

NYC DAY TRIP FROM THE LEHIGH VALLEY

How to get there, what to do, and when to go

New York City sits just 80-90 miles east of the Lehigh Valley - close enough to be one of the easiest big-day-trip destinations in the region.

IN THIS GUIDE

1. Getting There
2. Best Times to Go
3. Parking Tips
4. Sample Itinerary: Classic Manhattan
5. Sample Itinerary: Brooklyn & Culture
6. Budget Tips
7. Tips & Planning

GETTING THERE

Lehigh Valley to Manhattan, ~80-90 miles via I-78 — Three main options: drive (about 90 minutes to the Holland Tunnel off-peak, longer in traffic); take the Trans-Bridge Lines bus from the Allentown or Bethlehem terminals directly to the Port Authority Bus Terminal (41st St & 8th Ave) in Midtown - the only true one-seat ride; or drive to a NJ Transit station (nearest is High Bridge on the Raritan Valley Line - there is no rail station in the Valley itself) and take the train, noting most RVL trains transfer at Newark Penn.

BEST TIMES TO GO

New York City — Weekdays are far less crowded than weekends. If you must go on a weekend, leave by 7 a.m. to beat tunnel traffic. Spring and fall offer the best walking weather; avoid major holiday weekends and the Christmas-to-New-Year's week unless you love crowds.

PARKING TIPS

Jersey City / Hoboken, NJ — Skip driving into Manhattan: park in Jersey City or Hoboken and take the PATH train in - cheaper and far less stressful. Use SpotHero or ParkWhiz to reserve spots in advance. Budget \$30-50 if you do park in the city.

SAMPLE ITINERARY: CLASSIC MANHATTAN

Manhattan — Begin with a morning walk in Central Park, then visit the Metropolitan Museum of Art or the American Museum of Natural History (note: pay-what-you-wish at both is now limited to NY-area residents/students; PA visitors pay the fixed adult rate, currently \$30 at the Met). Lunch on the Upper West Side, then head downtown to SoHo, Greenwich Village, or Chelsea Market (75 Ninth Ave). Walk the free High Line, which connects to Chelsea Market, and finish with a sunset stroll across the Brooklyn Bridge before heading home.

SAMPLE ITINERARY: BROOKLYN & CULTURE

Take the bus or train in, then subway to central Brooklyn. Start at Prospect Park (free) or the adjacent Brooklyn Botanic Garden (paid - about \$22, free Fri before noon) and explore the shops and restaurants of Park Slope. Then subway north to Williamsburg (the L train serves Bedford Ave) and, if you like, walk across the Williamsburg Bridge into the Lower East Side for dinner.

BUDGET TIPS

New York City — Trans-Bridge round-trip bus fares often beat the cost of gas plus tolls and parking. Keep food costs low with dollar-slice pizza and Halal-cart meals. For free sightseeing, ride the Staten Island Ferry (free, 24/7, great Statue of Liberty views from the right/starboard side leaving Manhattan), walk the High Line and Brooklyn Bridge, and visit always-free museums like the National Museum of the American Indian at Bowling Green - since several big museums now restrict pay-what-you-wish to NY-area residents.

TIPS & PLANNING

Buy Trans-Bridge tickets in advance (reservation-based; cash fares aren't sold at Port Authority). Verify museum admission rules before you go - the Met, AMNH and Brooklyn Botanic Garden each have residency or fee conditions that changed in recent years. Wear comfortable shoes; a NYC day is a walking day. A reloadable OMNY tap (contactless card or phone) is the easiest way to pay subway/bus fares. Build in buffer time for tunnel traffic on the drive home.

LEHIGHVALLEY.COM

EXPLORE THE LEHIGH VALLEY

Download more free local guides at lehighvalley.com/guides

© 2026 LehighValley.com — All rights reserved