

UPPER WEST SIDE / MORNINGSIDE HEIGHTS, MANHATTAN

UPPER WEST SIDE: PARK TO RIVER

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

DISTANCE 3.4 miles	TIME 3 to 4 hours
STOPS 13, 5 private (sidewalk only)	START Lincoln Center (1 to 66 St)
END Cathedral of St. John the Divine	MAP museenyc.com/tours/05-upper-west-side/map

Apartment-house Manhattan at its best. The UWS was built almost entirely between 1885 and 1930, mostly as large rental buildings for people who wanted space without a townhouse. It zigzags between two parks, and the side streets between Columbus and Amsterdam are where people actually live.

ROUTE CARD

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

1 Lincoln Center, Josie Robertson Plaza	7 West End Collegiate Church PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY
2 The Dorilton PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY	8 Aphorpe Apartments PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY
3 West 71st Street Historic District PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY	9 Zabar's
4 The Dakota PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY	10 Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument
5 Strawberry Fields	11 Riverside Park and the 91st Street Garden
6 The Museum of Natural History and Theodore Roosevelt Park	12 Nicholas Roerich Museum
	13 Cathedral of St. John the Divine

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

GETTING THERE AND BACK

START 1 to 66 St-Lincoln Center. Or A/B/C/D/1 to 59 St-Columbus Circle and walk up Broadway.

FINISH 1 at 110 St-Cathedral Pkwy, or B/C at Cathedral Pkwy, both a block or two from the cathedral.

ALONG THE ROUTE

Broadway: 1 train local at 66, 72, 79, 86, 96, 103, 110, 116. Central Park West: B/C at 72, 81, 86, 96, 103, 110. Buses: M104 on Broadway, M7/M11 on Columbus and Amsterdam, M10 on Central Park West, M5 on Riverside Dr. Crosstown: M72, M79 SBS, M86 SBS, M96.

Cutting it short

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

- Anywhere: the 1 train runs under Broadway the whole length of this walk, a stop every 8 blocks.
- After stop 6 (Museum): B/C at 81 St-Museum of Natural History, at the door.
- After stop 9 (Zabar's): 1 at 79 St or 86 St, one block east.
- After stop 11 (91st St Garden): M5 or M104, or walk east to the 1 at 96 St.

THE WALK

1 LINCOLN CENTER, JOSIE ROBERTSON PLAZA

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Built in the late 1950s and 60s on the site of San Juan Hill, a dense Black and Puerto Rican neighborhood that Robert Moses cleared under urban renewal. West Side Story was filmed in the condemned blocks before demolition. Worth holding both facts at once: the plaza is beautiful and it cost a neighborhood. The Met Opera's Chagall murals are visible from the fountain at night.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.77250, -73.98350

2 THE DORILTON

PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY

Walk: North on Broadway six blocks to W 71st St. The Dorilton is on the east side.

Or ride: 1 train one stop, 66 St to 72 St.

71st and Broadway. When it went up, a critic wrote that it made strong men swear and children weep. Mansard roof, giant limestone figures, an iron gate that belongs on a palace. It is the loudest building on Broadway and it earned its landmark status.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.77785, -73.98190

3 WEST 71ST STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY

Walk: West on W 71st St from Columbus Ave. Walk the block slowly.

Heads up: Private houses. Compare the stoops down the row: same plan, different faces.

Between Columbus and West End. Rows of brownstone and limestone houses built in the 1890s on speculation after the Ninth Avenue El arrived. Look at how each row varies the same basic plan: different stoops, different cornices, same bones. This is the residential texture the big avenues hide.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.77820, -73.98080

4 THE DAKOTA

PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY

Walk: East on W 72nd St to Central Park West. About 8 minutes.

Or ride: M72 crosstown bus, or 1/2/3 to 72 St and walk east.

Built by Edward Clark of Singer sewing machines, so far north and so isolated that people joked it might as well be in Dakota territory. Henry Hardenbergh gave it a moat, gables and gargoyles. It proved wealthy New Yorkers would live in apartments, which changed the city. John Lennon was shot at the 72nd Street entrance in 1980. It is private; do not go past the gate.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.77646, -73.97629

5 STRAWBERRY FIELDS

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Walk: Enter Central Park at W 72nd St. The mosaic is about 200 feet in on your right.

Heads up: Crowded at the mosaic, empty fifty feet away. Walk past it for the quiet.

Yoko Ono funded this section of the park as a memorial to Lennon. The Imagine mosaic was a gift from Naples. It is usually crowded right at the mosaic and empty fifty feet away, which is the trick with the whole park.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.77563, -73.97490

6 THE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY AND THEODORE ROOSEVELT PARK

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Walk: North inside the park to W 77th St, exit west to Central Park West. About 15 minutes.

Or ride: B or C train one stop, 72 St to 81 St.

Heads up: Use the 77th St facade, not the famous Central Park West one. It is the better building.

Twenty-odd connected buildings in every style from Romanesque to the Gilder Center's poured-concrete canyon. The 77th Street facade is the original 1892 Romanesque front and is far better than the famous Central Park West one. The park around it is free; the Gilder Center is inside, with museum admission, which is pay what you wish for New York State residents.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.78130, -73.97400

7 WEST END COLLEGIATE CHURCH

PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY

Walk: West on W 77th St to West End Ave. Church on the corner.

77th and West End. Built for a congregation founded in 1628, the oldest continuous Protestant congregation in America. The architect went full Dutch: crow-stepped gables, orange brick, terra cotta. It looks transplanted from Haarlem, which is the joke.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.78400, -73.98170

8 APTHORP APARTMENTS

PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY

Walk: North on West End Ave to W 79th, east to Broadway. The Apthorp takes the block between 78th and 79th.

Heads up: Look through the Broadway gates at the courtyard. Do not walk in.

Broadway between 78th and 79th, built by William Waldorf Astor. A full city block wrapped around an interior courtyard with fountains, entered through iron gates on Broadway. Look through the gates. The courtyard is one of the great hidden interiors in Manhattan.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.78560, -73.97650

9 ZABAR'S

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Walk: North on Broadway one block to W 80th St.

Heads up: Good picnic assembly point before Riverside Park. Mezzanine is upstairs.

Broadway at 80th. Smoked fish, cheese, coffee, and a mezzanine full of kitchen equipment. It is a genuine neighborhood institution rather than a preserved one, still family-run, still crowded with people buying dinner. Good place to assemble a picnic before Riverside Park.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.78560, -73.97890

10 SOLDIERS' AND SAILORS' MONUMENT

CLOSED FOR NOW: FENCED OFF FOR RESTORATION

Walk: West on W 80th St to Riverside Dr, into the park, then north along the upper promenade to W 89th. About 15 minutes.

Or ride: M79 SBS crosstown to Riverside Dr, or M5 north on Riverside Dr.

Heads up: Fenced off for restoration. View it from the promenade.

A Civil War memorial modeled on the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates in Athens, set on a terrace with a straight view across the Hudson. It has been fenced off since 2017 while the city prepares a full restoration, so for now you see it from the promenade. The view west across the Hudson is still yours.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.79370, -73.97590

11 RIVERSIDE PARK AND THE 91ST STREET GARDEN

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Walk: North inside the park two blocks. The garden is on the terrace level at W 91st.

Heads up: Volunteer-planted. Best late spring and early fall.

Olmsted laid out Riverside Park along the bluff; the 91st Street Garden is a later community-run addition, planted and maintained by volunteers since the 1980s. Peak in late spring and early fall. This is where the last scene of *You've Got Mail* was shot, if that matters to you.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.79100, -73.97700

12 NICHOLAS ROERICH MUSEUM

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Walk: North through Riverside Park to W 107th St, exit east to 319 W 107th between Riverside and Broadway. About 20 minutes.

Or ride: M5 north on Riverside Dr to 106th, or 1 train 86 St to 103 St.

Heads up: Free, tiny, and almost always empty. Check the afternoon hours.

107th between Broadway and Riverside. A small free museum in a 1898 townhouse devoted to Roerich, the Russian painter, mystic and set designer who co-created *The Rite of Spring*. Rooms of luminous Himalayan landscapes. Almost nobody is ever in there.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.80160, -73.96900

13 CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Walk: East on W 110th St, which is Cathedral Pkwy, to Amsterdam Ave, then north two blocks. About 15 minutes.

Or ride: M4 or M11 north on Amsterdam, or 1 train to 110 St.

Heads up: Enormous and still unfinished. Walk around to the Cathedral Close on the south side.

Begun in 1892 in Romanesque, switched to Gothic mid-build, still unfinished and probably always will be. The nave is 601 feet long. Look for the Peace Fountain outside and, inside, the memorial to the victims of AIDS and the firefighters' bay. The Cathedral Close is on the south side; its famous peacocks retired to a sanctuary in 2023.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.80380, -73.96200

COMBINING THIS WITH OTHER TOURS

- [Tour 11 \(Central Park: The Greatest Hits\)](#) runs along this tour's eastern edge and shares the Dakota and Strawberry Fields. Walk this one to the Museum, then turn into the park and pick up Tour 11 at Bethesda.
- [Tour 4 \(Harlem\)](#) starts at 125th St, a stop away on the B/C from where this tour ends. Best pairing on the list if you have a full day.
- [Tour 1 \(West Village\)](#) is the same walk in miniature at the other end of the island. Nothing connects them on foot; take the 1 train.

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/05-upper-west-side/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

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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.