

# The Ultimate Guide to Entertaining Teens in NYC

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## The Sporty Teen

- ❑ For the sporty teen, run don't walk to [Chelsea Piers](#) on the west side highway between 18th and 23rd St. You will find a plethora of drop-in sport related activities for the whole family, including batting cages, golf, bowling and rock climbing. *11th Ave between 17th and 23rd Streets - Manhattan.*
- ❑ Combine an afternoon in the Flatiron district with a stop at [Spin New York](#), a ping pong social club that welcomes kids and families before 9pm. While they take advance reservations, last minute walk-ins are ok too. *48 E. 23rd Street - Flatiron*
- ❑ Some lively and competitive family fun games can be had at [Area 53 in Dumbo](#), Brooklyn. Laser tag is one of our favorite family activities when we travel with teens. Combine it with a tour of the [Dumbo waterfront](#) for some serious instagram moments. *53 Bridge Street - Dumbo*
- ❑ NYC is serious about skateboarding and there are plenty of skate parks to catch some air. Pier 62 near Chelsea Piers is pretty rad and overlooks the Hudson River. The LES skatepark (Coleman playground) is a classic and can be combined with a stop for [dumplings](#) or [dim sum](#) in Chinatown. Highbridge Skate Park is the largest skatepark and is located in Washington Heights. If your teen is in NYC without their board and needs a fix, [Skate Brooklyn](#) has a ramp that is free to try out. *4th Ave and Saint Marks Place. - East Village*
- ❑ No matter what time of year it is, you can always catch a game at one of NYC's many great stadiums. [Madison Square Garden](#) is the home of the Knicks and the Rangers. [The Barclay Center](#) houses the Brooklyn Nets. If it's baseball season, the [Mets](#) and the [Yankees](#) can provide a few hours of great family entertainment. All of these stadiums are just a subway ride away.
- ❑ During the summer months, [free kayaking](#) can be had in many places along the water. We like Hudson River Park at Pier 96 in Manhattan or in [Brooklyn Bridge Park](#) at Pier 4 in Brooklyn.
- ❑ Brooklyn's happening Gowanus neighborhood is a mecca for teens in NYC that like sports. In the course of an afternoon you and your teen can stop at [Brooklyn Boulders](#) for rock climbing, or [Crossfit](#) for drop-in teen classes on

Monday & Wednesday. Or for something a little more unusual try the super cool [Axe throwing joint](#) right across the street. Kids under 18 need an adult present for Axe throwing. *De Graw Street between 3rd and 4th Ave., Brooklyn*

## **[Lover of Things That Go](#)**

- ❑ [NY Transit Museum](#) - this decommissioned subway station in downtown Brooklyn is a must no matter what borough you are in. I love the first hand view of how the NYC subway system was created and how it has dealt with a myriad of challenges. Including, more recently, 9/11 and Hurricane Sandy. The best part is a look at subway cars from the early 1900's to today, complete with advertisements from that time. Bonus if you bring a parent/grandparent that remembers some of the ads! Open Friday - Sunday. *99 Schermerhorn Street - Downtown Brooklyn.*
- ❑ City Hall's Secret Subway Station - At the end of the downtown 6 local train, there is a secret subway station that has been out of service since the 1940's. The conductors usually allow you to stay on the train after the last stop at Brooklyn Bridge City Hall . Watch as the train does a loop through that secret station to turn around and head back uptown.
- ❑ There is nothing like viewing the island of Manhattan from the water but [Circle Line cruises](#) can get expensive. Gawk at the skyline and Lady Liberty for FREE on the [Staten Island Ferry](#) by riding round trip to Staten Island and back (note: you have to disembark in Staten Island and reboard through the waiting room.). Ferry runs 24/7 generally every 15 min.
- ❑ Spend a night at the [TWA Hotel](#) at JFK airport and watch the planes come in. Opened in May 2019, the TWA Hotel was created out of the abandoned and landmarked TWA Flight Center. Complete with a rooftop pool, a cocktail lounge created out of a 1958 airplane, and floor to ceiling noise proof windows in your room. You and your transportation loving teen will not soon forget a night watching the planes fly in and out in this 1960's inspired hotel. *JFK Airport, Queens*
- ❑ We love the [Double Decker Tour Bus](#) for families and teens on a lazy Saturday in NYC. Whether you are a long time resident or just visiting, guaranteed you will learn more than a few random facts about NYC.

- Or, try [the Ride](#) which delivers a unique take on the traditional bus tour. The bus is tricked out into theater style seating where the streets of NYC are the theater. Comedic tour guides put on a different show every day depending on the activity in the streets. *42nd & 8th Ave. Midtown Manhattan*

## **The Goth Teen**

- The countercultural magnet of Manhattan has been the East Village for decades. Specifically, St. Marks Place on 8th St between 3rd Ave and Ave A. It was the home of hippies in the 60's, punks in the 70's and anarchists in the 80's. and since has been a home for "anything goes". While some may argue it has lost its edge, it remains an essential stop for the goth and/or punk teen in NYC.
- Once the centerpiece of St. Marks Place, [Trash and Vaudeville](#) moved its location to E. 7th St. near 1st Ave in 2016 but remains the punk clothing mecca of NYC and a must stop for the Goth Teen.
- Pay homage to Joey Ramone Place at *325 Bowery*.
- Try this [Punks and Poets](#) walk and audio guide through the village, tracing the birth of punk.
- If you've already explored the East Village and want more punk, head over to the Bushwick flea markets Punk Alley. Housed in shipping containers on 861 Broadway in Bushwick, you will find a handful of shops carrying punk junk and rarities. Plus, its the home of KPISS, Bushwick's punk radio station.
- Learn about the death and mourning rituals of many Brooklyn neighborhoods on [Madame Morbids Trolley Tour](#). *9th St and Driggs in Williamsburg*
- [House of Wax](#) - quirky and a bit creepy this cabinet of curiosities is a family friendly bar located right outside the dine-in [Alamo Drafthouse](#) in downtown Brooklyn. Make a night of it, but note that the both locations allows kids under 18 only with a parent. *445 Albee Square - Downtown Brooklyn*

## **The LGBTQ Teen**

- Greenwich Village - the 1969 Stonewall Inn riots are widely considered to be the genesis of the modern day gay rights movement. A visit to NYC wouldn't

be complete without paying homage to this history in the Greenwich Village and the Stonewall Inn (note: Stonewall is a bar and strictly 21+ - but a photo outside is required for the LGBTQ teen). See this post about the [17 LGBTQ landmarks](#) for a more complete Greenwich Village tour. *53 Christopher St. - Greenwich Village*

- ❑ Located on the lower East Side, [Bluestocking Bookstore, Cafe and Activist Center](#) features over 6,000 titles on feminism, queer and gender studies, climate and environment and race and black studies. They also have a robust calendar of activities. *116 Suffolk Street - Lower East Side*
- ❑ The [Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art](#), located in Soho on Wooster St. was built by its founders to preserve LGBTQ identity and examines the intersection between art and social justice. *26 Wooster St. - Soho*
- ❑ Seasonal events: one of the largest pride marches in the world can be found in NYC at [Pride](#). All of NYC celebrates this fun and interactive event that takes place the last two weeks of June culminating in the Pride Parade the last Sunday in June. Also, every September, the [Brooklyn Museum hosts the Queer Fashion show](#) featuring designers whose work is rooted in gender non-conformity.
- ❑ One of NYC's rites of passage is a Brunch or Dinner and a drag show at the famous [Lucky Chengs](#). This is NYC's longest running drag cabaret and is tons of fun. Recommended for ages 15+, but it's up to the parent. *707 8th Ave. Greenwich Village*
- ❑ The [Alice Austen House](#) in Staten Island was designated as a National LGBTQ Historic Site in late 2017. Austen raised LGBTQ awareness in the early 1900's through her photography. Some of her 8,000 photo collection, as well as exhibits showcasing modern photographers can be seen at her house. *2 Hylan Blvd. Staten Island*

## **The Instagram Fanatic**

- ❑ Take a free ride on the [Staten Island ferry](#) for up close views of the Statue of Liberty and the NYC skyline from the water,
- ❑ Stroll over the Brooklyn Bridge to capture this majestic suspension bridge up close and personal.

- ❑ The Flatiron building is one of NYC's most photographed landmarks. Combine it with a stop at [Eataly](#) or the very first [Shake Shack](#). *Madison Square Park, Flatiron*
- ❑ Fight the crowds trying to take some of the most memorable shots in [Brooklyn bridge park in Dumbo](#). Don't miss pebble beach, Jane's Carousel, and the view of the Empire State Building from Washington and Front Street for the most iconic shots. *New Dock Street - Dumbo*
- ❑ The [Oculus is the World Trade Center](#) transportation hub consisting of a train station, plaza, food and shops. Your Instagram obsessed teen won't want to miss a shot of this building designed to look like a dove leaving a child's hand. Be sure and see it from both outside and inside. Combine it with your [tours of the 9/11 memorial](#). *Church Street - downtown NYC*
- ❑ While downtown, hop over to Staple Street in Tribeca for a highly Instagrammable shot of the the Staple Street Skybridge. *9 Jay Street - Tribeca*
- ❑ Have you really been to NYC if you haven't seen the [Guggenheim Museum](#) designed by Frank Lloyd Wright? Combine your visit with a few other museums along [Museum Mile](#) or [explore Central Park](#). *1071 5th Ave. (89th St) - Upper East Side*.
- ❑ NYC's newest Instagram spot also happens to be the highest outdoor sky deck in the Western Hemisphere. Also listed under Daredevil, [the Edge](#) makes for the perfect Instagram post. *30 Hudson Yards*

## [The New York History Buff](#)

- ❑ The [Queens Museum](#) located in Flushing Meadow Park features a plethora of Worlds Fair memorabilia and would surely be an entertaining afternoon for your teen in NYC. However, the little known gem of this spot is the detailed model of the city. It contains 895,000 tiny buildings and 100 bridges. A walkway surrounds the model and binoculars are set up so you can search for your home/hotel amongst the concrete jungle. *Flushing Meadows Corona Park - Queens*
- ❑ For the history buff who is interested in America's urban immigration story, head to the lower east side for a terrific tour of [The Tenement Museum](#). *103 Orchard Street -Lower East Side*

- ❑ While you are downtown, head over to the financial district for a meal at [Fraunces Tavern & Museum](#). Your history buff will appreciate seeing NYC's oldest standing structure that once served as a watering hole for many of our founding fathers. Try the Chicken Pot Pie! *54 Pearl Street - Financial District*
- ❑ The job of a Historical Society is to preserve, protect and encourage the study of the history of the region it represents. If you are uptown, consider a stop in the [NY Historical Society](#) to get a healthy dose of NYC history. At a minimum, watch the inspiring 18 minute video about this great city. The [Brooklyn Historical Society](#), is located in [Brooklyn Heights](#). It is temporarily closed due to Covid. Check back for when it reopens, even if you only go to see the architecture.
- ❑ Located at the top of Museum Mile on 103rd St. is a great referendum to NYC - [The Museum of City of New York](#). Find out what makes NYC tick with special attention paid to immigration, civil rights and sexual orientation. *1220 Fifth Ave. (at 104th St.) Upper East Side.*
- ❑ Spend an afternoon strolling through America's first suburb - Brooklyn Heights. See my review of this historic neighborhood [here](#).

## **[The Bookworm](#)**

- ❑ [The Strand](#) located on Broadway just below 14th St. is easily NYC's most beloved indie book shop. It is packed with 18 miles of new and used books. Don't miss the Rare Book Room accessible only by elevator. *828 Broadway (at 13th Street).*
- ❑ [The Morgan Library & Museum](#) - built more than 100 years ago by J.P. Morgan to house his rare books, manuscripts and prints, this gorgeous room is the stuff of old New York dreams. Worth the visit for the Instagram picture alone. *225 Madison at 36th Street*
- ❑ Try to snag a table at the celebrity magnet [Minetta Tavern](#), once the stomping grounds for Ezra Pound, Eugene O'Neill and E.E. Cummings. Reservations necessary. *113 Macdougall Street - Greenwich Village*
- ❑ Check out [The Mysterious Bookshop](#) in Tribeca. See details in category for the Sleuther teen. *58 Warren Street - Tribeca*



- ❑ [The Nuyorican Poets Cafe](#) has been hosting Poetry Slams every Wed and Friday for decades. Their ever popular Open Mic Nights has been going on every Monday since the early 70's. All ages are welcome to spectate or try their hand at performing their craft. Let your literary teen try out some of their works in the greatest city in the world (arrive early to ensure a place for performing). *236 E. 3rd Street - between Ave. B and Ave. C.*
- ❑ Visit Patience and Fortitude -the lions outside the [NY Public Library](#) located right across from Bryant Park at 5th Ave. Then climb the steps to explore the stacks indoors. Don't miss the real Winnie the Pooh with 4 of his friends on display on the ground floor. *Fifth Ave and West 42nd St.*
- ❑ The [Jefferson Market Branch](#) of the New York Public Library is by far my favorite branch. Resembling a Victorian Castle, the library is filled with stained glass windows and carved doorways. It even has a public garden - and is free to enter. *425 6th Avenue at 9th Street - Greenwich Village*

## **The Comic Book Fan**

- ❑ NYC definitely does not lack for comic book stores - the comic King is [Midtown Comics](#). All comic book lovers must stop at the largest comic book retailer at least once. The midtown location can be combined with your Times Square experience and the downtown location can be combined with South Street Seaport.
- ❑ Other worthwhile stops include [Toy Tokyo](#) (*91 Second Ave.*) the NYC destination for vintage collectibles and Japanese toys. Or the teen favorite and UK cult megastore, [Forbidden Planet](#). One part Toy Tokyo and one part Midtown Comics, you can find toys, action figures, and graphic novels. *832 Broadway*
- ❑ [Desert Island](#) in Williamsburg is a more intimate and relaxed way to search for the perfect zine. The stores free newspaper, Smoke Signal is a great way for your teen to stay in the know about upcoming underground artists. *540 Metropolitan Ave. - Williamsburg*
- ❑ Unassumingly sitting on 63rd Street, lies the [Museum of Comic and Cartoon Art](#). Sharing cartoon art works from a permanent collection, as well as rotating

exhibits, this is the place to see for the comic loving teen in NYC. *128 E. 63rd Street*

- ❑ [Brooklyn Superhero Supply Company](#) in Park Slope is stocked with capes, masks, gadgets and crime fighting gear. In addition, there is a literacy non-profit offering after school classes in the back. Fight crime and illiteracy in one fell swoop. *372 5th Ave. - Park Slope*
- ❑ A [Superhero Bus Tour of NYC](#) - see where your favorite comic book heroes saved the day on this one of a kind bus tour good for kids and adults. Bonus: it covers a fair number of NYC icons along the way. So if you are visiting with teens and have limited time, this is a good 2 for 1 option.
- ❑ True fans already know about [New York Comic Con](#) - the largest pop culture event on the east coast. If you are in NYC the first weekend in October, don't be surprised when you pass a few of your favorite comics and super heroes on the subway platform. Tickets usually go on sale mid summer.

## [The Music Lover](#)

- ❑ Watch and learn from the masters to see how a piece of music is shaped at the [NY Philharmonic open rehearsals](#). Two mornings a month from 9:30-12:30. Buy tickets in advance. *David Geffen Hall - 10 Lincoln Center Plaza*
- ❑ The heyday of American song writing mostly happened on Tin Pan Alley from the late 1800's to the 1920's (*28th St between Broadway & 6th*). While the businesses are all gone, the brownstones remain. No.45 was where George Gershwin published the Wizard of Oz and No. 40 was where Take Me Out to the Ballgame was written.
- ❑ Every night is a party at [Cafe Wha?](#) in Greenwich Village. Home to the likes of Bob Dylan, Jimi Hendrix, Bruce Springsteen and many more. If you see only one NYC classic music venue make it this one and you never know who just might show up. All ages welcome - shows 7 nights a week and tix run \$5-\$15 online. *115 Macdougall Street- Greenwich Village*
- ❑ Located in Lincoln Center, [The Julliard Store](#) is one of the last places in NYC to get a good selection of piano sheet music. *144 W. 66th Street*
- ❑ [Steinway Factory Tour](#) - way out in Astoria is the remainder of what was once known as Steinway Village. A tour of the factory will walk you through the 9-

month process of making the worlds best known pianos. Tours are Tuesday and Thursday at 9:30 every month except July and August. All Steinway Factory Tours are closed through the end of 2021. Check the website for tours starting 2022. *18-1 Steinway Place- Queens*

- Be good or be gone at [Amateur Night at the Apollo](#). On Wednesdays, your teens can vote with a shouted "yay" or a "nay" as they judge to see who will become the next Ella Fitzgerald or James Brown. A super fun event for teens and adults! Combine a trip here with dinner at either the [Red Rooster](#) or [Sylvia's](#) for the complete Harlem experience. Amateur night reopens Feb 2022. *253 W. 125th Street - Harlem*
- Leave a rose on the Imagine mosaic in Strawberry Fields. Here you can pay homage to your favorite Beatle at a 2.5 acre section of Central Park dedicated to John Lennon. *Near West 72nd Street.*
- Is Hip Hop your teens vibe? Try one of these [NYC Hip Hop tours](#) in Brooklyn, the Bronx, or Harlem the birthplace of hip hop. Maybe you will learn something that helps you better connect with them. *109 E. 59th Street.*

## [The Daredevil](#)

- Ride the Beast - May through September, speed loving teens in NYC should head over to 42nd St on the west side highway for a ride on [The Beast](#). Get an up-close look at the Statue of Liberty at speeds of up to 45MPH with twists, turns and heart pumping music. *Pier 83 at West 42nd St and 12th Ave.*
- Experience an event where ordinary objects become musical instruments in a show that combines dance, music and theater all at once. Energizing and inventive, [Stomp](#) is a perfect NYC theater night with your high energy teen. *126 2nd Ave.*
- An amusement park with thrilling rides is the place to be for the daredevils in your house.. After mom and dad have explored a few of the museums on their list, hop on the D,F,N or Q train to blow off some steam at [Luna Park in Coney Island](#). Open every day Memorial Day to Labor day plus weekends beginning April and ending October. Loads of thrill seeking rides, games, and funnel cakes will keep the whole family entertained for hours. Make a day of it

by adding in a visit to the nearby [New York Aquarium](#) and spending a few hours on the beach. *Coney Island, Brooklyn*

- ❑ Zipline over the Bronx river and navigate through the trees at [Bronx Zoo Treetop Adventure](#). Four different levels ranging from beginner to expert allows the whole family to get involved (as long as everyone is over 7). Closed in Dec. and Jan. *2300 Southern Blvd, Bronx River Entrance - Bronx*
- ❑ For a unique and thrilling experience, try the [Trapeze School NYC](#). Learn the aerial art of flying trapeze while enjoying an NYC sunset on the Hudson. Summer months only but there is a year round indoor facility in South Williamsburg. *Pier 40, West Street- Manhattan or 30 Tompkins Ave. - Williamsburg*
- ❑ Thrill seeking teens in NYC will love [the Edge](#) at Hudson Yards. Opened in March 2020, the Edge is the highest outdoor sky deck in the Western hemisphere. It is suspended mid air 100 stories up and features a glass floor. Get advance [tickets](#) and go for sunset. *30 Hudson Yards*
- ❑ NYC's newest skyscraper [One Vanderbilt](#) opened September 2021 and is NYC's 4th tallest building. However, it is only the second with a glass floor observation deck, making it a great spot for a daredevil teen in NYC. *1 Vanderbilt Ave. at 43rd Street*

## [The Collector of Oddities](#)

- ❑ My all time favorite activity with teens [anywhere in the world](#) is a [scavenger hunt](#). It's a family activity that gets teens engaged in a little competitive camaraderie while allowing them to use their phones. [Accomplice NY](#) is an adventure theater show which combines escape rooms, scavenger hunts and sightseeing. Or try [Watson Adventures](#).
- ❑ [City Reliquary](#). I am so happy to report that this community museum in Williamsburg was saved from the demise of Coronavirus by its generous funders. This is one of those little known treasures in NYC that would have been a shame to lose. Their creative permanent display of NYC artifacts, and rotating exhibits focused on NYC history is both quirky and clever. Open weekends only. *370 Metropolitan Ave. -Williamsburg*

- ❑ [The Oddities Flea Market](#) is a Brooklyn based event that takes place seasonally in Greenpoint at the Brooklyn Bazaar. Check the website to see when it will be back in the area.
- ❑ On an out-of-the way cobblestoned street in Tribeca, you will find the city's tiniest [Museum](#) open for viewing 24/7. This quirky spot sits inside a freight elevator on Cortlandt Alley and explores modern day humanity through everyday objects. *4 Cortland Alley*
- ❑ [House of Wax](#) - quirky and a bit creepy this cabinet of curiosities is a family friendly bar located right outside the dine-in [Alamo Drafthouse](#) in downtown Brooklyn. *445 Albee Square*
- ❑ [Obscura Antiques & Oddities](#) is NYC's oldest oddities emporium. The shop carries medical, scientific, natural history, circus, sideshow and all things unusual. *Avenue A just below 13th Street.*

## [The Theater Kid](#)

- ❑ Broadway, obviously! See a last minute show (day of or next day) with discounted seats by waiting in line at the [TKTS booth](#) in Times Square. There are also booths available in South Street Seaport and Lincoln Center which always have shorter lines. Or reserve your discounted tickets in advance by downloading the [TodayTix](#) app on your phone. Teens from anywhere in the world can buy \$5 tickets (sometimes \$10) to the best of New York City dance, music, theater and visual arts events all year round through the [Arts Connection box office](#). All live theater is slowly reopening in NYC and we are here for it!
- ❑ Home to one of the most respected comedy training centers in the country, the [Upright Citizens Brigade Theater](#) is a great experience for your budding actor and a fun family night out. Catch an improv show any night of the week for under \$15 per person and experience 90 minutes of the most innovative comedy experience you have ever seen. Under 16yrs needs to be accompanied by an adult but this would be a great and affordable night out for your older teen and their friends. As of October 2021, the fate of the UCB is unclear. There were announcement of its closure late in 2020, however there

seems to be movement towards a revitalization. Keep checking their website.  
*555 West 42nd Street*

- ❑ [Shakespeare in the Park](#) - an NYC tradition for more than 60 years, those free Shakespeare in the Park tickets are among the most sought after prizes for all New Yorkers. Every summer, Joe's Public and the Delacorte Theater in Central Park hosts a series of Shakespeare productions that New Yorkers are willing to line up for as early as 6am just to get their hands on a pair of tickets! Tickets get distributed at noon on day of performance. Having been several times, it is well worth the wait.
- ❑ [Ellen's Stardust Diner](#) - despite the long lines, an evening at Ellen's Stardust for the drama geek teen is a dream. A 50's themed diner the food isn't the attraction but tends to make the average teen pretty happy. The spotlight here is on the uber-talented singing waitstaff. Waiters and actors go hand in hand in NYC and this hard working group of performers really do sing for (your) supper. They also take requests. Our visits to Ellen's Stardust with the teens have been some of our most fun nights in NYC. *1650 Broadway at 51st Street*
- ❑ [The Drama Bookshop](#) - this century old theater bookshop selling scripts and books about the stage was an essential go-to for the theater community. It closed in Jan 2020 due to increasing rents, but Lin Manuel Miranda and the folks from Hamilton saved it from it's demise and the shop reopened - bigger and better - at *266 W. 39th St.*

## [The Gamer](#)

- ❑ Is your gamer teen tired of being dragged around to see the sites of NYC? Head over to [VR World NYC](#) right near the Empire State Building. Reserved for 15+ after 9pm. In addition, if you are closer to Penn Station/ Chelsea try [Escape Virtuality](#) for the latest and greatest in VR experiences. Escape Virtuality accepts all ages all day. *130 W. 29th Street*
- ❑ For the traditional gaming enthusiasts, [Modern Pinball](#) in Kips Bay and [Chinatown Fair Family Fun Center](#) on Mott Street are both entertaining. *362 Third Ave at 27th St.* Modern Pinball is still temporarily closed due to Covid.

- ❑ After a few days of living the NYC fast life, a family game night at the [Uncommons Board Game Cafe](#) in Soho will be just what the doctor ordered. Or if you have bored teens at home on a Saturday night, send them to Uncommons for some classic competitive fun (ages 14+). Reservations accepted for 5+ people. \$15 per person. *230 Thompson Street*
- ❑ Located in Rockefeller Center, [The Nintendo store](#) is a must- stop if you are touring NYC with a gamer. This 10,000 square foot store is filled with interactive game demos, accessories and collectibles. *10 Rockefeller Plaza*
- ❑ Head to Williamsburg's [Action Burger](#) - a retro video game themed hamburger restaurant to get your bored teen engaged in a fun family activity. *292 Graham Ave., Williamsburg*

## [The Sleuther](#)

- ❑ The sleuther in your house will love a visit to [Spyscape](#) in Times Square. Spy gadgets, spy stories, spy challenges, and an exploration of your own spy skills will surely entertain your spy obsessed teen for 2 hours. Even if you don't go, there are lots of spy like virtual experiences on the website. *928 Eighth Ave. (at 56th St.)*
- ❑ Every city seems to have Escape Games these days and NYC is not lacking. We have done them with several different companies in NYC both as birthday parties and as spontaneous afternoon events. If your teen is spending a lazy Saturday staring at their device, sign them up with a friend for an escape game to get them sleuthing around.
- ❑ Nobody really knows why in late 2019, there was suddenly a new [KGB Espionage Museum](#), but it has just enough kitsch to pique my curiosity. Learn to spot liars, crack codes and escape laser tunnels all in Union Square on West 14th St. *245 West 14th Street* Temporarily closed due to Covid-19.
- ❑ Be careful who you share your secrets with in the Whispering Hall in Grand Central Station. Located just across from the Oyster Bar and under the 4 archways, you and a friend can stand in opposite corners, whisper into the wall and hear one another perfectly. Consider a [Grand Central Station Scavenger Hunt](#) while you are there. Plus its a great idea for a teen birthday party!

- ❑ [The Mysterious Bookshop](#) - located on Warren St. in Tribeca. This indie bookshop specializes in mystery, crime and espionage books with lots of limited editions and rare crime novels. Go ahead and challenge the staff to find you the perfect book. *58 Warren Street, Tribeca*

## [The Fashionista](#)

- ❑ There is no shortage of shopping for upscale fashion in NYC but the two newest can't-miss hot spots are [Hudson Yards](#) and the [Westfield World Trade Center](#). Both malls are packed with all the name brands you can dream of and each have an added bonus of must see architectural spots as well. In Westfield, look for the Oculus - an enormous steel structure at the center of the mall made to look like a dove in flight. In the Hudson Yards, look for the Vessel - an outdoor soaring spiral of interconnecting staircases with extraordinary views.
- ❑ If vintage shopping is more appealing to your teen, there is no better place than a trip out to [Bushwick](#) in Brooklyn. The vintage jackpot can be found all within a few blocks of one another. Start out at [Urban Jungle](#) on Knickerbocker Ave. for the largest shop with uber cheap finds in a really well organized layout. From there, also on Knickerbocker, look for [Chess and the Sphinx](#) for a slightly more dressed up look, or [Flamingo's Vintage Pound](#) for clothing sold by the pound. One block over on Wilson, you can find [Collections](#) and [Worship](#), two slightly more upscale vintage choices. For all things pink and sparkly, try [Risk Gallery](#) on Central Ave. You can find a great map of all the vintage shops [here](#).
- ❑ [The Museum at FIT](#) is a worthwhile stop in Chelsea for the aspiring fashionista. Organized by grad students of FIT's fashion and textile studies program, you can peep at upcoming trends in garments and accessories. Free entrance. *227 W. 27th Street*
- ❑ Try one of these [fashion walking tours](#) to get the inside scoop on all things fashion in NYC.

## [The Artist](#)



- ❑ Obviously your budding artist teen in NYC should consider both the [Metropolitan Museum of Art](#) and the [Museum of Modern Art](#) required attendance. And that is just a start. I would also add the [Guggenheim](#), the [Whitney](#) and the [Neue Galerie](#) to round out that list.
- ❑ Wander through the free art galleries of Chelsea. While there are plenty of art galleries spread out throughout NYC, the area of 18th-28th Streets between 10th and 11th Ave are the most well known. Some not to miss galleries include [Zwirner](#), [Gagosian](#) and [Petzel](#). Don't miss a walk on the nearby [High Line](#) all the way up to 34th Street for a look at some cool outdoor art.
- ❑ While in Chelsea, check out the shop [Printed Matter](#), an eclectic non-profit bookstore and gallery dedicated to publications by artists with an amazing 'zine collection. *231 11th Ave. at 26th St.*
- ❑ For all things color, run don't walk to [Kremer Pigments](#) in Chelsea. This little shop is filled to the brim with pigments in every color you can imagine. A delight to the eyes, they have an array of color related classes that any artist would swoon over. *247 W. 29th St.*
- ❑ Does your teen always have a sketchbook in hand? Then the [Sketchbook Project](#) in [Williamsburg](#) is a must for them. Housing over 41,000 sketchbooks, this is the worlds largest free sketchbook collection and a must see for the artist in your house. You can choose a subject that interests you and the librarian will locate a few sketchbooks for you to look at in that genre. Bonus, the artist will receive a message that their work has been viewed. *28 Frost Street, Williamsburg*
- ❑ The "sport" of the art market happens at auction houses. There is no better place to see and experience the selling of art in NYC than Christie's, Sotheby's or Phillips. Auction houses are open to the public and anyone can attend (although getting a paddle is somewhat harder). [Christie's](#) focuses on European furniture, books and manuscripts while [Sotheby's](#) focuses on American furniture and photography. [Phillips](#) focuses on helping artists start their careers.
- ❑ The street art lover must not miss the Troutman street [murals in Bushwick](#). At the [Bushwick Art Collective](#), your artist teens in NYC can get inspiration from the works of some of the worlds most well-known and rising street artists.

You can go it alone along Troutman Street and neighboring blocks, but I liked learning about the artists and their rivalries on this free [walking tour](#) .

- ❑ ESPOs Art World - Located on 4th Ave. in Boerum Hill, ESPO's is a studio and art gallery owned by artist Stephen Powers. A well established mural artist and sign painter, Powers bright and friendly shop is packed to the brim both inside and out with his printed signs. Not to be missed, for the artist into screen printing. *72 4th Ave. Brooklyn*

## **The Film Critic**

- ❑ The movie going culture is strong in NYC. Try a visit to one of NYC's most famous theaters and take the time to appreciate the theater itself before the screening starts. Here are my favorites. In midtown, the legendary [Paris Theater](#) is NYC's last single screen picture palace. It was saved from closure this year by Netflix who will use it to release its own films. Also, the [Metrograph](#) in the Lower East Side is reminiscent of old Hollywood and is dedicated to projecting on 35MM film. Another favorite of mine is the revival house [Film Forum](#) in Soho where at least 2 of 3 screens are usually devoted to old films. Finally, for cocktails and food served seat-side, visit the [Alamo Drafthouse](#) in downtown Brooklyn. (Note that kids under 18 need to be accompanied by an adult in this theater. )
- ❑ For an eclectic alternative, make your way out to Bushwick for the [Syndicated Bar Theater Kitchen](#). Here you can choose between hanging out in a spacious room projecting movies on the wall or go for the retro 60-seat cinema in the back. You can order food and drink from your seats. *40 Bogart Street, Bushwick*
- ❑ If your teen loves film and loves NYC, this [NYC TV and Movie Bus tour](#) is the perfect option. The 3 hour bus tour will take you to some of NYC's best filming locations including Friends, Modern Family, Veep, Girls, Homeland and lots more.
- ❑ Hook and Ladder 8 is still operational in Tribeca but you can snap a pic at the Ghostbuster Headquarters with the logo out front. *14 N. Moore St.*

- ❑ Expand your understanding of film, television and digital media at the [Museum of the Moving Image](#) in Queens. Don't miss the Jim Henson exhibition honoring the creator of the Muppets. *36-01 35th Ave. Queens*
- ❑ [The Skyline Drive In](#) in Greenpoint is a must see. Combine jaw dropping views of the NYC skyline and a cozy drive in movie reminiscent of days gone by. Your teen in NYC will not soon forget this experience. While the drive-in experience is great in a car, there is also ample walk up seating available for nights when it isn't too cold to sit outside in a lounge chair for 2 hours. *1 Oak Street, Brooklyn*

## **The Science Geek**

- ❑ An obvious choice for the science lover is the [NY Hall of Science](#) in Flushing Meadows Park. Known for its interactive learning, it holds more than 450 permanent indoor interactive exhibits as well as outdoor exhibits. *47-01 111th Street, Queens* Temporarily closed due to Covid.
- ❑ Located on an aircraft carrier in the Hudson River, the [Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum](#) is the place to be for the teen in NYC that loves nautical or aeronautical sciences. Interactive exhibits, simulation experiences, and military and maritime history will enthrall your science enthusiast for hours. I especially love their education programs. Lots of great programs for the science loving teen in NYC. *Pier 86 at West 46th Street*
- ❑ [American Museum of Natural History](#) and Hayden Planetarium is one of the largest and well known natural history museums in the world. My teens have spent countless days wandering the halls of this wonder and it remains their go-to spot during an afternoon with friends. *200 Central Park West at 81st Street*
- ❑ On Tuesdays between April and October (when its not raining) your teen can reach for the stars on the High Line at 14th Street. [Stargazing on the High Line](#) offers the chance to peer through high powered telescopes provided by the Amateur Astronomers Association of NY. Also, [Columbia Astronomy public outreach program](#) offers stargazing and lectures on the roof of the Pupin building on 120th St.

- ❑ We have spent countless hours in [The Evolution Store](#) and it is a must-see for any science or animal loving kid. Located in Greenwich Village, this shop is stocked to the brim with science and natural history collectibles, artifacts and gifts. It was also our go-to for party favors when the kids were smaller. 687 Broadway at W. 3rd Street
- ❑ [Secret Science Club](#) is a nonprofit program of science, lecture, arts and performance series once a month based at the [Bell House in Gowanus](#). It is still closed due to COVID, but lectures can be viewed online and cover subjects from the science of water to the study of the creatures that live in forest canopies. 149 7th Street between 2nd & 3rd, Brooklyn

## [The Dancer](#)

- ❑ There is no shortage of live dance performances available in NYC. Experience some of the worlds best dance at one of these famous venues. [Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts](#) has 30 indoor and outdoor facilities and is home to the New York City Ballet and the School of American Ballet. For a more modern dance experience head to [Alvin Ailey](#) in midtown west. The [Joyce Theater](#), in Chelsea, hosts a wide spectrum of groupes from all over the world with both emerging and established artists.
- ❑ Hip hop music and culture is one of the most popular in the world but its roots sit squarely in NYC. [Hush Hip Hop Tours](#) will take you through either the Bronx or Brooklyn to feel the beat of a neighborhood where it all started. Want more hip-hop? Head to the [Hip Hop Museum](#) at 610 Exterior Street in the Bronx. When in the Bronx be sure to take a walk on Hip Hop Blvd at 1520 Sedgwick Ave.
- ❑ Join the Milonga (outdoor Tango dance parties) under the stars in NYC. All levels are welcome to dance the night away June through September in [Central Park](#) near the Shakespeare Statue or on [Pier 45](#) in the West Village.
- ❑ For 25 years, NY's hottest outdoor dance party has attracted audiences to swing under the stars at Lincoln Center's [Midsummer Nights Swing](#). Open to all ages, this event usually runs Tues - Sat in June and July.
- ❑ For the dancer looking to boost their dance attire, don't miss [On Stage Dancewear](#). 197 Madison between 34th & 35th Street

## [The Magic & Mystery lover](#)

- ❑ Housed on the 6th floor of a midtown office building is NYC's oldest magic shop [Tannen's Magic](#). Once inside you will be treated with drawers full of tricks and trinkets of the trade. You can also find some of Houdini's memorabilia. Ask for a demo before purchasing! *45 W. 34th St. #608*
- ❑ The Conjuring Arts Research Center is a 12,000 book library for magic scholars hidden in an unremarkable midtown office building. It is also one of the few places a non-professional can unlock the secrets of the world of magic. To borrow a book, check their library catalog [online](#) and the pickup is at Tannen's Magic (see above).
- ❑ Located in the old bank building in Chelsea, the [Museum of Illusions](#) is a place where nothing is what it seems. The exhibit will teach you about how the human brain perceives reality and why your eyes see things that your brain cannot immediately comprehend. *77 8th Ave. Chelsea.*
- ❑ New York's longest running off-broadway magic show happens every Monday night at [Monday Night Magic](#). Held at the Players Theater at *115 Macdougall Street*, each week is a different show.
- ❑ [Sleep No More](#) - this choose your own adventure type theatrical experience tells the story of Shakespeare's Macbeth in a totally immersive way. Every experience is different no matter how many times you go. While not magical, this interactive play is certainly mysterious. Set inside The McKittrick Hotel, it has 5 floors of themed rooms with intricately decorated sets. [This writeup](#) of the experience is helpful to read before you go. Note that under 18yrs is not permitted without a ticketed adult. and will reopen post Covid Feb 2022. *530 W. 27th St. - Chelsea*

## [The Sweet Tooth Fanatic](#)

- ❑ [Ring ding bar](#)- Who doesn't love a good 1950's throwback. The Ring Ding Bar was borne out of Duane Park Patisserie located in Tribeca. On any given day it offers an array of inventive Ring Ding flavors from The Classic Chocolate to the popular Rainbow. *179 Duane Street - Tribeca*

- ❑ The [Black Tap shakes](#) and graffiti decorated space were the go-to birthday celebrations for my teens. Sure, we started with the obligatory burger, but the real reason we were there was for the inventive shakes bigger than their heads. While they have expanded a bit to locations in CA and NV, the OG spot remains in Soho. *529 Broome Street.*
- ❑ Open on the lower East Side since 1937, [Economy candy](#) is the oldest candy store in NY. Take a walk down memory lane in this shop stocked chock full of every candy you can dream up. *108 Rivington Street - Lower East Side*
- ❑ [Torly Travels Downtown Cupcake Tour](#) takes you on a search for the best cupcakes through 6 different downtown cupcake shops. Which is your favorite? *Various downtown Manhattan locations.*
- ❑ Have you really visited NYC if you haven't had Frrozen Hot Chocolate at [Serendipity 3](#)? This eclectic little eatery that has been featured in countless movies as the quintessential NYC experience. *225 E. 60th Street. - Upper East Side*
- ❑ [Dominique Ansel Bakery](#) is the mother of all bakeries in NYC and the lines outside confirm it. Best known for his invention of the Cronut in 2013, chef Ansel has not stopped making mouth watering concoctions like the Milk & Cookie Shot, the Frozen S'more or the Blossoming Hot Chocolate. *189 Spring Street - Soho*
- ❑ Bring a little Japanese culture into your life with a stop at [Taiyaki](#) in Chinatown. Baked fish shaped waffles are filled with homemade soft serve ice cream making these adorable treats highly instagrammable. *119 Baxter Street in Chinatown or 294 Bedford Ave in Williamsburg*
- ❑ Located in a 1920's apothecary, [Brooklyn Farmacy & Soda Fountain](#) serves up delectable ice cream sundaes and floats with their own house-made sodas. *513 Henry Street - Carroll Gardens*

## **[The Architecture & Design Guru](#)**

- ❑ The [Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum](#) is America's only design museum. A mecca of interactive historic and contemporary design, this spot is a constant go to for my teens and their friends. *2 E. 91st Street - Upper East Side*

- ❑ Out of the ashes of the World Trade Center, came the tallest building in NYC, [One World Observatory](#). A trip to the top is well worth the time for the lover of tall buildings. Especially the 47 second elevator ride, which guides you through the transformation of the unsettled lands of NYC to today's forest of skyscrapers. It will make you want to go again just to watch it more closely.  
*117 West Street - Battery Park*
- ❑ I'm sure its no surprise that NYC is home to [The Skyscraper Museum](#). For only \$5, this museum is a great way for the architecture enthusiast to learn about the evolution of the NYC skyline and all the forces that go into it. *39 Battery Place - Battery Park*
- ❑ NYC's former main post office, the James A Farley building was wondrously transposed into NYC's newest commuting hub the [Moynihan Train Hall](#) in 2020. While it is the new home for Amtrak, it is worth a visit for the shiny and creative architecture. Don't miss the permanent art exhibits entitled Go (at West 33rd St. entrance), The Hive (at West 31st St. entrance), and Penn Stations Half Century hanging in the waiting area. *421 8th Avenue - Midtown.*
- ❑ [The Center for Architecture](#) aims to further public knowledge about New York City architecture and architects by presenting issues in architecture and urbanism to a general audience. The center is free and open to the public (during non-covid times), and worth a look. They also host the city's month long architecture and design festival Archtober. *536 LaGuardia Place - Greenwich Village.*
- ❑ Lovers of NYC architecture, must have the [Queens Museum](#) on their bucket list. Also lister for lover of NYC history, the gem of this spot is the detailed model of Manhattan. It contains 895,000 tiny buildings and 100 bridges. A walkway surrounds the model and binoculars are set up so you can search for your home/hotel amongst the concrete jungle. *Flushing Meadows Corona Park - Queens*