

NEW YORK ON THE CHEAP

You can have a great day out in the Big Apple for less than \$10. TV producer Richard Mello explains how

With the US dollar at above \$1.90 to the pound, a break in New York City is an attractive proposition for British travellers. And those on a tight budget can keep daily expenses below \$10, if necessary. As a producer of a local television programme called \$9.99, it's my job to suggest ways that New Yorkers can enjoy a day with that amount of money. Many of the bargains are attractive to foreign visitors, too.

One of the city's great deals is the **subway**. A \$2 ticket will get you anywhere within the five boroughs. Although few foreign visitors leave Manhattan, the subway will take you off the island via several lines to Brooklyn.

Near the Clinton/Washington stop on the G line, which runs up and down Brooklyn, is the largest sculpture park in New York, an eclectic collection of large works at the **Pratt Institute**. Fans of industrial archeology should see the steam-driven powerhouse, which provided the institute's electricity until a few years ago; others should go directly to **Green-Wood Cemetery**, in the heart of Brooklyn. This beautifully landscaped burial ground for New York's famous (and infamous) is considered one of the finest in the world. Guided tours are available at \$10, but trust to serendipity by wandering around on your own and spend most of the money instead on a Middle-Eastern lunch at the **Tutt Cafe**. It is near the Brooklyn Heights Promenade, a prime spot for views of lower Manhattan at sunset.

If you have children in tow, it's worth visiting **Prospect Park**. Here, in a landscape by Central Park's

designers, London-born Calvert Vaux and Frederick Law Olmsted, \$2 buys admission to the zoo for a child (\$5 for adults) and \$1.50 a ride on the classic, 95-year-old carousel. Nearby is the 224-year-old Lefferts farmhouse and museum (admission free), offering various child-friendly activities including sheep shearing. On summer Saturdays you can climb inside the Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial Arch, where The New York Puppet Library offers hundreds of handmade puppets for loan.

Spending a \$9.99 day in a single area is one option; another is to tailor your day to a particular taste. For art lovers there are several options, including the Pratt Institute. The famous 'Museum Mile' along 5th Avenue – which includes the Guggenheim, the Metropolitan and seven other institutions – is an obvious choice; but unlike New Yorkers (who can put up with dirty looks) foreign visitors tend to pay the museums' 'suggested donation', which can be \$15 or more. An alternative is the private galleries. Several can be found in the Fuller Building on 57th Street near Madison Avenue, where you may happen upon a little-known O'Keeffe or Matisse. There's no admission charge, and you don't have to pretend to be a buyer.

And housed in a former school in Long Island City, Queens, is **P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center**, the sister gallery to Manhattan's MoMA which shows work by living artists. The gallery has a suggested donation, but of only \$5 for adults and \$2 for students and seniors. Unfortunately, its excellent 'WarmUp' events in

the summer, which combine visual art with music supplied by DJ-ing curators, now cost \$10.

Evening entertainments are also available at bargain prices – or less. Marjorie Eliot of **Parlor Entertainment** holds free jazz concerts in her Harlem apartment from 4pm to 6.30pm every Sunday evening. Just ring the bell at 555 Edgecombe Avenue, apartment 3F, and you'll be buzzed in. And the **Upright Citizens Brigade Theatre** in Chelsea offers comedy shows throughout the week costing up to \$8. The most popular night is Sunday, when *Saturday Night Live* cast members sometimes participate in improv shows: entrance to the late, 9.30pm show is free

Pratt Institute, 200 Willoughby Avenue; 00 1 718 636 3600; www.pratt.edu.

Green-Wood Cemetery, 500 West 25th Street; 00 1 718 768 7300; www.green-wood.com.

Prospect Park, 95 Prospect Park West; 00 1 718 965 8951; www.prospectpark.org.

Tutt Cafe, 47 Hicks Street; 00 1 718 722 7777.

P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, 22–25 Jackson Avenue; 00 1 718 784 2084; www.ps1.org.

Parlor Entertainment, 00 1 212 781 6595; www.parlorentertainment.com.

Upright Citizens Brigade Theatre, 307 West 26th Street; 00 1 212 366 9176; www.ucbtheatre.com.

The \$9.99 programme is broadcast throughout the greater New York area on NYC TV Channel 25