



Hudson County, New Jersey

BY STEPHANIE VERMILLION

Just eight kilometres from crowded Times Square, travellers can find respite from tourist attractions in an unexpected locale: Hudson County. This New Jersey county, set west of Manhattan along the Hudson River, is an emerging destination attracting travellers and food lovers alike. We can hardly blame them. With significantly fewer tourists than neighbouring Manhattan and shortcuts to major landmarks we're betting it won't stay that way for long. A diverse culinary scene, good value hotels and splendid New York City views attract new visitors each year. Here's how to visit Hudson County while it's still hidden in plain sight:

SEE & DO



Most travellers visit the **Statue of Liberty** and **Ellis Island National Museum of Immigration** from Lower Manhattan, but lines are long and the boats are packed. Instead, head to Jersey City's **Liberty State Park**. The park offers the area's quickest access to the Statue and Ellis Island - tickets are available from Statue Cruises at the Central Railroad Terminal Building - but that hardly scratches the surface of this 485-hectare green space. Stroll the waterfront for expansive views of the Statue of Liberty and Lower Manhattan or stop by the highly praised **Liberty House Restaurant** for upscale dining with elevated Manhattan vistas. To round out your park experience, head over to the **Liberty Science Center**, an interactive museum with the largest planetarium in the Western Hemisphere, the **Jennifer Chalsty Planetarium**. The museum is filled with hands-on children's activities, but on the third Thursday of every month, adults 21 and over have all the fun. Liberty Science Center's popular After Dark parties pair food, drinks, music and dancing with after-hours access.

Unspoiled panoramas continue in **Hoboken**, one of America's most densely populated communities. At just over two-and-a-half-square kilometres, Hoboken is easily navigable. The pedestrian-friendly **Hudson River Waterfront Walkway** is a 29-kilometre path from Bayonne to the George Washington Bridge. It winds through Hoboken, offering views from the **World Trade Center** to the **Empire State Building** and beyond. For a unique vantage point, admire Manhattan's skyline from the water. The volunteer-run **Hoboken Cove Community**



Boathouse provides free SUP and kayaking most weekends from May to September. Alternatively, head up to one of Hoboken's best hidden viewpoints: **Castle Point Lookout**, located on the peaceful **Stevens Institute of Technology** campus. Situated on a hilltop with Hoboken's waterfront walkway in the foreground, this panorama puts the enormous Manhattan skyline to scale.

While its views are unparalleled, Hudson County is more than a Manhattan photo opp. Experience local fare and fandom at Harrison's **Red Bull Arena**, home to Major League Soccer's New York Red Bulls. Between MLS matches, the stadium hosts a variety of prestigious teams, including the defending FIFA World Cup champions, the U.S. Women's National Team. Red Bull Arena is a quick walk from the Harrison PATH station, making it easily accessible for Hudson County visitors.



Hyatt Regency Jersey City on the Hudson

Hyatt Hotels & Resorts



Skinner's Loft in Jersey City

EAT & DRINK



Hudson County is one of the most culturally diverse places in the United States, and nowhere is this more apparent than its food scene. Take **Son Cubano**, a trendy restaurant with vintage vibes from glamorous 1950s Cuba. This waterfront institution pairs cultural classics like *churrasco* and *ropa vieja* with late-night fun; live music and festive dancing fill the West New York hot spot every weekend.

Despite its size, dining options abound in Hoboken. With longstanding establishments like the classic **Amanda's Restaurant** and the upscale **Blue Eyes Restaurant** (named after former resident Frank Sinatra), visitors never have to go hungry in Hoboken. We'd argue **Elysian Cafe** cooks up some of its best bites. It's also the city's oldest continually operated bar and restaurant. Circa 1895, this saloon masqueraded as a "beauty parlor" (cough, speakeasy, cough) during Prohibition. Today, the Hoboken staple serves French fare for brunch, lunch and dinner. Cozy up at the front bar with a draught beer where antique décor pairs with TVs for game day or practice patience while waiting for a coveted outdoor table - the perfect spot to watch the hustle, bustle and adorable dogs parading up and down Hoboken's main drag, Washington Street.

Come happy hour, there's no better place to pony up for creative cocktails than **The Archer**, a rustic, lodge-inspired bar on Newark Avenue in Jersey City. This swanky hangout serves imaginative concoctions like the Tijuana Lady (tequila, Licor 43, lime and angostura bitters) and the St. Charles Punch (Cognac, port, lemon and simple syrup). The fun doesn't stop at the drink menu. The Archer serves equally inspired appetizers, from duck poutine to braised oxtail toast. If restaurant-hopping is your thing, head down Newark Avenue to **Barcade**, **Porta** and **Roman Nose** to drink up and chow down on Jersey City's ever-expanding restaurant row. 11

STAY & SLEEP



Good views are not scarce in Hudson County, but the area's waterfront hotels offer some of the best. Weehawken's **Sheraton Lincoln Harbor Hotel** is adjacent to the NY Waterway ferry line's Lincoln Harbor stop. Guests can travel to and from Midtown Manhattan in less than 10 minutes. If you score a waterfront room, schedule an early wake-up call. The sunrise over Manhattan's skyline is worth every minute of missed sleep.

Or head south along the Hudson waterfront to the **Hyatt Regency Jersey City**, a posh, four-star hotel situated on its own quiet pier facing the **One World Trade Center**. The hotel is a quick walk from the Exchange Place PATH train station, which connects to NYC. Whether or not you leave the Hyatt's Manhattan-view indoor pool is entirely up to you.

Come football season, Jets and Giants fans flock to East Rutherford for tailgating and spirited revelry. **Embassy Suites by Hilton Secaucus Meadowlands** offers cozy and convenient lodging in the heart of the Jets and Giants action. The hotel offers free shuttle connections to and from **Meadowlands Sports Complex**. After a long day of cheering, recover your voice in their indoor pool and tropical atrium.