New York City

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The City of New York, often called New York City or simply New York, is the most populous city in the United States. With an estimated 2016 population of 8,537,673distributed over a land area of about 302.6 square miles (784 km2), New York City is also the most densely populated major city in the United States. Located at the southern tip of the state of New York, the city is the center of the New York metropolitan area, one of the most populous urban agglomerations in the world. A global power city, New York City exerts a significant impact upon commerce, finance, media, art, fashion, research, technology, education, and entertainment, its fast pace defining the term New York minute. Home to the headquarters of the United Nations, New York is an important center for international diplomacy and has been described as the cultural, financial, and media capital of the world.

Situated on one of the world's largest natural harbors, New Yk City consists of five boroughs, each of which is a separate county of New York State. The five boroughs – Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan, The Bronx, and Staten Island – were consolidated into a single city in 1898. The city and its metropolitan area constitute the premier gateway for legal immigration to the United States, and as many as 800 languages are spoken in New York, making it the most linguistically diverse city in the world. New York City is home to more than 3.2 million residents born outside the United States, the world's largest foreign-born population of any city. By 2016 estimates, the New York City metropolitan region remains by a significant margin the most populous in the United States, as defined by both the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), 20.2 million residents, and the Combined Statistical Area (CSA), 23.7 million residents. In 2013, the MSA produced a gross metropolitan product (GMP) of nearly US$1.39 trillion. In 2012, the CSA generated a GMP of over US$1.55 trillion. NYC's MSA and CSA GDP are higher than the GDPs of all but 11 and 12 countries, respectively.

New York City traces its origin to its 1624 founding in Lower Manhattan as a trading post by colonists of the Dutch Republic and was named New Amsterdam in 1626. The city and its surroundings came under English control in 1664 and were renamed New York after King Charles II of England granted the lands to his brother, the Duke of York. New York served as the capital of the United States from 1785 until 1790. It has been the country's largest city since 1790. The Statue of Liberty greeted millions of immigrants as they came to the Americas by ship in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and is a symbol of the United States and its democracy. In the 21st century, New York has emerged as a global node of creativity and entrepreneurship, social tolerance, and environmental sustainability, and as a world symbol of freedom and cultural diversity.

Many districts and landmarks in New York City have become well known, and the city received a record 61 million tourists in 2016, hosting three of the world's ten most visited tourist attractions in 2013. Several sources have ranked New York the most photographed city in the world. Times Square, iconic as the world's "heart" and its "Crossroads", is the brightly illuminated hub of the Broadway Theater District, one of the world's busiest pedestrian intersections, and a major center of the world's entertainment industry. The names of many of the city's bridges, tapered skyscrapers, and parks are known around the world. Anchored by Wall Street in the Financial District of Lower Manhattan, New York City has been called both the most economically powerful city and the leading financial center of the world, and the city is home to the world's two largest stock exchanges by total market capitalization, the New York Stock Exchange and NASDAQ. Manhattan's real estate market is among the most expensive in the world. Manhattan's Chinatown incorporates the highest concentration of Chinese people in the Western Hemisphere, with multiple signature Chinatowns developing across the city. Providing continuous 24/7 service, the New York City Subway is one of the most extensive metro systems worldwide, with 472 stations in operation. Over 120 colleges and universities are located in New York City, including Columbia University, New York University, and Rockefeller University, which have been ranked among the top 35 in the world.

1. Geography

New York City is situated in the Northeastern United States, in southeastern New York State, approximately halfway between Washington, D.C. and Boston. The location at the mouth of the Hudson River, which feeds into a naturally sheltered harbor and then into the Atlantic Ocean, has helped the city grow in significance as a trading port. Most of New York City is built on the three islands of Long Island, Manhattan, and Staten Island.

The Hudson River flows through the Hudson Valley into New York Bay. Between New York City and Troy, New York, the river is an estuary. The Hudson River separates the city from the U.S. state of New Jersey. The East River—a tidal strait—flows from Long Island Sound and separates the Bronx and Manhattan from Long Island. The Harlem River, another tidal strait between the East and Hudson Rivers, separates most of Manhattan from the Bronx. The Bronx River, which flows through the Bronx and Westchester County, is the only entirely fresh water river in the city.

The city's land has been altered substantially by human intervention, with considerable land reclamation along the waterfronts since Dutch colonial times; reclamation is most prominent in Lower Manhattan, with developments such as Battery Park City in the 1970s and 1980s. Some of the natural relief in topography has been evened out, especially in Manhattan.

The city's total area is 468.484 square miles (1,213.37 km2), including 302.643 sq mi (783.84 km2) of land and 165.841 sq mi (429.53 km2) of this is water. The highest point in the city is Todt Hill on Staten Island, which, at 409.8 feet (124.9 m) above sea level, is the highest point on the Eastern Seaboard south of Maine. The summit of the ridge is mostly covered in woodlands as part of the Staten Island Greenbelt.

2. Architecture

New York has architecturally noteworthy buildings in a wide range of styles and from distinct time periods, from the saltbox style Pieter Claesen Wyckoff House in Brooklyn, the oldest section of which dates to 1656, to the modern One World Trade Center, the skyscraper at Ground Zero in Lower Manhattan and the most expensive office tower in the world by construction cost.

Manhattan's skyline, with its many skyscrapers, is universally recognized, and the city has been home to several of the tallest buildings in the world. As of 2011, New York City had 5,937 high-rise buildings, of which 550 completed structures were at least 330 feet (100 m) high, both second in the world after Hong Kong, with over 50 completed skyscrapers taller than 656 feet (200 m). These include the Woolworth Building, an early example of Gothic Revival architecture in skyscraper design, built with massively scaled Gothic detailing; completed in 1913, for 17 years it was the world's tallest building.

The 1916 Zoning Resolution required setbacks in new buildings and restricted towers to a percentage of the lot size, to allow sunlight to reach the streets below. The Art Deco style of the Chrysler Building (1930) and Empire State Building (1931), with their tapered tops and steel spires, reflected the zoning requirements. The buildings have distinctive ornamentation, such as the eagles at the corners of the 61st floor on the Chrysler Building, and are considered some of the finest examples of the Art Deco style. A highly influential example of the international style in the United States is the Seagram Building (1957), distinctive for its façade using visible bronze-toned I-beams to evoke the building's structure. The Condé Nast Building (2000) is a prominent example of green design in American skyscrapers and has received an award from the American Institute of Architects and AIA New York State for its design.

The character of New York's large residential districts is often defined by the elegant brownstone rowhouses and townhouses and shabby tenements that were built during a period of rapid expansion from 1870 to 1930. In contrast, New York City also has neighborhoods that are less densely populated and feature free-standing dwellings. In neighborhoods such as Riverdale (in the Bronx), Ditmas Park (in Brooklyn), and Douglaston (in Queens), large single-family homes are common in various architectural styles such as Tudor Revival and Victorian.

Stone and brick became the city's building materials of choice after the construction of wood-frame houses was limited in the aftermath of the Great Fire of 1835. A distinctive feature of many of the city's buildings is the wooden roof-mounted water towers. In the 1800s, the city required their installation on buildings higher than six stories to prevent the need for excessively high water pressures at lower elevations, which could break municipal water pipes. Garden apartments became popular during the 1920s in outlying areas, such as Jackson Heights.

According to the United States Geological Survey, an updated analysis of seismic hazard in July 2014 revealed a "slightly lower hazard for tall buildings" in New York City than previously assessed. Scientists estimated this lessened risk based upon a lower likelihood than previously thought of slow shaking near the city, which would be more likely to cause damage to taller structures from an earthquake in the vicinity of the city.

3. Parks

The City of New York has a complex park system, with various lands operated by the National Park Service, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation.

In its 2013 ParkScore ranking, the Trust for Public Land reported that the park system in New York City was the second best park system among the 50 most populous US cities, behind the park system of Minneapolis. ParkScore ranks urban park systems by a formula that analyzes median park size, park acres as percent of city area, the percent of city residents within a half-mile of a park, spending of park services per resident, and the number of playgrounds per 10,000 residents.

3.1 National parks

Gateway National Recreation Area contains over 26,000 acres (10,521.83 ha) in total, most of it surrounded by New York City, including the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. In Brooklyn and Queens, the park contains over 9,000 acres (36 km2) of salt marsh, wetlands, islands, and water, including most of Jamaica Bay. Also in Queens, the park includes a significant portion of the western Rockaway Peninsula, most notably Jacob Riis Park and Fort Tilden. In Staten Island, Gateway National Recreation Area includes Fort Wadsworth, with historic pre-Civil War era Battery Weed and Fort Tompkins, and Great Kills Park, with beaches, trails, and a marina.

The Statue of Liberty National Monument and Ellis Island Immigration Museum are managed by the National Park Service and are in both the states of New York and New Jersey. They are joined in the harbor by Governors Island National Monument, in New York. Historic sites under federal management on Manhattan Island include Castle Clinton National Monument; Federal Hall National Memorial; Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace National Historic Site; General Grant National Memorial ("Grant's Tomb"); African Burial Ground National Monument; and Hamilton Grange National Memorial. Hundreds of private properties are listed on the National Register of Historic Places or as a National Historic Landmark such as, for example, the Stonewall Inn, part of the Stonewall National Monument in Greenwich Village, as the catalyst of the modern gay rights movement.

3.2 State parks

There are seven state parks within the confines of New York City, including Clay Pit Ponds State Park Preserve, a natural area that includes extensive riding trails, and Riverbank State Park, a 28-acre (110,000 m2) facility that rises 69 feet (21 m) over the Hudson River.

3.3 City parks

New York City has over 28,000 acres (110 km2) of municipal parkland and 14 miles (23 km) of public beaches. The largest municipal park in the city is Pelham Bay Park in the Bronx, with 2,765 acres (1,119 ha).

Central Park, an 883-acre (3.57 km2) park in middle-upper Manhattan, is the most visited urban park in the United States and one of the most filmed locations in the world, with 40 million visitors in 2013. The park contains a myriad of attractions; there are several lakes and ponds, two ice-skating rinks, the Central Park Zoo, the Central Park Conservatory Garden, and the 106-acre (0.43 km2) Jackie Onassis Reservoir. Indoor attractions include Belvedere Castle with its nature center, the Swedish Cottage Marionette Theater, and the historic Carousel. On October 23, 2012, hedge fund manager John A. Paulson announced a $100 million gift to the Central Park Conservancy, the largest ever monetary donation to New York City's park system.

Washington Square Park is a prominent landmark in the Greenwich Village neighborhood of Lower Manhattan. The Washington Square Arch at the northern gateway to the park is an iconic symbol of both New York University and Greenwich Village.

Prospect Park in Brooklyn has a 90-acre (360,000 m2) meadow, a lake, and extensive woodlands. Within the park is the historic Battle Pass, prominent in the Battle of Long Island.

Flushing Meadows–Corona Park in Queens, with its 897 acres (363 ha) making it the city's fourth largest park, was the setting for the 1939 World's Fair and the 1964 World's Fair and is host to the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center and the annual United States Open Tennis Championships tournament.

Over a fifth of the Bronx's area, 7,000 acres (28 km2), is given over to open space and parks, including Pelham Bay Park, Van Cortlandt Park, the Bronx Zoo, and the New York Botanical Gardens.

In Staten Island, the Conference House Park contains the historic Conference House, site of the only attempt of a peaceful resolution to the American Revolution which was conducted in September 1775, attended by Benjamin Franklin representing the Americans and Lord Howe representing the British Crown. The historic Burial Ridge, the largest Native American burial ground within New York City, is within the park.

4. Population density

In 2015, the city had an estimated population density of 28,053 people per square mile (10,756/km²), rendering it the most densely populated of all municipalities housing over 100,000 residents in the United States, with several small cities (of fewer than 100,000) in adjacent Hudson County, New Jersey having greater density, as per the 2010 Census. Geographically co-extensive with New York County, the borough of Manhattan's 2015 population density of 69,468 inhabitants per square mile (26,822/km2) makes it the highest of any county in the United States and higher than the density of any individual American city.

Historical population

Year Pop. ±%

1970 7,894,862 -

1980 7,071,639 -10.4%

1990 7,322,564 +3.5%

2000 8,008,278 +9.4%

2010 8,175,133 +2.1%

2016 8,537,673 +4.4%