

# Spring Fling in NYC

A balmy day in May would make for an ideal day trip to The Big Apple — not too hot, not too cold, just right. Choose between two itineraries or stay overnight to experience both.

## Option 1: The Dramatic Day Trip

Start at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center. While this library is known for its collection of theater-related items, it also offers vibrant exhibitions relating to the performing arts. Exhibitions we visited over the years include one celebrating the Frank Sinatra Centennial and one highlighting musicals performed on both Broadway and the London stage (one of my top five, *A Chorus Line*, was among them!) This will whet your palate for lunch and the matinée.

Cross Broadway to Boulud Sud on 64th Street. This is the perfect location for pre-theater lunch and is my favorite of Chef Daniel Boulud's restaurants. The cuisine is truly Mediterranean, showcasing dishes from France to Spain to Italy to Greece to Morocco to Israel to Turkey. The setting is casually elegant with ceramic tagines bordering the open kitchen and Cezanne inspired landscapes decorating the walls. Some dishes I recommend are:

- ▶ Octopus à la Plancha with Marcona Almonds, Arugula, Jerez Vinegar
- ▶ Sicilian Sardine Escabèche with White Raisins, Toasted Pine Nuts
- ▶ Spicy Moroccan Hummus, Herb Falafel, Babaganoush
- ▶ House-Made Taramasalata Smoked Cod Roe, Dill Potato Chips
- ▶ Chicken Tagine
- ▶ Tunisian Brik Confit Tuna, Capers, Gruyère, Egg
- ▶ Grapefruit Givré — This requires an elaboration as it is one of the most unique and tasty desserts I have ever encountered. A whole hollowed out grapefruit lined with grapefruit sorbet, filled with fresh grapefruit segments, topped with white sesame foam, topped with rosy cubes of Turkish delight and halva crumbles, draped with caramelized tuile, then topped with halva shreds that resemble cotton candy.

After dessert and coffee, make your way back to Lincoln Center for a production at one of its many venues — the Metropolitan Opera House, the David H. Koch Theater for dance, the Philharmonic's home at David Geffen Hall, or a musical at the Vivian Beaumont Theater. In April we saw Kelli O'Hara star in Mozart's opera buffa, *Così Fan Tutte*, updated to take place in 1950s Coney Island. It will have closed by the publication of this article; however, a revival of Lerner & Loewe's *My Fair Lady* will play through 2018.

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## Option 2: The Gourmand Getaway

Start your day with an espresso at Eataly, the Italian marketplace that reminds me of Philly's Reading Terminal Market on steroids. This feast for the eyes and palate is located on 5th Avenue facing Madison Square Park, just steps from the majestic Flatiron Building. Stroll by fishmongers, butchers, bakers, cheesemongers, and pasta makers. Children will especially enjoy watching chefs stretch and shape mozzarella and roll out sheets of fresh pasta. While Eataly contains dining venues serving dishes from charcuterie boards to pizza, I recommend working up an appetite. You should also browse the cookbook stalls, kitchen gadgets, and fresh fruits and veggies.

Next head about seven blocks south to the Union Square Greenmarket at the northwest side of Union Square Park on 17th Street. The open-air market is open Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Here you will find fruits, vegetables, cheeses, meats, flowers, herbs, and spices. If only I could shop for groceries here and at Eataly every week!

For a leisurely late lunch, walk one block east to Casa Mono at 17th and Irving Place. While Casa Mono is among the upper echelon of restaurants — it has been awarded a Michelin star every year since 2009 — it is relaxed, cozy, and not pretentious. The tapas inspired by the cuisine on Spain's Costa Brava are prepared in an open kitchen. The tables are tight, but the clientele is friendly. Some tapas I recommend with a sparkling rosé cava are:

- ▶ Burrata with Beer Battered Acorn Squash, Marcona Pesto and Cured Egg Yolk — wonderful contrast between the crispy squash and the creamy burrata.
- ▶ Fluke Crudo with Blood Orange, Lemon and Ancho Dust — refreshing with a kick.
- ▶ Skirt Steak with Romesco and Onion Mermelada — zingy, peppery romesco pairs perfectly with the tender beef.
- ▶ Razor Clams a la Plancha — admire them at Eataly but enjoy them here.

Whichever route you follow, savor the food, culture, and energy of New York. 🗽



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