



[www.centralpark.org](http://www.centralpark.org)  
 Central Park Conservancy: 212-310-6600  
 Shakespeare in the Park: 212-539-8750

Central Park, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted (with help from Calvert Vaux) in the 1850s, is an 843-acre haven to many New Yorkers. On a summer Saturday, one can walk through the park and see jugglers, magicians, disco roller-skater-bladers, Hungarian folk dancing, skateboarders, joggers, operas, rock concerts, ball players, Troilus and Cressida, boaters, art, turtles, frogs, birds, and...oh, yes, billions of people. However, the park is big enough so that there are many, many quiet spots (including official "quiet zones" such as the Shakespeare Gardens 17) for reading, picnicking, and napping.

**Practicalities**

Central Park is easily accessible by subway, since the A, C, B, D, N, R, 1, 2, 3, 9 trains all ring the park (odd, though, that there are no stations within the park). Parking along Central Park West is usually pretty good—if you go in the mornings, you'll have an even easier time of it since most New Yorkers are "late to bed, late to rise" types. Unless you're there for a big concert, a softball game, or for Shakespeare in the Park, walking around Central Park (especially alone!) at night is not recommended.

**Attractions**

Like the city itself, Central Park is an eclectic mix of many different types of attractions. Just when you think that Central Park is nothing more than an overcrowded noisy place crawling with roller bladers banging into each other, you'll stumble upon a quiet glade that houses a small sculpture and three people reading books.

**Nature**

Ironically, perhaps the attributes of Central Park least thought about by New Yorkers are its flora and fauna. There are an amazing number of both plant and animal species that inhabit the park (separate from the creatures housed in its two zoos 4 & 8). A good source of information on all the flora and fauna is schoolteacher Leslie Day's web site, at <http://www.nysite.com/nature/index.htm>.

**Architecture & Sculpture**

Architecturally, Central Park is known for several structures. Calvert Vaux designed the beautiful Bethesda Fountain and Terrace 11 that has become the "center" of the park for many people. The view of Turtle Pond from Belvedere Castle 16 (home of the Central Park Learning Center) is also not to be missed. The Arsenal 5 is a wonderful ivy-clad building that houses several Parks Department offices. There are tons of sculptures in the park, although two of the most notable are perhaps Alice in Wonderland 15 and the Obelisk 19. Oh...The Metropolitan Museum of Art also happens to be in the park.

**Open Spaces**

Perhaps the attractions most loved by New Yorkers are Central Park's "spaces." Space being at a premium in the average New Yorker's apartment probably has a lot to do with this, but nonetheless, places such as Strawberry Fields 10, The Great Lawn, The Ramble, and Sheep Meadow are prime hang-outs for many New Yorkers.

**Performance**

Central Park is a microcosm of the great cultural attractions New York has to offer. The Delacorte Theater 18 is the home of Shakespeare in the Park, a New York tradition begun by famous director Joseph Papp. Summerstage 9 is now an extremely popular summer concert venue for all types of music, including the occasional killer rock concert. Opera companies and classical philharmonics also show up in the park frequently, as does the odd mega-star (Garth Brooks, Diana Ross, etc.).

**Sports**

There are so many types of sport occurring in Central Park at any one time that it's pretty dizzying to contemplate. Roller blading and roller skating are very popular (not just at the Roller Skating Rink 7—see [www.centralparksate.com](http://www.centralparksate.com) and [www.cpdsa.org](http://www.cpdsa.org)), as is jogging, especially around the Reservoir. The Great Lawn, since its reconstruction, has beautiful softball fields. There are also softball fields at Heckscher Playground. There are 30 tennis courts in Central Park (usually with a long waiting list), fishing at Harlem Meer, gondola rides and boat rentals at the Loeb Boathouse, chess and checkers at the Chess and Checkers House 25, and rock-climbing lessons at the North Meadow Rec Center. There is also volleyball, basketball, skateboarding, bicycling, and an infinite number of pick-up soccer, frisbee, football and kill-the-carrier games being played. Finally, Central Park is where the NYC Marathon ends each year, in case you're still not tired.

**Landmarks**

- |                       |                        |                             |  |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| 1 Wollman Rink        | 10 Strawberry Fields   | 18 Delacorte Theater        | 24 Metropolitan Museum of Art              |
| 2 Carousel            | 11 Bethesda Fountain   | 19 The Obelisk              | 25 Chess & Checkers House                  |
| 3 The Dairy           | 12 Bow Bridge          | 20 North Meadow Rec. Center |  |
| 4 The Zoo             | 13 Loeb Boathouse      | 21 Conservatory Garden      | Police Precinct<br>86th St & Transverse Rd |
| 5 The Arsenal         | 14 Model Boat Racing   | 22 Lasker Rink              |  |
| 6 Tavern on the Green | 15 Alice in Wonderland | 23 Dana Discovery Center    |  |
| 7 Roller Skating Rink | 16 Belvedere Castle    |                             |  |
| 8 Children's Zoo      | 17 Shakespeare Gardens |                             |  |
| 9 Summerstage         |                        |                             |  |

