

CENTRAL PARK CONSERVANCY PICNIC GUIDE

What are the ingredients for a fantastic New York City afternoon? A picnic basket, a blanket, and Central Park, of course! Use our official Picnic Guide to prepare for a fun afternoon in the Park.



CHOOSE THE BEST LOCATION

Central Park is home to lawns, benches, gazebos, and picnic tables across its 843 acres, which provide dozens of great picnic spots. Here are a few of our favorites.

Harlem Meer

East Side from 106th to 110th Street

The Harlem Meer is perfect for visitors looking for a bit of peace and quiet. The Charles A. Dana Discovery Center is also steps away if you need visitor information or other amenities. After your picnic, visit the nearby Conservatory Garden.

Great Hill

West Side from 103rd to 107th Streets

This open hilltop meadow contains picnic tables and a lawn surrounded by stately trees. It's one of the quieter and more isolated meadows to enjoy a picnic.

East Meadow

East Side from 97th to 100th Streets

Stake out a shady spot in this pastoral meadow that contains some of the finest specimen trees in the Park, including an American Elm that is believed to be one of the original Park plantings.

Arthur Ross Pinetum

Mid-Park between 84th and 86th Streets

Surrounded by 17 different species of pine trees, you're bound to find shade at this four-acre landscape. The Pinetum contains several picnic tables and swing sets.

Great Lawn

Mid-Park from 79th to 85th Street

The site of a former reservoir, this 55-acre area contains eight ball fields – six of them within the Great Lawn Oval. A picnic spot on the perimeter or on Turtle Pond will provide a great view of baseball and softball games in the spring and summer, or soccer games in the fall.

Sheep Meadow

West Side from 66th to 69th Streets

This 15-acre meadow is likely the most popular place for a picnic in the Park, making it great for people-watching. Take in a stunning view of midtown's skyscrapers while lounging on the lush, green lawn. Within walking distance from Columbus Circle, Sheep Meadow is easily accessible from a number of subway lines.



BRINGING YOUR PUP?

Don't forget! Dogs must be on-leash at all times from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm. Dogs are allowed in the above locations except for Sheep Meadow and the Great Lawn Oval.



FIND THE PERFECT FOOD

Is your picnic basket empty? Don't fret – there are plenty of places to pick up food in the Park.

Maoz Vegetarian

East Side from 106th to 110th Streets

Le Pain Quotidien at Conservatory Water

East Side at 74th Street

Le Pain Quotidien at Mineral Springs

West Side, mid-Park at 69th Street

Ballfields Cafe

Mid-Park, north of the Heckscher Ballfields at 65th Street

Dancing Crane Cafe at the Central Park Zoo

Inside the Central Park Wildlife Conservation Center at 64th Street and Fifth Avenue

Hours vary. Concession carts selling snacks and treats are also scattered around the Park.

DID YOU KNOW?

The most popular day for picnics in the United States is the 4th of July.



(FREE!) FUN AND GAMES

Take advantage of beautiful picnic weather with free outdoor games and activities throughout the Park.

Chess & Checkers House

Mid-Park at 64th Street

This visitor center run by the Conservancy features outdoor chess and checkers tables. Visitors are welcome to borrow chess and checkers pieces from Conservancy staff, or bring their own. Dominos and backgammon are also available.

North Meadow Recreation Center

Mid-Park at 97th Street

Borrow balls, bats, Frisbees, and jump ropes. The Recreation Center also features basketball and handball courts; as well as baseball, softball, and soccer fields.

Charles A. Dana Discovery Center

Inside the Park at 110th Street between Fifth and Lenox Avenues

Borrow fishing poles and bait at this center just north of the Harlem Meer for catch-and-release fishing. Groups of 5 or more require reservations. Seasonal.



If your picnic includes kids between 6 to 10 years old, we recommend Discovery Journals! These journals contain activities that help kids to investigate the connections between the plants, wildlife, and people in the Park. Journals can be picked up free of charge at all Visitor Centers.

GRILLING AND BARBECUING

Barbecuing is allowed only on Memorial Day, Labor Day, and 4th of July. Grilling on one of those three days? We suggest the Harlem Meer or the Great Hill because of their smaller crowds.

Please note the following rules:

- Barbecuing is allowed only on the three days specified above, not the entire holiday weekend.
- Barbecuing is prohibited in the following areas: athletic fields, playgrounds, woodlands (North Woods, Ramble, Hallett Nature Sanctuary), landscapes that are fenced off, and Conservatory Garden.
- Use of propane is not allowed.

FORGET SOMETHING?



You can find blankets, hats, books, and bags at the Dairy Visitor Center & Gift Shop. The Dairy is open daily from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, except Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.



TRASH

Carry in, carry out! Please take all of your trash with you and place it in a trash receptacle on your way out of the Park.