

GREENWICH VILLAGE / WEST VILLAGE, MANHATTAN

WEST VILLAGE CROOKED STREETS

A MUSEENYC WALKING TOUR · FREE, AND NOT SPONSORED BY ANYONE

DISTANCE 2.2 miles	TIME 2 to 3 hours
STOPS 13, 8 private (sidewalk only)	START Washington Square Arch (A/B/C/D/E/F/M to W 4 St)
END Pier 45, Hudson River Park	MAP museenyc.com/tours/01-west-village/map

The only part of Manhattan that ignored the 1811 street grid. Streets bend, cross themselves, and dead-end into courtyards. This walk is mostly about texture: doorways, alleys, brick, ironwork. Go on a weekday morning if you can.

ROUTE CARD

Screenshot or tear off this page. Full detail for each stop follows.

1 Washington Square Arch	8 Cherry Lane Theatre PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY
2 MacDougal Alley PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY	9 75 1/2 Bedford Street PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY
3 Washington Mews PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY	10 Grove Court PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY
4 Jefferson Market Library	11 Church of St. Luke in the Fields
5 Patchin Place PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY	12 Westbeth Artists Housing PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY
6 Gay Street	13 Pier 45, Hudson River Park
7 Northern Dispensary PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY	

Private stops include people's homes: no gates, no doorways, no photographing into windows.

GETTING THERE AND BACK

START A/B/C/D/E/F/M to W 4 St-Washington Sq. Or N/R/W to 8 St-NYU, 6 to Astor Pl.

FINISH 1 at Christopher St-Stonewall, two blocks inland from Pier 45. Also A/C/E at 14 St, L at 8 Av.

Cutting it short

Every walk here has exits. Good ones on this route:

- After stop 4 (Jefferson Market): F/M at 14 St-6 Av, two blocks north.
 - After stop 7 (Northern Dispensary): 1 at Christopher St-Stonewall, one block west.
 - After stop 11 (St Luke's): 1 at Christopher St-Stonewall, two blocks east.
-

THE WALK

1 WASHINGTON SQUARE ARCH

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

The village's front door. Built in marble in 1892 to replace a temporary wooden arch, designed by Stanford White. The park below it was a potter's field and a military parade ground before it was a park, and it still works as the neighborhood's living room: chess hustlers, piano players, NYU students, dogs. Stand under the arch and look north up Fifth Avenue. That view is why the arch is here.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.73082, -73.99733

2 MACDOUGAL ALLEY

PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY

Walk: Northwest corner of the park, up MacDougal St half a block. The alley opens on your left.

A dead-end cobblestone alley of former carriage houses that served the mansions on Washington Square North. By 1900 artists had taken over the stables as cheap studios. Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney had her studio at No. 19 and started what became the Whitney Museum out of it. Private now, but you can see the whole alley from the sidewalk.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.73185, -73.99823

3 WASHINGTON MEWS

PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY

Walk: Back to Washington Sq North, east past the Greek Revival row at Nos. 21-26, cross Fifth Ave. The mews gate is on your left.

Heads up: Both mews are gated. The view through the bars is the whole experience. Do not push a gate open.

The same idea as MacDougal Alley but longer and better preserved. Stables on the north side, purpose-built studio houses with stucco fronts on the south. NYU owns almost all of it now. Peek through the gate at either end for the full cobblestone run.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.73245, -73.99506

4 JEFFERSON MARKET LIBRARY

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Walk: West on Waverly Pl to Sixth Ave, then north 4 blocks. The clock tower is unmissable.
Or ride: M5 or M7 bus north on Sixth Ave.

A pink-and-red Victorian Gothic pile with a clock tower, voted one of the ten most beautiful buildings in America in the 1880s. It was a courthouse, then a market, then nearly demolished, then saved by a neighborhood campaign led by Margot Gayle. Now it is a branch library and you can walk right in. Look up at the stained glass on the stair.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.73508, -74.00075

5 PATCHIN PLACE

PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY

Walk: Behind the library. The gate is on W 10th St, just west of Sixth Ave.

A gated cul-de-sac of ten small brick houses built in 1848, reportedly for Basque waiters working at the Brevoort Hotel. e.e. cummings lived at No. 4 for forty years, Djuna Barnes at No. 5, and Marlon Brando and Theodore Dreiser passed through. The gas lamp at the gate is a reproduction, but the scale is real.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.73456, -74.00069

6 GAY STREET

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Walk: W 10th west one block to Waverly Pl, turn left. Gay St is the short bent street on your left.

A single crooked block connecting Christopher Street and Waverly Place, lined with early-1800s Federal and Greek Revival houses. It was a Black residential street in the 1830s, then a speakeasy strip during Prohibition. The bend halfway down is the point: you cannot see one end from the other, which is the whole West Village in miniature.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.73357, -74.00135

7 NORTHERN DISPENSARY

PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY

Walk: At the bottom of Gay St, where Waverly Pl splits. The triangular building is right in front of you.

A three-sided brick building from 1831 that sat at the intersection where Waverly Place splits. Local trivia: it has two sides on one street (Waverly Place) and one side on two streets (Christopher and Grove). Edgar Allan Poe was treated here for a cold in 1837. Long vacant, still perfect as an object.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.73330, -74.00099

8 CHERRY LANE THEATRE

PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY

Walk: Southwest on Grove St, left on Bedford St, right on Commerce St. Commerce bends hard and the theater appears on the bend.

A brewery, then a box factory, then a tobacco warehouse, then a theater since 1924. Edna St. Vincent Millay was part of the group that converted it. Beckett, Albee, Mamet and Shepard all premiered work here. The film company A24 bought it and reopened it in 2025 after a renovation. The block, Commerce Street, curves hard for no obvious reason, which makes the theater appear suddenly.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.73173, -74.00435

9 75 1/2 BEDFORD STREET

PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY

Walk: Back up Commerce to Bedford St, turn left. No. 75 1/2 is between Commerce and Morton, wedged between two normal-width houses.

Heads up: It is somebody's house. Photograph from across the street.

Nine and a half feet wide, built in 1873 in what had been a carriage alley. Edna St. Vincent Millay lived here, as later did Cary Grant and Margaret Mead. It is a private home, so admire it from across the street. Next door at No. 77 is the Isaacs-Hendricks House, the oldest house in the Village, built 1799.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.73155, -74.00512

10 GROVE COURT

PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY

Walk: North on Bedford to Grove St, turn right. The iron gate is mid-block on the south side.

A courtyard of six 1850s brick houses set back from Grove Street behind a gate, originally built as cheap housing for workers and nicknamed Mixed Ale Alley. Now some of the most expensive real estate in the city. Do not open the gate. The view through the bars is the view.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.73260, -74.00527

11 CHURCH OF ST. LUKE IN THE FIELDS

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Walk: West on Grove St to Hudson St, left two blocks. The garden entrance is on Hudson, through the churchyard gate.

Heads up: Garden closes early and is shut for private events. If the gate is locked, the church forecourt is still worth the stop.

Founded in 1821 when this really was fields. A fire gutted the church in 1981, and it was rebuilt and reconsecrated in 1985 with its Federal look restored. The reason to stop is the garden: a deep, layered, quiet green space open to the public most days, hidden entirely from Hudson Street. One of the best places in Manhattan to sit down and hear nothing.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.73202, -74.00693

12 WESTBETH ARTISTS HOUSING

PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY

Walk: North on Hudson St about 4 blocks to Bethune St, left to the courtyard entrance. This is a detour north; you walk back down along the river.

Or ride: M11 or M20 bus north on Hudson St.

Thirteen buildings that housed Bell Telephone Laboratories, where early experiments in talking pictures and television were carried out. In 1970 it was converted by Richard Meier into subsidized live-work housing for artists, one of the first adaptive reuses of its kind in the country. Walk into the central courtyard, which is open.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.73696, -74.00930

13 PIER 45, HUDSON RIVER PARK

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Walk: West on Bethune to the Hudson River greenway, then south along the water about 4 blocks to the pier at Christopher St.

Or ride: M11 or M20 back down, or skip the detour and go straight from St Luke's.

Heads up: Time this for sunset if you can. The pier faces straight west.

End the walk on the pier. Lawn, benches, and an open view down the Hudson to the harbor. This stretch of waterfront was derelict shipping piers into the 1990s and was a central gathering place for the Village's queer community long before it was a park. Time it for sunset.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.73335, -74.01050

COMBINING THIS WITH OTHER TOURS

- [Tour 3 \(East Village to LES\)](#) starts at Astor Place, a 10-minute walk east from Washington Square. Do both in one day and you have crossed Manhattan below 14th St.
- [Tour 7 \(Chinatown and Tribeca\)](#) ends at Pier 25. Walk the greenway north 15 minutes and you are at Pier 45 where this tour ends. Run Tour 7 first, then this one in reverse, for a full west-side day.

WALKING NAVIGATION LINKS

Google caps a directions link at ten points, so the route is split. Open a segment on your phone and it starts walking navigation.

- [Stops 1–10](#)
- [Stops 10–13](#)

THE MAP

Open the MUSEENYC map for this walk at museenyc.com/tours/01-west-village/map. Every pin carries its own walking directions, transit alternative and notes.

- **Green pin** = open to the public.
- **Orange pin** = private, look from the sidewalk. Several are people's homes: no gates, no doorways, no photographing into windows.

The orange line is a straight-line guide between stops, not the walking route. Use the navigation links for turn-by-turn.

MUSEENYC

MUSEENYC writes guides to New York museums, neighborhoods and walks. Nothing here is sponsored, nothing is paid placement, and no one pays to be included.

Questions about a stop, a closure, or anything else on this walk? Reach MUSEENYC at museenyc.tours@gmail.com or [@museenyc](https://www.instagram.com/museenyc) on Instagram. More walks at museenyc.com/tours.