

HYC Harbor & Dominican Parade



Times Square from Tour Bus

The bus was on Broadway looking toward Times Square at 42nd between Broadway and Fashion (which is 7th Ave).

The weather was so great on our short trip (on Aug. 11-12, 2007) to New York City that we took in a bus tour of lower Manhattan, a bird-lovers tour of the East River, and watched the Dominican National Parade on 6th Avenue.

Lower Manhattan Bus Cruise

If the weather cooperates, you can get a great perspective of NYC from about 15 feet above the ground by taking an open-air, double-decker tourist bus ride. Even if you've lived in the City for a long time, it offers a new, refreshing look at the City. You'll discover new sights, objects, colors, and perspectives. You'll see the shapes of people's heads from above, the colors of leaves from inside the trees, and the shapes of second floor windows. In general, you'll see much less trash than walking on the ground. But if you don't stay in your seat, you'll get decapitated by a stop light.

These tourist buses, of which there are thousands in the city, take you in a giant circle of either Lower or Upper Manhattan. We took the Lower route, starting in Mid-town and circling through the southern tip of the island. A tour ticket allows you



Water Taxi on East River

Brooklyn sits behind this Water Taxi tour boat as in was departing the terminal.

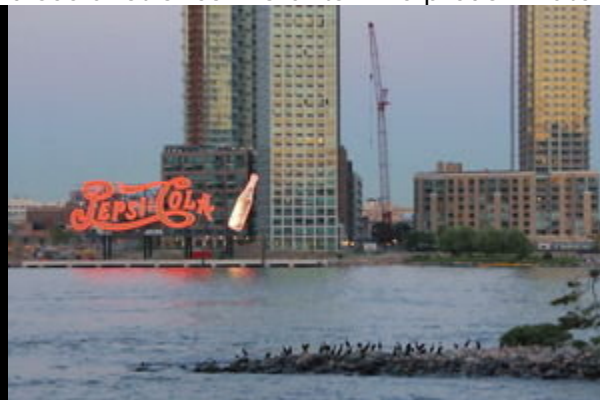
to get on and off as often as you want (at 16 designated stops) for a 24 hour period. Start early in the day and avoid the crowds otherwise the buses crawl and upper seats are filled.

Waterfowl Water Taxi Tour

Yes there really are birds in New York Harbor? In fact there are an estimated 1,000 pairs of the Black-Crowned Night Heron nesting, and 2,000 pairs of the Double-Crested Cormorants. These waterfowl populations drastically declined until about 1975 when the birds began returning.

During the summer the New York Water Taxi service runs a special Audubon tour on Saturday evening. The water taxi only holds about 100 people but there are other Audubon Society tours (www.nycaudubon.org), if you are interested. Our tour started out at the Water Taxi depot near Battery Park and headed up the East River past Roosevelt Island followed by Ward Island, ending at the North Brother and South Brother Islands, which are next to the famous Rikers Island prison.

Due to a late start, by the time we sailed up the East River, it was too dark to see the herons but we did see a lot of cormorants. The predominate



Cormorants on the East River

This little island populated with cormorants rests on the East River between the UN Building on one side and the infamous Pepsi-Cola sign on the other.

hangouts in NYC for harbor birds are the Brother Islands, but it was so dark when got there that we could only see faint shadows of what might have been sleepy birds.

Dominican National Parade

Just about every Sunday during the summer Midtown Manhattan has a big street fair or a parade or both. It was our lucky fate to be touring Manhattan on the Sunday of the 25th annual Dominican National Parade. The parade was about as colorful, noisy, and lively as a parade can be.

Tens of thousands of bouncing kids and cheering adults lined the 2-mile parade route on 6th (Madison) Ave from 36th St. to Central Park. The parade took several hours because of the many floats and because the cross streets were not completely cut off. Police at each intersection on the parade route, halted the parade and let traffic through every few minutes.

Dominicans make up a half-million of New York City's population. So not surprisingly, the parade walkers included many politicians, celebrities and other important people. Mayor Bloomberg was supposedly in the parade, however he never came through our viewing spot at mid-way. Hillary Clinton's entourage came through but



no Hillary.

I cannot remember seeing so many flags, and they were red, white, and blue Dominican flags! Almost everyone waved a flag in one hand and blew a whistle in the other.

The most colorful creatures were the "lame devils" (diablos cojuelo) with their sharp-featured masks and colorful, ruffle-sleeved costumes. These creatures represent "spirits of mischief" intending to improve the playfulness of the event. They appear to be uniquely Dominican with a long history within Dominican Carnival celebrations.

One in 16 New Yorkers is a Dominican, although their concentration in Manhattan is diminishing as more move away from the big city into the heartland. Dominicans live mostly in the Washington Heights neighborhoods of Upper Manhattan, where incomes tend to be relatively very low. New York Dominicans put on a great parade and deserve more respect.



Dancers in Dominican Parade
New York City 25th Annual Dominican Parade



Marching Dominican
New York City 25th Annual Dominican Parade



Colorful "Lame Devils"
New York City 25nd Annual Dominican Parade



Police Holding Crowds
New York City 25nd Annual Dominican Parade. Nancy and daughter Gina are in the crowd being held back by the police.