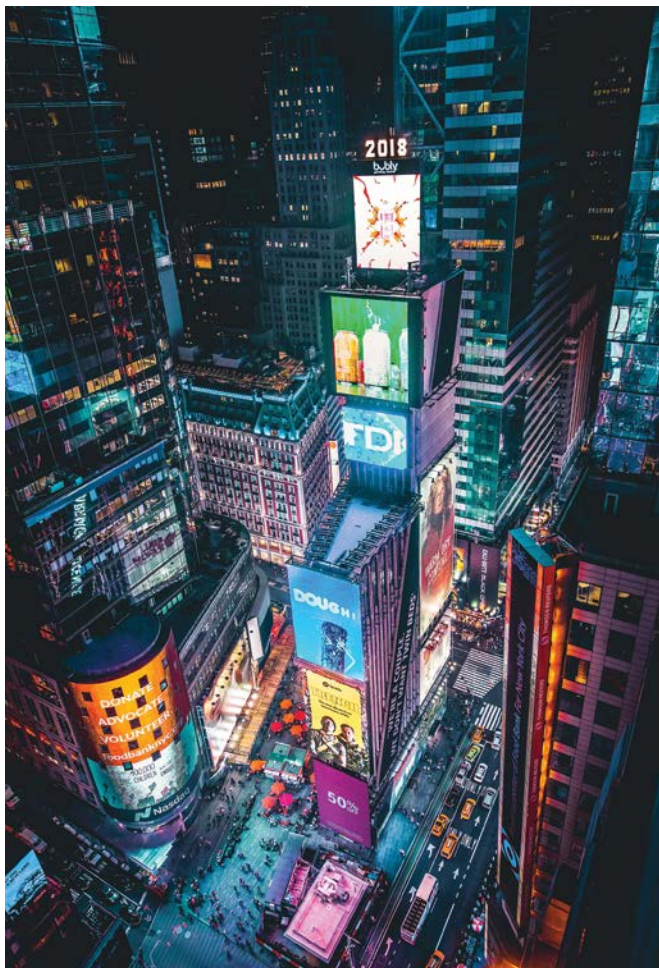


A Holiday Getaway to the Big Apple

BY FABIA D'ARIENZO



Maybe it's the indelible images from *Miracle on 34th Street*. It could be the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade floats—or the window displays up and down Fifth Avenue. Then there's the Christmas tree and skating at Rockefeller Center—not to mention New Year's Eve in Times Square. But whatever it is, there's something gleefully festive about New York City during the holidays that draws people in and makes so many want to be a part of it.

To make it easier for our readers to experience a fun getaway to the Big Apple, we've pulled together a list of ideas, happily provided by members of the HLAA New York City Chapter.

So go ahead—start planning. And this holiday season, enjoy the excitement of the city that never sleeps.

- **Check out the HLAA New York City Chapter's website.** Be sure to visit the Resources page at hearinglossnyc.org. There are several drop-down options with specific information on local looped venues and hearing access throughout the city, with additional information on much of what's listed below.
- **Go big at Radio City Music Hall and see the *Christmas Spectacular Starring the Radio City Rockettes*.** First opened in December 1932, this cherished landmark remains the world's largest indoor theater. If you want to experience the full monty of a New York City holiday getaway, then the *Christmas Spectacular* should be on your list. It's an energizing extravaganza that will leave you grinning from ear to ear. The theater has an FM system and offers sign language interpreters upon request—with a minimum of two weeks' notice.
- **Enjoy the festivities along Fifth Avenue and throughout midtown:** Be sure to see the Rockefeller Center Christmas tree. The lights go on Wednesday, December 4, and it remains on display through early 2020. From there, go enjoy the holiday atmosphere and check out the window displays at Saks Fifth Avenue, Tiffany & Co., Barneys New York, Bergdorf Goodman—and don't forget Macy's Herald Square.
- **Catch a Broadway show.** Luckily, some Broadway theaters and a few off-Broadway have hearing loops. The HLAA New York City Chapter website has a listing. But you also can visit theateraccess.nyc for more information.

Many theaters now offer on-demand captioning on smartphones or a hand-held I-Caption device through an app called GalaPro. If it's offered, there's typically signage at the theater, along with instructions on how to download. Many theater staff have been trained to assist patrons with it.

You can buy discounted tickets at TKTS Discount Booths located in Times Square, Lincoln

Center and the South Street Seaport. Exact locations and maps are at tdf.org. And if you sign up for TDF Accessibility Programs (TAP) at tdf.org, you can get open captioning at select performances.

- **Visit Hudson Yards and walk to the top of the Vessel.** This remarkable interactive piece of artwork is a spiral staircase. As you climb up, you'll see extraordinary views of the Hudson River. Same-day tickets are free and are issued on a first-come, first-served basis. You also can reserve tickets online up to two weeks in advance.
- **Take a walk in Central Park.** It could be cold, but if it snows, the scenery is especially beautiful. Treat yourself to ice skating at the iconic Wollman Rink at the southeastern corner of the park.
- **Let the views from Bar SixtyFive at the Rainbow Room mesmerize you.** While the Rainbow Room may not be in everyone's budget, you may consider a light beverage at its neighboring cocktail bar. Sunsets and nighttime city views are stunning.
- **Embrace public transportation:** New York City public transportation is surprisingly hearing accessible. All subway information booths throughout Manhattan, the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens have hearing loops. And so do newer yellow cabs. For specific information, see the Resources page at hearinglossnyc.org.

While MTA buses don't have hearing assistive technologies, it's still a great way to see the city on a budget. New York HLAA members tell us to take a public bus from one end of a route to the other. The M4, for instance, runs down the Upper West Side from Washington Heights, crosses Central Park at 110th Street, passing the beautiful Harlem Meer—an 11-acre man-made lake in the park's northeast corner—and then down Fifth Avenue. It's a million-dollar view for the price of bus fare. You'll need a MetroCard or exact change in coins for buses, and a MetroCard for subways.
- **Buy holiday gifts at the Bank of America Winter Village at Bryant Park.** Right behind the Mid-Manhattan Library at 42nd Street—the one with the marble lions—is Bryant Park. And during the holidays it transforms into a festive open-air market with artisanal boutiques and taste-worthy eats. There's also free ice skating at the Rink and other family-friendly activities.

- **Bundle up and take a roundtrip ride on the Staten Island Ferry.** It's free, and you'll get a great view as you pass by Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty—which is beautiful at night and just as affecting during the day. The views of lower Manhattan and other points of interest in New York Harbor are worth the trip. The ride is about 25 minutes each way. More information is on siferry.com.
- **Visit a museum and get cultured.** Many museums offer assistive listening devices upon request or have hearing loops. Some hearing accessible venues include the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Frick Collection, the Ellis Island National Museum of Immigration, the National September 11 Memorial Museum, the Tenement Museum, the Jewish Museum, and the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum. See hearinglossnyc.org for a fuller listing.
- **Eat your way through the Big Apple.** New York City food is one of a kind. Whether it's pastrami on rye, a bagel and lox, a Reuben, New York cheesecake, the pizza, falafel, a black-and-white cookie, a cannoli, or the staple hot dog, you know it's going to be good. And remember, there's always a ShackBurger. Started as a hot dog cart in Madison Square Park, Shake Shack seems to understand the needs of people with hearing loss. At least three Manhattan locations have hearing loops—at 366 Columbus Ave. at 77th Street, at 154 E. 86 St. at Lexington and Third, and at 215 Murray St. between West Street and North End Avenue.
- **Scope out bathrooms, which are notoriously hard to find.** Our New York friends tell us that your best bets are department stores, the Shops at Columbus Circle—which is fun on its own and has a Whole Foods Market on the lower level, libraries, some hotel lobbies, museums and Starbucks. **HL**



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