

## New York at our Own Pace

There's something special about seeing New York for the third or fourth time. After you've seen all of the major tourist sites, you can spend time roaming through the outer cities, getting to know the neighborhoods, parks, coffee shops and lunch spots, free from the pressure to *get it all done*.

We spent a lot of time in Central Park, weaving in and out of its strategic trails and lawns as we sought out different vegan restaurants on Yelp. Our Airbnb was located on the 6th floor of a tiny building in the lower east side, and had no elevator. There's no better way to get a real "New York experience" than dragging two suitcases up six flights of stairs into a room the size of a matchbook, to sit directly in front of the air conditioner on full blast (it is, after all, August in NY). However, waking in the morning to the sound of traditional Capoeira music coming from the park, and walking to the hipster coffee shop on the corner (where they know your order after just two days) makes you feel like a true New Yorker, and is part of what makes Airbnb such a vital resource.

The city is always bigger than I give it credit for. That's one thing you can say about New York, it never disappoints in sheer size. We came in from Boston on the bus, and I felt the demeanor of the people around us change as we inched closer to the city. In the four hours it took to get there, they hardened themselves a bit with each passing hour. We watched the Bronx roll by with its plump black mothers squatting on brick landings, eyeing their babies playing in the yard. Harlem, with its squalor and heart, seems timeless, for better or worse.

As we unloaded off the bus and entered the conveyor belt of bitterness and perpetual rushing, the ease and quaint beauty of Boston became a distant memory. The last time we were in New York was Christmas day, and the absence of crowds was as shocking as the heat. We were allowed leisure time as we made our way through High Line, over to the Village, and into Brooklyn. I had my first bagel with lox in a family-owned bagel shop off State Street, arguably the best in town.

New York sent us off in style, with an upgrade to a brand new convertible Mustang, a perk I'm pretty sure relates to our gender. 50 miles later the top was down, the stereo was cranked to eleven and the horsepower pushed us to an even hundred, as the sun set on another successful trip to New York City.

We'll always come back.

