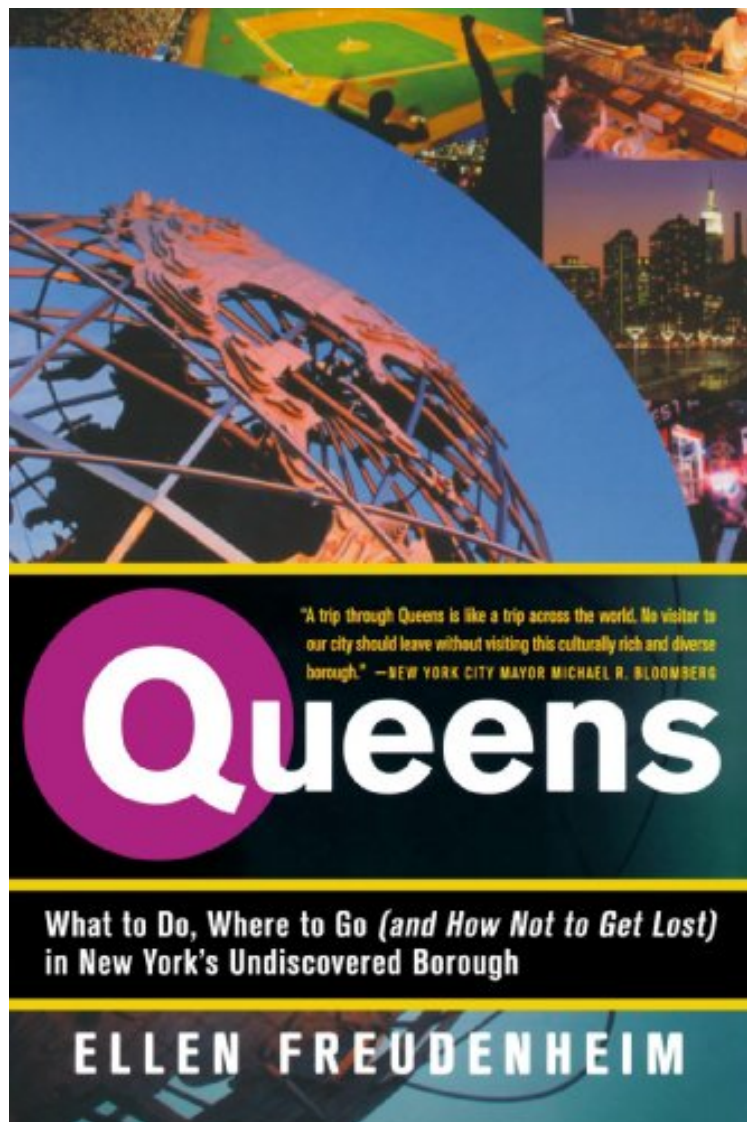


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Queens: What to Do, Where to Go (and How Not to Get Lost) in New York's Undiscovered Borough

Ellen Freudenheim

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Ellen Freudenheim : Queens: What to Do, Where to Go (and How Not to Get Lost) in New York's Undiscovered Borough before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Queens: What to Do, Where to Go (and How Not to Get Lost) in New York's Undiscovered Borough:

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. "New York's Best Kept Secret."By booklover10Ellen Freudenheim's "Queens: What to Do, Where to Go (And How Not to Get Lost) in New York's Undiscovered Borough" is a delightful guidebook to an often forgotten part of New York City. As the author points out, "were it to secede from New York City today, Queens would be the fourth largest city in America." If you enjoy diversity and value history and culture, Queens is the place for you: 120 languages are spoken here, ethnic food stores and restaurants abound, and Queens features cultural institutions, historic sites, and sports venues that are well worth a visit. Like so many formerly underappreciated parts of New York City (many in Brooklyn), Queens is being rediscovered and is on the upswing. After an informative and witty introduction, Freudenheim devotes thirteen chapters to neighborhoods from Astoria (named after the wealthy fur trader, John Jacob Astor) to Woodside. Within these chapters, she covers the basics: where the neighborhood is located, how to get there, its history, things to see and do, where to shop, points of cultural interest, restaurants, and nightlife. Sprinkled throughout the chapters are lively anecdotes and essays, some written in the first person by Queens residents. At the back of the book are sections about JFK and LaGuardia Airports, tours you can take, and recommended Web sites. The detailed and well-organized subject and alphabetical indexes make the book easy to navigate. Even if you plan never to set foot in Queens, this guidebook is fun to read solely for its entertainment value. The author has a brisk and spunky writing style that makes "Queens" a browser's delight. Turn to any page, and you will find a fascinating tidbit of information presented with wit and verve. Did you know that jazz great Louis Armstrong lived in Queens for for twenty-eight years and that his house is a National Historic Landmark open to the public? I love New York (especially Brooklyn), but Ellen Freudenheim tempts me to board one of the many subway lines leading to the "hidden gems" of Queens. 2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Long live Queens. It's worth a visit...By University DocI grew up in Queens; I was born there. I also had lived in Brooklyn and worked in Manhattan and spent time in Staten Island and the Bronx. People think that everything happens in Brooklyn and Manhattan. Wrong! When I say that Queens reigns, I know what I am talking about. Queens has always been a secret worth hiding. Of course, as a child growing up there, it's difficult to know that. It is when you grow up and look back and read a book like this that you realize what you had. This book does that point on. It does a wonderful job of introducing this gem of a Borough to those not familiar with it. It also does a wonderful job of taking those back to a place they once visited and emphasizes the little known secrets. I just hope that letting the cat out of the bag doesn't ruin it for everyone else. Sometimes a secret is best kept that way. I always used to tell people when I lived in Queens that if you ever wanted to take a trip around the world, and couldn't afford it, take a trip to Queens. It's the next best thing. I highly recommend this book to anyone wanting to learn about a new place worth visiting, either vicariously or by actually going there. The restaurants are something worth stopping by and if you love to shop, there's a place in Queens to do it. I'm glad to have this book on my shelf. Even I learned something about Queens I didn't know about. As they say, stop by. Stay awhile. You might never want to leave. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Library Journal ReviewBy EF, The following was written by Library Journal: Freudenheim, Ellen. Queens: What To Do, Where To Go (And How Not To Get Lost) in New York's Undiscovered Borough. Griffin: St. Martin's. 2006. c.336p. maps. index. ISBN 0-312-35818-0. pap. \$17.95. TRAV Freudenheim, who wrote about the New York City borough of Brooklyn in Brooklyn!: The Ultimate Guide to New York's Most Happening Borough, now tackles Queens. She organizes the book by neighborhood, with each section containing information on how to get there, things to see and do, history, shopping, restaurants, and points of cultural interest. Walking tours and brief essays by community members are also included. Small, detailed neighborhood street maps are helpful for finding attractions and navigating the area. Freudenheim presents some very compelling reasons to visit, such as the ethnic food, world culture, and proximity to New York's airports (you'll be passing through, anyway), and further provides practical information like tips on decoding Queens' complicated street addresses. Not every restaurant or attraction is covered and reviews are brief, but the guide is packed with useful and entertaining information and nicely fills a niche by covering the borough exclusively. Freudenheim's enthusiasm for Queens is contagious. Recommended for libraries with large travel collections, particularly for those collecting New York travel guides.--Louise Feldmann, Colorado State Univ. Lib., Fort Collins

Discover Queens, New York City's Best-Kept Secret! Manhattan is touristy; Brooklyn is turning mainstream; and Queens is now the up-and-coming borough in New York. With food from every corner of the world, major sporting venues, quirky nightlife, and rich history and cultural institutions to boot, Queens has just about everything a visitor could want. This handy reference explores Queens neighborhood by neighborhood, and even those familiar with the borough will discover new hidden gems that they never knew existed. This guidebook includes: * Detailed coverage and maps of the major neighborhoods like Astoria, Jackson Heights, Long Island City, Forest Hills, and Sunnyside * Daytrips to interesting but more far-flung spots in the borough like Jamaica Bay National Wildlife Refuge * The best restaurants serving every possible type of cuisine * Cultural attractions and nightlife spots worth the subway fare from Manhattan. * Contributions from major figures in the community, including the president of Queens College and the director of PS1.

A trip through Queens is like a trip across the world. No visitor to our City should leave without visiting this culturally rich and diverse borough. New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg With this publication, Ellen Freudenheim has done what I urge everyone to do Visit Queens, and See the World! Helen Marshall, Queens Borough President About the Author ELLEN FREUDENHEIM is the author of several books, including three editions of Brooklyn! She's long-time resident and avid explorer of New York City. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Chapter One Introduction Queens: All This... Queens is New York's own terra incognita, a huge uncharted territory right here within our own urban enclave. Experiment for yourself. Ask any Manhattanite whether they ever go to Queens--or even know where it is. Many will vaguely wave a hand eastward. Others will say sure, they go to baseball games at Shea Stadium, or they will describe an urban adventure to an ethnic restaurant, usually the Jackson Diner. Business travelers might say that if going to JFK and LaGuardia airports counts, they go to Queens all the time. Underrated and overlooked for too long, the truth is, there's a ton to see and do in Queens for other New Yorkers and tourists alike. You can find something new every time you go--whether you're poking around the Asian shops in Flushing, tracking down Mae West's drinking haunt in Richmond Hill, biking in Forest Park, or attending performances of Latin dance at the Thalia Theater. One measure of the value of a place as a destination is whether it gets more or less interesting the more you visit; in Queens you can keep peeling layer after layer. Admittedly, it can be frustrating to find your way around (and it's no big secret that everyone does get lost occasionally in Queens, which is why we've included a chapter called Getting to and Around Queens). But for people who want to see the real New York, Queens--understated, upside down, and quirky as hell--is a knockout. Were it to secede from New York City today, Queens would be the fourth-largest city in America. It's a huge place full of interesting neighborhoods. About 120 languages are spoken in Queens; one of the top ten is a language few have even heard of: Tagalog, spoken in the Philippines. Queens officials claim that it is the most ethnically diverse county in the United States. Imagine if the pieces of a giant jigsaw puzzle of the world's cultures were tossed around in a bowl and randomly spilled out in a borough of New York--well, that's Queens. Visitors can enjoy an amazing array of authentic ethnic food in both restaurants and groceries. It goes without saying that along with the Chinese, Korean, Thai, Peruvian, Argentinean, Colombian, Romanian, Russian, Polish, and Filipino immigration, among others, there is excellent and cheap Chinese, Korean, Thai, Peruvian, Argentinean, Colombian, Romanian, Russian, Polish, and Filipino food, along with the usual New York standards of Italian, Irish, Jewish-style, and so on. And that's just for appetizers.... There are major cultural institutions here, including several outstanding contemporary art museums, such as P.S. 1 and the Fisher Landau Center, which anchor a very interesting art scene in Long Island City. Queens has more parkland than any other borough, as well as miles of Atlantic Ocean beach and a National Wildlife Refuge in Jamaica Bay. You can drive along the waterfront under the Throgs Neck Bridge and feel light-years away from Manhattan. If you are shopping for unusual gold jewelry, saris, antique chandeliers, or the latest in Latino or Indian music, this is the place to go. Idiosyncratic, jumbled-up Queens grabs at your heartstrings and even makes you laugh. It's a source of some mirth that there are more dead than living people in Queens. As anyone who's driven here knows, there are miles and miles of graves. More than 3 million souls are buried in about two dozen cemeteries. Graves are woven into the landscape; you see them along the highways, across from schools, and next to a gas station. Whether it's the constant reminder of mortality or some other factor, in general, Queens is a humble, not showy place, a middle- and working-class haven. It's a place where people are just living modest lives. Except, of course (there's always a but when generalizing about Queens), that Donald Trump grew up here, too. It's that essential mixed-up-ness of Queens that's seductive. It's hard to pigeonhole or stereotype the borough. You can't even say, for instance, that Flushing is an Asian neighborhood without adding that it's mainly Chinese--both mainland and Taiwanese--but also Korean and Indian, plus some Jewish and Italian, and so on. Astoria has a reputation as a Greek community. It has recently drawn attention for an influx of young professionals and artists (always the canaries in the mine shaft of gentrification). But there are highly rated Italian restaurants there, too, and how about that marvelous little Middle Eastern strip of Steinway Street--with hookah shops, falafel joints, and a caf straight out of Cairo? It's not surprising in Astoria that while walking to a Brazilian restaurant you pass a Bangladeshi mosque, a sari shop, and a spice market. Astoria also boasts an old German beer hall and one of the best classic movie theaters and film museums in the country. Sure, you could say Astoria is Greek--and then some. And so it goes in much of Queens. In the nineteenth century, Queens was considered the cornfields of New York. It was still largely a rural backwater with farms that helped feed a ravenously growing New York City. (Queens, like Brooklyn, joined up to create New York City as we know it in 1898.) As transportation from Manhattan became available--first trains, then in 1909 the Queensboro Bridge, and then more subways--Queens open spaces served as fodder for the dreams of utopian visionaries, urban planners, and entrepreneurial developers seeking to house the city's burgeoning population. Queens residents still identify themselves not with the larger municipal entity of the borough, but with their neighborhood, say Forest Hills, Astoria, or Neponsit. (If you send a letter to someone in Queens, the address lists the town name and zip code, as though it were some independent village in Rockland County, not a part of the city.) It is one of many such Queens ironies that plunked down in the middle of this small-townishness are two big airports, one of which is the nation's largest international jet portal to the world: JFK. Surprisingly, the borough is replete with experimental housing developments, some of which, like Tudor-besotted Kew Gardens and Forest Hills, are famous

garden communities in the city. Sunnyside Gardens, too, was built with huge communal garden spaces as an alternative to cramped Manhattan apartments; Perry Como and Judy Holliday lived here. On the other side of the spectrum, the 1960s brought megadevelopment in the form of Lefrak City, billed as the largest apartment house in the world, and the low-income Queensbridge Houses, where rough conditions gave rise to more than one hip-hop star. These developments offer a kaleidoscopic historical view of ways to create community, or at least affordable housing, in the megalopolis. The past is present here in a way that will endear Queens to hobbyist (and professional) historians. You can make a short foray to visit several historic houses, including a Revolutionary War-era farmhouse on New York City's only remaining working farm and museum, where children can harvest pumpkins in the autumn. Rising from the flat parkland near LaGuardia Airport are vestiges of the old world's fairs of the mid-twentieth century. Up close, the Unisphere (that enormous metallic globe we've all seen from Grand Central Parkway en route to LaGuardia or JFK airports) is eerily beautiful, an unobtrusive reminder that we're all in this world together. A stone's throw away from Shea Stadium is the world's largest scale model, a 9,000-square-foot minicity of New York circa 1965, called the Panorama. In a little museum near Rockaway Beach, you can see shards from old Hog Island, a party place of the Tammany Hall set that was washed away by a hurricane a century ago--and more. A brief listing of famous Queens residents gives some hint of the borough's creative and intellectual heft. Historically, Queens has been home to Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong, Jack Kerouac and Jimmy Breslin, Mae West and the Marx Brothers, Helen Keller and Malcolm X, and Nobel Peace Prize recipient Ralph Bunche. It's where Jerry Seinfeld, Donald Trump, and rap artists 50 Cent and LL Cool J grew up. It's also where fictional characters Spiderman and Archie Bunker lived. Architecture buffs will find in Queens a rich smorgasbord of styles, from beach bungalows in the Rockaways to factories adapted for reuse in Long Island City. There's also an amazing amount of neo-Tudor architecture in Queens. The borough has an extraordinary number of early-twentieth-century homes and institutional buildings, Tudor and otherwise, that would be considered landmarks were they located in Manhattan. Like some living urban archaeological site, there are layers and accretions in Queens. It's typical that at Kennedy Airport, JetBlue is building a big state-of-the-art terminal just about on top of the Terminal 5 TWA Flight Center, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. And the beat goes on today in the era of the so-called McMansion as older buildings (some historic) are torn down by newcomers who want bigger, brassier homes. The visual juxtapositions in the borough are so pervasive it seems fitting that artist Joseph Cornell, a surrealist collage artist who was a peer of Salvador Dalí, lived and worked in Queens. Queens is on the upswing, but not in an all-shiny-and-new or corporate way. In Long Island City, old industrial buildings have been renovated into museums and art studios. A junk heap has been recycled into an award-winning waterfront sculpture park. A vast old public school building has become the internationally acclaimed P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center. In Jamaica, a Pentecostal congregation uses an extravagant art deco theater as a church. Queens is rich in opportunities for visitors and has good...