

The
New York Photographer's
Travel Guide

James Maher

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The New York Photographer's Travel Guide:

The Best Places to Photograph from a Professional Photographer, Tour Guide, and Lifelong New Yorker



The New York Photographer's Travel Guide: The Best Places to Photograph from a Professional Photographer, Tour Guide, and Lifelong New Yorker.

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About the Author

If you enjoy this guide, you may be interested in receiving my NY Photo Digest, sent monthly with informational photography articles and tips, new work, and historical essays on both New York and famous photographers:

https://www.jamesmaherphotography.com/join_mailing_list/

I also offer daily private New York photography tours and weekend / weeklong group street photography workshops:

<https://www.jamesmaherphotography.com/workshops/>

Map

To access a Google map with all of the locations mentioned in this book, please use this link, and feel free to share it with others.

<http://bit.ly/2d1bfly>



Part 1

Preparing For Your Trip



Chapter 1

Introduction



New York is a photographer's city. No matter what your interests, there is something here for you to capture, whether it is the sprawling cityscapes, the old sublime architecture, the futuristic steel and glass towers, the natural beauty of Central Park, or the people and fashions on the street.

Millions of tourists flock to New York each year to capture the grand city - 59.7 million in 2015 to be exact. Because of this, it can somehow seem incredibly hard to capture a unique photograph of the city, that is until you turn the corner one day and come across that spectacular moment; then it can seem incredibly easy.

I grew up in New York and have seen it change significantly. I have built up a large archive over the years, exploring in the

rain, the snow, in the brutal heat of summer, and at the late hours of the night. I used to always love to wander the city, and as I got older, the camera became a reason to do it. If I just wandered out of the apartment one night at 11pm to explore, my wife would think I was going crazy. With a camera, walking around at 11pm seems more normal to her and others. I may still be crazy, but at least other people seem to understand it a little better when you have a camera around your neck.

Photography has brought me up to a \$20 million dollar penthouse apartment on Park Avenue and down to the abandoned FDR train under Grant Central Terminal. It has acted as a key to meet all types of people and achieve all types of unique experiences around New York that I otherwise might not have bothered with. It fed my love for the history of New York and led me to become a certified New York tour guide. For the last six years, I have lead photography workshops around New York, where I mix an education of both photography and the history of the city. I feel that both go hand in hand, because you can take a better photograph of New York if you understand both its history and its current happenings. The next time you come to New York, please look me up and I would love to show you around.

This book will explore all of my favorite places to photograph in the city and give you advice about how to photograph here. This is most of what I know. I did not aim to cover every single potential photographic opportunity in New York. I wanted this book to be focused on what I know best, and I wanted it to be able to be read and understood in its entirety on a plane ride. While I'm sure there are many spectacular locations for photography that I have not yet found and never will find, as the city is immense, this is an exhaustive list based on a decade and a half of researching and exploring.

All this being said, save some time to wander and get lost. Veer away from the map occasionally. Sometimes this is when the

best photographs appear. I hope you have a wonderful time photographing here, and I hope this book makes you even more excited to photograph New York.

Chapter 2

Planning and Equipment



Each season in New York is unique. In springtime, the city comes alive, people put on their most colorful outfits, and the weather is gorgeous, if not occasionally rainy. In summer, the city heats up like a furnace, the sun bakes down on the streets, and the New Yorkers with the means to do so flock to cooler areas (don't let this deter you, it is still a great season for photography). In the fall, the weather becomes perfect again, the trees start changing, and everyone returns to the normal grind, but still with enough energy to be out and about. In early winter, the Christmas lights spread out all over the city, the weather is brisk but nice, the occasional snowstorm turns the city into a magical place, hotel prices rise significantly, New Yorkers all switch to their black outfits, and you cannot go anywhere in midtown quickly due to the crowds. In January and

February, the crowds disappear and the city goes quiet due to the brutal cold, but the snowstorms are legendary.

Plan to walk everywhere, but make sure to pace yourself. I know many people who have abused their legs in the first two days and hurt for the rest of the trip. Even going up and down the subway stairs many times a day can add some strain over the course of the week, particularly with a camera and camera bag weighing you down. You should walk as much as you can handle because that's the way we like it here, but make sure to break it up. Spread out the big walking days as much as possible.

Taxis are easy to flag down wherever you go in New York, but I highly suggest downloading a taxi app like Uber or Lyft for your trip, should you be stuck in an area without taxis or at a time where they all seem full. After a long day of walking, this option could be a lifesaver. It is also good to download a New York transit app on your phone. There are many, but I recommend Citymapper and New York Subway. While it depends on where you are going, the subways are usually the fastest way to get around the city, so plan on using them.



Because of the amount of walking, I highly suggest traveling light with your equipment when coming to the city. It can be tempting to bring along a fisheye lens, a wide zoom, a general zoom, a 70-200mm telephoto lens, multiple filters, and every other gadget under the sun, particularly if this is a once in a lifetime trip. However, this can also ruin your trip. Photographing will quickly get old as the equipment will weigh you down, slow you down, hurt your back, and make photography a lot less fun. Pick your favorite two lenses and go with that, if not just your favorite one. A general zoom, such as a 24-70mm or a 24-105mm will cover pretty much everything you need, and the few shots you will miss from not bringing your other lenses will be made up by the fact that you will be able to walk many more miles. Most of the time, I walk around with a 35mm prime or a 50mm prime and that is it, although I love my 24-70mm.

A tripod will be helpful at night in New York, particularly in darker places like Central Park, but keep in mind that they are not allowed in Times Square or in Grand Central Terminal. You can bring a small beanbag or mini tripod with you, which will work in most places. If your camera can perform well at ISO 1600 or 3200, then you can shoot handheld in many areas of New York at night. We will talk more about this later, but you just need to seek out the light sources, whether it be a lamppost, a store window, or a neon sign.

The city looks the most beautiful in the elements, so if you arrive during a rainy week, that may not be a bad thing. I make a point to go out in big snowstorms and in the rain. It is a magical time to see the city when not many other people are adventuring outdoors.

When shooting in the elements, always be safe. Bad weather can be dangerous, both to you and to your equipment, so use your judgment. I have tried many camera weather enclosures, but I have found nothing that works better than the small

pharmacy plastic bags. I will pack my bag with a couple hand towels, four or five plastic bags, gaffers tape, my lens hood, and an umbrella. I will remove the lens hood, poke a hole in the plastic bag, stick my lens through it, use some gaffers tape to keep it on tight, and then attach my lens hood over it. I will still use an umbrella when shooting this way. This is not a perfect solution to keep the water away, so you still have to be very careful to keep your camera from getting wet. In addition, try not to point your lens up to the sky too often as that is when the rain will hit it and you will have to wipe it off. If I have to take a shot pointing up, I will get everything ready first and then raise my camera to take the shot as quickly as possible.



If you are looking for new equipment, B&H Photo Video on 9th Avenue between 33rd and 34th Streets is the place to shop. The block-long store is world-famous and holds every type of toy you could possibly dream of. There is even a conveyor belt system that whisks camera equipment above your head and all over the store. The people who work there are extremely

knowledgeable and will treat you right; they are not just trying to make a sale - if they do not think you should buy something, they will tell you. And if you are looking to purchase your equipment before you head to New York, ordering from www.bhphotovideo.com is the way to go.

You cannot go wrong with many camera companies, including Canon, Olympus, Nikon, and Sony; however, I highly suggest you consider Fuji cameras. In my opinion, Fuji is the camera company of the future. Particularly for travel and street photography, large SLRs can be cumbersome. This is where mirrorless cameras come in, and do not let the APS-C sized sensors deter you. The image quality is basically as good as full-frame sensors (the difference is negligible for most uses). Fuji cameras are sturdy, well-built, and the image and color quality are top class. But most importantly, they are the most ergonomic cameras out there. They are the perfect size, beautiful, and are extremely fun to use. In contrast, while Sony makes incredible camera bodies, they cost much more, and their lenses are usually very large, which leads their mirrorless cameras to often have the heft of an SLR.

My two favorite cameras are the revolutionary Fuji X-T and X100 lines. The X-T line allows you to use interchangeable lenses, while the X100 line has a built in 35mm equivalent lens (although there are 50mm and 28mm equivalent attachments). Purchase a tiny travel camera bag such as the ONA Bowery bag and you will be good to go!

You can see all of my recommended camera and equipment on my [B&H Gear Essentials](#) page.

Chapter 3

General Tips and Safety



New York is as safe as it has been in a very long time. When people think about the dangerous New York of old, they think about the '70s and '80s, but the city has come a long way since then. Any place that an out-of-towner would think of going will most likely be very safe.

That being said, New York is a city, and you need to be smart about how you carry yourself, particularly if you have a lot of equipment and look like a tourist. I carry a camera nearly every day, and I have never had an incident nor have I ever been pick-pocketed. This is something that I do not feel like I have to worry about, but I also keep my stuff with me at all times. If I have expensive equipment in a bag when I sit down to lunch, I make sure that the bag is in front of me and under the table, and I will sometimes stick my leg through the strap. I never leave my equipment unattended. I know New York can be an

overwhelming place and traveling here can be tiring, but try to keep your awareness.

I photograph frequently at night by myself, but if you decide to do this and you don't know the city well, you need to be smart about it. It is always a good thing to bring a friend and stay to areas that you know. Manhattan, in general, will be safe to photograph at night. Even Central Park is safe at night, but if you go very late, you will be in a park without many other people around. If you know your way around that can be fine, but I would suggest sticking to sunset and the hour or two afterward when there are still a lot of people around, as opposed to 11pm or midnight. That goes for the rest of the city as well.

But by far the most dangerous aspect of photographing in the city is due to cars and bikes. When people travel, they are often fatigued, jetlagged, over-stimulated, and excited. Throw a camera into the mix and this can be a dangerous situation. Be extra careful about crossing the streets, backing up suddenly into a person or a biker, swinging into someone, or falling off the curb. Always know where the cars and bikes are coming from. When photographers look through the viewfinder and begin to walk around to find the right perspective, they often have no awareness of where they are walking. So make sure to keep your wits about you.

Chapter 4

Night Photography Tips



New York is spectacular at night. Scenes that might look normal by day come alive at night. The city sparkles, particularly if it is rainy out. I highly suggest you set aside a night to explore. Look up the sunset time on Google and start photographing 45 minutes before it. The next two hours after the sun sets will be beautiful as the sky turns from red to purple to blue to black and as the glow of the building lights get stronger.

A tripod and shutter release are recommended for night photography, particularly if you are doing urban landscapes, but I also love to shoot handheld at night, so I would consider doing one night with a tripod and one night walking around handheld with your camera at a high ISO. There are so many lights and bright window displays around the city that you just need to seek out the light sources. Find lampposts or window

signs and get close to them. Wait until interesting people walk by and use those light sources to illuminate your subjects. This method of photography can create some very moody images, and the colors come alive based on the color temperature of the lights.

Some of my favorite locations to photograph at night are midtown (particularly the 42nd Street stretch), the Manhattan and Brooklyn bridges and the Brooklyn waterfront, Central Park, Top of the Rock, Chinatown, SoHo, and Washington Square Park.



Chapter 5

Street Photography Tips



New York is an unparalleled place to learn and practice street photography. If you do not know what street photography is, there are many definitions, but it is basically candid photography of people in public. I know some of you might think that is a little creepy, and it might be, but it is an important art form. Think about the old photographs of New York that you love. How many of them showed people? Most likely it is a lot of them.

This type of photography captures the culture and street life of the city and preserves it. One day it will be historic. Many of the buildings will stay the same, but photographs with people and culture in them will age in such an interesting way.

While some think that it is the skyline and architecture that makes New York what it is, that is not true. The people of New

York are even more interesting than the buildings. On the streets, no matter where you are, you can see a melting pot of all types of people going on their daily grind. From hot dog vendors, to recent immigrants, to flâneurs, to Wall Street brokers, to some of the richest people in the world, you can come across anyone standing on a street corner.

In some places around the world, such as France and Germany, street photography is not legal without permission. In more places than not, however, it is legal, but always check the local laws when traveling. Street photography in New York is legal and you can use the photographs for artistic purposes. You can sell prints of them or use them to illustrate the city, but you cannot use them for any advertising or commercial purposes without a model release.

In addition, New York is one of the easiest places in the world to learn street photography. There is so much hustle and bustle that everyone gets lost in the crowd. There are photographers and tourists everywhere, taking photographs of everything. You will be much more invisible out there than you might think, so be confident.



Pick busy street corners to hang out on and people watch. No matter if you are walking around or waiting in place, the same amount of extraordinary people and moments will pass you by. However, if you are standing in place and waiting for them to appear, it will be easier to notice and catch them. If you are nervous about trying street photography, it is even more important to pick your spot in a busy intersection. When you stand on a street corner with your camera ready, your subjects are entering your personal space, instead of you entering their space, so it makes the transaction much easier. Most people will walk by you without giving a thought.

I try whenever possible to not let people know that I have taken their photograph. This is because I want to keep things candid and not have everyone stop me to talk. My biggest tip for not being noticed is to watch out for your camera snap. A camera snap is the moment that you take the camera away from your eye after you take a photo. This is the action that tips people off that you have taken their photograph, and it is something that nearly everyone does. If you stop doing this and keep the camera up to your eye after you have taken a photograph, people will just think that they got in your way and will keep walking through your scene. Similarly, for areas that are not as busy, I will often aim the camera above a person or to the side of them as if I am taking a photograph of a building. Then, at the last second, I will make it look like I am putting my camera down, where I will take a quick photo of them before moving on.

If someone does notice you, be honest. Smile and shake their hand. Tell them that you are doing a project on the people and culture of New York, and you thought they looked fabulous. Flattery works great. Offer to send them the photograph. Apologize if they continue to seem annoyed, offer to delete it, and tell them that you did not mean to make them uncomfortable. If you are in a public place, it is legal, but it is best not to bring this up unless completely necessary. That will

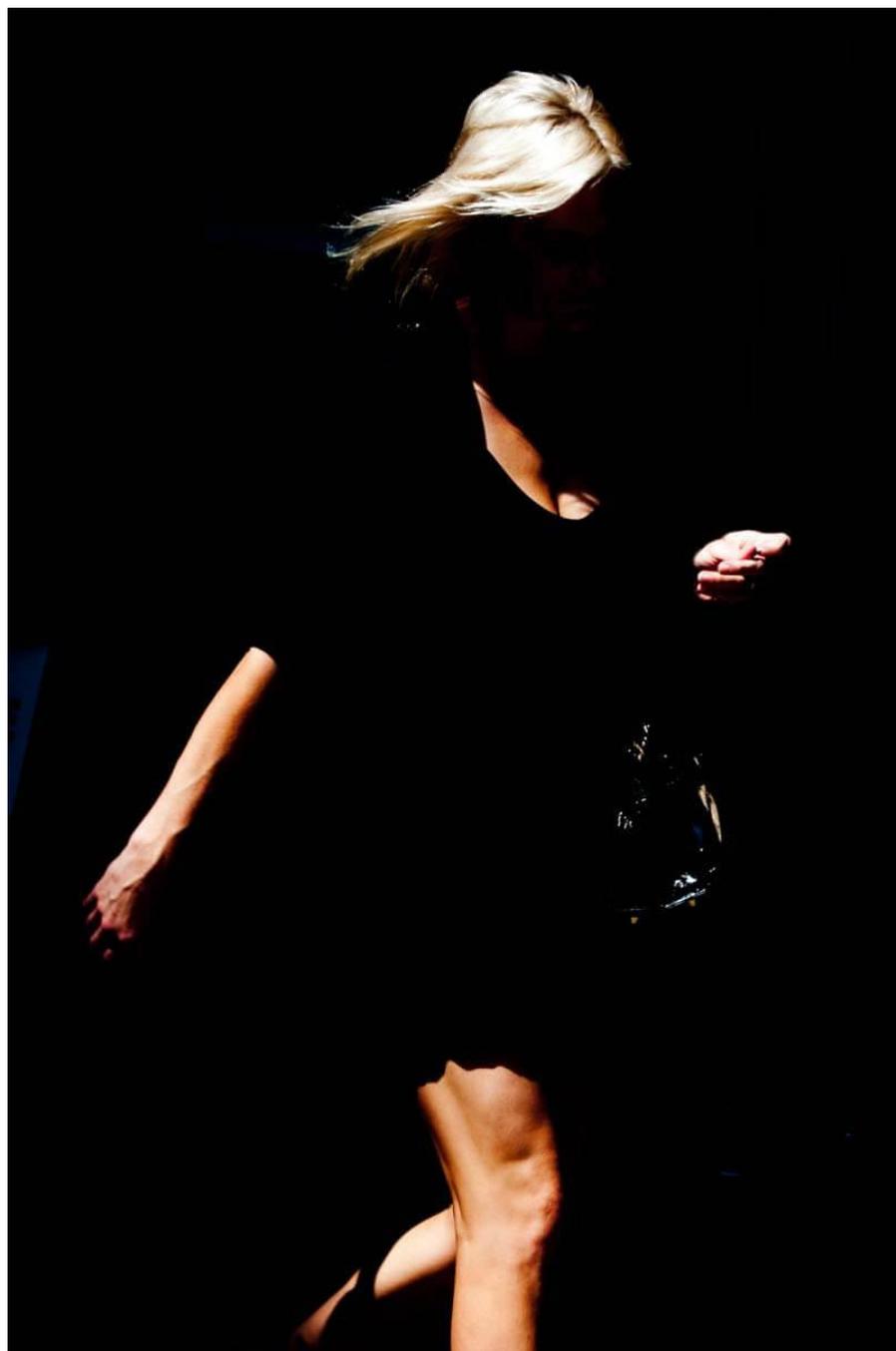
just make the subject angry. Also, keep in mind that public places do not include businesses or on private property, although many street photographers do photograph in these situations.

For your camera, the most important setting to pay attention to is your shutter speed. Your shutter speed should be at least 1/250th of a second to freeze the motion in people. If it is dark out, you can go slower, to 1/160th or 1/125th, and in harsh sunlight, you can go higher than 1/250th.

It is also a good idea to raise your ISO. How much depends on your camera. With my professional level camera, I usually shoot at ISO 200-400 in sunlight, ISO 800 in light shade, ISO 1600 in dark shade or at dusk, and ISO 3200 or 6400 at night. The reason for this is that the higher ISOs allow you to use a faster shutter speed to freeze motion in people and also a smaller aperture (a larger numbered aperture, such as F8, F11, or F16) so that more of the scene is sharp and so that you do not screw up the focus on the main subject. At night, no matter what you do, you will usually be stuck using a very large aperture, such as F2.8 or F4.

Many famous street photographers have had their favorite corners. Bill Cunningham of the New York Times Style Section fame and Garry Winogrand, one of the most famous street photographers of all time, spent much of their lives photographing on 5th Avenue. The avenue is wide and lets in a lot of light, and it is one of the busiest stretches of the city. The city even renamed the corner of 57th and 5th after Bill Cunningham, after he passed away in 2016.

My favorite areas for street photography are 5th Avenue in the 50s and 40s, SoHo and particularly the corner of Prince and Broadway, the East Village, the Lower East Side, Chinatown, Coney Island, anywhere in Midtown, Bushwick, Williamsburg, and of course the subway system.



Part 2

Best Photography Locations



Chapter 6

Central Park



No trip to New York is complete without a trip to the most famous park in the world. Central Park was designed by landscape architect and writer Frederick Law Olmsted and by English architect Calvert Vaux, or as they are commonly called Olmsted and Vaux. Opened to the public in 1858, the park has functioned as both a respite from the daily grind for New Yorkers, and as a tourist destination for tens of millions from around the world.

Unless it is overcast, for the best light (and fewer people) the best times to visit the park are in the early morning and an hour before sunset and into dusk. It is great to visit the park during a light rain when the ground shimmers and the colors pop. If you visit on a weekend, there will be many more people out and about, particularly in the warmer months.

Central Park is wonderful in all seasons. In winter, the leaves fall off the trees and you can see through them to the lights of the buildings surrounding the park. If you are lucky to visit in the middle of a snowstorm, the park turns into a Disney-like fairytale. In spring, the trees sprout, the park smells amazing, and people flock from all over in celebration. In summer, the trees provide shade and the surrounding buildings disappear, making you feel like you are lost in the woods. Thousands of people sunbathe and play Frisbee in Sheep Meadow. And you know what happens in fall. The trees turn all types of gorgeous colors, and every inch of the park is photogenic.



“[Central Park] is the most important work of American art of the 19th century,” Sara Cedar Miller said. Everywhere you look, it feels like you are staring at a painting, and it is shocking to realize that you actually are. Central Park is a real life painting with every vista planned and created. The original map of what was called the Greensward Plan is located in the Central Park Arsenal, and it is 3-feet by 8-feet and made in pen and ink.

My suggested photography walk through the park will take you a couple hours, depending on your pace. You can go at any

time, but I suggest starting an hour before sunset and bringing a tripod for when it gets darker. Bring a map of the park, and GPS on your phone will be very helpful. Enter at the entrance to the park on the corner of 67th Street and 5th Avenue. As you walk in, the Treehouse will appear on your right, which is built on a huge piece of Manhattan Schist, the hard bedrock that makes it much easier to construct tall skyscrapers. Walk onto the rocks to the side of the structure, and be careful of your step. You will have a grand view of the park and Central Park south. The tall skinny building in the middle is named One57, whose penthouse sold for over \$100 million to an unnamed person or company.

Head down from the Treehouse the way you came, and walk west to the Mall, the southern end of which is called Literary Walk. Surrounded by rows of American Elm trees, which form a canopy, this is the most important horticultural feature in the park. It is also one of the last remaining stretches of American Elm trees in North America.



Walk north through the Mall until you reach Bethesda Terrace. Do not go down the middle steps; instead, enter from the top on either side to see it from above. This is the heart of Central Park, where everything leads. Go under the terrace and photograph the arch, then photograph Bethesda Fountain, which depicts a winged angel with four four-foot cherubs representing temperance, purity, health, and peace. Go to the water and see the Loeb Boathouse in the distance, then walk on the path to your right. Halfway along the path and to your left you will see a gorgeous view of the Lake. If you are visiting during the warmer months and during the day, you can walk the rest of this path to the Boathouse to rent a rowboat for an hour to explore the Lake. This is my favorite thing to do in all of New York.



Otherwise, walk back the way you came to Bethesda Terrace and take the path on the opposite side that goes to the northwest. This will lead you to the cast-iron Bow Bridge, the most famous structure in the Park. Hop over the fence on the left to photograph it, then cross the bridge and take the path to your right to capture the bridge from the other side.

From here, walk back south the way you came, through Bethesda Terrace and to the Mall. When you come to the Mall head to your right towards Sheep Meadow. During the day, you can walk into the middle of Sheep Meadow to get a grand view of the buildings on Central Park south. It looks almost as if the city was cut like a slice of cake. If it is evening and Sheep Meadow is closed, walk halfway along the northern end of the fence until you can see the lights peering at you from above 42nd Street. This view is very special at dusk and night, and it is one of my favorite photographs of the city. A tripod that reaches fairly high is necessary as the fence is tall. From here, walk back the way you came to the Mall, and then walk south on your way out of the park. On your way out, you will pass Gapstow Bridge and the Pond, and occasionally at night you will see groups of people playing Pokémon Go.



Chapter 7

Midtown and 42nd Street



Wandering past the old buildings and new architecture of Midtown is a great way to explore New York, and there is not a more crowded place anywhere in the city. My favorite walk is east to west on 42nd Street, starting at the Chrysler Building (make sure to walk into the lobby), to Grand Central Terminal, to the New York Public Library, to Bryant Park, with views of the American Standard Radiator Building and the Empire State Building, and then ending in Times Square. This is a wonderful walk to do after sunset and into the evening.



If you visit during the day, take some time to see the New York Public Library. The library will usually have an exhibit of some sort and old photographs of the city shown throughout the second floor. The interior of the structure is awe-inspiring. Do not forget to walk into the historic Rose Main Reading Room and the Bill Blass Public Catalog Room, which house stunning ceiling frescoes.



Make sure to explore the interior of Grand Central. Unfortunately, they do not allow tripods, although you can contact them to try and reserve a three-hour time slot to use one, but you must do this at least two weeks before. There are two ledges on each side of the terminal where you can rest your camera to photograph the interior and the crowds. Hold your camera strap to avoid dropping it below, and a small beanbag can help you steady the camera to get the shot you want. Use a slow shutter speed of around 4 seconds to capture the motion in the crowd. Snap a lot of these shots to make sure you capture the right mix of people moving.





5th Avenue is a mecca for shopping and street photography. Walk the length of it in the 40s and 50s, and stop on occasional street corners for people watching and street photography. You will see people from all over the world and all types of New Yorkers, including some very well-to-do people. Some great and not-so-great fashions will pass you by.



Visit Rockefeller Center between 49th and 50th Streets, and go to Top of the Rock. Top of the Rock is stunning at most times, but I highly suggest it at sunset and dusk. Go early to snag a spot to rest your camera on as people can be aggressive and you are not allowed to bring tripods up there. Across the street between 50th and 51st is St. Patrick's Cathedral, and if you walk one block west to 6th Avenue you will see Radio City Music Hall. In winter, make sure to walk the stretch of 5th Avenue between 50th and 58th to see all of the famous holiday window displays. Bergdorf Goodman has the premier windows.

Walking east to west on 34th Street is also a great walk due to the sheer amount of people you will encounter. Start on Park Avenue to see both a long view of Grand Central to the north and the Empire State Building to the west. Walk west past the Empire State Building and take a detour through Herald Square to the corner of Broadway and 32nd Street for one of the best views of the skyscraper. Walk back to 34th Street to see Macy's and the incredible crowds of people outside. Continue west while shooting some street photography until you get to your final destination, B&H Photo Video. Explore the mecca of photography, a mammoth block of a store, and try not to spend all of your travel money.





Chapter 8

Two Bridges and Brooklyn Waterfront



Walking the Manhattan Bridge, the Brooklyn waterfront, and the Brooklyn Bridge is one of the most spectacular walks in the city. You can do this at any time, but I highly suggest starting 45 minutes before sunset or sunrise. The walk can take anywhere from two to four hours depending on your pace and if you decide to see everything mentioned here. If you do not have the energy for the entire route, I suggest doing the Manhattan Bridge and Brooklyn waterfront and then taking a taxi from there back into Manhattan. Taxis are very easy to find by the waterfront. This area is safe to photograph at night, but as always be careful, and it can't hurt to bring a friend. A tripod will be necessary at night.

Start on the Manhattan side of the Manhattan Bridge, and take the path on the right (the south) side. Keep an eye out for the occasional bicyclist, and make sure not to suddenly step backward without looking as you might clip one coming by. There are grates along the bridge that can block a clear view

for your lens. The lenses on mirrorless cameras should fit through the grates, but for SLRs and larger lenses, if you kneel down, you can fit your lens easily through the large openings below the grate. This will allow you to photograph everything without a blocked view, but be careful and make sure to look up before you stand up, as you do not want to impale your head on the bottom of the grate. It could potentially cut you.



As you walk the bridge, you will see the old tenement buildings of the Lower East Side and Chinatown, wonderful street life below, and the grand skyscrapers of the Financial District in the background. Keep an eye out for the graffiti, as it is one of the best graffiti walks in the city. At the halfway point of the bridge, you will have one of the best views of the Brooklyn Bridge in the city. This is one of my favorite spots in all of New York since you have such an iconic view, but it does not have the tourist traffic that the Brooklyn Bridge gets. Often you are alone there or only near a few people. Walk the remainder of the bridge stopping in a few spots as the light continues to change. At your the first opportunity, walk down to the street from the bridge.



From here, you will want to head south towards the waterfront and west a few blocks. Be careful crossing the street here and use the bridge as your guide to lead to the waterfront. GPS can be valuable, but it is only about an eight or nine block walk. Make your way over to Washington Street and Front Street, where you will see the iconic view of the Empire State Building through the legs of the Manhattan Bridge from the middle of the street.





Walk towards the water on Washington Street and into Main Street Park, where there is a tiny beach with some of the best skyline views in the city. It should take a couple hours to get to this point and you will have covered a majority of the best views, so you may be tired and want to catch a taxi, but if you want to keep going there is more to see.

Walk along the waterfront, past Jane's Carousel and towards the Brooklyn Bridge. From here, you can head directly to the Brooklyn Bridge or you can take a detour under the Brooklyn Bridge towards Pier 1 in Brooklyn Bridge Park. You can walk along the water on Pier 1 but a more direct route will be to walk straight instead of going around the edge. Once you get to the far side of Pier 1, head to the water and you will see the iconic view of the old rotted pier poles with the Manhattan skyline behind them. After, walk back the way you came to old Fulton Street.



You will want to walk along the bridge to the corner of Prospect Street and Washington Street, where the entrance to the Brooklyn Bridge is. It should be a five block walk, give or take. Walk the length of the Brooklyn Bridge towards Manhattan and be careful to stay in the pedestrian lane. The pedestrian path is very narrow on the bridge and bicyclists go very fast, so it is easy to get into an accident. Look before you make any sudden lateral moves. If you decide to use a tripod on the bridge, particularly at night, be extremely careful. Tripod legs splay outward and bicyclists cannot see the bottom part of the legs, so they can easily trip over it and hurt themselves. Stay to the pedestrian side and do not splay the legs out all the way. Make sure the width of the legs is not larger than the width of your body, so the bicyclists can correctly judge where they can safely pass you.

After you cross the bridge into Manhattan, you will be next to the gorgeous Manhattan Municipal Building. The 6 Train is right here to take you back uptown.

Chapter 9

SoHo and Greene Street



Second to only 5th Avenue in commercial rent prices, SoHo, which stands for South of Houston, is one of the unique neighborhoods in New York. Once a manufacturing area filled with factories and sweatshops, the neighborhood is covered in the best cast-iron architecture in the world. Built around the 1850s, these buildings included the Little Singer Sewing Machine company and the Silk Exchange building in the heart of the old silk district. In fact, one of the main reasons that so many immigrants moved to the Lower East Side was because of its proximity to the jobs in SoHo.



On the corner of Broadway and Broome is the E.V. Haughwout Building, a five-story structure covered on both sides with a gorgeous cast-iron exterior. Despite only being five-stories tall, this building is often considered to be the birth of the skyscraper. Because it fronted two streets, it was the first building at the time to have two cast-iron facades, the weight of which could have brought down the building. To avoid this, they decided to use the strength of the cast-iron to support the building, so they installed a structural metal frame, which was the first step towards the steel-framed skyscrapers of the early 20th century. The building also had the first successful passenger elevator, the Otis, built in 1857. The cost of the elevator was smartly negated by the fanfare that brought people into the building and its shops.



The neighborhood remained a manufacturing district until the '70s and '80s, when the city went into a significant depression. As people moved out of the city and danger and drugs moved in, many of the business and factories followed, leaving huge empty spaces in SoHo. These would turn into the artist lofts that are so romantically depicted in old New York. The city became cheaper, and artists and creatives flocked to it from all over the world, living illegally in their loft workspaces. From there, many galleries popped up, the most successful of which still remain today.

Over the last 30 years, the area has transformed from making clothing to selling it, and within the bustling Broadway and the quiet side streets are a who's who of international luxury brands. These days, there are \$10 million apartments next to old artists living in \$250 a month rent controlled apartments.



I suggest wandering around and getting lost in SoHo with your camera, but two places of note are the corner of Prince Street and Broadway, which is my favorite location for street photography in the entire city, and the five-block walk of

Greene Street, which has the most incredible stretch of cast-iron in the world. Make sure to visit Greene Street between Grand Street and Canal, which is the best block of Greene Street. Between the most fashionable people in the city, the sleek window displays of the most famous luxury brands, and the cast-iron architecture, this is one of the best and most unique neighborhoods in New York for photography.



Chapter 10

East Village and Lower East Side



The East Village and Lower East Side were once the centers of immigrant life in New York. As the city went into a depression in the '70s and immigrants and other ethnic groups moved to different areas of the city, such as Little Italy, both neighborhoods declined.

They became the center for the drug trade in New York. Many of the tenement buildings were left abandoned, and the drug dealers moved in. Buildings were frequently burned down by their owners for the insurance money, and much of the neighborhood went up in flames. However, while there were not many police officers patrolling the streets, the drug dealers kept an eye out for the people who lived in the area. They kept the area as safe as they could because they did not want reasons for the police to come in. Thus, many old-timers talk about the drug dealers looking out for them and keeping their block safe.

Due to all of these factors, the neighborhood was cheap, and so artists, creatives, people moving to New York from all over the world, and anyone without much money moved here. The Punk Rock movement, a musical and artistic form based on a distrust of authority, little money, and a lot of free time, sprouted out of a small country, bluegrass, and blues bar on the Bowery named CBGB. Despite the living conditions, this was a time in New York where creatives could live cheaply and still have a lot of free time to produce their art. From the rubble of burned down buildings bloomed dozens of lot-sized community gardens, built by hand from the residents that lived in the neighborhood. The community gardens of note are La Plaza Cultural, 6BC Botanical Garden, and the 9th Street Community Garden Park.

Since the '80s, both neighborhoods have progressively become more gentrified, and it now has a mix of old punk rockers, new yuppies, eclectic people, NYU students, and people from all over the world. The neighborhoods have some of the best restaurants as well as the most bars and clubs in the city. It is the center of nightlife in New York, whether or not the residents that live there like it. Street art now covers both the East Village and especially the Lower East Side.





In the East Village, St. Marks Place is one of the most vibrant streets in the New York, and it is fantastic for street photography and people watching. 2nd Avenue, 1st Avenue, Avenue A, and Avenue B will have the most interesting street life to capture. In May, the Loisaida festival on Avenue C is one of the best festivals in New York to photograph and people watch. On 3rd Street between 1st and 2nd Avenues is the Hells Angels headquarters. Walk by and take a glance, but be very respectful and keep your distance. Visit the community gardens, and also make sure to visit Tompkins Square Park, the site of the famous Tompkins Square Park riots.

Walk to the Bowery and head into the John Varvatos clothing store between 1st and 2nd Streets. This store, which now sadly sells \$3,000 punk rock inspired blazers, was once the site of CBGB, the famous club that punk rock sprouted out of, and hosted bands such as the Ramones, Blondie, Television, The Patti Smith Group, Talking Heads, and the Dead Boys. Many of the old walls have been preserved, and framed photographs from the era dot the walls. If you have an affinity for punk rock, this is a must see. Finally, if you are a basketball fan, head to

Houston Street, and walk two blocks east to Sara D. Roosevelt Park, where you can photograph and watch some very competitive pickup games.



On the Lower East Side, pop into Russ & Daughters and Katz' Deli on Houston Street to people watch and eat. Russ & Daughters' famous meal is a bialy with lox and cream cheese, while Katz' is famous for pastrami on rye and the movie *When Harry Met Sally*. Wander down Orchard, Ludlow, and Essex Streets. Both the East Village and Lower East Side will have gorgeous old tenement buildings, with carved stone facades and beautiful fire escapes. The best fire escapes in the neighborhood can be seen on the corner of Broome and Orchard. Half a block away on Orchard is the Tenement Museum, with its great New York-centric bookstore. Galleries now litter the Lower East Side, and their frequency is only increasing as they are priced out of Chelsea. It is a lot of fun to explore the ever changing exhibits.



The nightlife in both neighborhoods is vibrant, to say the least, and special to photograph. Please be safe, go photographing with a friend, and stay in the busy areas. There is no need to wander to areas with no people. I suggest staying on 2nd Avenue, 1st Avenue, and Avenue A in the East Village, and photographing on the corner of Stanton and Ludlow, nicknamed Hell Square by neighbors, on the Lower East Side.



Chapter 11

Chinatown, Little Italy, and Nolita

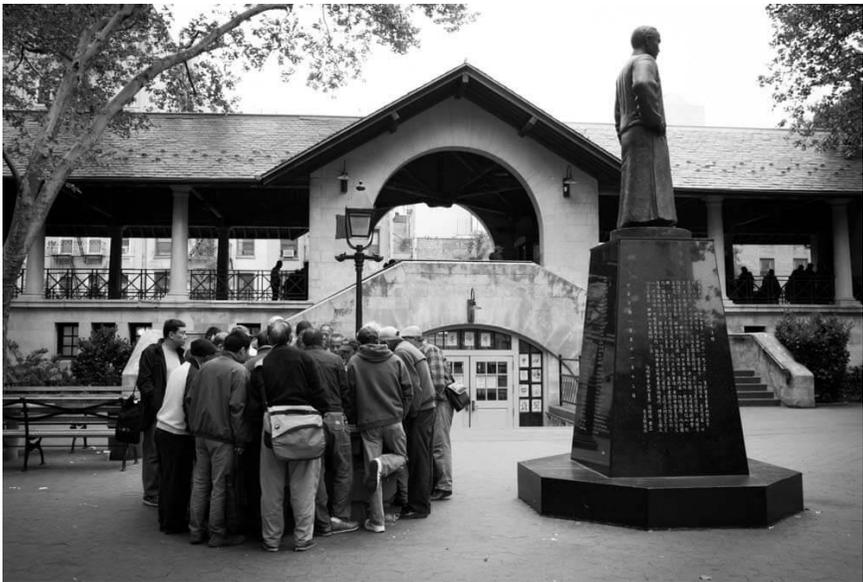


Manhattan's Chinatown neighborhood is home to an estimated population of 90,000 to 100,000 people, and it holds the largest group of Chinese people in the Western Hemisphere. Chinatown began around the late 1800s on Mott, Mosco, Pell, and Doyers streets, just east of the notorious Five Points district.

Begin in Columbus Park, named for Christopher Columbus and built on what was once the center of the Five Points neighborhood, one of the most dangerous immigrant ghettos and made famous by the film *Gangs of New York*. Now it is a park where mostly Chinese people gather to hang out, play Chinese chess, and gamble on Chinese blackjack and Chinese poker. Besides the coldest days of winter and during dinnertime, people will be here playing games whenever you come. It is crowded on most days, but on weekends it will be packed. Outside of the main enclosure, there will be many people

surrounding the chess tables and watching the chess players. Get close and watch. It is usually okay to take photos here politely of the tables with men. The tables with women do not like it as much.

Go into the enclosure and watch the gamblers. I suggest not taking photos here unless the situation is right. Everyone is nice and lots of tourists visit, but they usually have a quick eye towards people photographing. A good way to take a photo here is to sit away from it all on one of the ends for a while and to take a photo of the entire enclosure with everyone playing.





Leave the park and walk east to Mott Street, noticing the carved stone tenement buildings and the ornate fire escapes. On Mott Street is Shanghai Asian Manor, one of the best restaurants in Chinatown with the best soup dumplings. Walk half a block on Mott to Pell Street and then on Pell until you see the curved alleyway that is Doyers Street. Doyers Street is also known as “the Bloody Angle” due to the frequent killings among the Tong Gangs in Chinatown that lasted into the ‘30s. Law enforcement officials have said that more people have died violently on this street than on any other intersection in the U.S. On Doyers street is the Nom Wah Tea Parlor, opened in 1927 and the oldest dim sum parlor in New York. However, if you want dim sum, walk a couple blocks to Elizabeth between Canal and Bayard to Jing Fong, a huge dim sum parlor that feeds thousands of people in a fabulously chaotic atmosphere every weekend. Just make sure you get there before 1pm. On the Bowery by Canal Street is the entrance to the Manhattan Bridge pedestrian path.



Walk a few more blocks to Mott Street between Hester and Grand, which is the main market street in Chinatown. The street is bustling all day until dinnertime. Take your time walking up and down both sides of the street, photographing both the people and the stands. There is a huge variety of food sold here, a significant amount of which I have never heard of. Try some of the dragon's eye fruit. I promise it is delicious!

If you notice on the map, technically you are now in Little Italy. While it may be called Little Italy on the map, most of the Italians have moved away over the last 30 years, and much of Little Italy is now pretty much Chinatown. What is left is a five-block stretch on Mulberry Street that has become fairly touristy. Unfortunately, many of the restaurants (not all) have followed suit and the quality of the food has deteriorated.



That does not mean it is not worth seeing. Head west on Grand Street and you will see Ferrara Bakery. While this bakery is now popular for its baked goods, that was not always the case. Many of these shops used to make their money from illegal gambling and activities in the back, and the baked goods would be a 'come-on' to keep people there and happy.

On the corner of Grand and Mulberry is the Italian American Museum with many old photographs from the neighborhood. Make a left on Mulberry Street and explore for two blocks to Canal Street as Italian men try to convince you to have lunch at their establishments. These are the two most beautiful blocks in Little Italy, and the most important aspect to pay attention to is the architecture of the detailed tenement buildings. While some of the restaurants have sold out, the buildings are still the real deal. Halfway between Hester and Canal is an empty alley, which houses gorgeous street art from many famous artists.

If you are in the mood to shop, turn around completely and walk north on Mulberry Street for five blocks to the neighborhood called Nolita, which stands for North of Little Italy. This

neighborhood has some wonderful shopping from all types of clothing stores.

Make a right on Spring Street and walk a block, and you will see Lombardi's Pizza. While they have very good pizza, it is not usually worth the long wait of tourists, but it is good. Make a left and halfway between Elizabeth and Prince Street will be the Elizabeth Street Garden, filled to the brim with old statues, busts, and people eating lunch. Make a left on Prince Street and walk for two blocks, where you will see St. Patrick's Old Cathedral, which has underground crypts that are home to many well-known New Yorkers. From here, if you have an interest at looking at some photography, the new International Center for Photography museum is two blocks east on the Bowery between Houston and Prince Streets.

Chapter 12

West Village and Washington Square Park



Old beautiful houses are the name of the game in the Village. Start the day with a drink and a photograph at the old Whitehorse Tavern on 11th Street and Hudson Street, one of the last remaining gathering places for writers and artists in the Village heyday of the '50s and '60s, and where Dylan Thomas famously drank before becoming ill and dying a few days later.

Walk two blocks south and one block west to 121 Charles St, where a 200-year-old farmhouse stands. The farmhouse originated on the Upper East Side and was moved to this location to save it from demolition. Walk south and one block east to Bedford Street, where you will come across a rare wooden building at 17 Grove Street, built in 1822 and one of the oldest buildings in the Village. Around the corner is Grove

Court, one of the most special places in New York. Hidden behind a private gate is a row of six brick-faced three-story townhouses with an ivy patch of land in front. These buildings were originally built as back-houses, to house tradesmen and laborers. Now they are worth millions.



Walk south on Bedford Street to Commerce Street, where you will see the Cherry Lane Theatre, housed in a farm silo building that dates back to 1817. On the corner of Commerce and Bedford (77 Bedford) is the Isaacs-Hendricks House, which dates back to 1799, four years younger than the oldest house in the Village. Next door at 75 and 1/2 Bedford is one of the narrowest houses in the city at nine and a half feet wide, dating back to 1873.

Head north on 7th Avenue and make a right on Christopher Street, where you will see the famous Stonewall Inn of the Stonewall riots fame. Continue walking east on Christopher Street where you will see a strange triangular building called the Northern Dispensary. This building was built in 1831 for the

purpose of providing medical services, and Edgar Allen Poe was famously treated there. Once you arrive at 6th Avenue, you will see the Jefferson Market Library at 10th Street. Head one block East on 9th street and you will see some incredible townhouses along the way.



Make a right on 5th Avenue and walk south towards Washington Square Park. Half a block before you get there is the Washington Mews, a hidden side street of tiny old townhouses that follow the path of an old Lenape trail, which connected the Hudson and East Rivers. It originally functioned as a row of stables (a mews) that serviced horses owned by homes in the area. Finally, enter Washington Square Park and take some time to photograph people and relax on the benches. Often there will be musicians playing and other performers. Make sure to get the photograph of the Empire State Building through the space in the Washington Square Arch.



Chapter 13

City Hall District



The City Hall District in Manhattan is a tiny area with some of the most intricate and gorgeous old architecture in the city. Begin in Foley Square, where you will see the New York Supreme Court building and the Thurgood Marshall Courthouse. If you are a fan of New York crime or court shows, such as *Law and Order*, you will undoubtedly notice the court steps of both buildings, which are two of the most filmed on locations in the city.

Walk south towards the giant Manhattan Municipal Building, built in 1914 as a way to create much needed city office space that could not be provided by the relatively tiny City Hall a few blocks away. Designed by the architecture firm McKim, Mead & White, the Municipal Building is one of the most beautiful structures in New York that nobody talks about. The building

has a European style to it, which seems to have been the city's way of showing off that they were on par with cities such as London or Paris. At its very tip is a 25-foot golden copper statue titled Civic Fame, which represents the consolidation of the boroughs of New York coming together in 1898. Down below is a gorgeous columned base, with a Roman-style central arch, which once allowed pedestrian traffic through it. Over to the south side is a stunning arcade with Guastavino tiled curved ceilings, which cover the entrance to the City Hall subway station. It is here that you can take the 6 train past the last stop to see the old abandoned City Hall Subway station, which we will talk about later.





Walk a block west on Chambers Street to see the Surrogate's Court building and the Tweed Courthouse. Then walk back to Centre Street and head south to Park Row, although keep in

mind that the entrance to the Brooklyn Bridge pedestrian path is here as well, should you prefer to do that. Here you will see the Woolworth Building, the tallest building in the world in 1913 and nicknamed the Cathedral of Commerce. In my book, the Woolworth building is neck and neck with the Chrysler Building for the most beautiful architecture in New York. In City Hall Park, you will see City Hall and the Jacob Mould Fountain, which has a great view of the top of the Manhattan Municipal Building.



Chapter 14

Flatiron District and Madison Square Park



The Flatiron Building is one of the most famous structures in New York and one of the most photographed in the world. At only 22 stories, there is a myth that the Flatiron was the tallest in the world at one point, but that was never the case.

Standing in front of Eataly at 5th Avenue and 23rd Street is a 1909 cast-iron street clock, which you can photograph with the Flatiron building behind. Head to Madison Square Park for some Shake Shack and further views of the Flatiron building. Nearby is the Met Life Tower, the world's tallest building until 1913, when the Woolworth Building surpassed it. The Tower has four clocks, one on each side, and a gilded cupola at the top, which serves as an eternal light, never going off. The

Metropolitan Life Insurance Company advertised the light for many years with the slogan, "The Light That Never Fails."

Two blocks north is the full-block NY Life building, designed by Cass Gilbert of Woolworth Building fame, with gothic details and a gold pyramid at the top consisting of 25,000 gold-leaf tiles. From here, head back over to 5th Avenue, where you will have a spectacular view of the Empire State Building.

Chapter 15

Subway System



The subway system is one of the best places in New York to people watch and shoot street photography. Because you are enclosed in a confined area, many are intimidated by photographing people in the subway, but if you can get over this fear, it is very rewarding, and there is a lot to see. For inspiration, check out the work of Bruce Davidson's Subway book on the Internet, and the book itself is a great addition to any street photography enthusiast's collection.

Get comfortable by photographing in the busier stations and at busier times so that you are not noticed. Cameras with silent shutters are big helps as well. The 42nd Street Times Square station, the S Shuttle train, and the Grand Central Station are fantastic places to start.



For great views, consider taking the N, Q trains to Coney Island, where the elevated tracks in Brooklyn give you a unique view of the borough. Even better elevated views are seen from the 7 train as it heads out to Queens. Take the 7 train to the Queensboro Plaza station before heading back, getting off at a couple stations along the way to photograph the views.

Chapter 16

East River Ferry, Water Taxis, Tour Boats, and Staten Island Ferry



By water is the only way to see New York! Hire a Circle Line cruise around Manhattan, either during the day or at sunset. Take the East River Ferry at the pier at 35th Street and FDR as it makes stops south all the way to Dumbo. Take the Water Taxi from Pier 79 on west 39th Street and the Hudson River and head towards Dumbo, or if you are in need of furniture, stop at the IKEA stop in Red Hook Brooklyn. If you are really ambitious, get a water housing for your camera, and rent some jet skis!

Take the free Staten Island Ferry back and forth, with views of the Statue of Liberty. The trip is especially nice at sunset. The ferry runs 24 hours a day, seven days a week and travels between the Whitehall Ferry Terminal (also known as South

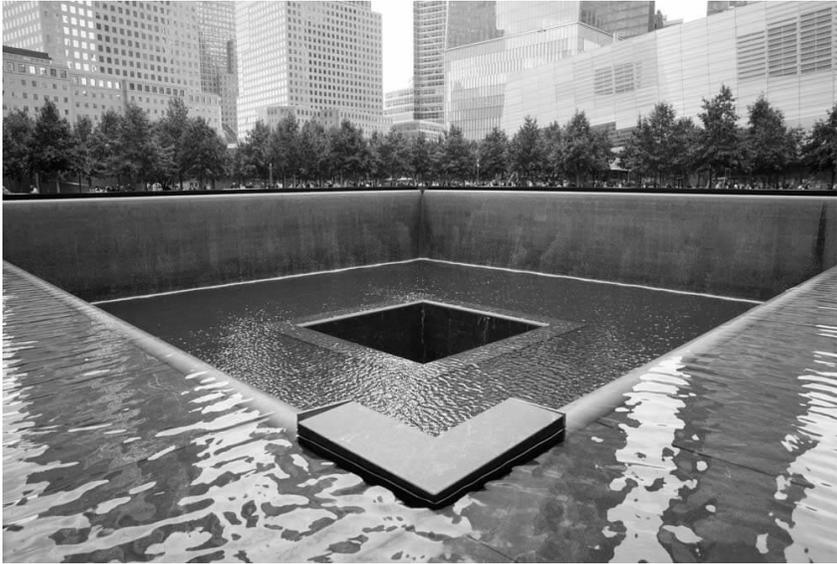
Ferry) in Manhattan and the St. George Ferry Terminal in Staten Island. It is best to skip rush hour times for your trip as the boat will be packed with commuters.

Chapter 17

Financial District, Battery Park, and World Trade Center



Start your day paying respects at the World Trade Center. Get tickets and take the elevator to the top for jaw-dropping views of the city (although you can only photograph through the glass). View the 9/11 Memorial and the powerful museum. Directly east of the memorial is the massive \$4 billion Oculus Train Station, a brand new 800,000 square foot transportation hub and high-end shopping mall in a structure that looks like a fish skeleton.



Walk east to visit St. Paul's Chapel, frequented by George Washington and the oldest surviving church building in Manhattan. Head south on Broadway for six blocks to Trinity Church, which dates back to 1697 (the church itself and not the current structure).



Head east to see the New York Stock Exchange, Federal Hall, and 40 Wall Street, which was beat out for the title of world's tallest building in 1930 in an epic battle with the Chrysler Building. Walk back to Broadway and head south to see the famous Charging Bull sculpture by Arturo di Modica, weighing over three and a half tons and measuring 18-feet long. On an early December morning in 1989, Arturo and a few friends placed the massive Charging Bull on Broad Street right in front of the New York Stock Exchange, evading the police in between patrols. The next day, it was news all around the world, and while the city removed it at the end of the day, popular outcry forced them to put it back, nearby at Bowling Green. From here, walk one block south to visit the Alexander Hamilton U.S. Custom House.

Enter Battery Park, which has one of the best views of the Statue of Liberty that is not on a boat, but just make sure to bring a long lens. The views at sunset with the sun setting behind are spectacular. This area, known as "The Battery" since the 17th century, was originally an artillery battery that protected from sea attacks. Visit Castle Clinton, originally called "The West Battery," which was built to prevent a British invasion in 1812, just prior to the War of 1812. While Castle Clinton was built on a small artificial island, this island was encircled and incorporated into Battery Park, which has been created mostly by landfill. Turn towards the city a little before sunset and you will see the sun shining on the skyscrapers of the financial district.



Chapter 18

Bushwick and Williamsburg



Bushwick and Williamsburg are the heart of gentrifying and hipster Brooklyn. If you love street art or street photography, these are two neighborhoods that you will not want to miss. Begin by taking the L train to the Morgan Avenue stop in Bushwick and wander in any direction to see some of the best street art and graffiti in the city. Businesses and buildings in the neighborhood give their walls away to popular street artists, many who belong to The Bushwick Collective. Since they are then legally allowed to paint, they are all able to spend a lot of time on their work, and the whole area feels like one huge gallery. Stop for some great pizza for lunch at the ultra-popular Roberta's.

Get back on the L train and head towards Manhattan to the Bedford Avenue stop in Williamsburg. Next, head towards the waterfront to see some grand views of the Manhattan skyline.

On North 8th Street is the State of New York East River State Park, which holds Smorgasburg, a Saturday only food flea market that lasts until late October. About eight blocks south is Grand Ferry Park and the old Domino Sugar factory. But the key to photographing Williamsburg is just to wander. Walk along Bedford and people watch, get lost, and explore the side streets.



Chapter 19

Coney Island



Coney Island is one of the most infamous places in New York, and it is so fun to explore. Take the yellow N, Q, or the orange D train to the last stop at Coney Island Stillwell Av, about an hour trip from Manhattan. On the way, you will see some fantastic views from the elevated tracks, so keep your camera out.



Stop for a Nathan's hotdog or at Totonno's pizza. Consider taking in a Brooklyn Cyclones game if you have the time, but the street photography is what you really have come for. Walk the boardwalk and head to the beach, one of the famed places for New York street photographers throughout history. Walk the Steeplechase Pier. I would suggest going in the afternoon and staying through the evening as the area cools off. Everything continues until late, and the lights and scenery make it beautiful for some dusk street photography.

Go on the Wonder Wheel for some high up views of Brooklyn. There are many fun rides to go on including the famous Cyclone, but be careful of taking your camera on the roller coasters. There are lockers, and there are many carnival games to keep you busy.

Chapter 20

Rooftop bars



The landscape of rooftop bars in New York is massive and ever changing, so it is hard for me to keep up. However, they do provide some epic skyline views of the city in an enjoyable atmosphere, so I suggest you do your own research besides what I am able to tell you about here. Some favorites of mine are Top of the Strand at the Strand Hotel, Refinery Hotel Rooftop, La Birreria atop Eataly, Ink48 at the Kimpton Hotel, The Top of the Standard, Jimmy at the James Hotel, the St. Cloud at the Knickerbocker hotel, Rare View at Fashion 26, and The Ides at the Wythe Hotel.

Part 3

Secret and Off-the-Beaten-Path Locations



Chapter 21

Old City Hall Subway Station



The once grand City Hall subway station now sleeps quietly under City Hall Park. Originally opened in 1904, this ornate station was the showpiece of the brand new New York City subway system, with arches and vaulted ceilings, elegant Guastavino and colored glass tiling, skylights, and brass chandeliers. The opening was a huge and novel event:

“The night took on a carnival atmosphere, like New Year’s Eve. Many couples celebrated in style by putting on their best clothes, going out to dinner, and then taking their first subway ride together. Some people spent the entire evening on the trains, going back and forth from 145th street to City Hall for hours. Reveling in the sheer novelty of the underground, these riders wanted to soak up its unfamiliar sights and sensations for as long as possible.” - Clifton Hood, *722 Miles: The Building Of The Subways*.

Despite its beauty, the City Hall subway station was never very busy. In the final year of use, it only handled about 600 passengers a day, due to the much busier Brooklyn Bridge station, which was close by. The station finally closed for good on New Year's Eve in 1945 when, to handle increased ridership, new longer trains were created with doors that were an unsafe distance from the extremely curved track of the station.

Fortunately for us, they kept the lights on. While the New York Transit Museum holds a few tours a year, they can be difficult tickets to get. However, there is a little secret. At the end of the green 6 train line (not the green 4 or 5) at the City Hall subway station, if you stay on the downtown line after the last stop, on the opposite windows from the side that the doors open on, you can see the station through the windows as the train turns around to head uptown. Because it is through a moving train, it is not worth photographing, but it is definitely worth seeing. Pay attention, because it will pass quickly, but it is spectacular. And don't worry, because it is entirely legal to do this.

Chapter 22

Chrysler Building Lobby



With the exception of the Woolworth Building lobby, the Chrysler Building lobby is possibly the most ornate and expensive lobby in the entire city. When walking in, what first hits you is the breathtaking mural that covers the ceiling. An Art Deco masterpiece, it is a tribute to the age in which it was created. The lobby is filled with Art Deco triangles, sharp angles, slightly curved lines, chrome detailing, and a multitude of patterns.



Chapter 23

Atlantic Avenue Subway Tunnel



(Unfortunately, as of the writing of this book, the Atlantic Avenue Subway Tunnel has been closed, hopefully temporarily. The City DOT agency shut down the tunnel for dubious reasons, while Bob Diamond is suing to get it back. Make sure when you read this book to check to see if the tunnel has been reopened).

It is not often in the City of New York that a regular guy can truly influence the history of the city, but Bob Diamond is just one of those people. The story of the Atlantic Avenue subway tunnel is one that goes back through the annals of New York history, but it is also one that has a modern chapter, of Bob Diamond's quest to unearth and expose the tunnel as a significant New York landmark.

Let's jump back in history. If you think the argument today between bikers and joggers in the city is a big deal, then transport yourself to Atlantic Avenue in 1844. The street at the time was an extremely busy artery in Brooklyn, so much that there was actually a Long Island Railroad train running down it. Because of the foot traffic and the fact that it often took a train up to eight city blocks to stop, people and carriages kept getting hit. It was a major problem at the time (the Brooklyn Dodgers were once famously named the Brooklyn Trolley Dodgers). To avoid this problem, mostly to make sure his trains were not delayed, the head of the LIRR Cornelius Vanderbilt decided to build the world's first underground train system under Atlantic Avenue.

The Tunnel was built in about seven months, using a cut-and-cover method, which meant cutting into the tunnel, covering it with a wood frame, and then bricking it in. There was even a murder that supposedly occurred during the construction, which was done almost entirely by Irish immigrants. One day, when the workers were told by a British contractor that they would have to miss church and work on Sundays, one of the Irish workers pulled out a gun and shot the contractor dead. Legend has it that the workers then buried his body behind the wall, where it rests to this day.

The tunnel was only open for about 15 years, and the last train ran in 1859 when, due to political reasons, it was shut down. Luckily for us, the contract to close and fill in the tunnel was given to a greedy man named Electus Litchfield. Instead of filling in the entire tunnel, Electus filled in only the ends, capped the holes in the street, and paid someone off to say that it had been filled.

Legends and stories persisted about the tunnel for the next 100 years. Walt Whitman once wrote, *"The old tunnel, that used to lie there underground, a passage of Acheron-like solemnity and darkness, now all closed and filled up, and soon to be utterly*

forgotten.” But the tunnel was not to be forgotten, because of Bob Diamond. In 1980, as a 19-year-old engineering student, Diamond heard a story on the radio about the lost journal pages of John Wilkes Booth being buried in an old subway tunnel hidden under Brooklyn. This was the type of story that had spread around every once in awhile since the tunnel had been filled up, but nobody had found it yet. Fortunately, Bob had the youthful exuberance that only a young engineering student could have, and so he decided to search for it.

And search he did, hunting through all of the newspaper articles printed in Brooklyn in the 19th and 20th centuries until he came across an article published in the Brooklyn Eagle in 1911. It was a full-page article about the tunnel, which told of a set of plans located in the borough president’s office. When Diamond arrived at the office, he was told that the plans were not there, but he persisted and asked if he could look through an old locked box of papers. After breaking open the box, he found plans for the tunnel with a small circle on it, possibly representing a manhole.

So on one early morning in 1981, with the help of the Department of Transportation and some friends, Diamond opened a small manhole cover on the corner of Atlantic and Court Streets. As they looked down the hole, there was a floor of dirt, appearing that the tunnel had indeed been filled in. But he had come this far, and Diamond wanted to make sure. Crawling through a small trench of space, he began to dig with his hands until he uncovered what looked like the brick ceiling. Diamond smashed through the bricks, sending a rush of cold, stale air into his face and revealing a 15-foot drop. He had found the tunnel.

Because of the find, Diamond was put in charge of the tunnel, and he now leads a crusade to save and improve it. He installed lights leading all the way down the tunnel attached to a generator and created a stairwell to get down to the bottom

from the manhole. He now leads monthly tours to explore the tunnel, explaining his story along with the history of the tunnel. There is even another mystery that he hopes to uncover about what is on the other side of the far wall of the tunnel. Six blocks of the tunnel are currently blocked off by a wall of dirt, and this is where Diamond believes an old locomotive with the lost pages of John Wilkes Booth diary could be located. In 2011, engineering consultants scanned Atlantic Avenue with high-powered, ground-penetrating electromagnetic devices looking for the cast-iron locomotive. They found a 20-foot-long metallic anomaly below, which Diamond said could only be a locomotive. However, he has unfortunately not been able to gain permission from the city to dig it out.

Bob Diamond is trying his hardest to preserve an amazing part of New York history, of our country's history, and of the history of subway technology. He has constantly had to fight people from trying to stop him along the way. He hopes to one day open up the end of the tunnel, lay tracks down, and run a locomotive tour down it. I can't imagine a more fitting way for the tunnel to end up, just as it had started.

Chapter 24

Cortlandt Alley



The percentage of movies and TV shows based in New York that start with criminals being chased down alleyways is abnormally high. This can be misleading since the city does not have many alleyways (the chases, maybe). The Commissioners Plan in 1811 led to the creation of New York's grid system and was a dream for New York real estate professionals since it allowed for the maximum use of space for building.

However, one of the few Manhattan alleyways lies in Tribeca, about a block from Chinatown. This three-block alleyway looks like the New York of old, with dirt and graffiti everywhere. It is a popular place for photo shoots, television, and movies.

Two blocks in, on the corner of White Street and Cortlandt Alley is a plaque recognizing the location of the Mudd Club, a famous

rock venue that existed during the height of punk rock from 1978 to 1983, frequented by Jean-Michel Basquiat, Lou Reed, Andy Warhol, and performed at by Frank Zappa, The Ramones, and The Talking Heads.

Walk down the final block of the alleyway, and make sure to peer into the glass windows of two shuttered gates. Here lies the MMuseumm, the smallest museum in New York, hidden in plain sight and host to a variety of unique art projects and random objects.

Chapter 25

What Lies Under Grand Central Terminal?



Ten stories under Manhattan's Grand Central Terminal is a network of activity. Known as M42 and kept top-secret until the 1980's, the hidden room powers Grand Central's train network with massive AC/DC rotaries and is not shown on any maps or blueprints. However, as large and impressive as these rotary converters are, they had one absurd Achilles heel - they could be destroyed by throwing a bucket of sand into the rotating blades.

During World War II, 80 percent of troops and war material passed through Grand Central on their way up the Eastern Seaboard. Shutting down Grand Central would have been a major victory for the Nazis. It is for this reason that the area was kept secret for so long. Hitler eventually gained wind of this

weakness from a former Grand Central worker who had expatriated to Germany, and he sent two U-Boats with four Nazi spies to destroy the converters. The spies landed on Amagansett, Long Island, where they were seen by the coast guard before disappearing into the night.

Because of the sighting, the FBI was on the lookout for the spies and searched through everyone's luggage who passed through Grand Central, day after day, until they found a set of luggage that could have only belonged to the German spies. When the spies eventually came to pick up the luggage before heading to destroy the rotaries, they were promptly arrested.



In the station is a 102-year-old computer system built by Westinghouse, considered to be the first electric computer. Apparently, every year Apple executives visit it to pay homage.

Also under Grand Central lies track 61, which famously transported President FDR underground to the Waldorf Astoria hotel to keep his disability hidden from the public. It has

transported many celebrities and officials and served as a quick getaway for many presidents from the hotel.



In the tunnel is FDR's rusted and abandoned train, which was constructed to stabilize the side-to-side movements that would plague FDR during train travel due to his partial paralysis from polio. The train could fit FDR's armor plated car, which would drive off it, onto a platform, and straight in the elevator.

Chapter 26

Woolworth Building Lobby

Off-limits for more than a decade, the Woolworth Building just recently started tours of its unparalleled lobby, including a 75-minute photography tour, which allows tripods for \$40 a person. Designed by Cass Gilbert, The lobby is the grandest and most ornate in the city and harkens back to the Byzantine Empire. The arcade is covered with murals and carved details and is reminiscent of the interior of a cathedral, thus the building's nickname, "The Cathedral of Commerce."

Unfortunately, there are no photos here because I have yet to book one of the new tours, but you can Google the Woolworth Building lobby to see it.

Chapter 27

Green-Wood Cemetery



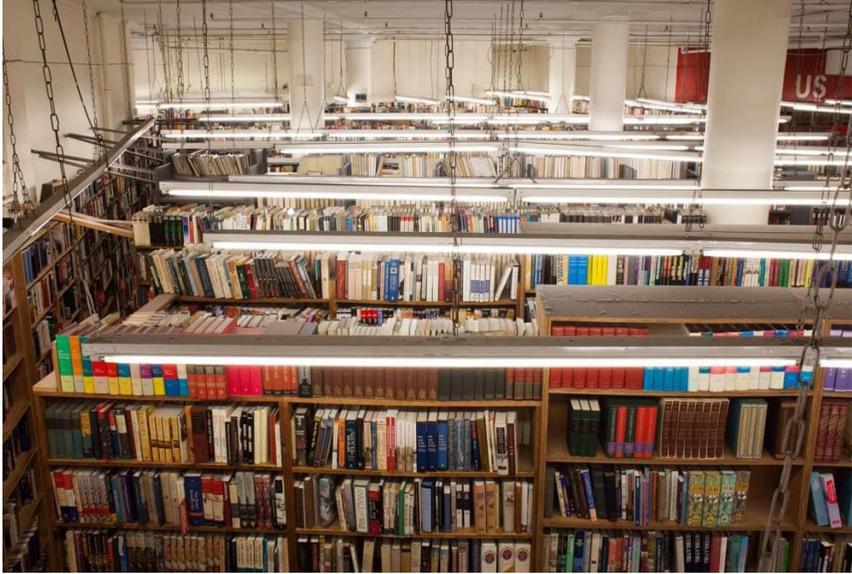
Founded in Brooklyn in 1838, before the creation of Central Park or Prospect Park, there was Green-Wood cemetery, a massive 478-acre swath of land on the western coast of the borough. The cemetery includes hills, valleys, ponds, paths, and ornate structures of all types. Due to its grandeur and the

fact that it predated both Central Park and Prospect Park, the cemetery received an international reputation, and once attracted 500,000 visitors a year, the second greatest tourist attraction in the U.S. behind Niagara Falls. It has a famous roster of inhabitants, including Boss Tweed, Leonard Bernstein, Louis Comfort Tiffany, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Civil War generals, artists, musicians, politicians, and sports legends. Paul Goldberger in *The New York Times* wrote, *"It is the ambition of the New Yorker to live upon the Fifth Avenue, to take his airings in the Park, and to sleep with his fathers in Green-Wood."*

Once the site of an important part of the Battle of Brooklyn in 1776, Battle Hill is the highest point in Brooklyn, rising approximately 200 feet above sea level. Because of the height, you can see straight through to the Manhattan skyline, including the Empire State Building, The Statue of Liberty, The World Trade Center, and more. A telephoto lens is suggested.

Part 4

Best Photography Museums and Galleries



MoMA: The Museum of Modern Art has some of the most spectacular art in the city. The 5th floor is where to go first, with works from Picasso (*Les Femmes d'Alger*), Monet (*Water Lilies*), Van Gogh (*Starry Night*), Dali, and Matisse (*Dance*). The MoMA is also home to the best photography permanent collection in the city. It is a must see.

The MET: The Metropolitan Museum of Art rivals MoMA in every way. The Met has a diverse range of art throughout history that complements the MoMA's modern art collection, and there are always great photography exhibits. It is good to visit the Met in combination with a visit to Central Park. Go on the roof for a beautiful overhead view of the park.

International Center for Photography: Located on the Bowery, the ICP museum is the premier photography museum in New York, with a changing selection of shows from top photographers. This is a must see for any photography enthusiast. They also have a great photography bookstore.

The Strand Bookstore: Located on the corner of 12th Street and Broadway is probably the best photography gallery in the city, a large old bookstore called The Strand dating back to 1927. On the second floor is a photography section that is rivaled by no other. Covering multiple aisles and more than a handful of very large tables are more photography books that you can possibly imagine. Spend two hours here and you will be in photography heaven.

Photography Galleries: The best photography galleries in the city are Howard Greenberg Gallery, Steven Kasher Gallery, Leica Gallery SoHo, Yancey Richardson Gallery, Robert Mann Gallery, Pace/MacGill Gallery, Yossi Milo Gallery, and Danziger Gallery.

Part 5

Events



PDN Photo Expo: The PhotoPlus International Photography Conference and Expo is one of the premiere photography shows in the world and attended by over 20,000 people each year. Located in the Javits Convention Center in late October, the event holds over 100 seminars, photo walks, master classes, keynotes, and over 150 speakers. There is also a gigantic main floor with hundreds of photography vendors.

Mermaid Parade: The Mermaid Parade is a yearly June event in Coney Island and a favorite of photographers. Each year, thousands of unique New Yorkers dress in the most unimaginable mermaid costumes, often including a little (or a lot of) nudity. As you know, mermaids and mermen are not exactly known for wearing a lot of clothing.

Loisaida Festival: Each year in May, on Avenue C in the East Village, the neighborhood comes out for one of the best street fairs of the year. Loisaida (or Avenue C) is named for the way that the residents of the neighborhood pronounce Lower East Side. This festival brings out a selection of true New Yorkers and makes for some fantastic people watching.

Chinese New Year: Each year in early February or late January, Chinatown comes alive, even more than it already is. The parade goes from Mott Street to Canal Street and includes dragons, dancers, costumes, and dumplings. It is wonderful for people watching and street photography.

San Gennaro Festival: The Feast of San Gennaro was originally a one-day religious ceremony taken from Naples to the block of Mulberry Street in Little Italy. Each year in September, the vendors come out for an 11-day street fair, including games, parades, and performances.

Fashion Week: Each year in early September and early February, the fashion world erupts in delight with a weeklong string of fashion shows. Just as excited are a group of fashion photographers and bloggers who stalk the shows to photograph the most fashionable attendants. If you are into fashion and photography, these events are for you.

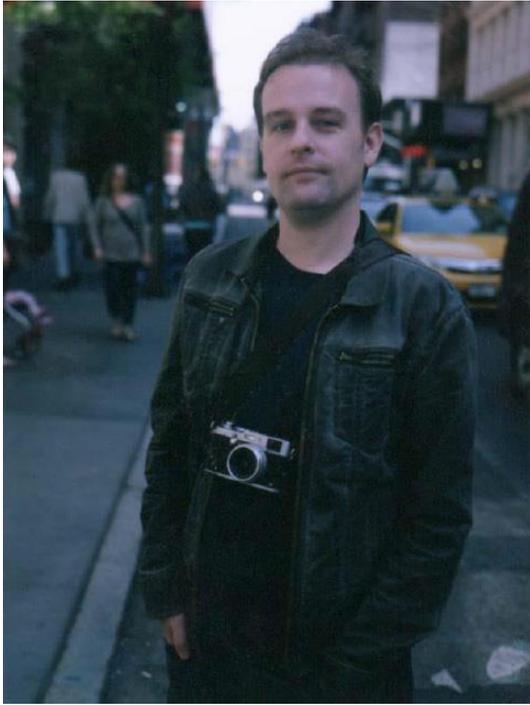
Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade balloon blow-up: Forget the Thanksgiving Day Parade itself, the balloon blowing up the night before is the best part. Get close to the floats without as large of a crowd, and walk Central Park West at night illuminated by the work lights.

Rockefeller Center Tree and 5th Avenue Holiday Window Displays: Every year at the end of November, the giant Rockefeller Center Christmas tree is lit. New Yorkers and tourists from all over the world flock to it. This can be fantastic for street photography as there is always a crushing crowd no

matter when you visit. Head to 5th Avenue and do some street photography at its busiest time of year, and see all the intricate holiday window displays and hoards of people photographing them.



About the Author



James Maher has lived in New York for his entire life (besides a 5-year stint in Madison, Wisconsin, but he doesn't want to talk about that). Like many Manhattanites, he is a terrible driver and cook, but he is an excellent navigator. His favorite pizza slice is Sal and Carmine's on Broadway between 101st and 102nd Streets.

James has been practicing the art of street photography since he first picked up a camera, has worked as a portrait and fine art photographer in New York since 2005, and has had a regular feature for the NY Daily News reporting on different neighborhoods of the city through street portraits and interviews with locals. He is a certified New York tour and workshop guide and teaches private photography workshops

in addition to weekend and weeklong group street photography workshops. He has sold and licensed his photography of New York to collectors and companies from around the world. James also writes frequently about the history of New York City and famous photographers on his website. You can visit it at www.jamesmaherphotography.com.

If you enjoyed this guide, you may be interested in receiving my NY Photo Digest, sent monthly with informational photography articles and tips, new work, and historical essays on both New York and famous photographers:

https://www.jamesmaherphotography.com/join_mailing_list/

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