when the rail system was first set up, the Manhattan Refrigeration Company built their complex to allow the trains to stop and continue through 5 blocks. Today, the rail entrance into building is closed - covered with green and grey tiles.

Stop B - Standard Hotel. As you are walking up the stairs to the High Line, you can't help but notice the large concrete hotel directly in front of you. The high-end hotel boasts 338 rooms, all with stunning views of the city and the beautiful park below.

Stop C - Whitney Museum of American Art. Slated to open in 2015, the construction you see on the west side of the High Line is the future location of the Whitney Museum of American Art. The Whitney is dedicated the collection and display of 20th century and contemporary American Art. This was also the location for Fort Gansevoort, a defensive structure built in preparation for the War of 1812, as well as the customs building where Herman Melville once worked.

Continue along the High Line and look to your left. You should be looking at refrigerated trucks (lorries) backed onto low-lying buildings.

Stop D - Gansevoort Market Meat Center - There are 9 meatpacking companies still located in the Meatpacking District, a far cry from the approximately 200 decades earlier. The Meat Center used to be larger, but part of the space is now being used for the new Whitney Museum building in exchange for an extension of the Meat Center's lease.

Continue along the High Line on a narrow passage through a thicket of small birch and serviceberry trees (known as the [Gansevoort Woodland](#)) until you pass underneath the Standard Hotel and reach the intersection of West 13th St. There are over 200 species of plants and trees on the High Line. They were designed to mimic the natural growth that occurred on the tracks during the High Line's period of abandonment.

Stop E - Hogs and Heifers - Just before you walk underneath another building straddling the High Line, look down to the street on your right. Opened in the early 1990s, when rent in the

Meatpacking was still very low, Hogs and Heifers (hogs as in Harley motorcycles and heifers, which means virgin cows) is a neighborhood institution. Walk inside to see the mountainous collection of bras donated over the years by female patrons, including Drew Barrymore and Julia Roberts. Paul McCartney is believed to have danced on the bar. The movie Coyote Ugly was filmed right down the street and many credit Hogs and Heifers with inspiring the flick.

Now cross to the other side of the High Line and look out at the view from West 13th Street out to the Hudson River, where you should see the cast iron shell of what was once Pier 54's gateway.

Stop F - Pier 54 - Over a century ago, Pier 54 was a part of the Chelsea piers. Imagine the great trans-Atlantic passenger ships docked here in southern Manhattan on the Hudson. Pier 54 belonged to the Cunard Line and it's from this pier in 1915 that the RMS Lusitania disembarked before being sunk by a German U boat, precipitating U.S. entry into WW1.

Now stroll underneath this second building until you reach the intersection of West 14th Street. Look to your left out to the Hudson River, out to a large beige structure.

Stop G - Pier 57 - Pier 57, built in the early 50's, is remarkable in that it is built on floating concrete caissons, or boxes. Constructed up the Hudson River, it was then floated down to its Chelsea location.

Continue north on the High Line past a few benches to your right and a playful water arrangement on your left until you reach the intersection of West 15th Street. You are walking through the [Diller-Von Furstenberg Sundeck](#), which contains grasses, perennials and shrubs, including several wetland species.

Stop H - Chelsea Market - Most of the 22 buildings you see around 14th and 15th Streets were built for the National Biscuit Company. This is where trains brought butter, flour, sugar and shortening to create the Saltines, Oreos, Fig Newtons, Vanilla Wafers, Barnum's Animal Crackers and Mallomars. Today, the complex, anchored by Chelsea Market, features a shopping mall, an urban food outlet, television production facilities and offices, including

Oxygen and the Food Network (Emril Live) as well as offices for Major League Baseball (MLB) and Google.

Now walk underneath the main Nabisco building and look to your left.

Stop I - Southern Spur - The “spurs” of the High Line are curved tracks that veer off of the main track. The Southern Spur connected the tracks with the Nabisco Warehouse and the rail cars could go right into the building. You can still see “NBC” written on the Southern Spur, which stood for National Biscuit Company (aka Nabisco.)

Once you come out from underneath, you have reached West 16th Street. Stand on the left side of the High Line.

Stop J - Merchants Refrigerating Company Warehouse - The railroad tracks that make up the High Line led directly inside this building, which opened in 1918. At that time, merchants and businesses did not have personal refrigeration systems. Instead, they rented out space in building such as this one to keep things cold or frozen. This is also known as the [Northern Spur](#), designed to evoke the wild landscape that once was common on the High Line.

Continue north along the High Line until your reach a seating area overlooking 10th Avenue.

Stop K - 10th Avenue Overlook- This seating area allows for a rare view of a busy avenue. You can sit and rest while looking out at the madness of 10th Avenue. No matter how bad the traffic looks while you sit there; remember that it doesn't even come close to being as bad as it once was! 10th Avenue in the late 19th century was known as “Death Avenue.” Hundreds of people were killed on this avenue between 1880 and 1920. The danger and congestion of 10th and 11th Avenues were a key factor in the decision to elevate the railroad tracks.

As you walk back up to the High Line from the overlook, you should notice a grove of 3 flower maple trees known as the [10th Ave Square](#). Look south in the distance and you can see the Statue of Liberty. Continue north until you reach West 17th Street and look out toward the Hudson River on your left.

Stop L - Pier 59 - This pier was once the intended destination for an eagerly anticipated arrival in New York: the Titanic. The white building that looks strangely like an iceberg is the IAC Building, designed by Frank Gehry in 2007. IAC is the parent company that owns and Newsweek and Match.com.

Now continue north until you reach West 18th Street and look to the low-lying building on your left side.

Stop M - Site of the Roxy Nightclub - The Roxy Nightclub opened as a roller disco in 1978 and was described as “the Studio 54 of roller rinks.” In the 1980’s the club became a venue for hip-hop music and sponsored breakdancing competitions.

Continue north again through a series of narrow passageways until you get to West 19th Street. However, along the way, see if you can line the Empire State Building up with a tower at the Theological Seminary. You are now walking through an area known as the [Chelsea Grasslands](#), an area with a mix of colorful meadow grasses and perennials, all chosen to add color and texture throughout the year.

Stop N - The Kitchen - The Kitchen, 512 West 19th Street, the first building on your left on the south side of the street, is a non-profit art and performance space. The organization began in 1971 and takes its name from its original location: the kitchen of the Mercer Arts Center, where video artists showed their work. Though the organization was originally established to display the work of video artists, it expanded to include all kinds of art and performance. They focus primarily on local and emerging artists whose work is experimental in nature. Alumni of The Kitchen include Phillip Glass and Brian Eno, and The Beastie Boys gave an early performance there in 1983. When the organization moved to its current location in 1986 it was considered a bold and slightly odd choice, given that the neighborhood at the time was primarily auto repair shops. The New York Times said of the move, “This neighborhood will be the next SoHo.” (Prophetic, NY Times!)

Continue till you reach West 20th Street and look out to the large red complex to your right.

Stop O - The General Theological Seminary and Clement Clark Moore - This entire neighborhood was once a large family estate called “Chelsea.” The estate was named by its original owner, Maj. Thomas Clark. Major Clark was a British veteran of the French and Indian War, and he named his estate after a London hospital that served war veterans. His estate was passed down through the family and eventually came into the possession of his grandson, Clement Clark Moore. The younger Moore refused to sell of the parcel of land that was the orchard, instead allowing a seminary to be built there. Clement Clark Moore’s legacy isn’t limited to the seminary, however. He composed the poem “A Visit from St. Nicholas” for his children. Today it is known as “Twas the Night Before Christmas.”

Stop P - Manhattan Project Testing - These warehouses off to the left of the High Line on West 20th Street held several tons of uranium during the 1940s. This was done as a part of the Manhattan Project, which was the name given to the research and development project that created the first atomic bomb.

Continue north until you reach West 21st Street and look to the church on your right side.

Stop Q - Catholic Church of the Guardian Angels - This seems like an odd spot for a church. The Church of the Guardian Angels was built specifically in conjunction with the elevated railroad. The congregation had been meeting at a church located further uptown, directly in the path of the coming rail lines, so they were forced to demolish their building and relocate.

Stop R - The Dia Foundation - Today, West 22nd Street is in the heart of the Chelsea art gallery district. When the renowned Dia Foundation opened a four-story converted warehouse in 1987 called Dia: Chelsea, it was just the beginning. At its height, Dia: Chelsea had 60,000 visitors per year. It closed for renovations in February 2004, but the repairs needed for the building were so vast that the organization sold the building for \$38.55 million in February 2007.

Now continue north one block to West 23rd Street, where you will reach a futuristic looking steel and glass apartment building adjacent to the High Line called HL-23, designed by Neil Denari.

The creating of the High Line Park has been the catalyst for the construction of many new apartment buildings with multi-million dollar units.

Stop S - London Terrace Apartments - This massive apartment complex to your right on the other side of 10th Avenue was once the largest in the world. Construction began in 1929 on this complex, which includes about 1700 apartments and an Olympic-sized swimming pool.

Stop T - Cass Gilbert Building - On the north side of W 25th St is a somewhat nondescript building that was built for the RC Williams Wholesale Grocery Company. RC Williams had started off as a small family store on Maiden Lane in 1809, but by the time this building was constructed in 1927-28 they were prosperous enough to employ one of America's top architects: Cass Gilbert, architect of the Woolworth Building, the US Supreme Court Building in Washington DC and the Alexander Hamilton Custom House. Many are surprised when they see this plain building. It has none of the ornamentation of Gilbert's better known works.

Now walk north to West 26th Street and look left (west) to the end of the block to 11th Avenue.

Stop U - Starrett Lehigh Building - This block-long building was a warehouse and freight terminal that opened in 1932. Trains could be driven directly into a space on the ground floor of the building. This massive structure was a joint venture of the Starrett real-estate company and the Lehigh Valley Railroad. Its lines and rounded edges make it a relatively graceful-looking building, particularly for a warehouse. It is beauty meets function. The lot that it is built on was also the site of the former Lehigh Valley Railroad freight terminal. The building hit hard times during the Great Depression. Starrett was bought out, and the Lehigh Valley Railroad held on until 1944, when they too disassociated themselves from the building. The rail tracks were removed in 1966, and the Helmsley real estate concern bought the building in 1998. Ownership has changed hands a few more times, but current tenants of the building include Martha Stewart Omnimedia and Tommy Hilfiger USA.

Stop V - US Mail Distribution Center - This is where most of New York's mail is processed. In 2001, this center had a serious scare when it processed mail that had been laced with anthrax, causing a panic in New York. Though the building is a little worse for wear on the outside, the

rooftop has had quite a makeover and is one of the largest green rooftops in New York City. The Distribution Center sits where the Hudson Railroad Depot used to be. The Hudson Railroad controlled the lines that went down the west side of Manhattan, and the west side tracks were used for both passenger and freight trains. When Cornelius Vanderbilt bought all of the rail lines in New York, including the Hudson, the west side tracks were designated as “freight only.” This was because he wanted all passenger lines to go through the new terminal at 42nd St: Grand Central Depot. Before this switch, however, the Hudson Railroad Depot at 30th Street had a very famous visitor. On February 15, 1861 Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd Lincoln disembarked at the Hudson Depot for his first visit to New York City as the President of the United States. He was greeted by thousands of well-wishers and cheering crowds. Four years later, on April 25, 1865, mourners accompanied Lincoln’s body, which has lain in state at City Hall the day before, to the 30th Street Depot for the beginning of a cross-country trip that would bring Lincoln back to his hometown of Springfield, IL.

This is the end of the High Line as it stands now. The coming years will be exciting, as the final phase of this beautiful elevated park is completed! Enjoy exploring both the High Line and the surrounding neighborhood. The High Line is beautiful in all seasons and at all times of day, but try to make it for a sunset if you can!