

Voyager





Voyager

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Editor's Note:

We are so excited to announce the inaugural edition of the renewed Voyager! This year definitely has been a crazy year for everyone, and when we thought of starting Voyager during the middle of a Pandemic, it seemed impossible. We believe it is important to show Horace Mann students' diverse and unique travel perspectives from across the globe to right down the street! We hope that Voyager is a publication that every type of reader can relate to in some way.

We owe an enormous amount of gratitude to everyone who helped Voyager get to this point. We can't put into words how much all of your help means to us given this is our first edition. First and foremost we need to thank Ms. Morales for her constant support and encouragement throughout this entire process. Whenever we found an issue along the way we could always count on our Executive Editor Rowan Mally for giving his expertise to help us through it. We also want to thank our entire editorial board for making the production of our first issue so smooth.

Finally, we are extremely thankful for all of our staff writers who passionately shared their stories of adventure. We loved creating this issue and hope you enjoy it as much as we do!

-Spencer Rosenberg and Sam Weidman

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EVERYTHING IS POKE-DOKIE

JAYDEN SIEGEL

Covid-19 has made traveling hard. No longer can people travel and experience the wonderful cuisines of foreign countries. Instead, they are restricted to local restaurants and cuisines. As New Yorkers, we are restricted to the food in New York. How terrible! New York, a city of immigrants, is home to a wide array of diverse options. In New York, people can travel the world (food-wise) from their bedrooms. In this article I will be focusing on the presence of Hawaiian cuisine in New York. More specifically, I will be reviewing Poke Bowls. I will be doing this in the most lazy way possible: sitting on my couch at home, ordering off of Uber Eats. I think Horace Mann students would find this particularly helpful because does anybody really have time to stop studying for their math test and walk ten blocks to the nearest Poke Bowl place?

Now, for those of you who have never eaten the classic Hawaiian dish and are wondering what it is, I will provide you with a brief description.

Brief Description of Poke Bowl:

Poke means chunk in Hawaiian. The classic Hawaiian Poke Bowl usually consists of cubes or chunks of raw marinated fish combined with rice. A New York City Poke Bowl revolution has completely flipped that definition onto its head. Now, in the best description possible, a Poke Bowl can be anything. It can just have raw fish, it can have no fish at all, just greens, rice and greens, lots of sauces, IDKK. However, most Poke Bowls, even in the city, do contain rice and raw marinated fish like the original, just a whole lot more toppings.

Warnings Before Ordering

Poke Bowls are not as healthy as advertised. Poke bowls are becoming so popular in New York (and elsewhere) because they are salads that are delicious and look very healthy. My number one learning is: don't let their looks and their salad like structures trick you into thinking that all Poke Bowls are healthy - because they are not. I can assure you that when you open your clear plastic containers, you will notice that your delicious, healthy salad is about ½ rice and ½ spicy mayo. And then accounting for common additions like the sodium infused seaweed salad, tuna or salmon which are both high in mercury, or crunchy toppings like Tempura Crunch, you will realize that your healthy salad is not as healthy as it seems. However, the purpose of this is not to scare you away from ordering Poke Bowls. What you put in your Poke Bowl will decide how healthy your meal will be. Many Poke Bowls without the unhealthy additions are still very tasty. Also, it's fair to argue that even the most unhealthy Poke Bowls are healthier than prevailing orders from Shake Shack,

Chick-Fil-A, or McDonalds.

Poke Bowls are expensive.

Although my introductory paragraph may seem slightly ostentatious and spoiled, I am fully aware of the cost of Poke Bowls. The average cost of the Poke Bowls that I ordered was around 15 dollars. Add in a bubble tea, tax, delivery fees, and a tip and the price doubles. That is expensive. I am fully aware of this and if it weren't for my journalistic aspirations, I never would have dropped Benjamin Franklin's bill for just three Poke Bowls in the span of three days (#maketheschoolpay, I'm kidding... but actually). It's well known, however, that good and healthy food tends to cost more. So, it is really a matter of what is a priority for you. If this article wasn't about ordering food, I would advise you to walk the ten blocks and pick up your Poke Bowl -- which is not only a cheaper alternative, but a healthier one too!

Presentation is Key, but Sometimes Misleading

Typically presentation matters when ordering in as one image or picture can be the deciding factor that answers the irritating and surprisingly time-consuming question of "what should I order?". Through my brief excursion into Hawaiian cuisine, I will confess to you: Poke chefs know how to present. Maybe that's why Poke Bowls are becoming so popular in the ordering-in world. Whether through a sparkling HD photo on Uber Eats or in-person presentations that made my eyes bulge, it became obvious immediately that making a Poke Bowl is an art. However, not all of the bowls, rather unsurprisingly, tasted as good as their immaculate presentations suggested. Although I am a strong believer that presentation matters and contributes to the eating experience, I am here to tell you that presentation is not an accurate indicator of taste. So, like, don't order Poke Bowls or whatever (sarcastic).

Now, without further ado, or self-deprecating blabbering, I give you the top Poke places near *** ***** Avenue ***** (my address).

BEST POKE BOWL PLACES NEAR ME TO ORDER FROM

(ranked from worst to best)
Note: Whoever reads this and is inspired to order in, please think about the environment. Uber eats gives you an option to request disposable, single use, bad for the environment items like utensils and napkins. Please do not check the box requesting these items. Use your utensils at home. Also, ordering in general is not very good for the environment. It uses plastic bags and containers along with other wasteful items. Please make an effort to not always order in and make use of the reusable kitchenware you have at home. Also, if you decide to order in, recycle your garbage.

Not as important note: There is a chance that some of my decisions and reviews are biased.

"I never would have dropped Benjamin Franklin's bill for just three Poke Bowls in the span of three days"

3- POKE BOWL (8TH AVE) -- How it is labeled on UberEats Rather comically, I couldn't find the name of this place. On Uber Eats it is labeled Poke Bowl (8th Ave), so I am going to go with that. Kind of sketchy? A sketchy name accompanied a rather sketchy Poke Bowl. The "Honolulu Salmon Poke Plenty Bowl" was the only bowl that I ordered which I considered not eating. After opening the plastic covering, I was welcomed with a rather fishy smell which made me question whether I am willing to risk my health and well being in order to review a Poke Bowl. My innate journalistic subconscious kicked in and I devoured the whole bowl in a matter of minutes. I will not reveal what happened after that in the bathroom, but I can assure you it was not very pretty (this is a big stretch).

Overall, the bowl was not very good. The Spicy Ponzu sauce was way too strong and didn't really compliment the other flavors in the bowl. I thought mango was a peculiar addition to a Poke Bowl before ordering and my speculations were confirmed when I started eating the bowl. The mango was way too strong and tried to separate itself too much from the other more low key flavors. My only compliment of the bowl

is that the raw Salmon didn't taste as bad as it smelled.
2- RED POKE

I thought Red Poke had the most unique, non-traditional bowl. The "Young Sook Lee Bowl" had interesting additions of cucumber, red cabbage and shallots. Although the flavors didn't work amazingly together, I commend the restaurant for distinguishing itself with its own unique flavors. I thought the sauce was pretty good and I liked the raw salmon and tuna. Overall, it was a solid Poke Bowl.
1- UPTOWN POKE

This place is a classic. Located at 506 Amsterdam Avenue, it has a wonderful indoor seating area, recently updated actually - but, alas no one cares! - because this article is about ordering in. The first thing that jumped out to me after ordering in from Uptown Poke was that my name was written - along with a variety of multicolored festive lines and scribbles - on the white paper bag that carried my order. This felt like the ordering-in form of good service and respectful waiters. It felt as though they were individualizing the order for me - I was not just one of many.

I decided to order one of the restaurant's best sellers "The Salmon Sunrise" along with a Taro bubble tea. The bowl consisted of a combination of two sauces -- sweet sauce and spicy mayo -- which complemented each other very well. The edamame and avocado, although not groundbreakingly unique additions to Poke Bowls, still worked really well, as they usually do. The only real criticism I have is that the Poke Bowl was probably not that healthy, but it most definitely made up for it with flavor. The Taro bubble tea was also really good. I liked how you could customize your desired sweetness before ordering.



<https://www.istockphoto.com/photos/poke-bowl?phrase=poke%20bowl&sort=mostpopular>

The Universal Art of Street Food by William Choi

I have been fortunate enough to travel to various countries and cities, and during my time in each one, I was able to experience some amazing culture and food. My family is quite keen on enjoying unique dishes, and in particular, street food. You can sit down at a restaurant and order some fancy expensive meal, but I believe that there is a certain soul to street food, the streets are where the magic happens. Sometimes the hustle and bustle of a marketplace or plaza, filled with the scent of rich snacks and desserts to eat, is more comforting than any five star restaurant. Out of all the countries and wonderful places that I have had the chance to eat, Spain, Japan, and the United States stood out the most.

Spain

Perhaps this is perfect for a mid day, pre lunch snack. Consider this dish as a refreshing and clean side, not a whole meal. The unofficial name is Pan con Tomate, which simply means bread with tomato, but in fact this dish is much more than it's humble name. Typically, it is a slice of toasted bread with a generous amount of olive oil and organic tomato paste, not too thick, and unlike ketchup, the paste is only made with the actual juiced tomato and sometimes a small amount of salt. When you take a bite, it is crispy and airy, yet it also has a pleasant aftertaste. Though delicious, I do not recommend ordering this dish at a restaurant, as they serve the same exact thing as a street cook would, only double the price. Plus, you miss out on that naturalistic homey feel that is native to street markets and outdoor malls.



Next, is Paella:

A diverse dish, with many different culinary combinations and options, you can get it with meat, seafood, vegetables, practically anything you want. At almost every open market, someone is cooking paella in a gigantic pan similar to a wok, mixing and flipping with the aid of fast hands and a large spatula. When I got it, it was always warm and fresh. Cooks on the street and restaurants have variations in ingredients and spices, but the dish's general composition is as follows: Seafood paella is made of shrimp, clams, mussels, paprika, white rice, and some seafood broth. The rice is initially plain, but with the addition of stock, spice, and the seeping flavor of the seafood, it gains a unique and delicious taste. Personally, this dish makes me remember wandering in the city, and it brings back wonderful memories.

Mel i Mató, in other words, soft moist cheese topped with honey. Trust me, I thought that I would vomit, but after the first bite, I was sold. So refreshing and clean, with a creamy sweet taste. It is typically served inside a small cup with a little spoon on the street. They were so good that I ate three of them in a row. The cheese is made out of either sheep, goat, or cow milk, and the honey is usually local. You can find this dish at farmers markets, as usually the people that sell honey sell Mel i Mató as well. Spanish street food is truly a fine mix of extravagant, clean, and filling dishes, though I only named three.



Japan

It is Tako Tamago. Tako Tamago is a small cooked red octopus on a stick, stuffed with a quail egg, then candied. It looks so cute that you can't help but buy one. You take a bite, and a cascade of different flavors flood your senses, as you taste the chewy octopus with the distinctive cooked yolk of a quail egg. It leaves a slightly salty but sweet aftertaste, so you smile and decide to eat some more.



Still small in size, the next food is also a part of the skewered family, and is a dessert that has lived for hundreds of years, it is called dango. It is usually made out of rice flour shaped into balls, after which they are steamed then boiled. You often see three or four balls on a skewer, in festivals and celebrations. Quite often you see each individual ball a different color than the next, so when combined, the result is a fun array of green, white, and pink. Sometimes, a special sauce is added, very thick and gooey, composed of sweetened soy sauce or red bean paste. It is pleasantly chewy with a savory aftertaste, making for the perfect dessert under a clear night, complete with the bright explosions of a firework



New York

Let's start with some nice steamy chestnuts. Nutty and solid, their tantalizing aroma can be smelled blocks away during wintertime. They are the ideal snack to be eaten in the cold, as they warm up both your hands, and your stomach. They might not be for everyone, but I suggest you try a few sometime.

Maybe you are craving something doughy, in that case, then the pretzel is what first comes to mind. It is true, NYC does have the best pretzels. Large and perfectly brown, with visible chunks of salt, NYC pretzels never cease to amaze me with their homey and comforting feel. You can pick these up at the corner vendors basically everywhere in NYC.



In your childhood, you might have fond memories of seeing the white and blue ice cream truck, filled with the anticipation of whether or not your parent(s) would buy you a cone. I must admit, though this is a rare occasion, if I see a truck, I do occasionally buy myself some cold deliciousness. I have always ordered the same thing since I was six, and everytime I had it, the taste would flood my head with pleasant memories. If you pick some up, I strongly suggest vanilla on a cone with rainbow sprinkles. It's a personal favorite, but the colorful confetti like sprinkles, on top of a clean white swirl, is as delicious as it is uplifting.



Photo Credit: Rachel Kuhn

A Road-trip in the Era of Covid-19: California to Colorado

Rachel Kuhn

When HM went online after Spring Break 2020, my family and I quarantined in Napa Valley, California. After two months of isolation with beautiful surroundings and weather, my family decided to journey to Aspen, Colorado to spend the summer with extended family. On June 4th, we packed our rented Dodge minivan and drove the 1,060 miles to Aspen. My family and I woke up at 4am, and made a series of stops along our 20 hour drive:

Stop 1 - Random gas station with Wendy's:

After three and a half hours of driving we arrived in Nevada. I woke up to the glaring and blinding sun at 7:30am. How fun! I tried to fall back asleep and put my hoodie over my entire face, but the light was still so bright. When I felt the car come to a stop, I looked up to see the gas station we had just pulled into. Once my dad opened the door to get gas, I could smell the pungent gasoline, which definitely woke me up. I decided to get out of the car to use the bathroom and get some food because I wasn't sure how long it was going to be until our next stop. The gas station wasn't super busy at 7am, but there were probably around five people waiting to use the bathroom and three people waiting to order food from Wendy's. I remember everyone wearing masks, except for two men who were construction workers. They weren't wearing masks, but it didn't bother me because they basically left two minutes after we entered the gas station. I got a

large bottle of water to quench my thirst and got hash browns to eat later in case I got hungry. My parents got some coffee and my twin brother got a chicken biscuit thing, which he said was bad, but he ate it anyway. My parents were excited about the coffee because there were so many options: Hazelnut, Hazelnut decaf, Vanilla, Vanilla decaf, Columbia, Columbia decaf, flat whites, mochas, lattes, iced coffees, and so many more. I was going to get one, but then I realized that it would ruin my chances of falling asleep again, so I didn't.

Stop 2 - McDonald's in the middle of nowhere:

This stop was by far the worst. None of us were hungry except for my 20 year old brother whose life consists of working out for two thirds of the day and eating the other third. After driving for about 5 hours, through basically just vast plains with mountains in the distance, we approached a weirdly out of place McDonald's in a small, abandoned-ish town. To have this make more sense when I say abandoned, picture one of those wild west movies, where there are deserted stores near taverns. It honestly looked exactly like that, except there were a Shell gas station, a bank, a pharmacy, a clothing outlet, and a McDonalds thrown in there. I remember looking outside my window and seeing some people on the streets, but it was mainly people getting out of their large trucks. My older brother ran into the McDonald's to get the food we wanted. I got a Happy Meal, but unfortunately it did not make me happy. We pulled into the small

parking lot on the side opposite to the highway, so my older brother could eat before driving. While we sat in the parking, lot my brother told us that no one was in the McDonald's except for the four employees. I looked around the parking lot and saw not a single car. Not even the employee's cars. It was somewhat confusing, but I was mainly focused on eating my salty fries.

Stop 3 - Utah:

We made it to the Utah sign by midday and we were so excited because it meant we were halfway. We screamed in the car "Utah Baby!!" It was so fun and definitely cheered everyone up after a long ten and a half hours of driving. We decided to quickly pull over to look at the view. We were all laughing because we were in the middle of nowhere. Just plain nature and vast dry plains. We started to scream random funny things because why not. We were just so happy that we had already suffered and got over half of the drive.

Stop 4 - Ray's Tavern:

Our final stop was an authentic Mexican restaurant in Green River, Utah. We were so excited because we were actually going to sit down and eat a meal. When we drove into Green River, there was a bright sign that said "Welcome to Green River!" But that was literally all. This town was similar to that of the McDonald's in the middle of nowhere stop, except, Green River, had only one restaurant, Ray's Tavern, and one gas station. And when I say the rest of the town looked like something out of an old west movie, I mean it more than the other stop. It was so run down, It was dry and dusty outside and there were townhouse size buildings that looked as if someone hadn't stepped foot in them in a hundred years. There was only one street in Green River, which was the highway. When we pulled over to the Mexican restaurant, Ray's Tavern, it surprisingly looked good even though it was just a restaurant on the side of the highway. There were bright signs and it seemed pretty welcoming. Now I'm not sure if it was because of Covid-19 or that we were in the middle of nowhere, but there were only three other tables full in this decent-sized restaurant. I don't remember the other customers walking in with masks on, but my family wore our masks and so did the servers. We ordered yummy guacamole, chips, salsa, nachos, enchiladas, and chimichangas. It hit the spot and was honestly great food. Ray's Tavern was definitely a highlight because the food was excellent, put smiles on our faces, and was what we needed to get us through the next four hours of driving.

Final Stop - We made it to Aspen!

We arrived in Aspen at 12:30am and were all so excited and awake when we drove through town because we were finally there! It felt so good to take a shower and climb into a warm bed.

The experience overall was really unique not because it was such a long car ride, but because of the stops we took. I had never seen that part of the country before and I realized that I would have never experienced it if I had flown from San Francisco to Aspen. In a time where Covid-19 has taken over our lives and can sometimes make us feel bored, or lonely, I encourage you to try new things and always have an open mind. I could have looked at the road-trip as boring and long and painful, but instead I looked at it as an opportunity to enjoy the small moments.



Photo Credit: Rachel Kuhn



<https://www.istockphoto.com/photo/grande-starbucks-to-go-cup-on-table-gm458726871-20161263>



<https://pixabay.com/photos/coffee-beans-coffee-cup-cup-coffee-2218839/>



<https://artgrouppinc.com/portfolio/birch-coffee/>

Coffee Shop Destinations to Try During the Pandemic

Claire Goldberg

New Yorkers of all five boroughs have hunkered down for the past few months during quarantine, retreating into their apartments to adapt to a new normal. However, for many, some things - namely coffee - have remained a staple of daily life. In the absence of many of our regular pastimes, my sister and I decided to voyage across Manhattan in search of the best coffee shop in the city. Each coffee place was scored in four different categories: quality, price, atmosphere, and pandemic protocol. As a control group, each coffee shop was compared to the standard coffee of the city: Starbucks. In terms of atmosphere, Starbucks coffee is rather average. Despite their annual Christmas decorations, the Starbucks ambiance and decor are usually standard: small tables for work, loud pop music, and brown chairs. In essence, no one goes to Starbucks to take "instagram-worthy" pictures of the store; people go for the convenient coffee, as there is a store located on practically every other corner of the city. The coffee is good, and a little overpriced. During the pandemic, Starbucks has promoted their app on which customers can pre-order their drinks. While customers no longer have to wait for a long time in the store for their orders, the stores seldom provide outdoor seating. Overall, all aspects of Starbucks feel standard - nothing out of the ordinary.

One of our favorite coffee places is Hutch and Waldo, located on 81st Street between 2nd and 3rd Avenue. Described as an "Australian Hangout" on its website, Hutch and Waldo is exactly the type of store that's worthy of a picture. It occupies a former garage, with brick walls and plants, creating a trendy, hole-in-the-wall feel. The wall facing the street remains a clear garage door that folds upwards completely and opens the shop up to the street. In terms of atmosphere, Hutch and Waldo completely outdoes Starbucks. During the pandemic, the store has set up markers on which customers can wait for their drink. Furthermore, they give their customers gloves upon entry, and workers at the store monitor for crowds.[1] As my sister and I ordered online in advance, the store felt comparable to Starbucks in terms of safety. While the coffee was slightly overpriced, the quality was fantastic. I ordered a latte, which wasn't too strong or bitter. They even made a design of a heart in the froth. It also sells great food, with options spanning from acai bowls to breakfast sandwiches. Ultimately, all parts of the Hutch and Waldo experience were positive, and I highly recommend trying it.

Next is Birch coffee, which is a

Manhattan-based chain. Birch was by far the smallest place that we went to, with no indoor seating whatsoever. Even more-so than Hutch and Waldo, Birch is truly a hole-in-the-wall coffee shop. They had personable and young baristas, making the atmosphere rather pleasant. While their coffee is more expensive than Starbucks, it is likely because of its superior quality. Birch sources all of their beans from local and sustainable farms.[2] Birch's green coffee involves a meticulous production process, which in my opinion resulted in a yummy and flavorful coffee. The store only took orders at the window, so customers don't even have to go inside to get their coffee. This made Birch feel more safe, pandemic wise, than Starbucks. All in all, while the store may not look like anything, it certainly does make quality coffee and drinks.

Plantshed Cafe, located on 87th and Columbus, had by far the coolest atmosphere. Doubling as a botanist shop, Plantshed's interior was both beautiful and relaxing. Back in the days when the city wasn't fighting the virus, Plantshed was the perfect place to work: there's plenty of seating, mystical plants all around you, and soft music in the background. The coffee was also very good - better than Starbucks - and they had tasty seasonal coffee drinks like peppermint mochas and pumpkin lattes. In addition to coffee, the store has a variety of delicious vegan and gluten free pastries (and, not to mention, a variety of awesome plants). The coffee plus the plants create a wonderful experience, so Plantshed is the place for everyone - not just coffee lovers.

Lastly, my sister and I tried Ralph's Coffee, located on 72nd and Madison. While the experience was very different from Plantshed, it was almost equally exciting. Due to the pandemic, Ralph's is entirely outdoors and customers order at an outdoor table. However, during the holidays, the Ralph Lauren building is covered with bright holiday lights that complement the bright decorations spanning Madison Avenue. As a result, the outdoor eating experience is fun and festive, despite the cold. The coffee is priced similar to Starbucks, and yet its quality is way better. While they have a limited food menu - a selection of just a few pastries - their chocolate-chip cookie was fantastic. Overall, Ralph's Coffee is a more interesting and exciting alternative to Starbucks, that also doubles as a fun outing during the holiday season.

While the list of high-quality coffee shops goes on and on, these four alternatives to Starbucks are fun local destinations, where one can even do a little Manhattan sight-seeing. So, if you're stuck at home and looking to do a little traveling, here are a few pandemic-friendly places to start.



<https://www.elledecor.com/it/best-of/a22674031/plantshed-cafe-new-york/>



<https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fmxy.org%2>



<https://www.pexels.com/photo/art-blur-cappuccino-close-up-302899/>



Dining with the Squad and with Covid-19

Simon Schackner

Outdoor dining has been a great way for me to regain some sense of normalcy with my friends. It is a safe and delicious way to socialize. This article will rate some restaurants on the Upper East Side that I have enjoyed with my friends these last few months.

JG Melon's

JG Melon's has been one of my favorite places to eat since I was a little kid. Their burgers are definitely the best that I've ever had. When they finally opened outdoor dining over the summer, I knew I had to go. I went in August with my family. At that time, they had only a few outdoor seats, but the burger was still delicious. When I came back with a few of my friends during the fall, I was amazed to see that the restaurant had seats all the way down 74th between 3rd and 2nd; far more seats than they had in the summer. While there are no heating lamps, you are seated under a tent, which provides some warmth. The burgers are as good as you'll find anywhere, and they cost only \$12, so your friends won't be complaining about how they've had to spend all their money on one burger. In fact, it is easier to get a seat now

than it was before COVID. The outdoor dining arrangement really isn't anything special, but the food is just that good. I would give the food a 10/10, the outdoor arrangement an 8/10, and the service an 8/10 as well.

Toloache

Unlike JG Melon's, I had never even heard of this restaurant before COVID. My friends and I, planning to get some fast food and call it a night, passed the restaurant and decided to give it a try. Overall, I had a really good experience at this restaurant. My friends and I all ordered many different kinds of tacos. They were solid, but they felt more similar to something you might get out of a food truck rather than a gourmet restaurant. More importantly, I had a great experience at the restaurant. Our waiter was cracking jokes, and there were enough other people at the restaurant to make it feel like all was normal in the world, but it still felt safe. I wouldn't say the meal was anything special necessarily, but the general vibe of the restaurant made it a special night. I would give the food a 7/10, the outdoor arrangement an 8/10, and the

service a 9/10.

Amber

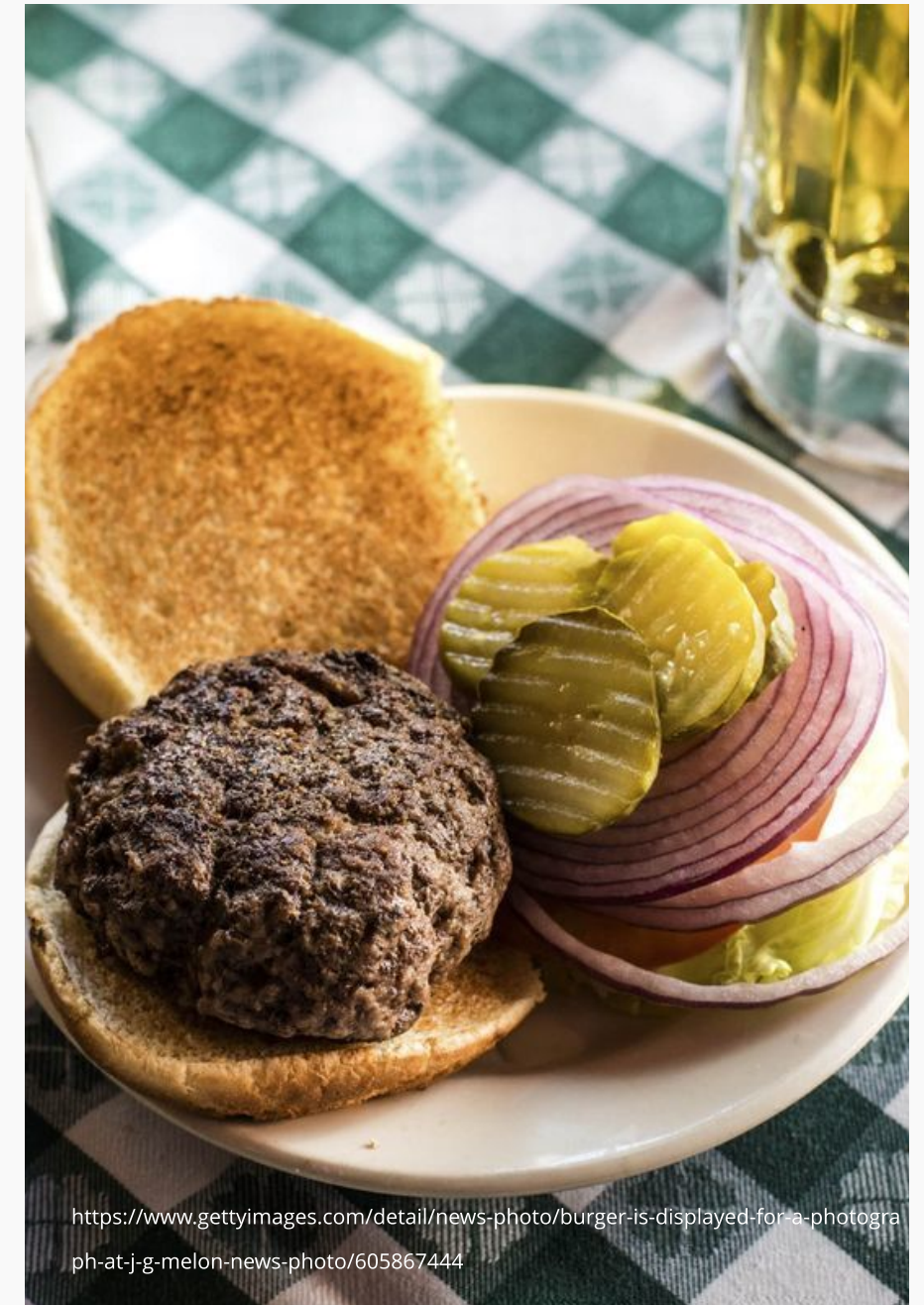
Amber's customers are-and always were -almost entirely high-schoolers. This fact is not surprising due to its relatively inexpensive sushi -- \$18 for a whole sushi platter. However, if you don't want to see people that you know, then going somewhere else is probably a better choice. The Japanese restaurant has done an exceptional job with its outdoor dining -- it has a huge tent located on 80th between 3rd and Lexington filled with tables and heating lamps. The entire arrangement, as well as the food, made for a relaxing, and much-needed meal with my friends. The service was excellent, and the waiters were friendly. I would give the food an 8/10, the outdoor arrangement a 9/10, and the service a 10/10.

Bonus - Koreatown (Miss Korea BBQ)

When you think of Koreatown, you might imagine cooking your own dinner on the large grill that they put in the center of every table. As the grills are attached to the tables inside and therefore cannot be moved

outside, I was a bit skeptical when my friends had the idea to go to Koreatown one night. We did not even check if they had outdoor dining! Once we got down there, I was surprised to see that there were multiple streets full of tents, people, heating lamps, and socially distanced tables. Miss Korea BBQ (the restaurant we chose) is similar to many of the other restaurants in Koreatown and the food, which consisted of meats and an extraordinary amount of side dishes, was excellent. It was probably better than it normally was, considering that I was not preparing my own meal this time. The experience was COVID safe and felt like a nice adventure compared to my relatively mundane life at the moment. I would give the food a 10/10, the outdoor arrangement a 9.5/10, and the service a 9/10.

Whether you are a food connoisseur or not, I would 100% recommend dining out with your friends. For me, it has not necessarily been the food that I remember from these restaurants, but the good times I had with my friends. As we all know, those good times are, now more than ever, hard to come by.



<https://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/burger-is-displayed-for-a-photograph-at-j-g-melon-news-photo/605867444>

"The outdoor dining arrangement really isn't anything special, but the food is just that good."

-Simon Schackner



<https://www.istockphoto.com/photo/roasting-teppanyaki-gm478415482-67338037>

So you're looking for the perfect restaurant for a fun night out with your friends and your hearts are set on a hibachi. Where do you go? Benihana and Flame are some of New York City's highest acclaimed hibachi restaurants. Both are excellent restaurants, but this article will compare the two and you decide where to go on your next night out!

Benihana was the first hibachi grill to open its doors over 50 years ago. Rocky Aoki, the founder, opened the original store on West 56th Street in 1964. A second location was

opened in downtown shortly after. Today there are over 70 Benihana restaurants around the world to enjoy. Benihana's traditional farmhouse interior and teppanyaki grills add a sense of authenticity to the exciting atmosphere created by the skilled chefs. The highly trained chefs double as skilled entertainers who dazzle delighted patrons with intricate knife work and theatrics. The chef performs captivating tricks such as juggling utensils, flipping a shrimp tail into his shirt pocket, catching an egg in his hat, flipping flattened shrimp pieces into diners' mouths, or

arranging onion rings into fire-shooting volcanoes-all while cooking up delicious food. Benihana has many exquisite dishes on its expansive a la carte menu. However, there is no need to deviate from the traditional meal because it has been perfected. The ground floor of the restaurant entertains patrons with the bar, which provides a fun environment where guests can mingle while waiting to be seated. When your grill is ready, the Maitre'D will lead your party up an elegant staircase, past multiple private dining rooms (available via reservation), and into the large main dining room.

The main room is packed with eleven teppanyaki grills. All the smoke and the high temperatures will make you wonder whether the restaurant follows the fire code. The quality of the food is the real selling point of Benihana. You can order delicious fried rice, grilled vegetables, and an entree of steak, chicken, or beef. The chef prepares these items exquisitely with fresh ingredients, making food of the highest quality.

Flame is new to the hibachi scene, but it has quickly gained popularity. Flame opened in 2016 and is located on 82nd Street



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/mhaithaca/6112637343/>

between Amsterdam and Columbus. It is a smaller restaurant than Benihana, with a bar, a sitting area, and only six hibachi grills. Although Flame is quite small, the atmosphere is incredible. Upon entering the restaurant, you immediately notice the excitement and energy of the customers and the chefs. The restaurant is loud and everyone seems happy. A common issue with hibachi restaurants is that the grills crowd the space and prevent good air circulation. Flame does not have these issues. The restaurant is very spacious. With only six hibachi grills, Flame feels more spacious because

the space that is saved from the low number of grills is made available for all other people in the restaurant. Each grill is given its own space so diners do not feel cramped and chefs can cook without bumping into each other. Another benefit to the restaurant being smaller is that the chef arrives at your table quickly. This allows for faster meals and quicker turnarounds at tables. The menu at Flame is extremely similar to the Benihana menu. It offers the basic shrimp, chicken, and steak meals with fried rice and other appetizers. The food is of similar quality, but Benihana's is

slightly better mainly due to the sauces they use with the main courses. However, a big critique I have of Flame's food is with the fried rice. Flame serves normal fried rice whereas Benihana serves chicken fried rice. This small difference changes the dish completely. The combo of the rice, vegetables, sauces and chicken is unrivaled. Without the chicken, the dish feels like it is missing something and lacks the key source of protein that makes the dish complete. Another critique I have of Flame is that the Wi-Fi in the restaurant is awful. It is difficult to pick up a phone call or send a text.

However, if you do not use your phone often at dinner, this should not affect your experience. Overall, Flame is a great restaurant with excellent service, positive energy, and good-quality food.

Benihana and Flame. Two top tier Hibachi restaurants with outstanding environments and excellent food. Both restaurants have great qualities about them but they also have their drawbacks and flaws. Which restaurant would you choose?



Last March, I had the privilege of traveling to Nairobi, Kenya, where I participated in a hockey game to raise awareness for climate change. This hockey game is part of a larger movement called The Last Game which "aims to raise awareness of the catastrophic effects climate change is having on the Arctic right now, especially the dramatic loss of Arctic sea ice." [3] Kenya is currently facing increased temperatures mixed with drought and decreased rainfall, all of which threaten the Kenyan environment. While the final game is being played in the Arctic, other games throughout the world are being played in countries that are also affected by climate change to show how climate change is a worldwide problem. The Last Game came together when big names in the hockey community such as Stanley

Cup winner, Slava Fetisov, and award winning videographer, Jon Alpert, partnered with the United Nations to bring awareness to the dire effects of climate change on our planet. The Last Game has played hockey games in over thirty countries and cities threatened by climate change, such as Argentina, Singapore, Scandinavia, and the Himalayas.

Kenya was chosen as a location for one of the games because of its uniqueness and unpopularity. Roller hockey has been played in Kenyan streets and parks for decades, so it was not a surprise when in 2006, a small ice rink was built in the upscale Panari Hotel. Shortly after the rink was built, the Kenyan Ice Hockey Team came to be which is composed of over 30 people including men,

women, and even a few children. This team made national news headlines in late 2019 as their ice rink was the only one of its kind in East Africa. The Kenyan Ice Hockey Team was flown to Canada by Tim Hortons to meet NHL superstars Sidney Crosby and Nathan MacKinnon. Along with attending the event in Kenya, I donated boxes of brand new hockey gear and accessories donated on behalf of the most popular hockey companies such as Howies Hockey Tape and Pro Hockey. These donations were much needed as getting any type of hockey gear in Kenya is especially difficult due to the fact that it has to be shipped in from other countries. Furthermore, all equipment that gets donated has to be approved by the UN and the Kenyan government which is a difficult process to say the least.

When the day of the game finally came, I was ready and excited to play in such an important event that would be featured on the news. The only ice rink in Kenya is located in their most famous and lavish hotel called the Panari Hotel, where we stayed. The ice rink is about 80% smaller than the size of a regular ice rink and is tucked into the back corner of the hotel's third floor. I felt so lucky to be able to skate alongside some of the greatest hockey players to ever play, such as



Slava Fetisov. The game went smooth as we played against the Kenyan team, which was surprisingly talented despite their lack of proper equipment and coaching.

Traveling to Kenya opened my eyes as I was able to take a tour of the city of Nairobi and part of that tour involved visiting the slums. Over 36% of Kenya's population lives below the poverty line, and walking down the streets of the slums only made me realize that the 36% statistic was heavily under-reported as finding a home with more than one bedroom or running water was impossible. While walking down the dirt road, there were people scrubbing shirts and socks with their bare hands who smiled and waved as we walked by. I turned the corner, and there it was, the old home of the best ice hockey player in all of Kenya. The mud roof was about six feet tall, and the house's total size was no bigger than my English

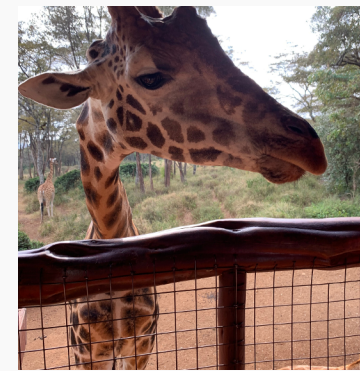
classroom. There were two mattresses tucked away in one of the corners, but the rest of the floor was dirt. There was no electricity, no running water, no kitchen, but there were bright glowing smiles on the children's faces when they saw us. The tiny hut I found myself standing in was one of the larger side of the normal house in the Kenyan slums, where some homes can hold upwards of ten people in a space about as big as a classroom. The trip to the slums was the first time in my life where I truly realized what a privilege it is to be growing up in an environment such as Horace Mann where the majority of students are in the upper class socioeconomically. As we drove away from the slums, people along the highways were walking up and down selling everything from water to towels to lamps to soccer balls.

Another lesson I learned in Kenya is that

although they are a third world country, these people were some of the happiest individuals I have ever met. Even though they live in small run-down huts, they are the most genuinely loving and fun people I have met in my life. The kids wanted to play roller hockey, and they were out all day having fun and enjoying life. Even though these Kenyan kids were as "underprivileged" as anyone in the world, they were rich in their personalities and the way they lived their lives. One example of this came when the group I was with took a tour of Nairobi National Park, which holds over four hundred different species of animals. Our driver, a Kenyan native, took such pride in describing the animals, such as giraffes, zebras, and lions that were surrounding our vehicle, along with the natural beauty that the park holds.

Overall, my journey to Nairobi, Kenya, was one of the best trips I have ever taken, and I highly recommend it to anyone who enjoys traveling. The trip opened my eyes to a new area of the world which I never really experienced before. I was able to understand and truly recognize the opportunity and privilege I have in my life here at Horace Mann.

All Photos Taken by Ricky Lipsey





FROM MEXICO CITY TO NYC
GASPAR NOTTENBOHM

Photo Credit: Gaspar Nottenbohm

Growing up in Mexico City, and then moving to New York, has had a profound impact on me and how I view the world around me. It has taught me that the world is a vast and beautiful place that is worth exploring. Mexico has expanded my horizon and helped me question the world around me. As I grew up, my love and hunger for travel grew steadily. I always had quite the appetite for adventure and travel. The move to New York made my love for travel expand at a rate that I had never experienced before. Of course, this is because New York City is a place where people from all over the world flock to and want to live in. A place whereby just walking down the street you can hear many familiar and new languages. Some might even call New York City the capital of the world.

New York’s diversity really stood out to me earlier this year

when I returned from Germany. Every time I had wandered through the gates and floors at JFK I never really thought about the hundreds and thousands of people that surrounded me. This year, walking out of the plane I was immediately greeted by hundreds of languages, peoples, and emotions. During the first lockdown, the world was put on hold. Everyone was in quarantine, lockdown, and staying home. Arriving in JFK, however, was a wash of relief. Seeing the hundreds of people coming and going from all over the world really made me appreciate the diversity that New York has. You can always say that I was just in JFK and any other airport in the world generates the same feeling. But for me, arriving in New York for the first time in months and seeing the airport as busy as ever made me happy and excited. All these people transferring through the airport in the city I’m lucky enough to call home, made me

truly appreciate the pull that New York has on the world.

In contrast, the part of Mexico City that I grew up in was segregated in the sense that there was little to no diversity. I attended a well-respected private school in the center of the city, which drew a homogenous group of people. I was young and oblivious to what went on beyond the ivy coated walls of the campus. But, I absolutely loved living in Mexico. The enchiladas with scrambled eggs and nopal almost every morning was a staple of my childhood. Of course, you can’t forget about the Tacos al Pastor and de Arrachera and the mouth-watering paletas from La Michoacana “almost” every afternoon. The Day of the Dead, The Reyes Magos, Día de la Independencia, and Las Posadas were just some of my favorite holidays. The crazy market that took place every weekend in the park, where I would go with my

dad to check out whatever new foods the vendors were selling that day. These are just some of the cherished memories that I hold from Mexico, and this list could obviously go on for much longer.

My years in Mexico have made me a more curious traveler. I used to be less open to food in other countries. Now I keep an open mind whenever I travel, for instance, when I visited Egypt for the first time last year, I was told never to eat street food as it could potentially give you food poisoning. However, I went against these recommendations and as a result, my love for Baba Ganush was born. I never consider the ingredients of the meal that I am eating, instead, I just try it. In Mexico, I used to eat fried grasshoppers and ant eggs. They might sound strange but are actually quite good. Such examples of eating different foods have really expanded my pallet. In general, I find that I have fewer prejudices and apprehensions when discovering a new place. If I were to have listened to the recommendations of our tour guides in Egypt, I would have never discovered my love for Egyptian cuisine. What I have learned is that just because a place doesn’t feel worth exploring, doesn’t mean that you should dismiss it completely.

Moving from Mexico has, as you might expect, ignited a hunger and love for discovering new places and meeting new people. This doesn’t however only apply to countries and cities halfway around the world. It can just mean trying out that new restaurant that just opened in your neighborhood. Any opportunity I get these days I want to travel and learn about other people. For myself, even if it means going to New Jersey to visit some friends over the

weekend is enough to quell my thirst for travel for the time being. I have made friends all over the world and learned about their cultures, and in exchange, they learn about my own. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has made travel this year nearly impossible. But, this shouldn’t be an excuse for anyone not to dream about their next destination. It can be as easy as reading a book or watching a YouTube video. Of course, this can’t be compared to the exhilarating feeling that you have after you step out of an airport terminal, a car, or a bus in a new place. You should always follow your dreams and travel to a new place whenever you get the opportunity. I recently saw a very good exhibition at the Whitney Museum downtown that explains the influence of Mexican Muralists on American Art. I love going to these exhibitions because it not only helps me get a better understanding of where

"However, I went against these recommendations and as a result, my love for Baba Ganush was born. I never consider the ingredients of the meal that I am eating, instead, I just try it."

I lived, but it helps me learn more about my Latino roots.

Living in Mexico for the time that I did really has expanded my horizon and helped me question the world around me. I have steadily come to terms with my Latino heritage and I have to say that traveling has helped me a lot with this. I now know what it feels like to grow up with an enclosed mentality and have a level of ignorance to the rest of the world around me. Even in Mexico, though I lived in this little bubble of people, I did manage to taste a little of the remarkable traditional Mexican culture. I can tell you that one of the worst feelings is when you realize how vast and

incredible the world is beyond your own bubble. And when you live in a city as diverse as New York, but don’t take that leap to go and traverse the metropolis we call home. So go travel and explore!



https://www.freepik.com/premium-photo/amazing-panoramic-view-new-york-city-skyline-skyscraper-beautiful-night-view-midtown-manchattan-ny-us_10358117.htm



<https://pinecliffe.campintouch.com/ui/photo/Thumbnails?seasonID=2020&action=f>

A COVID-19 SUMMER

Tyler Rosenberg

people but they are typically larger and around twenty five to thirty girls. Each bunk of girls was considered a “family”. You didn’t have to wear a mask in your bunk with your family. The thought behind this was that you wouldn’t wear a mask at home in your house with your family, so you didn’t have to in your bunk. You could only be unmasked with your family. As a result of this, you could only eat with your bunk, however, in the past, you ate with other campers from different age groups. You would go to activities with your bunk/family but had to keep a mask on because you would be with counselors that weren’t in your family.

The main goal of the camp directors was to run and maintain a safe camp while making it feel as normal as any other summer. Obviously, there was the main difference of having to wear masks for the first summer ever and the risk of Covid-19, but they still wanted to uphold a fun and safe environment. Pinecliffe

multiple times throughout the summer to ensure they were negative. At every activity, there were large bottles of hand sanitizer that everyone used both before and after an activity to ensure that everyone was germ-free. Plus, various hand washing stations were set up around camp that people could also use before and after activities.

Every camper was in a bunk with other girls; in the younger age groups there were 5-8 girls per bunk and the three oldest groups of girls were in a bunk with their whole age group. My age group this year was seventeen

This summer I had the privilege of being able to go to summer camp during the Covid-19 pandemic. I was extremely lucky that my camp was open because so many other camps in the area were closed. I go to Camp Pinecliffe, an all-girls camp in Harrison, Maine and this was my sixth summer. The camp took countless precautions to ensure that everyone was safe and healthy, while also having a fun summer.

Before camp, everyone got tested to make sure they were negative for Covid-19. Additionally, all campers and counselors had to get tested



of the same activities as normal summers; from swimming to ceramics to tennis, they had it all. One important part of camp is color war. The camp is divided into two teams and at the end of the summer, the team with the most points wins. There are different events throughout the summer where each team earns points, like a

"Despite the challenges of Covid-19, this summer was still great and I'm so lucky that Pinecliffe was even open to begin with."

track and field meet or a swim meet. These activities and events were a little different because you had to be socially distant, due to Covid-19 but still ended up happening.

One camp tradition is having camp sisters. An older camper will be like an older sister to a younger camper in a different age group. The two camp sisters would typically spend time together talking and going to one another's bunk, but this was hard to do during this summer. I had a camp sister in the past and we would hug and talk and spend time together, but I couldn't do that with my camp sister this year. While we could talk, it was a bit restricted due to having to wear masks and be six feet apart.

Another camp tradition is having milk and cookies. Some nights, after dinner and before it's time to go to your bunk and go to sleep, there is milk and cookies. You get a cookie and a cup of milk and you have it with your camp sister. You would typically sit and eat it with your camp sister. One new thing they did to try to

make a similar thing happen was spray paint orange dots on the front lawn that were six feet apart. You would sit at one dot and your camp sister would sit at the other and you would still be able to talk and eat your cookie. This was my second year having a camp sister and I wish I would have been able to do things such as hug my camp sister or show her my bunk and see hers. In the previous year I've had a camp sister, we spent a lot of time together in one another's bunk. Despite the fact that we didn't get to do that at all, I still enjoyed getting to talk to her, even if it was from a distance. Another tradition that is very important at Pinecliffe is called Sing. It's a crucial part of color war. The two teams, blue and brown, write three songs that the teams sing and then at the end of the summer, the winner of Sing is announced and so is the winner of color war.

For Sing, you are supposed to be smiling the whole time, so it's intimidating I guess, and the teams are in a semicircle, shoulder to shoulder to one another. Sing is a tradition that has been going on at Pinecliffe for years and years and has remained unchanged. This year we obviously couldn't be shoulder to shoulder, due to Covid-19 and social distancing, and you wouldn't be able to see if people were smiling or not.

Despite the challenges of Covid-19, this summer was still great and I'm so lucky that Pinecliffe was even open to begin with. Even though I had to wear a mask around and couldn't interact with other age groups as much, the activities were still pretty much the same and I still got to be with my friends.

THE OVERRATED TREND OF POP UP ART INSTALLATIONS

EMILY WEIDMAN AND VIVIAN CORACI

While scrolling through your Instagram feed in 2018, you probably saw variations of the same photo multiple times a day at the newest trending pop-up exhibitions. The Museum of Ice Cream, the Color Factory, and Candytopia are some of the picture-perfect installations that lit the way for the rise of these attractions. These “museums” gained popularity as they trended on social media platforms

like Instagram and Snapchat by both consumers and influencers, which allowed them to gain more brand recognition as millions of people were exposed to them.[4] The Color Factory has sixteen different rooms, each themed around the concept of color, while The Museum of Ice Cream (MOIC) includes 10 “whimsical settings” focused on ice cream and its toppings. Candytopia is another “picture perfect”

pop-up that created a “Willy Wonka-esque adventure” filled with larger-than-life candy artwork.[5] Although photos of these places on social media make the “museums” seem ideal and incredible, they often disappoint in real life. The glory they received on influencers’ pages truly overhyped the more mundane experience of visiting one of these “museums.” Eventually, they all became extremely similar and somewhat of rip-offs of each other, the experiences were changed by pre-existing unrealistic expectations, and they portrayed themselves to be something that in reality, they weren’t.

Attractions like The Color Factory, Candytopia, and the Museum of Ice Cream have all become competitors as well as spin-offs of each other, taking their main ideas: color, candy, and ice cream to create interactive installations that are strikingly similar. The Museum of Ice Cream created a pit of plastic sprinkles, while Candytopia created a pit of plastic marshmallows, and Color Factory created a large, more traditional sky blue ball pit. While these three exhibitions executed the ball pit concept in different ways, they all share the same concept. This uniformity stops the exhibits from being unique. When different people go to the same pop-up, their followers’ Instagram feeds are flooded with very similar photos of one of the trendy spots or installments at the exhibition. This narrows the focus of the pop-ups to the one trending room that is popping up all over social media, taking the focus of visitors away from the exhibition as a whole.

When visiting pop-up art installations, we found that the unrealistic expectations set by photos on our social media feed stopped us from truly enjoying the experiences. If you decide to go visit one of the trending pop-up exhibits, chances are that before going you will be bombarded with Instagram photos of the seemingly picture-perfect rooms and art installations. The staged “perfect” photos cause the entire experience to revolve around finding that perfect picture rather than appreciating the exhibits. An experience that I (Vivian) had at Color Factory perfectly showed this idea. I went to The Color Factory in November of 2018 with one of my friends, and while at the exhibit we were more focused on getting perfect photos rather than actually appreciating the museum and all of its visually captivating and interesting installations that were not as popular on our Instagram feeds. At Color Factory, the rooms are set up so that each room holds an exhibit, and once you leave a room, you cannot turn around and go back. By the end of the experience, we found ourselves rushing through the rooms, not appreciating them, as we headed towards the iconic Color Factory sky blue ball pit where we aimed to take our own Instagram-worthy photos. We had such high expectations for Color Factory and were focused on taking perfect photos before we even went. Therefore, we did not really appreciate it and ended up missing out on its intended experience, ruining the visit.

In addition, these exhibits tend to portray themselves to be

something that they simply are not. For example, in their About Us section, the Museum of Ice Cream website says that they are “inspiring human connection through the universal power of ice cream.”[6] However, we have found through visiting these locations that so much of the time is occupied by staring at your phone trying to get ideal photos. This causes human interaction to be limited and not as prominent in the experience, contradicting their original statement. Additionally, both the MOIC and Color Factory as described by their CEOs are branded and promoted as museums. The MOIC has previously been compared to extremely iconic and important New York City institutions including The Met, The Guggenheim, and The Whitney.¹ This is troubling because although the MOIC is currently a popular tourist attraction, it does not hold the historical significance of these iconic New York City landmarks, or contain the same variety of significant artworks that these museums hold. Although these three attractions could be fun places to spend an hour at with friends, they are not “must-see” attractions, nor are they worthy of all of the attention that they receive.

Pop-up art installations have started trends on social media in the last few years. However, we believe that most of these places are not worth the time or trip, are over-advertised, and are too idealized and sought-after for the experience that they deliver.



Island Getaway: My Retreat to the Cayman Islands

RIA CHOWDHRY

<https://www.westend61.de/en/imageView/AMF05374/caribbean-cayman-islands-george-town-luxury-resorts-and-seven-mile-beach>

After a few long months of sitting at home during the pandemic, a nice beach vacation seems long in order. If you are missing the warm, sunny beaches and crystal clear waters of the Caribbean, the Cayman Islands is the place for you. It is a perfect destination for anyone who wants a bit of relaxation and fun, with tons of opportunities to relax by the beach or snorkel near the reefs. The Cayman Islands is comprised of three smaller islands: Grand Cayman, Cayman Brac, and Little Cayman. With boats to go from island to island, island hopping becomes an easy and efficient way to discover all that the Cayman Islands have to offer. When all goes back to normal and we can travel

again, a visit to the Cayman Islands would be a fun and exciting adventure.

During my vacation a few years ago, I stayed on Grand Cayman Island, spending the majority of my time on the beach or in the turquoise waters. Before our arrival, my family had already planned a list of activities for our trip. A few of the Cayman Islands' most famous attractions are Seven Mile Beach, Starfish Point, and Stingray City, so we made sure to visit all three. Our hotel, like many others on Grand Cayman, had a direct view of the Seven Mile Beach, which truly does stretch seven miles along the coastline of Grand Cayman. The water is absolutely beautiful. Even standing waist-deep in the water, I could see my toes in the white sand. While

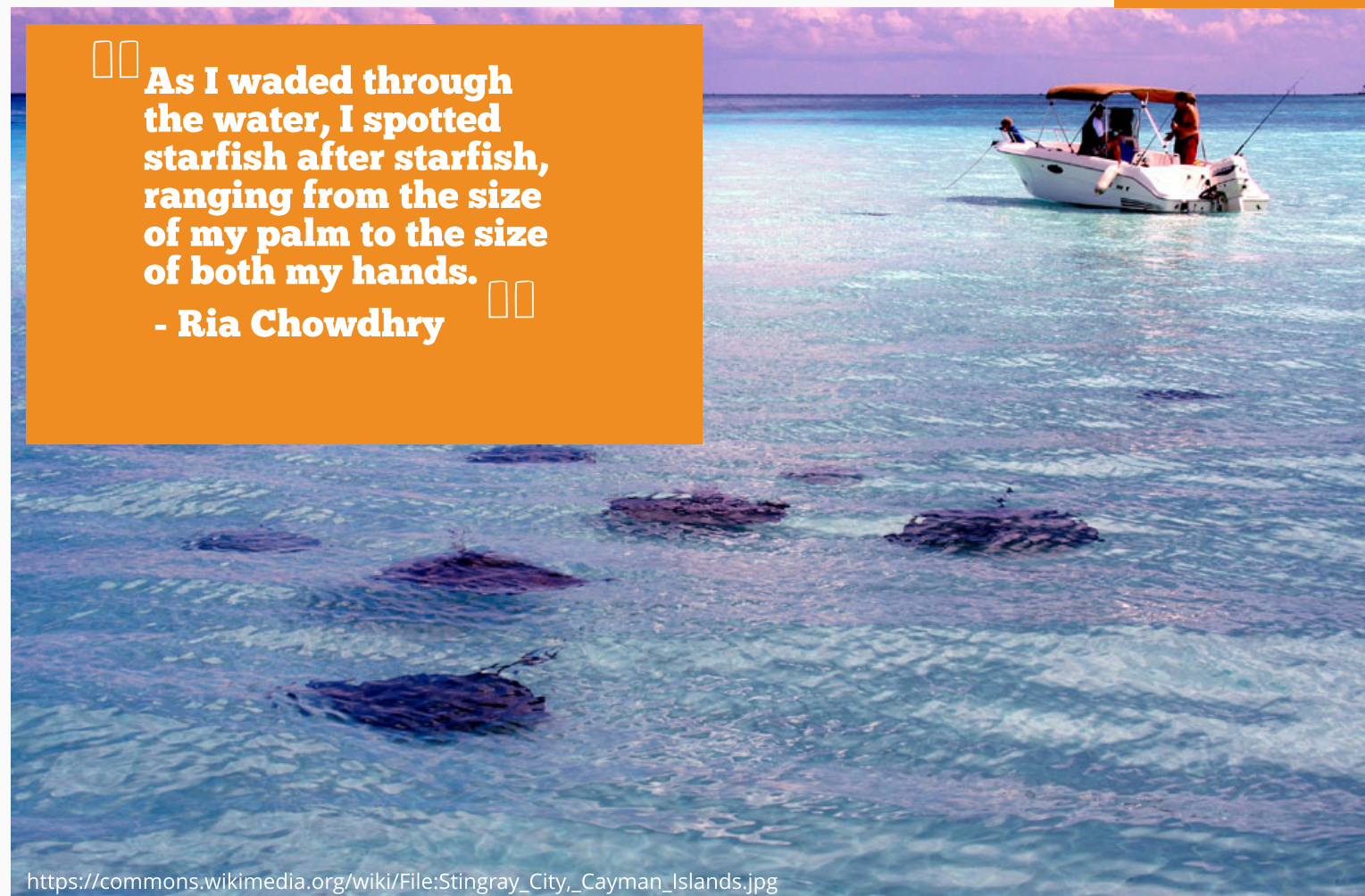
the stroll along the beach is mesmerizing, most tourists, myself included, enjoy the various water-based activities available. You can kayak, paddle board, kite-surf, and sail. Anytime I looked out towards the ocean, I could see at least a dozen red, yellow, and green kayaks and paddle-boards drifting along the coastline as well as many heads bobbing in and out of the water. I spent the first two days kayaking and paddle-boarding with my family, and then went wake-boarding a few days later. The water was never too choppy, and thus

perfect for many of the water-based activities, except for surfing. If you do plan to surf, the most ideal beach is Surfer's Beach, generating some of the larger swells on the island.

After spending some time on the picturesque Seven Mile Beach, our next destination was Starfish Point, a small beach surrounded by transparent blue water. Many visitors go snorkeling and diving farther out from the beach, but closer to shore is where you can find all



<https://www.istockphoto.com/photo/starfish-in-hands-grand-Cayman-gm157773021-15948749>



□□ **As I waded through the water, I spotted starfish after starfish, ranging from the size of my palm to the size of both my hands.** □□
- Ria Chowdhry

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Stingray_City,_Cayman_Islands.jpg

the red, orange, and yellow wild starfish lying peacefully in the golden sands. The fastest and best way to get to Starfish Point is by boat, and after docking the boat, I noticed the colorful specks underneath the water surface. The water was calm and clearer than the water at the Seven Mile Beach. As soon as I stepped off the boat, the water felt cold against my feet, but it wasn't deep enough to get past my waist. As I waded through the water, I spotted starfish after starfish, ranging from the size of my palm to the size of both my hands. I picked up a bright orange starfish and felt its suckers against my palm. I was told by our guide to keep it close to the waters and only hold it for a short period of time. After a minute, I gently placed it back under the water. Starfish Point is a

beautiful spot to take pictures, swim, and immerse yourself with colorful, bright wildlife.

Arguably the most well-known tourist attraction is Stingray City, a sandbar a few miles off the shore of Grand Cayman. This unique experience invites adventurers from around the world to spend quality time with the friendly stingrays. The magnificent creatures sweep by your legs and swarm around you in the water. The only way to get to Stingray City is by boat and the sandbar is always crowded with more than twenty boats anchored nearby. I put on my snorkeling gear and hopped into the water with the rest of my family. We walked carefully to the center of the sandbar, watching out for buried stingrays under the sand. In the center of the

sandbar, which was only three feet deep, we could swim with the rays and even feed them by sticking our hands near their mouths on their underside. Perhaps the most exhilarating moment was holding the stingray in my hands. My tour guide gently picked up a smaller stingray in his arms, and gradually placed it in my arms. It was much heavier than I expected, and its skin felt silky smooth against my arms. I was told that holding a stingray requires trust between you and the stingray itself. It can sense your fear, and once it does, it becomes nervous too. When stingrays are very comfortable, they do what is known as the "stingray dance," where they swiftly move their wings as if they are flapping them. They only do that with those they really trust, and since

many of the guides have established strong bonds with the creatures, I could watch one of the stingrays dance in a guide's arms.

While the list of activities to do in the Cayman Islands is long, the Seven Mile Beach, Starfish Point, and Stingray City are three places you must visit. They are definitely my top three favorite spots in the Cayman Islands, and I think others would agree as well. The turquoise waters and white sands are a great change of scenery from the bustling streets of New York, and after months in a global pandemic, the Cayman Islands seem like the perfect place to go.



Eating with Bennett, Pizza Edition: Mama's Too

Bennett Neuwirth

I'm not exaggerating when I say that Mama's Too might have the best pizza in all of New York City. It's really that good. Located on Broadway and 105th Street, Mama's Too does not serve the typical New York slice. When I moved uptown from 84th Street to 104th Street in 2018, I was pessimistic about the slices in my new neighborhood. I was definitely wrong. Many of Mama's Too's slices are a hybrid of Sicilian pizza and the traditional New York slice; the results from this combination can only be described as amazing. Created and opened by Frank Tuttolmondo (son of the owners of the original Mama's Pizzeria on the Upper West Side) in December of 2017, Mama's Too honors the quality of the original location while elaborating and expanding upon its menu. It serves slices such as the house triangular slice with the perfect combination of sauce, cheese, and fresh basil, and the pepperoni

square slice, which has some of the best pepperoni I've ever had served on pizza. Frank is able to reinvent the traditional idea of pizza himself while paying gratitude to his roots. Another slice from Mama's Too that I've come to love is the upside down slice. Frank starts with the cheese and then puts on the sauce as opposed to putting the sauce on and then the cheese. This results in a different pizza experience and one that is honestly incredible. Lastly, perhaps my favorite kind of slice from Mama's Too, is the square vodka slice. Frank makes this by taking the perfect square dough, slathering it with tomato vodka sauce, and topping it with shredded mozzarella cheese and basil. It may sound heavy, but Frank at Mama's Too does it perfectly. Its popularity speaks volume to how great the pizza is. Everytime I go to Mama's Too for a slice, the line is always out the door and around the block. I highly recommend Mama's Too and would suggest that you try to find the time to go there and experience

some of the best pizza that has ever been created.

Another Upper West Side pizza spot that I've come to love is Pizza Pete's, located on Columbus and 85th Street. Whenever I hear people talk about what they think the traditional New York slice is, Pizza Pete's is the first place to come to mind. I can't possibly think of many other traditional New York pizza places in New York City that can match the quality of the slices that Pizza Pete's serves on a daily basis. The pizza is superb with thin crust and great sauce and cheese. They have many choices for pizza by the slice and my personal favorite is the buffalo

chicken pizza. The buffalo chicken pizza is a perfected New York slice topped with some of the most amazing buffalo chicken that I have personally ever had. It's a must try. The staff at Pizza Pete's are some of the most friendly people I've ever met. If you ever happen to stumble upon Pizza Pete's, make sure you say hi to my friend Alonzo who's an amazing person and an even more amazing chef. Pizza Pete's may also have one of the best pizza deals in New York. You can get two plain slices and a small soda for only \$5! Great pizza for that low of a price is an utter and complete steal. It's not fancy. It's the New York slice you crave. In these uncertain times of Covid-19, we need pizza. We need a cheap, greasy slice, a coke and a New York slice that keeps the city alive. If you're ever near 85th and Columbus, I would definitely urge you to stop in to Pizza Pete's and grab a quick slice of pizza. I promise that you will not regret it.

*"If you
consider
yourself a
pizza
aficionado,
then you have
to try Mama's
Too."*

Eating with Brandon, Ramen Edition: Ichiran

Everyone loves cup noodles and instant ramen. It's a delicious yet filling snack! Now imagine a place that serves fresh ramen instead! Well, welcome Ichiran- one of the best ramen places I have ever been to in New York City. The individual, booth style restaurant is great for a meal alone but also for a meal with friends! There are a couple of Ichiran locations in NYC: two in midtown Manhattan and one in Brooklyn. This restaurant offers authentic Japanese ramen at the best bang for your buck. The ramen is top of the line quality for around \$18-30. Though, if you want to make the trek to Japan, Ichiran serves their noodles for almost half the price! Oh, New York City prices.

The Ichiran experience starts right when you walk through the double doors. A server or member of the waitstaff greets you and hands you a little menu where you can select a chef recommended ramen bowl or customize your own. If you customize your own, you can add various toppings such as scallions and mushrooms. If you pick the recommended set, it comes with dried seaweed, a soft boiled egg, scallions, pork, ramen, and kikurage mushrooms. You can even select your preferred level of noodle firmness and broth spiciness from levels 0-20 (I usually choose 3).

As you fill out the menu, a hostess will refer to an automated seat chart which shows not only the staff but the customers what seats are available. Then the hostess will then guide you to your seat. There are two rows, one on each side. In the middle is the kitchen. There are coat hooks behind your seat to put any belongings. When you sit down a member of the waitstaff will greet you through the curtain in front of your seat. You cannot see their face (adding to the mystery and excitement). It adds to the uniqueness of the place and makes you uncertain of what and when your food will arrive. On your menu there is also a place to fill out what drink you would like. Once your order slip is taken, you can sit back, relax and enjoy the calming music playing from above. While waiting for your food you can look through the reviews that are in the booth or even write your own! Located in every seat is a call button to alert the waitstaff.

The first thing that comes when you order ramen is the hard boiled egg. Then comes the toppings.

BRANDON KUO



Lastly is the ramen. The ramen comes in an authentic black Japanese arita bowl. This one of the creative ways the restaurant adds to create a true Japanese ramen experience. After unwrapping your chopsticks, you should add the toppings to your ramen and finally the spices. The pork broth has a well balanced salty yet rich flavor. The ramen noodles are freshly made and soak up the broth without losing their texture. All the toppings are fresh and the pork is marinated in a sweet soy marinade. Once you finish the ramen you should make sure to save some soup because a full or half "kae-dama," the name of the ramen refill, can be bought. A half kae-dama consists of half a noodle refill and goes for \$2.90. Meanwhile, a kae-dama, the full noodle refill, costs \$3.90. However neither comes with toppings or soup. To order, you simply press the call button and fill out the kae-dama menu located in the booth. Along with having a call button in the booth there is a order sensor too. For instance, if you selected their flagship matcha pudding for dessert, a member of the waitstaff will give you a small metal order plaque. That plaque is to be put on the sensor whenever the customer desires, causing a chime to play on the speaker, and the pudding will be brought within minutes! You should try to eat it as slowly as possible to enjoy all of the flavor. While you are eating the delicious pudding a member of the waitstaff comes over and gives you a plaque with your seat number on it. This is to be brought up to the counter on your way out in order to pay. At checkout there you can find an array of Ichiran products such as an Arita bowl and home ramen-kit available for purchase. If you or anyone you know is interested in trying quality ramen, Ichiran is the place to go not only for the food but also the experience and atmosphere.

The Future of Aviation

Walker McCarthy

In early April, Airbus chief executive Guillaume Faury warned that COVID-19 created “the gravest crisis the aerospace industry has ever known.”[7] Faury’s diagnosis of COVID-19’s impact on the industry was accurate six months ago and his analysis holds true today. While McKinsey & Company recently estimated that the industry will face an \$84 billion loss in 2020, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) noted that passenger air transport revenue fell by nearly 90% from 2019 in the late summer and early fall. The IATA identified travel restrictions as the central cause of reduced passenger volume – hardly a surprising conclusion given that the Pew Research Center noted last month that government mandates have limited the movement of 91% of the world’s population.[8] This decline in air travel and transport not only impacts executives and shareholders of major aerospace companies like Boeing and British Airways, but also threatens the livelihoods of millions of ordinary workers and the health of the global economy.

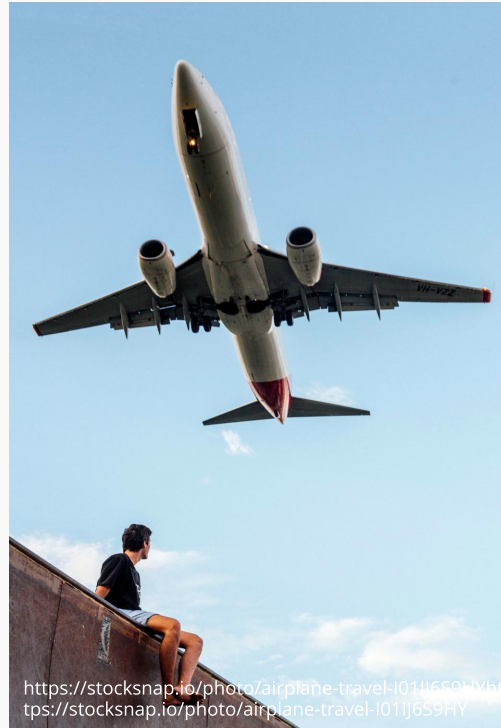
At first glance, the effects of limiting air travel may seem relatively contained, impacting pilots and flight attendants

most directly. Though understandable, unfortunately this conclusion is wrong. A recent report by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development observed that aviation makes up 3.4% of global GDP and plays a vital role in maintaining the international flow of goods and services. The report’s authors furthered that the airline industry alone employs nearly 100 million people worldwide (many of these jobs are in support services such as inflight catering, airport management, and technological manufacturing).[9] Governments around the world have sought to stem the bleeding of the aerospace industry, but public-sector intervention has not stopped airlines from furloughing hundreds of thousands of workers or, in some cases, declaring bankruptcy. Bailouts alone will not be able to save airlines – private sector leaders need to take immediate, radical steps to reshape their industry and the consumer experience of air travel. Fortunately for the industry’s hundreds of millions of employees and customers, executives are already starting to take action.

In a recent poll, top aviation leaders indicated how long they expect it will take for the aerospace industry to recover to pre-COVID levels. While 60% of respondents estimated a period of 18 months to 3 years, 26% predicted that the recovery would, at the latest, take off by mid-2021. Regardless of their recovery predictions, industry leaders unanimously noted that they are working to reshape and restart their operations as quickly as possible. Many executives are looking to the United States, where air travel is on the rise, for guidance.

CEO of the international Airline Passenger Experience Association (APEX), Joe Leader, accurately observed recently that flying remains a relatively safe form of travel. But for most people to get back in the air, the international community needs to develop a clear and consistent approach to coronavirus testing for all passengers. Leader explained:

“The United States has returned to stronger levels of air travel despite increasing COVID-19, this is because air travel remains the safest transport link, aside from one’s own personal vehicle. Overall, we need a more consistent international air travel approach that requires passengers to show a COVID-19 negative test to



prove they can travel, rather than forcing them to quarantine at the other end of their journey. Air travelers deserve certainty in exchange for their diligence and care.”[10]

Leader correctly notes that planes will only be able to return to the skies if governments around the world work with the private sector to develop faster, more cost efficient tests, and increase the availability and coordinate the distribution of these tests. Without international collaboration, testing will be inconsistent at best and nonexistent at worst. All airlines have to agree to and implement safe and effective protocols or COVID-19 will spread in airports and airplanes.

In addition to increased testing, the aerospace industry needs to innovate and adopt new safety measures for passengers and cargo. Over the past several decades, airlines have rushed to develop “high density

seating,” squeezing passengers as close together as possible to cut costs and increase profits.[11] In a pre-COVID world this practice was frustrating for many customers but did not pose any real risks or problems. However, in 2020, this system is no longer an option– it is antithetical to social distancing. High density seating is just one example of a process and practice that airlines need to change. Overall, the industry needs to ensure that customers are safe and feel safe, including limiting ‘touch-points’ (opportunities for COVID-19 to spread between flyers and crew members because of physical proximity). In the short-term, coronavirus related changes might reduce profit margins or require increased spending on customer experience, but they are necessary for airlines’ long-term survival. This article’s suggestions are not comprehensive solutions, but they are a place to start. For airlines to truly recover, the world needs to decelerate the pandemic and accelerate the production of a COVID-19 vaccine. In the meantime, however, aerospace leaders can and should take action.



Cycling in NYC: What to Expect on the Road

Ryan Finlay

Riding a bicycle in New York City may seem daunting at first. When I began using the city's network of bicycle thoroughfares several years ago, I found it to be a rather nerve racking experience. The system seemed discordant and I was unsure how to navigate safely around traffic and through intersections. That said, as time wore on, experience allowed me to feel comfortable travelling almost anywhere in the city on my bicycle. In order to safely and effectively navigate, it is helpful to have an understanding of what to expect on the road.

The city's bicycle road divisions can be grouped into four unofficial categories: greenways, paths, lanes, and routes. Each has a different level of isolation from roadway traffic, and looks distinctly different from the others.

Greenways are two directional thoroughfares which might accommodate pedestrians both on foot and on wheels. They are usually embedded in parkland, far from any motor vehicles. However, one will often be required to cross streets that intersect with the greenway. The appearance of a greenway can vary greatly. They will most likely be designed as plain asphalt paths (at least that is what I have found to be most common). Some might have a painted line to divide the path by direction. Of all four variations, I prefer greenways for their safety. For riders who might be inexperienced or unsure about close contact with motor vehicles, they are ideal.

Paths can be either single or two directional. Two directional paths are extremely rare (one such path runs beside Van Cortlandt Park on Broadway, just east of Horace Mann School). Located on the streets or avenues, paths are painted light green with a white outline. At intersections, there is usually a bike symbol painted in white over the green layer. If the path is single directional, it is usually designed with a standard width of five feet. Within this group, I recognize two subgroups: unprotected and protected paths. Unprotected paths are located directly next to the moving traffic. These are also quite rare; the only especially prominent example is the path around the center of Columbus Circle. Protected paths are set between sidewalks and parked cars. In addition, there is usually a stripped zone in between the parked cars and the path. At intersections, protected paths are very accommodating. There are street lights specifically for cyclists, and parking spaces are replaced by designated turn lanes and medians for pedestrians waiting at the crosswalk. When it comes to cycling on the roads themselves, I recommend looking out for a protected bike path as the ideal option. Paths are usually found on avenues and boulevards.

Lanes are single directional strips placed between the moving traffic and the parked vehicles, marked by solid white lines on either side, and painted bike symbols at intersections. The bike lanes are mostly on cross streets or smaller avenues. Besides moving traffic, I mainly watch out for double parked vehicles when I use a bike lane. There are no physical barriers separating the traffic from the bicycles,

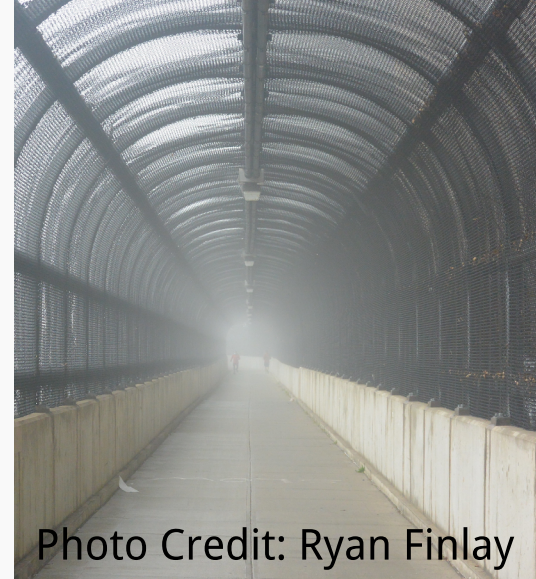


Photo Credit: Ryan Finlay

so when I am trapped behind a double parked vehicle, I often wait until the street lights behind me have turned red and most of the cars have passed before I go around the vehicle.

Routes are simply bike symbols painted on the street every block, to mark out which direction and what side of the street to go on. They serve as little to no protection from moving traffic, so when I am using a bike route, I treat it as though I was riding on a regular road without any cycling designations. Occasionally, I spot street signs on lampposts specifying that the road is a bike route, though I doubt any drivers actually notice.

For any of these categories, expect the unexpected. No matter what direction the traffic is moving, or what direction the path, lane, or route is serving, I always see bikers travelling in the opposite direction. Be especially wary of passing other cyclists when you cannot see what lies ahead. Many times I have attempted to pass others going slower than I and had unwittingly put myself directly in front of a bicycle speeding in the opposite direction. This usually leaves me at the receiving end of a spewing of profanities.



When it comes to bike paths, keep an eye out for storm drains. Often, the paths are painted directly through the grates. Many of these grates have a precariously large amount of space between rungs, meaning they are the perfect size to swallow the wheel of a racing bike. Ambulances are another bane of city cycling. In their effort to reach the one in need, I have come across a few of them driving on the bike paths to circumvent traffic.

For some reason, New Yorkers feel very comfortable treating bike paths and bike lanes as an extension of the sidewalk. When it comes to bike lanes, it is not uncommon to encounter joggers using them as a running track. I haven't had much difficulty swerving around them in the past. On the other hand pedestrians on the bike paths are more problematic. Most often, they use the bike path as a special waiting area for the crosswalk or a handy loading zone for shuffling into cars. Pedestrians are often extremely slow to move out of the way of an oncoming bicycle, and are rarely paying attention when they casually stumble into the path of a cyclist. Before I put a bell on my handlebars, I occasionally had incidents where I would

need to come to a stop at intersections, despite a green light, in order to avoid colliding with oblivious pedestrians. That is why I recommend attaching a bell to the bicycle handlebars. A ring of the bell at each intersection is an effective way to keep your path clear of pedestrians, and to alert those in the way that they should step to the side. When it comes to navigation, I have found the best resource to be the New York Department of Transportation's downloadable bike map. The map color codes different types of thoroughfares to show what bicycle infrastructure is in place on every single road in the city.[12]

SUBWAYS OF THE WORLD: TOKYO VS NYC

JORDAN WASSERBERGER



https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tokyo_Metro_13000_Series.jpg

Among many the great things about New York, one of the best is undoubtedly its public transit system. Each day, 5.5 million people use the subway - it has become the lifeblood of the city that never sleeps.[13] It runs 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and has kept the city and its people moving through thick and thin. That being said, it is far from a perfect system.

Trains break down constantly, routes run late, and entire lines will close for a seemingly endless supply of reasons. The Second Avenue subway, the system's first expansion since 1999, took over a decade to build, and was forced to open in three parts due to the complexity, cost, maintenance, and timeline of the

construction. The cars themselves are plagued with vermin, and the only line not littered with trash is the Second Avenue subway, simply because it hasn't been around long enough for the garbage to pile up. These problems exist not due to lack of attempted solutions, but nothing has been successful in cleaning the stations. Every time someone tries

to fix the subway they end up creating new problems, leading to a common "it is what it is" understanding amongst New Yorkers. However, not all subways are created equal. While the New York subway system may be the longest-running and busiest 24-hour system in the world, as much as it pains me to say this, it is not the best. No,



somehow a city with abysmal municipal planning, overcrowding beyond belief, and the worst street system ever conceived, also has one of the greatest railways on earth.[14] This diamond in the rough is Tokyo.

Tokyo has succeeded in creating the cleanest, cheapest, safest, and most efficient subway system in the world. I do not speak a word of Japanese, and yet I was able to perfectly navigate the lines with minimal effort. The stop names are accompanied by a number-letter combination which is also printed on your ticket, so even if you don't read Japanese you can know which stop to get off at, and there is an app which will tell you which stop to get off at based on your desired destination.[15] Never in my life had I been in train cars so clean, without a speck of trash for miles. It seriously looked like something out of a utopian sci-fi movie (the skyscraper-sized robot we passed only added to that). More importantly, every train arrived exactly on schedule, with no delays and not a single malfunction in the week I was there. Even more remarkable is the

payment system. Instead of having plastic cards where you never know how much money you have left until you absolutely need to be somewhere and suddenly you cannot pay the \$2.75 fare, the Tokyo Metro uses cheap paper stubs that you can buy at literally every stop. You simply input what stop you're going to, and the machine dispenses a ticket which is valid for that number of stops. Once you reach your destination, you recycle the stub, and you're done. It's cheap, better for the environment, and there is always one readily available. You can either purchase a ticket each time you use the Metro, or you can buy tickets for x number of hours.[16] The trains themselves are electric, with a new maglev line being built between Tokyo and other major cities on the island. The new metro will use magnetic repulsion to glide along a track, allowing it to reach greater speeds and be environmentally conscious. This allows the trains to move quickly, quietly, and with minimal turbulence. Every ride I took felt like sitting on a cloud. I mean that both figuratively and literally, as the Tokyo Metro is on and above street level. On top of not having to worry about rodents straight out

of The Princess Bride, you also get lovely views on your trip.

The Tokyo Metro is rapidly evolving. The introduction of cheaper maglev technology is helping their trains become more environmentally friendly, while simultaneously lowering actual commute time and boosting their efficiency. As Tokyo has grown, its rush hours have become more predictable, so the city hired "pushers" and "pullers" to, well, push people onto trains and pull them off. While it may sound a bit rough in theory, in practice it ensures that people get where they need to go, and keeps things running smoothly. The city government is not entirely to thank for the train's efficiency, however. The respect that Tokyo's citizens have for their city and its systems is palpable. Sure, part of the reason the trains are so clean is because of the constant cleaning by the municipal departments, but more importantly, people don't litter! Tokyo does not have a major rodent or insect problem, largely because they keep their city clean.

Most of what Tokyo has done with regards to their public transportation was possible because they planned it from the beginning. Most of the

positive attributes I listed above would be impossible for New York to implement, simply because of how disruptive such an undertaking would be to the city in general. However, not all hope is lost. The city can and must do a better job of keeping our subway system clean - rewarding those who help and giving fines to or otherwise reprimanding those who contribute to the problem. The city should embark on a gradual modernization of the trains themselves, upgrading existing models and ensuring that they run smoothly and are more eco-sensitive. Lastly, the city needs to do away with the MetroCard (which the Omni system seems to be doing already) and invest in better alternatives. Cleaning up and improving the subway system would do wonders for the city, and we could all use a bright future after this year.

"Tokyo has succeeded in creating the cleanest, cheapest, safest, and most efficient subway system in the world." – Jordan Wasserberger

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