

# TRAVEL

DISPATCHES



BIANCA PHOTOGRAPHY, OAHU VISITORS BUREAU

Waimanalo Beach on Oahu is one of two Hawaii beaches on the list.

## Hawaii beach is USA's best

Dr. Beach, aka Stephen Leatherman, has picked Waimanalo Bay Beach Park in Oahu as the USA's top beach of 2015.

Hamao Beach in Maui also placed in the rankings. Four Florida beaches landed on the coastal scientist's 25th annual list of top 10 beaches, more than in any other state. South Carolina, North Carolina, Massachusetts and California each had one beach make the top 10.

Leatherman, a professor at Florida International University, used 50 criteria to evaluate the beaches, including water and sand quality as well as safety and management.

This year, bonus points were awarded to beaches that ban smoking. Smoking is prohibited on all beaches on Oahu.

Winners from previous years were not in the running but can be found at [DrBeach.org](http://DrBeach.org). Find photos of all of this year's winners at [usatoday.com/travel](http://usatoday.com/travel)

Nancy Trejos

### THE FULL TOP 10 LIST FOR 2015

1. Waimanalo Bay Beach Park, Oahu, Hawaii
2. Barefoot Beach, Bonita Springs, Fla.
3. St. George Island State Park, Florida Panhandle
4. Hamao Beach, Maui, Hawaii
5. Cape Hatteras, Outer Banks, N.C.
6. Cape Florida State Park, Key Biscayne, Fla.
7. Coast Guard Beach, Cape Cod, Mass.
8. Beachwalker Park, Kiawah Island, S.C.
9. Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park, Naples, Fla.
10. East Beach, Santa Barbara, Calif.

## Free coffee for GI Joe, Jane

In a repeat of a successful program it offered last summer, Hudson Group is offering free coffee to members of the U.S. and Canadian Armed Forces at more than 50 of its cafes in airports and transit terminals across the country.

The program began on U.S. Armed Forces Day (May 16) and continues through Independence Day. Looks for signs and banners at participating locations.

The offer was created last year after Hudson Group's president and CEO, Joe DiDomizio, appeared on the CBS show *Undercover Boss* and promised one of his employees with family ties to the military that the company would offer free coffee to service men and women for a month.

The free coffee (size small) will be available in 52 Hudson-operated Food & Beverage locations, including Euro Café, Dunkin' Donuts, Aeromart, Jason's Deli and TexPress Gourmet. The offer is available to all active North American military men and women. Those not in uniform will be asked to show ID.

Harriet Baskas



DEVONYU/ISTOCKPHOTO  
GETTY IMAGES



STAN HONDA, AFP/GETTY IMAGES

# WHAT'S NEW IN NEW YORK

The view of Manhattan looking north from the observation deck at floors 100 to 102 of One World Trade Center.

New York City always lives up to its name. It's constantly evolving with new attractions, hotels, restaurants and bars hitting the scene.

Nancy Trejos and Ashley Day, our New York-based correspondents, fill you in on all the new places to check out this summer.

### THE VIEW FROM ON HIGH

Fourteen years after 9/11, visitors will once again be able to gaze upon the New York City skyline from the World Trade Center. The observatory on floors 100 to 102 at One World Trade Center will open to the public May 29.

Visitors will be able to see all of New York from 1,250 feet. The observatory also will feature three dining options and interactive exhibits. Even the elevator walls will tell a story, with high-definition monitors showing a time-lapse of lower Manhattan's history.

"You get 500 years of history in 47 seconds," says David Checketts, chairman and CEO of Legends Hospitality.

To delve even more into New York's history, visitors can hop on a ferry to Ellis Island.

From 1892 to 1954, about 12 million immigrants arrived and were processed at the Great Hall at Ellis Island. The Ellis Island Museum has chronicled immigration in those years, but the story didn't end there. With the completion of the Peopling of America Center on May 20, the museum has been renamed the Ellis Island National Museum of Immigration.

The \$20 million center breaks the story down into four parts: the journey to America, struggle and survival after arrival, efforts to build communities, and becoming citizens. Exhibits include video of immigrants — famous and not-so-famous — telling their own stories.

For those who want to learn more about the United States through its art, the Whitney Museum of American Art has opened its new long-awaited location in the Meatpacking District.

The nine-floor, 220,000-square-foot building designed by Renzo Piano Building Workshop alongside Cooper Robertson expands the exposure of the Whitney's collection, nearly doubling its exhibition space. The new location boasts the Whitney's first theater, an education center and outdoor galleries with stellar views of the skyline and nearby High Line.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art has leased the Whitney's former space on 75th Street and Madison Avenue through 2023.

### HIP NEW DIGS

Two pioneering hoteliers — Barry Sternlicht and Ian Schrager — have introduced properties that have quickly become destinations.

Sternlicht, founder of the hip W Hotel brand, has developed what could be Manhattan's most opulent hotel. The 114-room Baccarat Hotel in Midtown Manhattan features 17 crystal chandeliers and 15,000 pieces of crystal stemware, with the presidential suite running up to \$18,000 a night. Even the minibars boast



CHRIS GOODNEY, BLOOMBERG

The Whitney Museum of American Art has moved to the trendy Meatpacking District and almost doubled its display space. It even has outdoor galleries.

### MORE ONLINE USATODAY.COM/TRAVEL

Take a video tour of the new One World Observatory.

Baccarat crystal.

If a room at the Baccarat is way over your budget, you can stop by the Grand Salon for a drink instead. With its 22-foot-high ceilings, a 64-arm Baccarat chandelier and plush upholstered chairs, you'll feel as if you're at Versailles.

Later this summer, Sternlicht will introduce his new 1 Hotel brand, an environmentally friendly hotel. The first 1 Hotel opened in Miami this year. No paper or plastic will be found in guest rooms. Nature will double as art. The lobby will have a farmstand.

"Our message is you can live a sustainable life, a luxurious life, without sacrificing much, and maybe even doing it better," Sternlicht says.

Schrager, meanwhile, has opened his first hotel in New

York City in about five years. The Edition was unveiled in the historic Metropolitan Life tower in Madison Square Park in March with 273 elegant yet simple rooms.

"It's very hard to do something simple," says Schrager, who has partnered with Marriott International on the Edition brand. "What we're trying to do is edit it, pare it down, make it feel warm."

Another historic New York building has been converted into a hotel.

Built in 1906 by John Jacob Astor IV, who died on the Titanic, the Knickerbocker hotel, or the "Knick," once attracted glitterati and dignitaries. The hotel, which reopened in February after a \$240 million re-development, is looking to lure the same clientele with three eating and drinking establishments by celebrity chef Charlie Palmer.

St. Cloud, a 7,500-square-foot rooftop bar and terrace, will open soon with fantastic views of Times Square.

### FOOD AND DRINK GALORE

Once you've made your way to the Meatpacking district, don't miss Major Food Group's new hot spot, Santina, just outside the Whitney (and designed by the same architect). The bright and festive eatery — you can't miss the umbrellas and neon sign — showcases Italian seafood with airy patio seating below the High Line. Reservations are tricky; try for a weekday lunch.

For a larger group, try the new Gansevoort Market. Still fresh from its debut in October 2014, the warehouse space of local artisans and vendors is less crowded than nearby Chelsea Market. Choices include Tacombi tacos served out of a Volkswagen bus, American-themed macarons from Dana's Bakery, healthy juice from Feel Food NY, and Italian, Mediterranean and Spanish spots.

Midtown's mini-version of the food hall sits just off Times Square. Opened in March, City Kitchen brings trademark tastes like Luke's Lobster, Dough, and Sigmund's Pretzels to one central location. Visitors can grab a taco from Gabriela's, Brussels sprouts from Ilii Box or a custom frozen yogurt from Wooly's.

After Queens was named the country's top destination for 2015 by Lonely Planet for its cultural appeal and international cuisine, the borough launched Queens International Night Market in April. Venture out to the New York Hall of Science on Saturdays for the festivities, featuring more than 100 food vendors from 6 p.m. to midnight.

When the sun goes down, once off-limits Alphabet City is in the midst of a nightlife renaissance. Bibi wine bar on East 4th Street, which opened last spring, offers daily tasting flights of three red, white or rose pours in a simple, rustic spot. The wine bar Lois pours wines on tap, paired with simple, seasonal small plates, on Avenue C next to ABC Beer Co., the neighborhood's best craft beer destination.



MICHAEL KLEINBERG, CITY KITCHEN

The pretzels at Sigmund's in City Kitchen come with a twist.

## Start spreading the news: The city that never sleeps is reinventing itself yet again.



JOSHUA MCHUGH

In the guest rooms of the environmentally friendly 1 Hotel Central Park, paper and plastic are nowhere to be found.