

CHINATOWN / NOLITA / CIVIC CENTER / TRIBECA, MANHATTAN

# CHINATOWN, LITTLE ITALY AND TRIBECA

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

|                                        |                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DISTANCE<br>2.7 miles                  | TIME<br>3 hours                                                                                                      |
| STOPS<br>13, 2 private (sidewalk only) | START<br>Columbus Park (N/Q/R/W/J/Z/6 to Canal St)                                                                   |
| END<br>Pier 25, Hudson River Park      | MAP<br><a href="https://museenyc.com/tours/07-chinatown-tribeca/map">museenyc.com/tours/07-chinatown-tribeca/map</a> |

*The oldest street pattern in Manhattan, and the densest stacking of histories. Chinatown is a living working neighborhood, not a theme; Little Italy is mostly gone and worth seeing honestly; Tribeca is what happens when a warehouse district gets very rich. Mornings in Columbus Park are the best hour of this walk.*

## ROUTE CARD

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

|                                        |                                                                               |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1</b> Columbus Park                 | <b>8</b> Cortlandt Alley                                                      |
| <b>2</b> Doyers Street                 | <b>9</b> Foley Square and Thomas Paine Park                                   |
| <b>3</b> Mahayana Buddhist Temple      | <b>10</b> African Burial Ground National Monument                             |
| <b>4</b> Museum of Chinese in America  | <b>11</b> Staple Street Skybridge<br>PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY    |
| <b>5</b> Mulberry Street, Little Italy | <b>12</b> Harrison Street Row Houses<br>PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY |
| <b>6</b> Old St. Patrick's Cathedral   | <b>13</b> Pier 25, Hudson River Park                                          |
| <b>7</b> Elizabeth Street Garden       |                                                                               |

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

## GETTING THERE AND BACK

**START** N/Q/R/W/J/Z/6 to Canal St, or B/D to Grand St. Columbus Park is three minutes from either.

**FINISH** 1 at Franklin St, two blocks from Pier 25. Or A/C/E at Canal St, 2/3 at Chambers St.

## Cutting it short

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

- After stop 3 (Mahayana): B/D at Grand St, or N/Q/R/6 at Canal St.
- After stop 7 (Elizabeth St Garden): 6 at Spring St, two blocks.
- After stop 9 (Foley Square): 4/5/6/J/Z at Brooklyn Bridge-City Hall or Chambers St.
- After stop 11 (Staple Street): 1 at Franklin St, one block.

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## THE WALK

### 1 COLUMBUS PARK

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

This was the Five Points, the most notorious slum in 19th-century America, cleared in 1897 for the city's first park built specifically as slum clearance. Today it is Chinatown's backyard and the most authentically used public space downtown: mahjong, xiangqi, morning exercise groups, musicians. Go early and just sit.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.71480, -73.99980

### 2 DOYERS STREET

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**Walk:** East out of the park on Bayard St, right on Mott St, left on Pell St. Doyers is the crooked lane on your left.

A short crooked lane that bends sharply halfway along, which made it useful for ambushes during the tong wars of the early 1900s. It is said more people were killed on this block than any other in America. Now it is barbershops, a 1920s tea parlor, and a painted street mural.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.71430, -73.99820

### 3 MAHAYANA BUDDHIST TEMPLE

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**Walk:** Follow Doyers to the Bowery, turn left. The temple is at the corner of Canal, under the bridge.

**Heads up:** Free to enter. Hat off, voices down, no flash.

At the foot of the Manhattan Bridge. The building was the Rosemary Theater, a grindhouse, until a Buddhist association bought it in 1996. Inside is a 16-foot gilded Buddha. Free to enter; take your hat off and be quiet.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.71370, -73.99650

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## 4 MUSEUM OF CHINESE IN AMERICA

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**Walk:** West on Canal St to Centre St, north two blocks to 215 Centre. About 8 minutes.

**Or ride:** M103 bus north on Bowery and Centre St.

Founded in 1980 to document Chinese American history, with the permanent galleries designed by Maya Lin around a courtyard modeled on a traditional Chinese house. A 2020 fire destroyed much of the archive stored nearby, which the museum has been rebuilding since.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.71960, -74.00000

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## 5 MULBERRY STREET, LITTLE ITALY

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**Walk:** East on Grand St two blocks to Mulberry St, then north.

In 1910 this was 10,000 Italians in a few square blocks. Today Little Italy is essentially Mulberry between Canal and Broome, mostly restaurants aimed at visitors, with the actual Italian population long since moved to Bensonhurst and Staten Island. Worth walking precisely to see how a neighborhood contracts. Ferrara on Grand has been open since 1892.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.71920, -73.99700

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## 6 OLD ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**Walk:** North on Mulberry St to Prince St. The church takes the corner.

**Heads up:** Catacombs are by appointment only. The walled churchyard reads fine from the street.

Mott and Prince. This was the cathedral of New York until the uptown one opened in 1879. Its brick wall was manned by armed Irish parishioners in 1836 to fend off nativist mobs. The catacombs underneath can be toured by appointment; the walled churchyard is visible from the street and the basilica interior is open most days.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.72380, -73.99480

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## 7 ELIZABETH STREET GARDEN

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**Walk:** One block east to Elizabeth St, then south. The garden is between Prince and Spring.

**Heads up:** Volunteer-run with set hours. Check it is open before you count on it.

A one-acre lot filled with classical statuary, stone lions and balustrades, run as a volunteer public garden since the 1990s. After a decade-long fight over building senior housing on the site, the city agreed in 2026 to keep the garden and build the housing on another lot. Check the garden's hours before you go.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.72290, -73.99500

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## 8 CORTLANDT ALLEY

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**Walk:** South on Lafayette St about 10 minutes to Canal St. Cortlandt Alley runs south from Canal between Broadway and Lafayette.

**Or ride:** 6 train Spring St to Canal St.

**Heads up:** Look for the Mmuseumm in the freight elevator shaft halfway down.

Manhattan has almost no true alleys; Cortlandt is the best surviving one, running from Canal to Franklin. It is the default filming location whenever a script calls for a gritty New York alley. Halfway down is the Mmuseumm, a museum of everyday objects installed in a freight elevator shaft, viewable through the door when closed.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.71800, -74.00200

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## 9 FOLEY SQUARE AND THOMAS PAINE PARK

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**Walk:** South through the alley to Franklin St, east to Centre St, then south to the courthouses. About 10 minutes.

Ringed by the US Courthouse, the New York County Courthouse with its hexagonal Corinthian portico, and the federal buildings. The red Triumph of the Human Spirit sculpture at the center marks the nearby burial ground. The square sits on top of the filled-in Collect Pond, the city's original fresh water source.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.71430, -74.00220

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## 10 AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND NATIONAL MONUMENT

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**Walk:** West on Duane St two blocks to Elk St. The outdoor memorial is behind 290 Broadway; the visitor center entrance is on Broadway.

**Heads up:** The most important stop on this walk. Give it twenty minutes. Closed Mondays and Tuesdays.

Rediscovered in 1991 during excavation for a federal building. Colonial New York's Black population, free and enslaved, was buried here from the 1690s to 1794, outside the city limits, and the site was then built over and forgotten. The outdoor memorial and the free visitor center are both worth your time. This is the most important stop on this walk.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.71450, -74.00450

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## 11 STAPLE STREET SKYBRIDGE

PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY

**Walk:** West on Duane St to Hudson St. Staple St is the alley between Duane and Jay. About 10 minutes.

**Or ride:** 1 train Chambers St to Franklin St.

**Heads up:** Ninety seconds to see. Stand under the bridge and look up.

Staple Street is barely wide enough for a car. The copper-clad bridge crosses it at the third floor, built in 1907 to connect two buildings of the New York Hospital House of Relief. It is the most photographed object in Tribeca and takes about ninety seconds to see.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.71770, -74.00970

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## 12 HARRISON STREET ROW HOUSES

PRIVATE — VIEW FROM THE SIDEWALK ONLY

**Walk:** South on Hudson St to Harrison St, west half a block.

A row of 1790s-1820s Federal town houses, three of them by John McComb Jr. who designed City Hall. Most were physically relocated here in the 1970s from nearby streets when the Washington Market urban renewal project demolished everything around them. A rescued fragment of 18th-century New York.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.71850, -74.01050

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## 13 PIER 25, HUDSON RIVER PARK

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**Walk:** West on Harrison St to the greenway, cross at the light to the pier.

**Heads up:** The odd brick towers out in the water are Holland Tunnel vents.

End on the river. Pier 25 has a beach volleyball court, a skate park, moored historic vessels including the 1930s tug, and a straight view down the harbor. The Holland Tunnel ventilation towers are the odd brick objects out in the water.

[Open in maps](#) · 40.71900, -74.01350

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## COMBINING THIS WITH OTHER TOURS

- [Tour 9 \(Two Bridges\)](#) ends at Columbus Park, exactly where this tour starts, and shares four stops with it: African Burial Ground, Mahayana Temple, Doyers St and Columbus Park. Do Tour 9 in the morning, then pick this one up at stop 2 and skip the duplicates.
- [Tour 1 \(West Village\)](#) connects along the Hudson River greenway: 15 minutes north from Pier 25 to Pier 45.
- [Tour 3 \(East Village to LES\)](#) passes Seward Park on East Broadway, about a 12-minute walk from Columbus Park.

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## 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](#)

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## THE MAP

Open the MUSEENYC map for this walk at [museenyc.com/tours/07-chinatown-tribeca/map](https://museenyc.com/tours/07-chinatown-tribeca/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](mailto:museenyc.tours@gmail.com) or [@museenyc](https://www.instagram.com/museenyc) on Instagram. More walks at [museenyc.com/tours](https://museenyc.com/tours).