



# MarkHitsTheRoad

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## Return to New York City (Y16A-1)

I used to get to New York City on a regular basis, both for vacation and for business. But I hadn't been back since returning home from a conference in 2006. I had planned a return in 2013, but circumstances at work disrupted those plans. I finally made it back this year, ten years after my last visit. A lot of the city remains familiar, but the city has also changed – most notably the World Trade Center has been replaced by the Freedom Tower, and the National September 11 Memorial is now open.

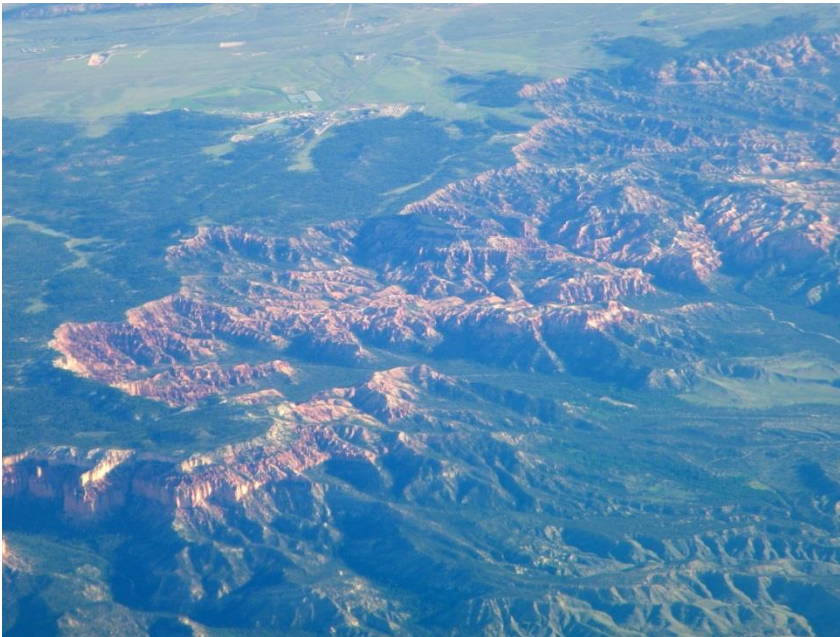
While in the city I returned to some favorite places, explored some new ones, took in a few shows and enjoyed some of the city's famous nightlife. It's a fun place to visit – I just wish it wasn't all the way across the country.

I had to get up at 3AM for an early morning non-stop flight from Las Vegas to New York's JFK Airport. But I woke up at 1AM and couldn't fall back to sleep. So I was pretty tired all day.

Some views from the plane en route to New York...



Early morning sun hitting Red Rock Canyon, not far from where I live.



The area of Utah's Bryce Canyon that is closest to the entrance to that national park.



I got this picture of the Moab Fault and Colorado River just north of Moab, capturing the entrance to Arches National Park and its Park Avenue area. I'd finally see Arches National Park from the air.



Except that I was so tired from little sleep and getting up at 3AM that I blinked – a blink that lasted much of 90 seconds according to the timestamps on my photos, though I recovered in time to get this picture of Salt Wash in the east end of the park. Delicate Arch actually stands above that dark spot low left of center, although it's not visible in the photo.





View across Brooklyn to Lower Manhattan and the new Freedom Tower



New York City naming rights seem to be getting out of hand. Applebee's now claims The Big Applebee, and the city's underground trains are named for a sandwich chain.



This was my 8<sup>th</sup> trip to NYC. I used to get there a lot – six times between 1996 and 2006 – but this was my first time back in 10 years. I stayed at my usual place, the Chelsea Pines Inn, a “B&B” (Bed & Bagels) on West 14<sup>th</sup>, right on the line between Chelsea and Greenwich Village/West Village. A nicely walkable location with easy access to the subways. Each room in the inn has a number of movie posters focused on some past star – I was in the Tony Curtis Room this time. Full size bed, desk, closet, fridge, private bath with a shower in a 5-story walkup (I was on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor this time but have been on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor before). Pretty much all I need at a relatively decent price by NYC standards.

I made a number of photo stops in the Chelsea and Greenwich Village area over the course of the week.



The Chelsea Hotel on 23<sup>rd</sup> is undergoing renovation. It served as a residence hotel for a number of artists, writers and musicians over the years. Arthur C. Clarke wrote *2001: A Space Odyssey* when he lived here. Jack Kerouac wrote *On The Road* when he lived here. Mark Twain, Dylan Thomas, William S. Burroughs, Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, Allen Ginsberg, Milos Foreman, Dennis Hopper, Jane Fonda, Iggy Pop, Bob Dylan, Alice Cooper, and numerous others are among past residents.



Trailer Park Lounge & Grill in Chelsea





High Line Park is new since my last visit. Elevated train tracks have been converted into a park. The sign? It's actually an art installation based on a photo taken at some beach.



I liked this Greenwich Village sign – and had a good meal at this restaurant one evening. A typical cross-section of New Yorkers....



In June 1969 there was a police raid at the Stonewall Inn, a Mafia-owned Greenwich Village bar that catered to a group that included drag queens, transgenders, gay men, hustlers and others. But this time the patrons fought back, and the Stonewall riots followed, marking the start of a big change in the push for gay rights. The original Stonewall Inn eventually closed but a new bar opened on the site and adopted the Stonewall name. The site of the riot, including the street in front of the bar and Christopher Park across the street, was declared a new national monument in 2016.



The sculpture Gay Liberation in Christopher Park. The attack on the Orlando gay bar Pulse took place my second night in NYC. Tributes to the victims were left at Stonewall Inn and in Christopher Park, and vigils were held here nightly.



Saturday I focused on Midtown. Times Square, Rockefeller Center, purchasing theatre tickets for the week and walking around filled the day.



Times Square, which was a lot seedier and thus a lot more interesting during my first trip to NYC back in 1992. Now it's flashy but dull, with chain stores, chain restaurants, souvenirs and crowds of tourists.



I've long been interested in the architecture, art and history of Rockefeller Center. This trip I finally took a guided tour of the complex.

I also headed to the “Top of the Rock” for its views of New York City.



The Empire State Building – center – and the new One World Trade Center a.k.a. Freedom Tower in the distant right. The Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island are barely discernable to the right of the Freedom Tower.



The Upper West Side, Hudson River and a bit of Central Park.





Walking around I came across Trump Tower, residence of Donald Trump, site of his New York home, headquarters to the Trump Organization and 2016 presidential campaign, and home to the Atrium at Trump Tower, Trump Bar, Trump Grill, Trump Café, Trump's Ice Cream Parlor and The Trump Store.

I can't say I was impressed. Compared to other towers in NYC, Trump's tower seemed, well, kind of short.



I explored the inside of Trump Tower a bit. As I rode down this escalator I experienced an almost overwhelming urge to run for president. I can only imagine how that might have turned out.





A mob funeral. Allegedly.

Sunday I headed for Coney Island along the south end of Brooklyn. I've been there a few times but never when it was both busy and sunny. I finally got both with today's excursion.





One of the more peculiar amusements along the boardwalk. Sitting on these “toilets” players take aim at the “smelly feet” of the characters in the bath tubs front of them. Whoever gets the most liquid in the right places wins!



Monday’s focus was on Lower Manhattan, and particularly Governors Island National Monument, on a small island just off the tip of Lower Manhattan. Long the site of a military base, it is also where the Dutch first settled when they established New York (New Amsterdam). Fort Jay is among the facilities on the island. Once generally off limits to tourists, It finally opened to the public as a national monument after my last visit to New York.





Another view of Fort Jay, with the Lower Manhattan skyline and the Freedom Tower in the background



View of the Statue of Liberty from Governors Island. I think that Liberty Mutual films some of its car insurance ads from the island, so you may recognize this perspective of the statue from TV.





The Lower Manhattan skyline from Governors Island



The Sphere sculpture stands in Battery Park. It once stood on the plaza at the World Trade Center, and it was (and remains) damaged from the events on September 11, 2001.

Tuesday I visited the National September 11 Memorial and its museum, located on the site of the World Trade Center.



Remnants of the original World Trade Center frame the new Freedom Tower



The museum features tributes to the victims, a thorough timeline of the terrorist attacks, remnants of the original buildings and some artifacts found in the rubble. The museum does a generally excellent job meeting its goals.





Above ground the park-like memorial features two large pools with waterfalls, built into the footprints of the Twin Towers.



The new One World Trade Center, a.k.a. the Freedom Tower stands at the edge of the memorial. At 1,776 feet tall, it is the tallest building in North America.



Views from One World Observatory, atop the Freedom Tower...



South – Governors Island, Verrazano Narrows Bridge



East – Brooklyn Bridge (right), East River





North – Empire State Building, Midtown



Northwest – Tribeca, West Village, Chelsea, Hudson River



I hit the theatre a handful of times a few nights while I was in town.



I saw *Something Rotten* on Broadway. That's the name of the show, not a review. It featured Christian Borle, who was great when I saw him in *Spamalot* (he was also on *Smash*)



I also saw Broadway's *Shuffle Along, or the Making of the Musical Sensation of 1921 and All That Followed*, the story behind an all-black musical that transformed Broadway.

I also saw the hilarious *Shear Madness* off-Broadway.

Of course, the hottest Broadway ticket in town is *Hamilton*. And I indeed saw *Hamilton* on Broadway.



The grave of Alexander Hamilton, in the Trinity Churchyard on Broadway near Wall Street.