



A GUIDE TO ASTORIA

New York is more than a city of skyscrapers. New York is in fact a city of neighborhoods, each with its distinctive flavor, and each beckoning you to visit. One such neighborhood is Astoria in the borough of Queens. Named after the fur trader, John Jacob Astor, Astoria became part of New York City in 1898. The first immigrants to arrive in large numbers were Germans, but since 1927 Astoria has been home to the largest population of Greeks outside of Athens. Signs of Greek heritage are pervasive. Greek restaurants, coffee shops and sidewalk cafes abound. More recently Italian, Asian, Islamic and South American cultures have added to the ethnic mix. As you walk along the streets of Astoria you will discover a typical New York neighborhood, rooted in the past, but constantly evolving.



Where is Astoria?

Located in the Borough of Queens, Astoria is easily accessible via a short subway, bus or tram ride across the East River.

It's Easy To Get To Astoria

By Subway: N train to Ditmars Avenue (end of line)
R Train to Steinway Street (exits at Broadway or 34th Avenue)

By Bus: Q101 (pick up at 2nd Avenue and 58th Street in Manhattan) runs along Steinway Street with stops at Broadway, 30th Avenue and Ditmars Avenue

By Cable Car: For an unusual urban escapade, take the Roosevelt Island Tram at 60th Street and 2nd Avenue to Roosevelt Island. While suspended in the air, you can marvel at the breathtaking view of the New York waterfront along the East River. Then take the Q102 bus to Astoria Boulevard and 8th Street adjacent to the river and the Old Astoria area.

Attractions

1 Steinway Street, known as the “World’s Largest Department Store” is truly a place to wander leisurely. Along Steinway Street itself, as well as those which intersect with it, you will find both high fashion boutiques interspersed with one-of-a-kind shops as well as street vendors hawking their wares. As you stroll along the side streets, the shops thin out and you will find yourself in residential Astoria, a neighborhood of moderate size apartment buildings, private homes and houses of worship. A section of Steinway Street between Astoria Boulevard and 27th Avenue has come to be known as “Little Cairo.” The



area is replete with Arab coffee shops and restaurants where you can find authentic Egyptian, Afghani, Pakistani and Moroccan cuisine.

2 Broadway. Yes! There is more than one Broadway in New York City, and

here too the emphasis is on shopping, and food is certainly a major attraction. Broadway offers a delectable variety of

restaurants, cafés and shops. Wander through a specialty food shop and marvel at the variety of cheeses, sausages,

fruits and pastries from all over the world. (*Greeter’s Secret:* If you love olives, you can choose from 30 different varieties.) Or you can succumb to your appetite while you

pause for refreshment at a restaurant or sidewalk café.





3 Greater Astoria Historical Society (35-20 Broadway) is located on the 4th floor of Quinn's Funeral Home. A small gallery is open on Saturdays from 11 A. M. to 4 P. M. On display in the lobby is a painting of the ferry terminal, which serviced the ferries plying between 92nd Street in Manhattan to Astoria Boulevard.

4 Astoria Performing Arts Center (APAC) (31-30 33rd Street). Presenting the best of contemporary drama in an intimate setting, the repertoire of the Center includes musical and non-musical, new, classic as well as contemporary theatre pieces at affordable prices.

5 Kaufman Astoria Studios (34-12 36th Avenue). Much of motion picture history in the days before Hollywood took place at Kaufman Astoria Studios. Since 1920 such motion picture titans as Rudolph Valentino, W. C. Fields, the Marx Brothers, as well as Harrison Ford, Paul Newman and Demi Moore have performed here. During World War II the studios housed the Armed Forces Signal Corps Pictorial Centre, where many propaganda and training films were produced.

6 The American Museum of the Moving Image (35th Avenue and 35th Street) invites you to immerse yourself in the art, history, technique, and technology of film, television, and digital media. Many of the displays are

interactive, and you too can be a movie star . . . if only for a moment. As you watch the screen, you can dub your voice into a movie clip and marvel at your talent.

7 Socrates Sculpture Park (31-34 Vernon Boulevard at Broadway and the East River). What was once an illegal dumpsite and riverside landfill has since 1986 become the only site in metropolitan New York dedicated to the



exhibition of large-scale works of sculpture, providing artists with opportunities to create and exhibit their work in a unique environment encouraging strong interaction among artists, artworks and the public.

8 Old Astoria (Astoria Boulevard and 14th Street) is a great area for walking. Near Astoria Park there are many private residences notable for their architectural diversity. Look particularly at 25-37 14th Street and 26-07 12th Street.





9 Astoria Park and Pool (Hoyt Avenue and East River). You probably won't go swimming in the pool, which was host to the 1936 Olympic Swim trials, but you can enjoy the East River esplanade that is part of this depression era project. The park's flagpole is believed to be the mast of Shamrock III, Sir Thomas Lipton's yacht which competed in the Americas Cup. Enjoy the view of the Triborough Bridge and the beautifully sculptured railroad bridge across the East River.



10 Bohemian Hall and Park (29-19 24th Avenue). Built in 1908, and originally of Czechoslovakian origin, this is the last surviving outdoor Beer Garden in New York City. If



nostalgia is your thing this is a great place to eat, drink and be merry.

11 Steinway and Sons & Steinway Company Town (End of Steinway Street and Bowery Bay). Piano entrepreneur William Steinway built a company town during the 1870's. Still standing are the Steinway home, the homes of his workers, as well as the factories that produce the Steinway piano, revered by concert pianists around the world. A tour is



available to take you on a walk through the Steinway Factory.



12 Lent Homestead (78-03 19th Road), built in 1654 by Dutch farmer Abraham Lent, is today the oldest private residence in New York City. Currently the Smith residence, it is tucked away

behind a shrub-enclosed fence. The homestead is an architectural jewel replete with a well-maintained garden and the Lent and Riber families' cemetery.

NOTE: Adjacent to Astoria, Long Island City is home to both the Museum of Modern Art and PS1 Contemporary Arts Center. They are easy to get to from Astoria and are certainly well worth a visit.

Museum of Modern Art (45-20 33rd Street). Temporarily located in Long Island City while the main building on 53d Street in Manhattan undergoes expansion and renovation, the Museum is a treasure trove of modern art in all its forms.

PS1 Contemporary Arts Center (22-25 Jackson Avenue). Formerly a public school, PS 1 is held in high regard as a defining force in the alternative



space movement as well as for its cutting edge approach to exhibitions.

When It's Time To Eat

Walking stimulates the appetite, and there is no shortage of restaurants to satisfy your craving. For Greek food, try



Uncle George's at 34th Street and Broadway, or the Greek Captain at 32-10 36th Avenue for seafood. Zlaha Praha serves Czechoslovakian food at 31st between 30th Avenue and Newtown Avenue, and you can dine Italian at Trattoria Lincontro at 21-76 31st Street.

Web Links

American Museum of the Moving Image — www.ammi.org

Astoria Performing Arts Center (APAC) — <http://www.apacny.org/index.html>

Greater Astoria Historical Society — <http://www.astorialic.org/>

Kaufman Astoria Studios — <http://www.kaufmanastoria.com/>

Lent Homestead — <http://www.lihistory.com/spechome/riker.htm>

Museum of Modern Art — www.moma.org

PS1 Contemporary Arts Center — www.psl.org

Socrates Sculpture Park — www.socratesculpturepark.org

Steinway & Sons — www.steinway.com

About Big Apple Greeter

Established in 1992, Big Apple Greeter is a “welcome visitor” program whose aim is to introduce foreign and domestic visitors to a “New Yorker’s New York.” A large network of volunteer Greeters help visitors to feel welcome and comfortable and to make the most out of their stay in the world’s most exciting and diverse city. Our goal is to encourage visitors to return to New York again and again. As a non-profit voluntary organization, Big Apple Greeter receives financial support from New York City’s business and philanthropic communities, and offers its services to visitors free of charge. Greeters do not accept tips.

Who is a Big Apple Greeter?

Nearly 400 adults of all ages, from all of the five boroughs of New York City have volunteered to become Greeters. Each is eager to portray his or her enthusiastic view of New York City. More than 20 foreign languages are spoken among the volunteer Greeters.

What does a Greeter actually do?

Share with a visitor what life in New York is really like by walking in their own neighborhood, or a neighborhood familiar to the Greeter—not just to see the well known sights of New York, but to highlight the little things that distinguish one New York neighborhood from another. Share with visitors the wonders of New York’s mass transit system using FUN PASSES generously donated by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

How do visitors learn about Big Apple Greeter?

Information about Big Apple Greeter is available on our multi-lingual Web site, www.bigapplegreeter.org, as well as extensive national and international newspaper, magazine and radio coverage. “Word-of-mouth,” travel agents, guidebooks and other pertinent information sources also disseminate information about Big Apple Greeter.



Big Apple Greeter has a nondiscriminatory policy on race, religion, color, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status and disability.

Photos by Cheryl Heidel and Bernard Saper.

