

Happy Birthday America (and New York)!

Roberta Cutillo (July 04, 2014)



The fourth of July is finally here and – as always – New York offers an incredible variety of options for its citizens (and visitors) to celebrate this National Holiday. And for the first time in Five years, the fireworks will be held on the East River, above the Brooklyn Bridge, not on the Hudson River!

It would be impossible to list every single one, but we have selected some of the most interesting ways New Yorkers can choose to celebrate the United State's Birthday this year: from securing a spot to see the famous Macy's Fireworks, to experiencing improv shows at the much more underground Indie-pendence Day Festival.



How do New Yorkers celebrate Independence Day? I don't actually know but they sure aren't lacking in options. As always, the Big Apple doesn't fail to offer a vast range of activities for all types of people.

Perhaps the most well-known of these are the Macy's Fireworks, which, according to the store, will be held regularly at 9 pm this year, in the event of rain or shine. However, one thing that will definitely be different is that, **for the first time in five years, the fireworks will be held on the East River, above the Brooklyn Bridge, not on the Hudson River.**

This means that the viewing spaces have changed. But not to worry, we have a pretty good idea of where to get the best firework-viewing experiences.

If you want to keep it simple and inexpensive, head out early (at least before 5pm) and find a spot on Piers 1 to 6 in Brooklyn Bridge Park, on the Brooklyn Heights promenade, in South Street Seaport (except for piers 15 and 17, which will be closed), the Grand Ferry Park in Williamsburg, or the Columbia Street Waterfront, between Degraw Street and Atlantic Avenue. In these places you can enjoy some nice American snacks and relax outdoors with friends as you wait for the fireworks to start.

You could also head to Havemeyer Park, where from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., North Brooklyn Farms is hosting a 4th of July BBQ.

If you would rather enjoy the view from a rooftop, there are quite a few restaurants offering Independence Day deals. Such as Fornino, a pizzeria and café on Pier 6 in Brooklyn Bridge Park where for \$75, guests get pizza and a buffet, plus a prime spot on the rooftop to see the fireworks. Likewise, The bar, Berry Park's huge Williamsburg roof deck will be a great place for firework-viewing.

Same goes for the Red, White and View event at the Z Hotel rooftop in Long Island City. And the Brooklyn Bridge Garden on Pier 1 of Brooklyn Bridge Park is hosting a private, ticketed event that will offer the best views without the crowds.

And if you want to get even closer to the fireworks, you can take one of the many ferry services, from the luxurious Infinity Yacht to the more affordable Festival Yacht, there are many options if you want to experience the fireworks while partying on the river.

Another way to celebrate the 4th of July is by heading down to the lovely South Street Seaport where there will be events going on for the entire weekend with live music and open air movie screenings.

If you want to witness something really American then you should definitely go out to Coney Island and check out Nathan's Famous Fourth of July International Hot Dog Eating Contest. This contest is a serious affair. It's neatly organized with different categories, people all around the United States participate, and the whole thing is broadcasted on live television.

After this you should stick around for Coney Island's very own fireworks starting at 9:45 pm: Although less famous than Macy's, just as festive and worthwhile.

Another all-American experience can be had at the Independence Day celebration in Historic Richmond Town, Staten Island (378-410 Clarke Ave). This event goes on from 11 am to 5 pm, during which time you can indulge in fun activities like the pie baking contest, help to churn old-time ice cream, participate in the Pinwheel Parade, and even meet patriotic villagers from the 1800s and earlier.

You could then spend the night on the South Beach Boardwalk at the FDR Boardwalk and Beach still in Staten Island, where from 9pm to 11pm there will be a free screening on the beach of the movie National Treasure.

Otherwise, if the Independence Day spirit has made you interested in the country's history, this



could be a great time to enjoy the Revolutionary Era Manhattan Walking Tour and discover the city's beautiful historic landmarks, which played a role in the Nation's fight for independence. Tours depart daily on Broadway and Murray St. at either 10 am, 12 pm or 1pm and last about two hours and a half. This could be a fun opportunity to brush up on your American History.

Perhaps the most official way to celebrate is by attending the Star-Spangled Celebration at Avery Fisher Hall: a beautiful concert held at 3pm on the 4th, at 8 pm on the 5th and at 3pm on the 6th by the New York Philharmonic and "The Commandant's Own" to celebrate America's birthday with this spectacular display of musical fireworks.

And if this type of celebration just isn't for you but you still want to do something special for the 4th of July, you should check out the Indie-pendence Day Festival at the PIT in Manhattan (123 East 24th St). The venue will host independent improve teams from across New York and beyond for hours of shows, live music, BBQ, drink specials, and fun (from 12pm to 11 pm). Here you can enjoy Independence Day with a dose of irony.

But regardless of how you choose to spend it, have an amazing Fourth of July!

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