

EAST VILLAGE / LOWER EAST SIDE, MANHATTAN

EAST VILLAGE TO LOWER EAST SIDE

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

DISTANCE 2.8 miles	TIME 3 hours
STOPS 13, 4 private (sidewalk only)	START Astor Place (6 to Astor Pl)
END East River Park at Corlears Hook	MAP museenyc.com/tours/03-east-village-les/map

Layer on layer of immigrant New York: Dutch farmland, German Kleindeutschland, Eastern European Jewish, Puerto Rican, then punk, then whatever it is now. Almost none of it is signposted. This walk is about reading the buildings.

ROUTE CARD

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

1 The Alamo (Astor Place Cube)	8 Angel Orensanz Foundation PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY
2 Cooper Union Foundation Building PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY	9 Essex Market
3 Stuyvesant Street	10 Eldridge Street Synagogue
4 St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery	11 Seward Park
5 Tompkins Square Park	12 Straus Square and the Forward Building PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY
6 Russian and Turkish Baths PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY	13 East River Park at Corlears Hook
7 6th Street and Avenue B Community Garden	

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

GETTING THERE AND BACK

START 6 to Astor Pl, N/R/W to 8 St-NYU, or L to Third Ave.

FINISH F at East Broadway or Delancey St-Essex St, also J/M/Z and M at Essex.

Cutting it short

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

- After stop 5 (Tompkins Square): L at First Ave, four blocks north.
- After stop 7 (6th and B Garden): F at Second Ave, or M9/M21 bus.
- After stop 9 (Essex Market): F/M/J/Z at Delancey St-Essex St, right there.
- After stop 11 (Seward Park): F at East Broadway, one block.

THE WALK

1 THE ALAMO (ASTOR PLACE CUBE)

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

A 15-foot steel cube balanced on one corner, installed in 1967 as temporary public art and never removed. It rotates if you push it, which several people usually are. The plaza around it is the hinge between NYU territory and the East Village.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.72995, -73.99125

2 COOPER UNION FOUNDATION BUILDING

PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY

Walk: Across the plaza, east side of Third Ave at Cooper Square.

Peter Cooper built it as a free college for the working class, open to all races and to women from the start. Lincoln gave the Cooper Union address in the Great Hall in 1860 and it arguably won him the presidency. The building has one of the oldest elevator shafts in America, round, because Cooper assumed elevators would be round.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.72951, -73.99080

3 STUYVESANT STREET

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Walk: Northeast behind Cooper Union. Stuyvesant St runs diagonally off Third Ave at E 9th St.

Heads up: The diagonal is the whole point. Notice how it fights the grid.

This block runs along the old property line of Peter Stuyvesant's farm, which is why it cuts diagonally across the grid. It is also the only street in Manhattan aligned to true east-west. The Stuyvesant-Fish House at No. 21 dates to 1804 and Renwick Triangle next door is an 1861 row.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.72963, -73.98850

4 ST. MARK'S CHURCH IN-THE-BOWERY

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Walk: Follow Stuyvesant St to its end at Second Ave and E 10th St. The church is on the corner.

Heads up: Churchyard is open and usually empty. Stuyvesant is in the east wall.

The second-oldest church building in Manhattan, built on the site of Stuyvesant's private chapel. He is interred in the east wall of the churchyard. In the 1960s and 70s it became a home for avant-garde performance: the Poetry Project, Danspace, Patti Smith, Sam Shepard. The churchyard is open and almost always empty.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.72911, -73.98740

5 TOMPKINS SQUARE PARK

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Walk: East on E 10th St five blocks to Avenue A. The park is on your right.

Or ride: M8 bus runs east on E 9th and west on E 10th.

Site of the 1874 labor riot, the 1988 police riot over the eviction of the tent city, and about a century of fights over who the park belongs to. Today it is elm trees, dog runs and chess tables. The Hare Krishna tree in the middle is where the movement held its first outdoor chanting in the US in 1966.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.72650, -73.98150

6 RUSSIAN AND TURKISH BATHS

PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY

Walk: Backtrack half a block west on E 10th. The baths are mid-block on the north side between First Ave and Ave A. You walked right past them.

A tenement basement bathhouse from 1892, from the era when most apartments had no bath. It has been in continuous operation since and still runs on the original Russian radiant-heat room. Worth seeing from outside even if you don't go in; if you do, bring a swimsuit and low expectations about decor.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.72740, -73.98400

7 6TH STREET AND AVENUE B COMMUNITY GARDEN

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Walk: Back east, south through Tompkins Square to E 7th St, then southeast to Avenue B and E 6th.

Heads up: Open Saturday and Sunday 1 to 6pm, April through October. A locked gate outside those hours is normal.

One of dozens of gardens that residents carved out of abandoned lots after the city went bankrupt and landlords were burning buildings; this one dates to 1982. Until 2008 its landmark was Eddie Boros's 65-foot Tower of Toys, a wooden tower hung with things he found on the street. The tower is gone, but the garden is still the clearest surviving evidence of what the neighborhood did for itself.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.72437, -73.98195

8 ANGEL ORENSANZ FOUNDATION

PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY

Walk: South on Avenue B to Houston St, cross, continue south on Clinton St, right on Norfolk. About 12 minutes.

Or ride: M21 bus crosstown on Houston St, or M14A SBS.

Built in 1849 for a German Reform congregation, modeled on a Cologne cathedral and on Friedrichswerder Church in Berlin. It was abandoned by the 1970s and bought by sculptor Angel Orensanz, who turned it into an arts space. The interior is extraordinary but only open for events; the facade on Norfolk Street reads clearly from the sidewalk.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.72050, -73.98730

9 ESSEX MARKET

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Walk: South on Norfolk St to Delancey St, right one block to Essex St.

Heads up: Real market with real vendors. Mezzanine seating upstairs.

La Guardia built the original to get pushcart vendors off the streets. The market moved across the street into a new building in 2019 and kept most of the old vendors: Dominican produce, a fishmonger, cheese, Mexican groceries. Go upstairs for the mezzanine seating. It is a real market, not a food hall pretending.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.71850, -73.98800

10 ELDRIDGE STREET SYNAGOGUE

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Walk: South on Essex St to Canal St, right on Canal about 5 blocks, left on Eldridge St. About 12 minutes.

Or ride: M15 SBS south on Allen St, or F train Delancey-Essex to East Broadway.

The first great synagogue built in America by Eastern European Jews, opened 1887, seating 700. By the 1950s the congregation had shrunk so far that the main sanctuary was sealed off and left to rot for thirty years. A twenty-year restoration reopened it in 2007, and a new east window by Kiki Smith was added in 2010. Now a museum. Pay the admission.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.71490, -73.99320

11 SEWARD PARK

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Walk: East on Canal to Essex, south to East Broadway. Seward Park is the triangle.

Built by demolishing a block of tenements after reformers argued that children needed somewhere to play besides the street. It was the first city-built permanent playground in the country. The library on the corner, Seward Park Branch, served the densest neighborhood on earth at the time.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.71410, -73.98960

12 STRAUS SQUARE AND THE FORWARD BUILDING

PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY

Walk: The Forward Building is on the south side of the park at 175 East Broadway. Look up at the facade.

Heads up: The carved heads above the entrance are Marx and Engels.

The Jewish Daily Forward had a circulation of a quarter million and built this tower on East Broadway to prove the immigrant left had arrived. Look up: the facade still carries carved portraits of Marx and Engels. It is luxury condos now, which is its own commentary.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.71430, -73.99070

13 EAST RIVER PARK AT CORLEARS HOOK

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Walk: East on East Broadway, then Grand St to the pedestrian bridge over the FDR at Cherry St. About 12 minutes.

Or ride: M14A SBS runs east on Grand St to the water.

Heads up: Most of the rebuilt park has reopened, but flood-protection work continues into 2027. Expect some fencing and detours.

The bend in the river where Manhattan turns, with a straight view up the East River and across to Brooklyn. The park has been rebuilt and raised as coastal flood protection. Most of it has reopened, including the Corlears Hook bridge, but work continues into 2027. The bridge overhead is the payoff.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.71120, -73.97880

COMBINING THIS WITH OTHER TOURS

- [Tour 1 \(West Village\)](#) starts at Washington Square, 10 minutes west of Astor Place. The two together cover the whole pre-grid downtown.
- [Tour 7 \(Chinatown\)](#) starts at Columbus Park, 12 minutes southwest of Seward Park. Pick up Tour 7 at stop 1 after stop 11 here.
- [Tour 8 \(Greenpoint and Williamsburg\)](#) ends by walking the Williamsburg Bridge into Delancey St, five minutes from stop 9 here. Run Tour 8, cross the bridge, finish with the back half of this one.
- [Tour 10 \(Williamsburg Bridge\)](#) starts at Essex Market and Seward Park, stops 9 and 11 of this tour. Walk this tour as far as Seward Park, then pick up Tour 10 at stop 3 and cross the bridge. That is the route a hundred thousand people actually took.
- [Tour 15 \(East Village Community Gardens\)](#) shares stop 7, the 6th Street and Avenue B garden. On a Sunday afternoon, add its stops 6 and 8 for two more gardens within a block: the koi pond at 6BC Botanical and the Creative Little Garden.

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/03-east-village-les/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.

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