



By now, most visitors (as well as the majority of residents) have grown tired of song lyrics about “the city that never sleeps”; where you “can do a half a million things, all at a quarter to three.” Well, like most clichés, these are entirely true. With the possible exception of New Orleans during Mardi Gras, New York reigns as—get ready for another cliché—the nightlife capital of the world.

All platitudes aside, bar closing time is at 4 A.M. Dance clubs often stay open until well into the morning, but stop serving at the bar. Music venues may close after the last set or keep jumping with a DJ or jukebox until the last customer has gone home. Whichever nighttime activities are on the agenda, chances are you will be exhausted before your options are.

The distinctions among bars, lounges, clubs and music venues are blurry at best. Expect live music at bars and clubs, dancing at lounges and music venues, and DJs everywhere.

Because so many establishments feature a variety of activities, it is always important to check local listings. *The New York Times* (Friday), [www.nytoday.com](http://www.nytoday.com) (*The New York Times*’ city guide on the Web), *Time Out New York*, the *Village Voice*, *New York* magazine, *The New Yorker* and the *New York Press* all run weekly listings.

## BARS & LOUNGES BY NEIGHBORHOOD

Many tourists concentrate on dance clubs and other places with music (*discussed later in this section*) when planning their evenings in the city. But while New York’s clubs are essential to the city’s nightlife, it’s often in the pubs and lounges, the neighborhood watering holes and swank hot spots, that New York after dark can really be appreciated. From the most elegant hotel bars to the deepest of dives, New York has something for everyone—often all on one block.

The difference between bars and lounges is subtle and usually lies in the attitude—and maybe a few couches. Lounges also often have DJs, but not the cabaret license required to host legal dancing. Throughout the Giuliani administration raids were frequently conducted, but the requisite signs reading, “No dancing by order of law,” are often disregarded by patrons and displayed with a wink from the management.

The following listings cover only a small fraction of the more than 1,000 bars in Manhattan. They were chosen for their historical significance, current popularity, location or other particular points of interest. For more listings go to [www.nytoday.com](http://www.nytoday.com). (*For Brooklyn bars see separate listings in chapter Exploring New York.*)

### Dive Bars in the East Village

Neighborhood bars and local holes-in-the-wall are some of the best places to see the real New York. This is particularly true in the East Village, where dives are equivalent to town hall. Hipsters, artists and colorful residents retreat to shoot pool, chat over cheap drinks or melt into a bar stool. If you find a surly bartender, the smell of stale beer, and air thick with smoke and character appealing, an East Village dive crawl is highly recommended.

**Ace Bar** 531 E. 5th St. (between Aves. A and B) (212) 979-8476. Ace is perfect for people with limited attention spans—pool, darts, pinball, and video games are all provided for your enjoyment, as well as a virtual museum of over 100 children’s lunch boxes.

**Blue and Gold Tavern** 79 E. 7th St. (between First and Second Aves.) (212) 473-8918. This is a no-nonsense beer and whisky kind of a place, where many a cigarette has been smoked over a Bud in the ancient booths. On weekends the pool table can see some heated action.

**Cherry Tavern** 441 E. 6th St. (between First Ave. and Ave. A) (212) 777-1448. One of the hippest of the East Village dives, Cherry Tavern has seen a model or two in the crowd. Though there’s a pool table and a good jukebox, the drink special—a shot of tequila and a can of Tecate beer for \$4—may be Cherry’s biggest attraction.

**Coyote Ugly Saloon** 153 First Ave. (between 9th and 10th Sts.) (212) 477-4431. It’s ugly, all right, but there’s something truthful—even pure—about this place, with its warped floorboards, lopsided bar stools, country jukebox and buxom bartender in her half-shirt and tight jeans.

**Holiday Cocktail Lounge** 75 St. Marks Pl. (between First and Second Aves.) (212) 777-9637. This classic East Village hangout is famous for its never-changing aesthetic; quilted faux-leather booths, a cigarette machine, a jukebox and video games are worn and sprinkled with a palpable seediness. Be prepared for the bar to close at the bartender’s whim.

**International Bar** 120 First Ave. (between 7th St. and St. Marks Pl.) (212) 777-9244. Much like Johnny’s S&P in the West Village, International is very local, very casual and very cheap. Though this tiny bar can get crowded on the weekends, it remains unaffected.

**Joe’s** 20 E. 6th St. (between Aves. A and B) (212) 473-9093. The jury’s still out on whether this hole-in-the-wall is a dive or a honky-tonk bar. On the dive side, it’s unpretentious, homey and on the honky-tonk side, it’s known for its mostly country jukebox. It attracts a neighborhood mix of old-timers and young locals.

**Marz Bar** 25 E. 1st St. (at Second Ave.). This punk-art bar has been around for well over a decade, and continues to revel in its downhill slide. We’re talking hardcore—yet harmless. This unpretentious little dive is a breath of fresh air for those who don’t associate spending money with being cool.

### Sing, Sing a Song: Karaoke in New York

Karaoke, once considered corny by the uninitiated, has had something of a surge in popularity of late. And for good reason. There’s nothing quite like belting out your favorite tune in front of a crowd, cheering you on as if you were a superstar—no matter how offensive the performance.

New York has a few karaoke options. There are karaoke lounges (often run by Japanese, Chinese or Korean Americans, but usually welcoming to all) that have karaoke every night. There are also places that rent out private rooms by the hour—a blast with a group. And then there are regular bars that have weekly or monthly karaoke nights. For more venues, check [www.murphguide.com/karaoke.htm](http://www.murphguide.com/karaoke.htm). If you’ve never done karaoke, it’s about time you tried. If you have, you’re probably already convinced.

**Arlene Grocery** 95 Stanton St. (between Ludlow and Orchard Sts.) (212) 358-1633. Come for Punk Rock/Heavy Metal Karaoke Monday nights at 10 P.M. With a live band and an enthusiastic crowd, you’ll feel like a rock star, or—if you’d rather just watch—a groupie.

**Asia Roma** 40 Mulberry St. (between Worth and Bayard Sts.) (212) 385-1133. This small, basement karaoke lounge is good for intimate groups.

**Japas 55** 253 W. 55th St. (between Broadway and Eighth Ave.) (212) 765-1210. At this long skinny bar with an after-work crowd of both dilettantes and hardcore crooners, the bartenders bring you a mike where you’re seated for \$1 per song. Private rooms are available. Japas also has a darker downtown location where you can be practically anonymous while you’re singing (11 St. Marks Pl. between Second and Third Aves., 212-473-4264).

**Planet Rose** 219 Ave. A (between 13th and 14th Sts.) (212) 353-9500. This wannabe-swank karaoke lounge has a steep cover charge most of the week (around \$40), but Sundays are free.

**Toto Music Studio** 38 W. 32nd St. (between Fifth and Sixth Aves.) (212) 594-6644. Private rooms only. A good spot for groups, the bigger rooms can literally hold dozens. Bring your own alcohol.

**Village Karaoke** 27 Cooper Square (212) 254-0066. Private rooms, a good song list and a bring-your-own-alcohol policy make this a great place to get rowdy.

**Winnie’s** 104 Bayard St. (bet. Mulberry and Baxter Sts.) (212) 732-2384. A regular cast of folks from Chinatown shares the space with Lower East Side hipsters, rowdily handing off the microphone for both classics and Chinese pop tunes (on most nights, one of the bartenders will also step out to belt a tune herself).

## Lower East Side

The Lower East Side has a charm that much of Manhattan has lost. Though the area has seen its share of rent hikes and gentrification in recent years, it remains a tapestry of cultures and a celebration of New York's diversity. Since the mid-19th century it has been the gateway to America for countless generations of immigrants. Waves of families from Eastern Europe, Italy, Ireland, Germany, and more recently China, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, have passed through here leaving their stamp on the neighborhood's cultural landscape. In the last two decades an influx of artists and young people has made the Lower East Side not only a cross-cultural mecca, but also a thriving center for art, fashion and nightlife.

In the storefronts on blocks like **Essex Street** (between Canal and Grand Sts.) the Lower East Side of the past and present converge. Asian-owned electronics stores abut old Jewish businesses like **Guss' Pickles**. Guss', with its open front and barrels lining the sidewalk, has been scooping pickles by hand for 90 years. (The green tomatoes are excellent.) Signs in Yiddish alternate with signs in Chinese along this stretch; locals pack **Kossar's Bagelry** (some of the best bagels in the city), as others settle down for a Sichuan lunch a few doors away.

To the north **Delancey Street** bisects the area, beyond which residents are largely Hispanic with a strong showing of younger newcomers. This thoroughfare offers mostly discount goods and cheap knock-offs, and an occasional shaved-ice snow cone vendor. **Ratner's**, a Delancey Street relic, has been serving Jewish dairy food since 1905—only now it's a fraction of its former size and shares a building with **Lansky Lounge**, a hot spot for nostalgic hipsters (see *chapter Nightlife*).

**Rivington Street**, one block north of Delancey, is dotted with Puerto Rican and Dominican businesses and home to **ABC No Rio**, one of several area cultural centers. It's also home to **Schapiro's Kosher Wines**, the last functioning winery in the city, family-run since 1899, and **Streit's Matzos**, one of the premier suppliers of matzo and other Jewish staples for over 75 years.

Just west of Rivington is the **Orchard Street Bargain District** (see *chapter Shopping*), where peddlers with pushcarts once crowded the streets. Shoppers still come to the area for discount leather goods, luggage and clothing.

**Orchard and Ludlow Streets** are home to some of the most fashionable shops and a slew of chic bars and lounges (see *chapter Nightlife*). A few paces away are some of the Lower East Side's longest standing eateries. **Katz's Delicatessen**, an area artifact and originator of the World War II slogan, "Send a salami to your boy in the Army," still carves pastrami and corned beef by hand. The kitschy Borscht Belt party atmosphere of **Sammy's Roumanian**, the enormous garlic-rubbed beef tenderloins and the bowls of schmaltz (rendered chicken fat) on every table are a nostalgic paean to the days before cholesterol consciousness. Also don't miss **Russ and Daughters** for smoked fish and other deli specialties and **Yonah Shimmel**, supplying the neighborhood with knishes since 1910.

**Subway:** F to Second Ave. or Delancey St.; J, M, Z to Essex St.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD

**ABC No Rio** 156 Rivington St. (between Clinton and Suffolk Sts.) (212) 254-3697. This cultural center has sponsored punk rock concerts, political discussions, film showings and poetry readings as well as art exhibitions.

**Eldridge Street Synagogue** 12 Eldridge St. (between Canal and Division Sts.) (212) 219-0888. Even in a state of disrepair, the Eldridge Street Synagogue's intricate carved facade and stained-glass windows stand out amid the tenements. Built in the late 1800's by immigrants from Eastern Europe, it was the first large-scale Orthodox synagogue in New York. It is being restored under the stewardship of the Eldridge Street Project, which offers tours of the building, lectures, and educational programs including rugelach baking lessons and genealogy workshops.

**First Shearith Israel Graveyard** 55–57 St. James Pl. (between Oliver and James Sts.). Located in Chinatown, this small cemetery is the oldest surviving burial ground for the first Jewish congregation in North America. The congregation was mostly comprised of Spanish and Portuguese Jews. The oldest stone dates from 1683.

**Henry Street Settlement—Abrons Arts Center** 466 Grand St. (at Pitt St.) (212) 598-0400. In its century or so of existence, the Henry Street Settlement has been unsurpassed in bringing a multitude of cultural and community-related activities—including opera, music, dance, theater, talks and workshops—to the residents of the Lower East Side. The hub of the Settlement, which occupies a row of handsome Greek Revival town houses, is the Abrons Arts Center. The majority of performances take place in the 350-seat Harry De Jur Playhouse, a national historic landmark. There is also a smaller theater, a recital hall, an outdoor amphitheater, classrooms, studios and art galleries.

**Lower East Side Tenement Museum** 90 Orchard St. (at Broome St.) (212) 431-0233. If a museum is meant to be a place where things are displayed to teach us who we are and where we've come from, then the grimy and dank building at 90 Orchard Street may prove to be more intimately meaningful for many than the Louvre or the Metropolitan. From beneath the floorboards of this 130-year-old house and between many layers of wallpaper have come notes and artifacts to illuminate the experiences of more than 1,300 people who passed through the building's 22 units.

**Admission:** \$9, general; \$7, students and seniors. **Credit cards:** All major. **Hours:** Tue., Wed., Fri., noon–5 P.M.; Thu., noon–9 P.M.; Sat.–Sun., 11 A.M.–5 P.M. **Services:** Tours, gift shop, lectures.

**Schapiro's Wine Company** 126 Rivington St. (between Essex and Norfolk Sts.) (212) 674-4404. The grapes are grown upstate, where much of the wine is now fermented and bottled, but some is still produced in ancient barrels on the premises. On Sundays from 11 A.M. to 5 P.M., Norman Schapiro, a real old-time character, offers free tours of the winery and tastes of his wines, ranging

from the treacly sweet to the dry. For more information, visit their Web site: [www.schapiro-wine.com](http://www.schapiro-wine.com).

**Williamsburg Bridge** Delancey St. and the East River. The Williamsburg Bridge was born of a dare. Could Leffert Lefferts Buck, the city's chief engineer, build a bridge that was longer than the Brooklyn Bridge in half the time and with less money? He could, and did. When it opened in 1903, the Williamsburg was the world's longest suspension bridge at 7,308 feet with a main span of 1,600 feet, five feet more than the Brooklyn Bridge. At a cost of \$24,188,090, it was \$906,487 under its rival. And it was built in seven years; the Brooklyn took 13.

## Selected Restaurants and Food Shops

### Congee Village

100 Orchard St. (between Delancey and Broome Sts.) (212) 941-1818

### Guss' Pickles

35 Essex Street (between Hester and Grand Sts.) (212) 254-4477

### Katz's Delicatessen

205 E. Houston St. (at Ludlow St.) (212) 254-2246

### Kossar's Bagelry

39 Essex St. (between Hester and Grand Sts.) (212) 387-9940

### Ratner's

138 Delancey St. (between Norfolk and Suffolk Sts.) (212) 677-5588

### Russ and Daughters

179 E. Houston St. (between Orchard and Allen Sts.) (212) 475-4880

### Sammy's Roumanian

157 Chrystie St. (between Delancey and Houston Sts.) (212) 673-0330

### Streit's Matzos

150 Rivington St. (at Suffolk St.) (212) 475-7000

### Yonah Shimmel Knishes

175 E. Houston St. (between Eldridge and Forsythe Sts.) (212) 477-2858