

Barney's (660 Madison Ave at 61st St), Bendel's (712 5th Ave at 56th St), and Tiffany's & Co. (727 5th Ave at 57th St).

While you are here: For kids and those who are kids at heart, stop in SantaLand, located on the 8th floor of Macy's. It features about 13,000 square feet of magical winter wonderland filled with elves, reindeer, toys, and the man himself – Santa. He's watching, so you better be good.

See the Lights

To dress up its magnificent lighting system, the Empire State Building (350 5th Ave, bet. 33rd and 34th Sts: www.esbnyc.com) first used color lights in 1976, the tower then glowing in red, white, and blue for the celebration of America's Bicentennial. The building celebrates the holidays by lighting up the tower in festive red and green lights.

Grand Central Station's (110 E. 42nd St; www.grandcentralterminal.com) Holiday Laser Light Show is presented on every hour and half hour from 11 a.m. – 9 p.m. through December 31. Holiday lights also decorate Central Park and the trees along Park Avenue, said to represent those who have served our country. A Giant Menorah (5th Avenue at 59th St) is lit each night of Hanukkah. Little Italy (www.littleitalynyc.com) is festooned with lights and other Christmas decorations during the holidays. There is weekend entertainment during December, including parades and carolers, and outdoor merchants.

Sightseeing: The Empire State Building's observatory is located on the 86th floor. This glass-enclosed area is open 365 days a year, rain or shine, allowing for a panoramic view of the city and more. It is said that during clear days, you can see as far as 80 miles.

Take a Tour

They say that there are a million stories in the big city, and by taking a tour, you will hear a few of them.

New York Walks and Talks (888-337-4455; www.newyorkwalksandtalks.com) and New York Discovery Tours (212-465-3331) offer themed tours such as Victorian Christmas (NY Discovery Tours) a walk through Gramercy Park and Chelsea neighborhood. Origins of Christmas Tradition (NY Discovery Tours) takes you to the site of the Currier and Ives Shop, and the location where "Twas the Night before Christmas" was written. Get the Christmas spirit (New York Walks and Talks), talk and history about how New York City helped shape today's image of Santa Claus. All New York Tour (866-868-7786) is a two-hour bus tour; highlight the holiday lights in the city.



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