"All the News That's Fit to Print

# The New York Times

Today, cloudy, warmer, high 79. Tonight, partly cloudy, low 65. Tomorrow, partly sunny skies, high 75. Weather map, Page 24.

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## 36 Hours

CENTRAL PARK, NEW YORK

It can be an island of calm or a center of activity and adventure for both tourists and locals.







From left, a long line of apartment buildings stand sentry along the west side of the park; a ballerina performing by the Bethesda Fountain; and the sphere at the Rose Center for Earth and Space, 87 feet in diameter.

#### By STEPHANIE ROSENBLOOM

In 1859, the sanctuary of undulating hills, bridges and lakes taking shape in the heart of Manhattan was described in The New York Times as a "noble work, which is so clearly destined to be the honor and de-light of New York." Neglect and decline in the 1970s threatened to sout out out that uto-pian vision of Central Park, but today, after years of restoration. It is wordarn and flow ars of restoration, it is verdant and flour-ting — the rare tourist destination that is

pian vision of Central Park, but today, attery years of restoration, it is verdam and flourishing—the rare tourist destination that is also a pleasure ground for locals. Depending on the season and cycle of life, one might be sunbathing or ice skating, sailing a toy boat or rowing a real one, listening to Shakespeare, rock music or the call of one of 230 species of birds.

Designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, Central Park's more than 840 acres are dappled with sculptures, monuments and fountains that tell of the nation's explorers, artists and heroes, both real and imaginary: Columbus, Beethoven, Duke Ellingson, John Lennon, Alice in Wonderland. The park is also home to tennis and handball courts, croquet greens, a carousel, a castle, a mariometre greens, a carousel, a castle, a marionette theater, a zoo and more than a dozen playgrounds. It is crisscrossed by horse-drawn carriages and ringed by astronomically riced apartments, luxury hotels and orld-class museums. Yet despite its being a kind of three-ring circus, there are quiet trails and hidden nooks, museums and bars within and around the park where one can find a more tranquil, timeless

#### Friday

#### 2 P.M. ➤ BOLDFACE NAMES

② 2 P.M. ➤ BOLDFACE NAMES
Download the free Central Park app to your smartphone. Its map allows you to pinpoint where you are, but more interesting, the app has audio clips of celebrities like Jerry Seinfeld welcoming you to the Mall and Literary Walk, for Whoopi Goldberg discussing Wollman Rink (where she learned to ice skate). Then, pretend you're an aristocrat in a Merchant Ivory film and step through one of the iron gates near 105th Street and Fifth Avenue into the formal, six-acre Conservatory Garden (an official quiet zone), which is divided into three garden styles: French, Italian and English (don't miss the Frances Hodgson Burnert Memorial Fountain with its sculpress of a boy and a girl, created in honor tures of a boy and a girl, created in honor of the author of "The Secret Garden"). In of the author of "The Secret Garden"). In the Iralian garden, climb the stairs to the tall wisteria pergola, sit on a shady bench and observe the 12-foot-tall jet fountain be-low. Now is a good time to press play on the app and listen to Candice Bergen dis-cuss the gardens. Before leaving, look down. At your feet, medallions etched into the ground carry the names of the original 13 states, including New York.

Exit the gardens onto Fifth Avenue through the soaring wrought-iron Vander-bilt Gate, made in Paris in 1894 and once

part of Cornelius Vanderbilt II's mansion at 58th Street. Walk south You're on the aptly named Museum Mile. Already been to heavyweights like the Guggenheim? Stop by less-trafficked spots like the Museum of the Gity of New York, where you'll find vestiges of the city's younger days, including handwritten manuscripts by Eugene O'Neill. And Neue Galerie celebrates 20th-century German and Austrian art and design with works by Gustav Klimt, Josef Hoffmann, Vasily Kandinsky and Paul Klee. Then enjoy a lobster roll (31s) at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's self-service goof garden cafe and martini bar (open May through late fall) as the sun sets. part of Cornelius Vanderbilt II's mansion

## ₹30 P.M. ➤ A SOUTHERN CRAWL

Begin at the Plaza. Skip the buzzy Champagne Bar in the lobby and climb the stairs to the more-intimate Rose Club, where plush chairs are ideal for tête-à-têtes. A Bloody Mary costs \$23, but, hey, you can almost make a meal of free nuts and popcorn. (The Plaza Food Hall is a great place to pick up pastries and other treats to eat in the park.)

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## Saturdav

@ 7:30 P.M. > A S

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live piano music Circle. Across the

#### 7:30 A.M. > EARLY BIRDS

Bird lovers know that daybreak is magical. In the Ramble, a more-than-30-acre maze of boulders and trees, birding is especially rewarding because, according to the Central Park website, it is on the Atlantic Flyway, a migration route that birds follow in the spring and fall. Walking its shady arteries, it's easy to forget that this section of the park is almost entirely man-made: The running water in the stream can be turned on and off as if it were coming from a kitch for faucet. (For those who get a later start, the Central Park Conservancy offers kits with binoculars, maps, a guidebook and sketching materials that you can borrow at no charge at Belvedere Castle.) Bird lovers know that daybreak is magical.

#### 6 10 A.M. ➤ INTO THE WOODS

On sunny days, Central Park's vast lawns are littered with people. If you want a little peace — and a hint of the Adirondacks — head to the North Woods. Be cautious, though, as this is a dense, somewhat isolated area. That said, the 90 acres of wild-flowers, trees, a ravine and a waterfall will transport you to the country. These wood-

lands (another bird-watching hot spot) were designed to block out the skyline and drown out the noise of the city with bab-bling water. And do they ever. Little won-der that the magician David Copperfield has said that this is the place he comes to when he longs to disappear. Look, too, for the nearby Pool, where ducks nestle on the banks beneath weeping willows. Farther north, at the Harlem Meer, you can try catch-and-release fishing.

#### 1 P.M. ➤ TASTING MENU

When you're in the mood for lunch, walk over to Trump Hotel Central Park and into Nougatine, the elegant yet "casual sister" of Jean-Georges. Here Jean-Georges Von-gerichten's prix fixe lunch menu (\$38) changes with the seasons but includes an

#### IF YOU GO

- 1 Conservatory Garden, Central Park.
- 2 Museum of the City of New York, 1220 Fifth Avenue; mcny.org. Neue Galerie, 1048 Fifth Avenue, neuegalerie.org. Metropolitan Museum of Art Roof Garden Café and Martini Bar. 1000 Fifth Avenue:

metmuseum.org/visit.

3 The Rose Club, The Plaza Fifth Avenue at Central Park

> olumbuscircle.com ls, Central Park e. Trump Hotel k, 1 Central Park georges.com. n Museum of Natu Central Park West Street between West and Colum amnh.org

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olumbus Circle,

ub Coca-Cola, 10 Columbus Circle; jazz.org /dizzys.php. 9 Tavern on the Green, Central Park West and 67th Street; tavernonthegreen.com.

10 Loeb Boathouse, Central

Park; enter at East 72nd Street and Fifth Avenue; thecentralparkboathouse.com.

11 Central Park Zoo, between East 63rd and 66th Streets; centralparkzoo.com.

NLINE: VIDEO Take a tour in and around Central Park in a new 36 Hours nytimes.com/travel

appetizer, main course like seared salmon with corn pudding and cherry tomato sal-ad or organic chicken with ricotta gnocchi, market carrots and Roma beans, and des sert (the warm chocolate cake with vanilla bean ice cream is a must).

#### 7 3 P.M. ➤ STAR GAZING

Next door to the American Museum of Natural History is a giant orb in a glass box: the Rose Center for Earth and Space. There are few better ways to spend a rainy day than gazing at star Clusters and galaxies during a show at the Hayden Planetarium, or watching an Imax nature film at the museum. Speaking of the museum, stop by to marvel at dinosaur fossils and to lie down (go ahead, it's O.K.) beneath the 94-foot-long, 21,000-pound fiberglass model of a blue whale suspended from the ceiling

#### 3 7:30 P.M. ➤ ALL THAT JAZZ

(1) 1:30 P.M. > ALL THAT JAZZ

In the warmer months you can catch a concert or play in Central Park or at nearby Lincoln Center, but any time of year is right for listening to jazz while eating finger-licking fare like a catfish po'boy (\$16) or bourbon-glazed barbecued baby back this (\$24) at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola. Part of Jazz at Lincoln Center, this intimate club has rable and bar seating all facing a year. has table and bar seating, all facing a ver-tiginous wall of windows behind the performers - almost close enough to touch that lets in Central Park and the twinkling

#### 10 P.M. ➤ NIGHTCAP IN THE PARE

The recently reopened, more rustic (think hunting lodge) Taivern on the Green at 67th Street and Central Park West has an oval indoor bar and fireplace to take the chill out of fall nights. For something more romantic, visit the outdoor bar where, beneath glowing lanterns, you can sip drinks with unromantic names inspired by borwith unromantic names inspired by bor-oughs, including the Staten Island (Cacao Prieto rum, coconut water, pineapple and lime juice: \$14).

#### Sunday

#### 1 9:30 A.M. > WAFFLES AND ROW BOATS

Yes, it's rife with tourists. But do visit the Loeb Boathouse, which opened in 1954. How often can one tuck into maple waffles with warm berry compote (\$16) and watch rowboats glide by on a lake — in the middle of Manhattan? After brunch, go for a row (boats are \$15 an hour; \$20 cash deposit required).

#### **11:30 A.M.** ➤ WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

Tigers, red pandas, and an emerald tree boa are a few of the creatures you may encounter at the Central Park Zoo. There are penguin and sea lion feedings, a children's zoo with a nature trail, and a 4-D theater. The zoo is tiny compared with the Bronx Zoo, but it is a delightful way to end a weekend in an urban jungle.