

Lower Manhattan/The Financial District

Start: Battery Park/U.S. Customs House.

Subway: Take the 4 or 5 to Bowling Green, the 1 to South Ferry, or the R or W to Whitehall Street.

Finish: African Burial Ground.

Time: Approximately 3 hours.

Best Time: Any weekday, when the wheels of finance are spinning and lower Manhattan is a maelstrom of activity.

Worst Time: Weekends, when most buildings and all the financial markets are closed.

The narrow, winding streets of the Financial District occupy the earliest-settled area of

Manhattan, where Dutch settlers established the colony of Nieuw Amsterdam in the early 17th century. Before their arrival, downtown was part of a vast forest, a lush hunting ground for Native Americans that was inhabited by mountain lions, bobcats, beavers, white-tailed deer, and wild turkeys. Hunters followed the Wiechquaekock Trail, a path through the center that today is more often referred to as Broadway.

This section of the city still centers on commerce, much as Nieuw Amsterdam did. Wall Street is America's strongest symbol of money and power; bulls and bears have replaced the wild beasts of the forest, and conservatively attired lawyers, stockbrokers, bankers, and businesspeople have supplanted the Native Americans and Dutch who once traded otter skins and beaver pelts on these very streets.

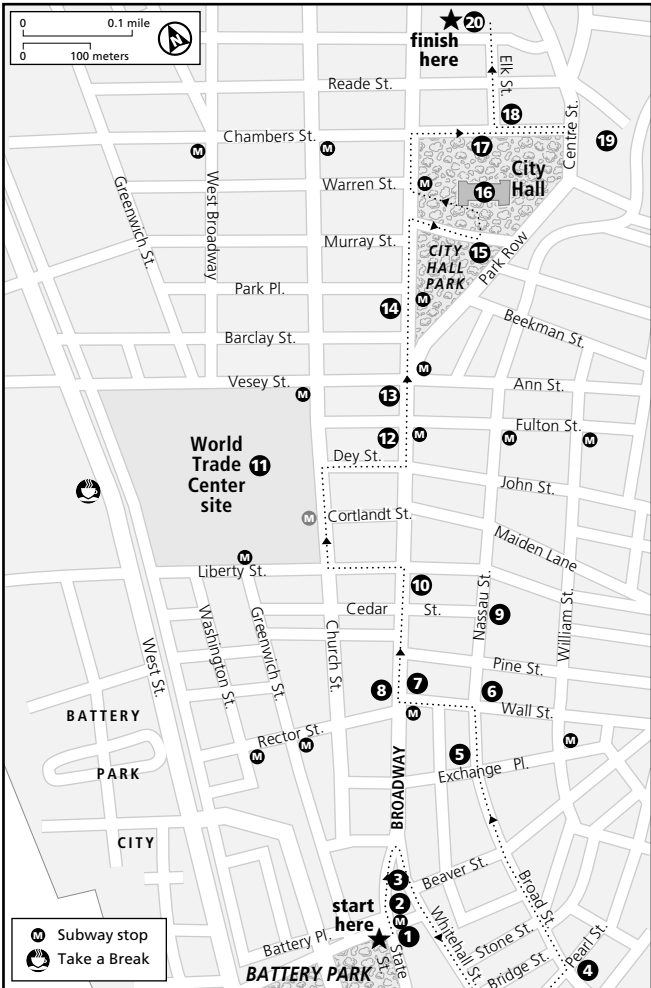
A highlight of this tour is the Financial District's architecture, in which the neighborhood's modern edifices and grand historical structures are dramatically juxtaposed: Colonial, 18th-century Georgian/Federal, and 19th-century neoclassical buildings stand in the shadow of colossal modern skyscrapers.

Much changed on September 11, 2001, when Lower Manhattan lost its greatest landmark, New York lost a familiar chunk of its skyline, America lost a share of its innocence, and more than 2,700 people lost their lives as a pair of planes commandeered by Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda terrorists plowed into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center. Those horrific events have etched themselves into all our memories. Nothing that can be said here can do justice to the heroism of the firefighters and other emergency workers who rushed into the burning buildings to help, only to perish when the towers collapsed. Paying respects at Ground Zero, amid the communal spirit that at times prevails there, may be the best way to acknowledge the incredible sacrifices so many people made that day. The surrounding neighborhood has been remarkably resilient, but it is still in varying stages of recovery. There is a subtle feel of besiegement here, with security an often-visible presence. Expect to pass through metal detectors to access many of the buildings.



The subways mentioned above all exit in or near **Battery Park**, an expanse of green at Manhattan's tip resting

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| 1 U.S. Customs House | 12 Kalikow Building |
| 2 Bowling Green Park | 13 St. Paul's Chapel |
| 3 Cunard Building | 14 Woolworth Building |
| 4 Fraunces Tavern Museum | 15 City Hall Park |
| 5 New York Stock Exchange | 16 City Hall |
| 6 Federal Hall National Memorial | 17 Tweed Courthouse |
| 7 Wall Street | 18 Surrogate's Court
(The Hall of Records) |
| 8 Trinity Church | 19 The Municipal Building |
| 9 Jean Dubuffet's <i>Group of Four Trees</i> | 20 African Burial Ground |
| 10 Isamu Noguchi's 1967 <i>The Red Cube</i> | |
| 11 Ground Zero | |

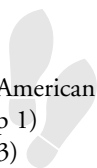
entirely upon a landfill—an old strategy of the Dutch to expand their settlement farther into the bay. The original tip of Manhattan ran along Battery Place, which borders the north side of the park. State Street flanks the park's east side, and stretched along it, filling the space below Bowling Green, is the Beaux Arts bulk of the old:

1. **U.S. Customs House**, home to the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian (© 212/514-3700; www.si.edu/nmai) since 1994. The giant statues lining the front of this granite 1907 structure personify Asia (pondering philosophically), America (bright-eyed and bushy-tailed), Europe (decadent, whose time has passed), and Africa (sleeping) and were carved by Daniel Chester French of Lincoln Memorial fame. The most interesting, if unintentional, sculptural statement—keeping in mind the building's new purpose—is the giant seated woman to the left of the entrance, representing America. The young, upstart America is surrounded by references to Native America: Mayan pictographs on her throne, Quetzalcoatl (an Aztec god symbolized by a feathered serpent) under her foot, a shock of corn in her lap, and a Plains Indian scout over her shoulder.

The airy oval rotunda inside was frescoed by Reginald Marsh to glorify the shipping industry (and, by extension, the customs office once here). Housing Native American treasures in a former arm of the federal government seems a bit of a cruel irony, but the well-curated exhibits here convey a sense of reverence. Native American art, culture, history, and contemporary issues are presented in sophisticated and thought-provoking ways. The museum is free and highly recommended, open daily 10am to 5pm (to 8pm Thurs).

Kid-Friendly Experiences

- Visiting the National Museum of the American Indian in the old U.S. Customs House (stop 1)
- Riding the Bronze Bull on Broadway (stop 3)



As you exit the building, directly in front of you sits the pretty little oasis of:

2. **Bowling Green Park.** In 1626, Dutchman Peter Minuit stood at this spot (or somewhere close to it) and gave glass beads and other trinkets worth about 60 guilders (\$24) to a group of Indians, and claimed that he had thereby bought Manhattan. However, the local Indians didn't consider that they owned this island in the first place because Manhattan ("land of many hills" is the most likely translation from the native tongue) was a communal hunting ground. (The idea that the Indians didn't believe in property is a colonial myth; the Indians had their own territories nearby.) It isn't clear what the Indians thought the trinkets meant. Either (a) they just thought the exchange was a formal way, one to which they were accustomed, of closing an agreement to extend the shared hunting use of the island to this funny-looking group of pale people with yellow beards, or (b) they were knowingly selling land that they didn't own in the first place and thus performing the first of many thousands of such deals in the Financial District. They may have also tried to sell Minuit a bridge just up the river a ways, but he was too busy fortifying his little town of Nieuw Amsterdam to listen. There's evidence that the "sellers" of Manhattan were of the Canarsie tribe from what is today Brooklyn.

Although Bowling Green Park today is just another lunch spot for stockbrokers, when King George III repealed the hated Stamp Act in 1770, New Yorkers magnanimously raised a statue of him here. The statue lasted 5 years, until the day the Declaration of Independence was read to the public in front of City Hall (now Federal Hall) up the street and a crowd rushed down Broadway to topple the statue, chop it up, melt it down, and transform it into 42,000 bullets with which to shoot the British.

The park also marks the start of Broadway—which, if you follow it far enough, leads to Albany. Walk up the left side of Broadway, past the Cunard Building at no. 25. In 1921, this was the ticketing room for Cunard, one of the world's most glamorous shipping and cruise lines and the

proprietor of the *QEII*. The deteriorating churchlike ceiling sheltered the local post office until 2005.

Cross to the traffic island to pat the enormous:

3. **Bronze bull**, reared back and ready to charge up Broadway. This symbol of an up stock market began as a practical joke by Italian sculptor Arturo DiModica, who originally stuck it in front of the New York Stock Exchange building in the middle of the night in 1989. The unamused brokers had it promptly removed, and it was eventually placed here.

Turn right to head south on Broadway, on the left side of the U.S. Customs House on Whitehall Street. Take a left onto Pearl Street; just past Broad Street stretches a historic block lined with (partially rebuilt) 18th- and 19th-century buildings. The two upper stories of 54 Pearl St. house the:

4. **Fraunces Tavern Museum** (☎ 212/425-1778; www.frauncestavernmuseum.org), where you can view the room in which Washington's historic farewell to his officers took place on December 4, 1783 (today, it's set up to represent a typical 18th-century tavern room), among other American history exhibits. A moderate admission fee is charged. Hours are Tuesday through Friday from noon to 5pm, and Saturday from 10am to 5pm. The restaurant in the posh, oak-paneled dining room and adjacent pub emerged from several years of extensive renovations in the fall of 2001, which inexplicably did away with much of the wonderful old clubby feel of the place, leaving it rather staid and uninspired. The food's good, but pricey.

From Fraunces Tavern, head straight up Broad Street past the lunch spots that cater to harried brokers. At no. 20, on the left, is the main entrance to the:

5. **New York Stock Exchange** (☎ 212/656-3000; www.nyse.com), which is near the buttonwood tree where merchants met as long ago as 1792 to try and pass off to each other the U.S. bonds that had been sold to fund the Revolutionary War. By 1903, they were trading stocks of publicly held companies in this Corinthian-columned,

Beaux Arts “temple” designed by George Post. Close to 2,800 companies are listed on the exchange, where 1.46 billion shares with a value of \$46 billion are traded on an average day.

Sadly, the new security measures have put a stop to tours, which used to allow visitors to peer out at the trading floor from an observation deck where Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin once created chaos by tossing dollar bills in the 1960s. The clunky metal fencing outside the building has the look of a cattle stockade, which may be somewhat appropriate given the recent performance of the market.

Continue north (left) up Broad Street. At the end of the block, you’ll see the Parthenon-inspired:

6. **Federal Hall National Memorial**, 26 Wall St. at Nassau Street (☎ 212/825-6990; www.nps.gov/feha). Fronted by 32-foot fluted marble Doric columns, this imposing 1842 neoclassical temple is built on the site of the British City Hall building, later called Federal Hall. Peter Zenger, publisher of the outspoken *Weekly Journal*, stood trial in 1735 for “seditious libel” against Royal Gov. William Cosby. Defended brilliantly by Alexander Hamilton, Zenger was eventually acquitted (based on the grounds that anything that is printed that is true, even if it isn’t very nice, can’t be construed as libel), and his acquittal set the precedent for freedom of the press, later guaranteed in the Bill of Rights, which was drafted and signed inside the original structure here.

New York’s first major rebellion against British authority occurred here when the Stamp Act Congress met in 1765 to protest King George III’s policy of “taxation without representation.” J. Q. A. Ward’s 1883 statue of George Washington on the steps commemorates the spot of the first presidential inauguration in 1789. Congress met here after the revolution, when New York was briefly the nation’s capital.

The majority of historically significant events that occurred on this spot predated the construction of the current building, which began as a customs house and then became a treasury. The foundation was damaged in

the 9/11 attacks and the Park Service has closed the museum for repairs, with a gala reopening scheduled for September 2006.

Facing Federal Hall, turn left up the road that has become the symbol of high finance the world over:

7. **Wall Street.** This narrow street, which is just a few short blocks long, started out as a service road that ran along the fortified wall that the Dutch erected in 1653 to defend against Indian attack. (Gov. Peter Stuyvesant's settlers had at first played off tribes against each other in order to trick them into ceding more and more land, but the native groups quickly realized that their real enemies were the Dutch.) Today's fortifications come in the form of security checkpoints, which may force slight detours as you work your way back to Broadway, across the street from:
8. **Trinity Church** (☎ 212/602-0800; www.trinitywallstreet.org). Serving God and mammon, this Wall Street house of worship—with neo-Gothic flying buttresses, beautiful stained-glass windows, and vaulted ceilings—was designed by Richard Upjohn and consecrated in 1846. At that time, its 280-foot spire dominated the skyline. Its main doors, embellished with biblical scenes, were inspired in part by Ghiberti's famed doors on Florence's Baptistery. The first church on this site was built in 1697 and burned down in 1776.

The church runs a brief tour daily at 2pm, with an additional tour Sunday morning following the 11:15am service. A small museum at the end of the left aisle displays documents (including the 1697 church charter from King William III), photographs, replicas of the Hamilton-Burr duel pistols, and other items. Capt. James Lawrence, whose famous last words were, "Don't give up the ship," and Alexander Hamilton are buried in the churchyard (against the south fence, next to steamboat inventor Robert Fulton), where the oldest grave dates from 1681. The newest item in the churchyard is a red, spider-like cast of the roots of one of the church's sycamore trees, felled by debris on 9/11. The sculpture, *Trinity Root*, by Steve Tobin, makes an eerie organic intrusion into an otherwise marble and stone environment.

Thursdays at 1pm, Trinity holds its Concerts at One series of chamber music and orchestral concerts. Call ☎ **212/602-0747** for details.

Take a left out of the church and head back up Broadway. At your feet you will see enigmatic captions, embedded in the sidewalks of lower Broadway. The dates and events recorded in granite correspond to the ticker-tape parades that have passed along this stretch of Broadway, sometimes referred to as the Canyon of Heroes. The canyon appellation is easy to understand as you look up at the looming buildings. Across Broadway, the Equitable Tower, at no. 120, is a monolith that maximizes its available lot at the expense of light and air for everyone else. After its 1915 construction, New York was inspired to pass its first zoning laws. As you pass Cedar Street, look (don't walk) to your right, across Broadway, and down Cedar Street. At the end of the street, you'll see:

9. **Jean Dubuffet's Group of Four Trees.** Installed in 1972, these amorphous mushroomlike white shapes traced with undulating black lines are representative of the artist's patented style. Dubuffet considered these installations as drawings in three dimensions "which extend and expand into space."

Closer at hand, in front of the tall, black Marine Midland Bank building on Broadway between Cedar and Liberty streets, is:

10. **Isamu Noguchi's 1967 The Red Cube,** another famed outdoor sculpture of downtown Manhattan. Noguchi fancied that this rhomboid "cube" balancing on its corner and shot through with a cylinder of empty space represented chance, like the "rolling of the dice." This sculpture is appropriately located in the gilt-edged gambling den that is the Financial District.

As you're looking at *The Red Cube* across Broadway, turn around to walk down Liberty Plaza/Liberty Street toward the gaping rent in the fabric of Manhattan:

11. **Ground Zero,** the somber hole in the ground where the World Trade Center once stood. Opened in 1970 under the auspices of the Port Authority, this immense complex

covered 12 million square feet of rentable office space, with 50,000 permanent workers and some 70,000 others (tourists and businesspeople) visiting each day. In the first few months after 9/11, Ground Zero was a dramatic sight. Twisted World Trade Center wreckage rose out of a steaming hole and no matter how many times you went by, it still came as a punch in the stomach. With the rubble long cleared, however, the initial raw horror of the scene is gone. Ground Zero today is indistinguishable from a run-of-the-mill construction pit if you don't know that it's also a final resting place. The ad hoc memorials that originally surrounded the site have been replaced by a uniform series of placards along the fence at Church Street, just south of the newly reopened PATH train station.



Take a Break For a view of Ground Zero with a little perspective, head west toward the World Financial Center's Winter Garden (☎ 212/945-2600; open 24 hours), in the center of the enclosed mall complex. The Winter Garden was all but destroyed by the collapsing towers, but you'd never guess it to look at the towering *Washingtonia robusta* palm trees and gleaming marble inside the atrium. Beneath the stairs you'll find a temporary exhibit outlining the plans for the site, which will hopefully someday include a worthy memorial in addition to the inevitable corporate skyscraper. Walk up the stairs to the panoramic windows and you'll have an elevated view of Ground Zero.

Varied dining choices—everything from pub fare to gourmet pizzas—are scattered throughout the World Financial Center. The lower, west side overlooks a yacht harbor and a pleasant cement park with outdoor tables, weather permitting.

Continue north on Church Street to turn right down Dey Street back to Broadway. Take a left, and on your left is the:

- Kalikow Building**, 195 Broadway. This neoclassical tower that dates from 1915 to 1922 is the former headquarters of AT&T and has more exterior columns than any other building in the world. The 25-story structure

rests on a Doric colonnade, with Ionic colonnades above. The lobby evokes a Greek temple with a forest of massive fluted columns. The building's tower crown is modeled on the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, a great Greek monument of antiquity. The bronze panels over the entranceway by Paul Manship (sculptor of Rockefeller Center's Prometheus) symbolize wind, air, fire, and earth.

Continue north on Broadway. The next block, between Vesey and Fulton streets, contains the small:

13. **St. Paul's Chapel** (☎ 212/233-4164; www.saintpaulschapel.org), dating from 1764, is New York's only surviving pre-Revolutionary church. During the 2 years that New York was the nation's capital, George Washington worshipped at this Georgian chapel belonging to Trinity Church; his pew is on the right side of the church, beneath a 1795 painting of the Great Seal, in one of its earliest renditions. Built by Thomas McBean, with a templelike portico and fluted Ionic columns supporting a massive pediment, the chapel resembles London's St. Martin's-in-the-Fields. In the months following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the chapel became a center for the workers and volunteers to wash up, get something to eat or drink, nap on the pews or on cots, and receive relief in the form of free chiropractic care, massages, and, of course, spiritual counseling. Explore the small graveyard in back, where the ancient headstones restore human scale to a chaotic corner, and provide additional context for the eerie prairie that is Ground Zero. Trinity's Concerts at One series is held here each Monday, featuring a variety of musical performances, from Japanese koto players to brass quartets.

Continue up Broadway, crossing Vesey and Barclay streets, and at 233 Broadway is the:

14. **Woolworth Building.** This soaring "cathedral of commerce" cost Frank W. Woolworth \$13.5 million worth of nickels and dimes in 1913. Designed by Cass Gilbert, it was the world's tallest edifice until 1930, when 40 Wall Street and the Chrysler Building surpassed it. The neo-Gothic architecture is rife with spires, gargoyles, flying

buttresses, vaulted ceilings, 16th-century–style stone-as-lace traceries, castlelike turrets, and a churchlike interior.

To get an overview of the Woolworth Building’s architecture, cross Broadway. On this side of the street, you’ll find scurrying city officials and growing greenery that together make up:

15. **City Hall Park**, a 250-year-old green surrounded by landmark buildings. A Frederick MacMonnies statue near the southwest corner of the park depicts Nathan Hale at age 21, having just uttered his famous words before execution: “I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country.” Northeast of City Hall in the park is a statue of *New York Tribune* founding editor Horace Greeley (seated with newspaper in hand) by J. Q. A. Ward. This small park has been a burial ground for paupers and the site of public executions, parades, and protests.

It now provides the setting for:

16. **City Hall**, the seat of the municipal government, housing the offices of the mayor and his staff, the city council, and other city agencies. City Hall combines Georgian and French Renaissance styles and was designed by Joseph F. Mangin and John McComb Jr. Later additions include the clock and 6,000-pound bell in the cupola tower. The cupola itself is crowned with a stately, white-painted copper statue of Justice. At its opening in 1812, City Hall marked the northern terminus of New York. Since the back of the building was just facing the hills, the city finished that side in cheap sandstone, as opposed to the marble and granite employed in front. (During a later renovation, the city re-clad the back to make the entire exterior uniform.)

City Hall contains quite an impressive collection of American art, including works by George Caitlin, Thomas Sully, Samuel B. Morse, and Rembrandt Peale. The elegant Governor’s Room upstairs, where Lafayette was received in 1824, houses Washington’s writing desk, his inaugural flag, and artwork by well-known American artists. The building may be visited via a guided tour (call ☎ 212/788-2170 for information and reservations), which is conducted in tandem with a tour of the:

17. **Tweed Courthouse** (52 Chambers St., at the north end of City Hall Park). This 1872 Italianate courthouse was built during the tenure of William Marcy “Boss” Tweed, who, in his post on the board of supervisors, stole millions in construction funds. Originally budgeted as a \$250,000 job in 1861, the courthouse project escalated to the staggering sum of \$14 million. Bills were padded to an unprecedented extent—Andrew Garvey, who was to become known as the “Prince of Plasterers,” was paid \$45,967 for a single day’s work! The ensuing scandal (Tweed and his cronies were discovered to have pocketed at least \$10 million) wrecked Tweed’s career; he died penniless in jail after being convicted at trial in, of all places, the Tweed Courthouse. The building was meticulously restored in 1999 and is now the headquarters for the Department of Education.

Across Chambers Street and to the right, at the corner of Elk Street, lies the turn-of-the-20th-century:

18. **Surrogate’s Court (The Hall of Records)**, 31 Chambers St. Housed in this sumptuous Beaux Arts structure are all the legal records relating to Manhattan real estate deeds and court cases, some dating from the mid-1600s. Heroic statues of distinguished New Yorkers (Peter Stuyvesant, De Witt Clinton, and others) front the mansard roof. The doorways, surmounted by arched pediments, are flanked by Philip Martiny’s sculptural groups portraying New York in Revolutionary Times (to your left) and New York in Its Infancy (to your right). Above the entrance is a three-story Corinthian colonnade.

Step inside to see the vestibule’s beautiful barrel-vaulted mosaic ceiling, embellished with astrological symbols, Egyptian and Greek motifs, and figures representing retribution, justice, sorrow, and labor. Continue back to the two-story sky-lit neoclassical atrium, clad in honey-colored marble with a colonnaded second-floor loggia and an ornate staircase adapted from the foyer of the Grand Opera House in Paris.

Exiting the Surrogate’s Court from the front door, you’ll see to your left, at the end of the block, that Chambers Street disappears under:

19. **The Municipal Building**, a grand civic edifice built between 1909 and 1914 to augment City Hall's government office space. The famed architectural firm of McKim, Mead, and White (as in Stanford White) used Greek and Roman design elements such as a massive Corinthian colonnade, ornately embellished vaults and cornices, and allegorical statuary in their design for this building. A triumphal arch, its barrel-vaulted ceiling adorned with relief panels, forms a magnificent arcade over Chambers Street; this arch has been called the "gate of the city." Sculptor Adolph Weinman created many of the building's bas-reliefs, medallions, and allegorical groupings of human figures (they symbolize civic pride, progress, guidance, prudence, and executive power). Weinman also designed the heroic hammered-copper statue of Civic Fame that tops the Municipal Building 582 feet above the street. This statue, which is the largest one in Manhattan, holds a crown with five turrets that represent New York's five boroughs.

See lots of lovey-dovey couples walking in and out? The city's marriage license bureau is on the second floor, and a wedding takes place about every 20 minutes.

Turn around on Chambers and take a right on Elk Street. At the second corner, Duane Street, look to your left for the:

20. **African Burial Ground** (© 212/264-2201; www.africanburialground.gov). This small lot was originally intended to be part of a federal building constructed at 290 Broadway. In 1991, during excavation, the remains of over 400 Africans were discovered. The government initially intended to go forward with construction, but community protest led to this section being preserved as a graveyard, with the remains re-interred after extensive study. In September 2005, a groundbreaking ceremony was held for a permanent memorial designed by architect Rodney Leon. Used by Africans from the late 1600s until 1795, this plot is only a tiny portion of a forgotten burial ground that stretches five city blocks. In some ways it serves as a microcosm for the neighborhood, where history layers on top of history, and the present never wholly sheds the context of the past.