

Q&A

I am going to New York with my 15-year-old son, and he really wants to see the city beyond Times Square. The problem is, he's not a big fan of organized tours. Are there any teenage-worthy ones that we can do on our own time?

G.P., Woburn

You might want to take a stab at the latest generation of guides that require a little technology and a large willingness to explore off the beaten path. Among them is Soundwalk (www.soundwalk.com), which bills itself as "audio tours for people who don't normally take audio tours."

For 50 minutes a mix of local hipsters and celebs (including author and director Paul Auster) take you on a sonic insider's tour of 13 locations, from the Meatpacking District and Chinatown to Hip-hop Bronx and Hasidic Williamsburg (one version for men and one for women, of course).

Interviews with neighborhood pioneers are woven together with sound effects (footsteps, helicopters, chitter chatter), ambient music, and knowledgeable tidbits down to the name of the maître d' in a trendy downtown restaurant and what happens behind that closed door you just passed. A map of each tour comes with the CD (\$20) or as a PDF file, should you choose to go the downloadable mp3 route (\$13).

Talking Street (www.talkingstreet.com) adds even more flexibility to the audio genre. All you need is a cellphone to join the tour aboard the Staten Island Ferry, at the World Trade Center Site, or on the Lower East Side. Just pay \$5.95 on the website, print out the map, follow it to any of the listed locations, dial 877-870-8687, and, before you know it, actors Jerry Stiller, Si-gourney Weaver, or Paul Sorvino are teaching you some of the city's finer points.

Got a travel-related question? Send it to Hillary Geronemus, travel editor at *Body + Soul* magazine, at hillarygeronemus@yahoo.com.

Rave/Rock stars

BETH D'ADDONO

A perfect little setting in the Crescent City

Looking for a lasting memory of your trip to New Orleans? After you have gotten the beignets at Café Du Monde and boas on Bourbon Street, head over to St. Philip Street for some bling-bling at New Orleans Gem & Lapidary, a spot decidedly off most tourists' radar.



Bling go the strings of shoppers' hearts.

Located on a small side street between Decatur and Chartres a few blocks away from the French Market, this jewel of a gem boutique will knock your socks off. Owned for 17 years by partners Guy LeBlanc and Alan Hobden, New Orleans Gem & Lapidary rises to any occasion, serving up a shining array from giant specimen crystals to freshwater pearls and every imaginable type of gemstone.

I found gifts for my 92-year-old grandmother (she adores her silver-dollar-size red Swarovski crystal on a long silver chain, \$50) and my niece turning 21 (chunky Wilma Flintstone-style cultured pearls separated by shimmering crystal beads, a steal at \$45). For myself, I chose a garnet ring custom designed in white gold for \$300. There's even a funky collection of gag gifts for the bachelorette party set. If you're not sure what you want, the friendly and ever-patient staff will show you possibilities you hadn't considered. Best of all, the prices will leave you with plenty of cash to show off your purchases over lunch.

New Orleans Gem & Lapidary, 527 St. Philip St., 504-524-9595, 800-356-6252. Daily 9:30 a.m.-6 p.m.

'Leonardo da Vinci: Experience, Experiment and Design'

Victoria & Albert Museum LONDON Through Jan. 7

The mind of Leonardo da Vinci was never more alive than when he had a pencil in hand with paper before him. This exhibition consists of 62 drawings from the holdings of the Victoria & Albert Museum, the British Library, the British Museum, and the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle. They dazzlingly show the sheer capaciousness of da Vinci's mind and imagination. One sheet contains more than a dozen subjects, ranging from geometric designs to hair strands. Other drawings consist of anatomical studies, analyses of the diffraction of light, renderings of horses, and a demonstration of the similar appearance of a man yelling and a lion roaring.

Cromwell Road. 011-44-20-7942-2000. www.vam.ac.uk

Louvre Atlanta: 'Kings as Collectors,' and 'The King's Drawings'

High Museum of Art ATLANTA Oct. 14-Sept. 2 and Jan. 28

Atlanta is making a move to become the Paris of the South, thanks to an agreement between the High Museum of Art and the Louvre. Starting this fall exhibitions highlighting artworks from the great Paris museum's collection will be exhibited at the High. The first two shows are "Kings as Collectors" and "The King's Drawings." The former comprises paintings, sculptures, pieces of decorative art, and drawings collected by French kings. The latter show consists of master drawings collected by Louis XIV, Louis XV, and Louis XVI. Subsequent exhibitions scheduled in 2007, 2008, and 2009 will examine the Louvre's holdings in decorative arts, antiquities, and more recent art.

1280 Peachtree St. NE. 404-733-4444. www.high.org

Destinations/Culture

MARK FEENEY

Leibovitz oeuvre to Louvre Atlanta



© ANNIE LEIBOVITZ, COURTESY OF VANITY FAIR; FROM "A PHOTOGRAPHER'S LIFE" (RANDOM HOUSE, 2006)

Jamie Foxx, actor-musician-comedian, from Annie Leibovitz's forthcoming "A Photographer's Life."

'Annie Leibovitz: A Photographer's Life, 1990-2005'

Brooklyn Museum NEW YORK Oct. 20-Jan. 21

Annie Leibovitz is the best-known portrait photographer working today. This new exhibition, which includes more than 200 images, offers a greatly varied view of her work. As might be expected, there are the famous: Bill Clinton, Bill Gates, Mick Jagger, Jack Nicholson, the celebrated nude portrait of a pregnant Demi Moore. But the bulk of the show consists of photographs of Leibovitz's family, landscapes, still lifes, self-portraits, and numerous pictures of Leibovitz's long-time companion, the late writer Susan Sontag.

200 Eastern Parkway. 718-638-5000. www.brooklynmuseum.org

International Architecture Exhibition Venice Biennale

VENICE Through Nov. 19

This 10th incarnation of the Venice Biennale for architecture focuses on cities, global urbanization, and building designs to address the problems of urban society worldwide. Sixteen cities receive special attention: Mumbai, Tokyo, Caracas, Mexico City, Bogota, São Paulo, Los Angeles, New York, Johannesburg, Cairo, Istanbul, London, Berlin, Barcelona, and Milan-Turin. The exhibitions, workshops, conferences, and educational activities will conclude with the presentation of an "Agenda for 21st-Century Cities."

Palazzo Querini Dubois. 011-39-041-521-8711. www.labiennale.org/en/architecture

'Anselm Kiefer: Heaven and Earth'

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art SAN FRANCISCO Oct. 20-Jan. 21

Comprising some 40 artworks, this exhibition offers the first US museum show devoted to Anselm Kiefer's work in almost 20 years. It includes paintings, sculptures, books, and works on paper dating from 1969 to the present, and highlights the ambitious subjects and themes characteristic of this German artist's work: alchemy, history, mythology, and Jewish mysticism.

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 151 Third St. 415-357-4000. www.sfmoma.org

Contact Mark Feeny at mfeeny@globe.com

Ride the rain forest, drive into the volcano

Where they went/St. Lucia

DIANE DANIEL

WHO: Tim and Joanie Cohen-Mitchell, both 42, of Orange, and their son, Noah, 4

WHERE: St. Lucia

WHEN: A week in July

WHY: "I was working on four Caribbean islands and everyone said that St. Lucia is the most family-friendly island you can go to, that it has the most to do for young children," said Joanie Cohen-Mitchell, a literacy specialist with the Caribbean Support Initiative.

AMENABLE TO IT ALL: The family met at Castries, the capital. "We were there in the rainy season and that first day was the only day it rained," Cohen-Mitchell said. "So we went to the pool at the hotel. Noah made all kinds of friends in the pool." They stayed in Rodney Bay, the kind of touristy area she used to avoid when traveling on her own, she said. "We picked it because it had access to a lot of things." They stayed at Coco Kreole, "an inexpensive hotel connected to an expensive hotel, so we got to use all the amenities. . . ."

STEERING CLEAR: From the hotel, they took day trips. "We rented a car and ended up driving around by ourselves. Tim did all the driving. I just couldn't do it," she said. "Not only do they drive on the other side, but the roads were really curvy."

BOY OH BOY: Noah loved Rainforest Sky Rides, a tram that went into the Babonneau rain forest, his mother reported. "It's a half-hour ride, so it's perfect for someone under 5. At the end there are trails and a little cafe, and shopping, of course."

You can hike around and look at things. Noah had a ball." Turning his attention to the ocean, Noah was captivated by a ride in a glass-bottom boat. "I thought he was going to jump out at the glass," Cohen-Mitchell said. "We saw squirrel fish, soldier fish, parrotfish, turtle, coral, sponges."

WHAT A BLAST: The family was fascinated by the Soufriere volcano. "It's billed as the world's only drive-in volcano," Cohen-Mitchell said. "You drive in and park and go for a short little tour, and it's smoking and bubbling. As you get close you can tell you're in the middle. They have side excursions . . . into hot springs. The area around it — two mountains called the Pitons — is beautiful."

DIFFERENT VIEWS: "My husband has lived in Africa and we both like nondeveloped areas," said Cohen-Mitchell, who has lived in Haiti and speaks Creole. "We knew, of course, that there were pockets of average people trying to get by. Like a couple roads up from Rodney Bay, you'd see incredible mansions, but if you took the other road into the interior, you'd see some poverty. We got lost, but the people were friendly and helpful. I could speak to them in Creole, which was fun."

COME SEE WHERE THEY WENT

Visit boston.com/wheretheywent for other readers' photos. Send suggestions within two weeks of your return to diane@bydianedaniel.com.



The Cohen-Mitchells about to embark on a glass-bottomed boat from Rodney Bay in St. Lucia.

You can taste the Big Apple without its taking a bite out of your wallet

By Richard P. Carpenter

GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Sure, you can spend a bundle in the city, seeing the hottest shows and eating at the priciest restaurants. But you can also fill your days in the Big Apple with worthwhile attractions that cost \$12 or less, usually with discounts for children, students, and seniors. Here, with some help from NYC & Company (the city's marketing agency), is a small sampling:

I am among those who have spent many an entertaining hour at the Museum of Television & Radio at 25 West 52d St. You can watch or listen to more than 120,000 programs and ads dating to 1918. You simply choose a program and watch or listen to it on a console, alone or with up to four people. Come on now, you've been dying to hear Archie Bunker bellow just one more time. Adult admission is \$10.

Visit www.mtr.org and click on New York or call 212-621-6800.

Watch those dolphins leap at the New York Aquarium on Coney Island. It's the city's only aquar-

ium, with more than 8,000 creatures. No matter your age, you will learn and be entertained. Adult admission is \$12.

Visit www.nyaquarium.com or call 718-265-FISH.

Manhattan's only remaining Dutch Colonial farmhouse is eight miles and a world apart from Times Square, and costs but \$1 admission. The Dyckman Farmhouse Museum at 4881 Broadway at 204th Street lets visitors see the parlor, dining room, and farm office; the Relic Room features photos and artifacts of Inwood from the last two centuries. Many of the objects date from the Revolutionary War period, when the Hessians — German soldiers serving with the British — camped there.

Visit www.dyckmanfarmhouse.org or call 212-304-9422.

Everyone should visit the Statue of Liberty and especially Ellis Island to live the story of American immigration. You will learn, for instance, that Annie Moore of Ireland celebrated her 15th birthday on Jan. 1, 1892, the day she became the first of more than 12 million immigrant steamship passengers to be processed by 1954.

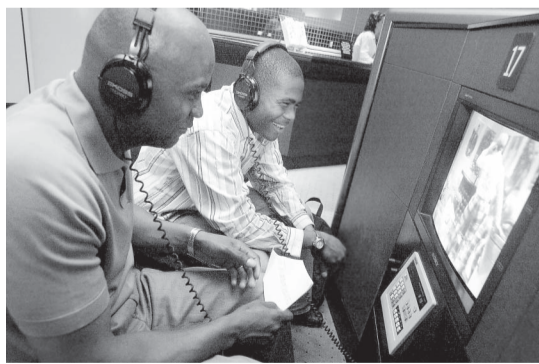
There is no admission charge but an adult ferry ticket is \$11.50.

Visit www.nps.gov/stli or www.nps.gov/ellis or call 212-363-3200. For ferry reservations, call 866-STATUE4 or visit www.statuereservations.com.

There are so many low-cost attractions in New York; for even more, along with city information, go to www.nyevisit.com and click on Visitors, then Things to Do. A guided tour of the United Nations (www.un.org/tours; 212-963-8687), for instance, costs \$12. But I have always maintained that the greatest attraction is the vibrant city itself, especially Manhattan with its sights and lights and characters. Whenever I visit, I walk until my feet protest.

Web world

A trip to www.vipoffers.com will get you a raft of discounts, such as 15 percent off the Daniela Trattoria on Eighth Avenue, a free



TING-LI WANG/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Randall Benjamin and his son Cory, 15, watched "Saturday Night Live" clips at the Museum of Television & Radio.

bottle of wine at 2 Rivers Restaurant and Bar on Murray Street downtown, and a \$12 brunch buffet at George O'Neill's Steakhouse & Piano Bar on 50th Street off Lexington.

On the higher side

The Shoreham Hotel on West 55th Street is running two specials: The Spa-Tacular Weekend package, valid through March 31, starts at \$519 a night but includes a Junior Spa Suite (with a five-head rain shower and Jacuzzi

tub), facial or manicure at Spa Chinoise across the street, two signature I Shoreham Happy martinis, continental breakfast for two, late checkout, and a champagne toast upon arrival. Also until March 31, the Sexy Weekends package starts at \$499 a night and includes a deluxe one-bedroom suite, two VIP tickets to the Museum of Modern Art (worth more than \$40), two tickets to the Museum of Sex (read all about it at www.museumofsex.com), and continental breakfast for two. The Shoreham completed a multimillion-dollar renovation at the end of last year.

Visit www.shorehamhotel.com or call 800-553-3347.

On the sky-high side

You won't find tables or slots, but you can live it up Vegas-style with a High Roller package at the Hotel Gansevoort in the city's trendy Meatpacking District. For \$5,000 a night for two people, the offer includes a stay in the duplex penthouse, an excursion on a 42-

foot private yacht or use of either a Lamborghini Gallardo or Ferrari 360 Spyder for a day; breakfast daily at Ono; a table for 10 and magnum of vodka at Lotus; a private midnight dip in the rooftop pool; a 60-minute custom facial, 60-minute massage, and manicure/pedicure per person; a bottle of Dom Perignon and chocolate strawberries upon arrival; round-trip transfers from the city's airport or addresses within 20 miles of the hotel; two monogrammed Hotel Gansevoort bathrobes; fresh flowers; and even hangover tonic, which may be most useful as you consider what you've spent.

Visit www.hotelgansevoort.com and click on Getaway Specials for lower-priced packages, or call 877-426-7386.

When not included, hotel taxes, airport fees, and port charges can add significantly to the price of a trip. Most prices quoted are for double occupancy; solo travelers will usually pay more. Offers are subject to availability and there may be blackout dates. Contact Richard P. Carpenter at carpenter@globe.com.