

A TWO-WHEEL TOUR OF

NEW YORK CITY



A local dad and his teenage daughters put the pedal to the pavement on a bicycle tour of the Big Apple

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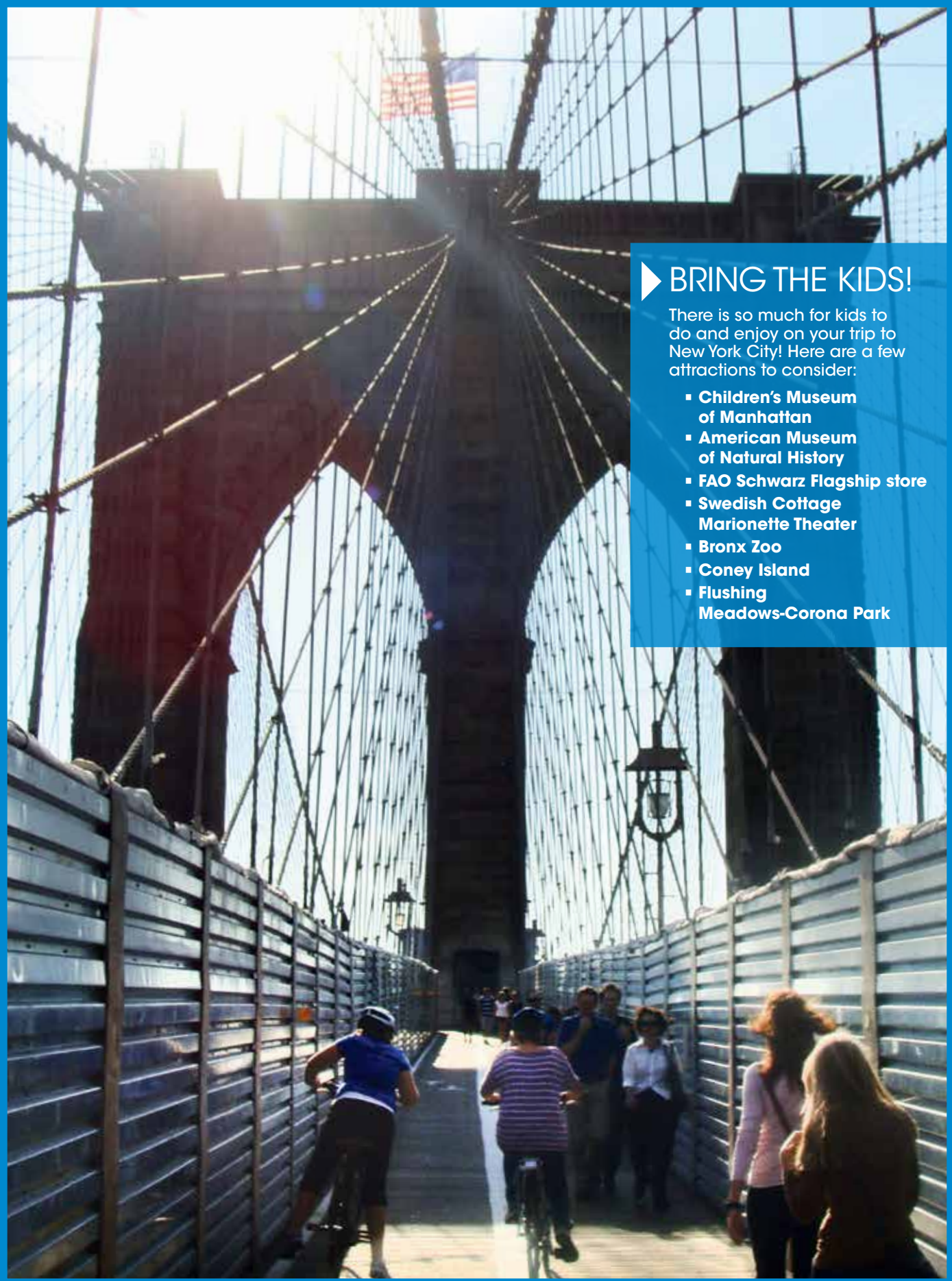
Think New York City is too big for the junior members of your family? Think about breaking the Big Apple down into bite-sized chunks and focus on the family-friendly neighborhoods. For a particularly kid-friendly perspective that includes many popular attractions, don't cram onto a tour bus. Try a bicycle tour instead.

What kid doesn't enjoy the freedom of hopping on a bike for a day of exploration? A guided bicycle tour on car-free paths seemed like just the way for my teenage daughters and me to get a closer look at New York. We headed to Lower Manhattan's Battery Park to meet our Bike and Roll New York City tour guide, and to get our adventure started.

Bike tours are becoming more and more popular, with several tour companies making it almost too easy to resist. They provide the bikes, helmets and guides. All you provide is the pedaling. Don't be intimidated, though: You don't need to be an Olympian for one of these bike tours. Our family rarely rides at home, but as they say ... you never forget how to ride a bike, right?

After a quick safety lesson, our "biker gang" set out through the streets of the surrounding neighborhoods. Right from the beginning we knew we had lucked out. We didn't book a private tour, but it ended up just being the three of us with the guide for the day. Bonus!

Near the beginning at South Street Seaport, we were instantly struck by this boat marina: It was not the New York City we expected! It looked much more like San Diego instead. From there we biked to the base of the Brooklyn Bridge and climbed up, up, up the surprisingly steep expanse. My daughters struggled a



▶ BRING THE KIDS!

There is so much for kids to do and enjoy on your trip to New York City! Here are a few attractions to consider:

- **Children's Museum of Manhattan**
- **American Museum of Natural History**
- **FAO Schwarz Flagship store**
- **Swedish Cottage Marionette Theater**
- **Bronx Zoo**
- **Coney Island**
- **Flushing Meadows-Corona Park**

little with their bicycle gears, but once we finally reached the top – oh, what a view.

Once stopped at the top of the bridge, the guide pointed out the Manhattan and Williamsburg bridges, DUMBO (Down Under the Manhattan Bridge Overpass), Brooklyn Bridge Park, the 1922 Jane’s Carousel, and even the neighborhood where he lived. It was fantastic to get this personal tour from a New Yorker full of local knowledge and community pride.

My daughters and I got to see those New York City icons from an up-close, personal perspective, through the eyes of a local.

After nearly 20 minutes on top of the bridge, taking in the view (and plenty of photos), we were rewarded with the brisk coast down the other side to Fulton Ferry and the New York Water Taxi. Since we had booked Bike and Roll’s Guided Bike & Boat tour, our water taxi tickets were already included in the tour’s price. We hopped aboard, parked our bikes and

let the boat whisk us down the East River toward the Statue of Liberty.

The water taxi came at the perfect time in the tour, just when our “sit bones” needed a break from the bike. The boat’s narrator took over as our temporary guide and told the story of the statue’s famous past while the vessel pattered slowly by, turning 180 degrees to give everyone a good view. Although we did not get to walk the grounds or enter the statue, the water taxi provided a wonderful way to see it up close without having to deal with crowds or lines.

Following our glimpse of Lady Liberty, the water taxi motored up the Hudson River, with the narrator pointing out several other notable landmarks along the way. We saw Ellis Island and the Empire State Building before we docked at Pier 84, currently the largest public pier in Hudson River Park. Pier 84 is located right next to the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum Complex, the relatively new home of the space shuttle Enterprise.

As we disembarked from the water taxi, we again mounted our bikes to pedal down the Hudson River Greenway. At Pier 66, we saw the historic John J. Harvey fireboat, which was pressed into service on 9/11 and performed a critical role in containing fires at the World Trade Center.

We cruised by the Chelsea Piers Sports and Entertainment Complex, where today’s New Yorkers can bowl, boat, golf,



skate ... you name it. Nearby, the historic Pier 54 was the former home of the Cunard Line, and the location where hundreds of Titanic survivors were brought after being rescued at sea more than 100 years ago. If you looked closely at the steel archway, you could still make out the words "Cunard" and "Star" from the former White Star Line.

A little more than three hours after our bike tour began in one of the oldest parts of the city, our adventure came to an end 9 miles later in Battery Place, one of Manhattan's newest neighborhoods, rising around the site of the World Trade Center and Freedom Tower. In this short time, my daughters and I got to see those New York City icons that are the staple of any visit to the Big Apple – except this time we saw them from an up-close, personal perspective, through the real neighborhoods, on a bike with a local. ■



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seasonally and most will reopen in the spring.



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