



New York is home to one of the richest, densest, most diverse cultural jumbles anywhere in the world. There is a reason the rest of the country looks askance at these five dynamic boroughs: New York continues to welcome peoples and cultures in a hotchpotch mismatch of creative chaos. This is no melting pot, it's a gumbo whose ethnic flavours blend but never disappear. Tastes, styles, cultures, peoples remain.

New York and its boroughs don't comprise any one identifiable ethnicity. Latinos are the largest population, then African-Americans, then whites. The borough of Queens alone clocks 138 spoken languages so you figure it out.

New York is the birthplace of salsa and *bachata*. It midwived bebop and hip-hop, Latin freestyle, Broadway show tunes and Tin Pan Alley. Jazz, travelling upriver from New Orleans, made stopovers in Chicago and Kansas City before taking root here. Duke Ellington and Billie Holiday settled here, Louis Armstrong died here and Rubén Blades made his name here. Tito Puente, Aaron Copeland, George Gershwin and Joey Ramone were all born here. Saturdays in Brooklyn brings Hasidic men walking to the synagogue, followed the next day by Gospel choirs donning their Sunday best to drown out neighbouring Haitian voodoo drumming and chant.

Appropriately enough, exploring world music in New York also means exploring beyond Manhattan to the outer boroughs: the Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn and Staten Island. Manhattan is home to long-standing African-American culture. Travel up to Harlem for a Sunday visit to Gospel

church services or to the new African neighbourhoods. On Wednesday nights head over to the Apollo for the open-mic Amateur Night where Ella Fitzgerald, George Clinton, Stevie Wonder and James Brown all got their start. Who knows who you'll catch. Slip over to the East Side for Spanish Harlem. Further north is the Senegalese enclave, further still a Ghanaian neighbourhood in the Bronx, side-by-side with a large Latino community. Take the subway to Queens to the long-standing Greek district in Astoria, which is now also home to burgeoning Middle Eastern populations. Or to Little India in Jackson Heights, which shares the town with Colombians, and to the Asian, especially Taiwanese, neighbourhoods in Flushing. Ridgewood is home to Balkan communities. Brooklyn is hipster central and a trip through Williamsburg is now a required excursion. But so too is Brooklyn, home to long-standing Caribbean neighbourhoods. The West Indians are in Flatbush – Haitian, Jamaican, Barbadian – surely, all the islands are represented in one street or another. And Brighton Beach is Moscow on the Atlantic – great, gaudy, delicious restaurants with cheesy pop nightclub shows rule the night. And on, and on...

Summer is the best time to come since there are hundreds of artists performing at events, most free, such as Lincoln Center Out of Doors, New York Summerstage, Celebrate Brooklyn and the River to River Festival. But all year round there is more to behold than one can ever hope to see. New York is paradise for the world music lover. Here is where to find the best of it. »

NEW YORK CITY

The Big Apple has an unrivalled live music scene. Gerald Seligman picks out his highlights

SUMMER FESTIVALS

Summerstage

The yearly (mostly) free festival started in Central Park and has now expanded to all the boroughs. Recent shows included Hugh Masekela, Freshlyground, Baloji, Novalima, Jarabe de Palo, ChocQuibTown, Yemen Blues, Tiken Jah Fakoly and more. **Weekends, June-August, www.summerstage.org**

Celebrate Brooklyn

Includes world and roots music. Recent artists included Larry Harlow and Latin Legends, Sean Kuti, Steel Pulse, Dr John, Los Lobos, Oumou Sangaré and Shirley Caesar. **June-August, Prospect Park Bandshell, Prospect Park West Brooklyn, www.bricartsmedia.org/performing-arts/celebrate-brooklyn**

Lincoln Center Festival & Lincoln Center Out of Doors

Recent artists included Billy Bragg, Juldeh Camara, Raya Brass Band, Dengue Fever, Blitz the Ambassador, NY Arabic Orchestra, Tan Dun, Grupo Folklórico y Experimental Nuevayorquino, Sexteto Tabalá and a lot of American roots. **July-August, Lincoln Center, Columbus Avenue and 64th Street, Manhattan, www.lcouthdoors.org**

River to River Festival

An excellent addition to the NY summer scene, held all over Manhattan with a broad variety of music, including some world and roots. Recent artists included NY Gypsy Allstars, the Holmes Brothers, Patti Smith and others. **June-July, Manhattan, www.rivertorivernyc.com**

OTHER FESTIVALS

GlobalFest

The annual world music festival with three stages running simultaneously. Always timed for the last Sunday of the APAP convention, early each January. **January, Webster Hall, 125 East 11th Street, Manhattan, +1 212 353 1600, www.globalfest-ny.org**

Flamenco Festival

This annual event features great dance companies and their remarkable musicians. **March, City Center, www.nycitycenter.org**



The East Village club Nublu

VENUES AND CLUBS

BB King

Latin, jazz, blues, funk, world, gospel Sundays and more, in the heart of Times Square. **237 W 42nd Street, +1 212 997 4144, www.bbkingblues.com**

Drom

A great club in the East Village, programming everything from jazz, electronica, soul, funk and plenty of world music. **85 Avenue A, +1 212 777 1157, www.dromnyc.com**

Guantanamera Restaurant

Cuban music nightly, usually an excellent house band like Pedrito Martinez and Ibboru. **939 8th Avenue, +1 212 262 5354, www.guantanamerany.com**

Highline Ballroom

Diverse programming, from superstar pop names to world music acts. Large room with chairs, tables and food. **431 W 16th Street, +1 212 414 5994, www.highlineballroom.com**

Joe's Pub

Small, cosy venue with nice acoustics. They programme around 700 shows a year, including a lot of world music. **425 Lafayette Street, +1 212 539 8778, www.joespub.com**

Le Poisson Rouge

Great room with excellent acoustics, showcasing jazz, world, indie, alternative, modern classical and more. **158 Bleeker Street, +1 212 505 3474, www.lepoissonrouge.com**

Mehanata Bulgarian Bar

A real party scene with many DJs, some bands, including a frequent set by DJ Hütz, aka Eugene Hütz from Gogol Bordello. **113 Ludlow Street, +1 212 625 0981, www.mehanata.com**

Nublu

There's an emphasis on jazz and alternative but some world, especially Brazilian fusion. They also run a record label. **62 Avenue C, +1 212 533 4080, www.nublu.net**

The Shrine

African and Mediterranean cuisine and mostly local 'world' bands with emphasis on reggae and Africa. **2271 Adam Clayton Powell Jr Blvd, +1 212 690 7807, www.shrinenyc.com**



Kaumakaiwa Kanaka'ole playing at GlobalFest

KEVIN VITAROLA

SOB's

Over 25 years of great world music of all kinds. In need of a new sound system, but it's still a fun club to frequent and a New York landmark for world music. Also known as Sounds of Brazil. **204 Varick Street, +1 212 243 4940, www.sobs.com**

Zinc Bar

Mostly jazz but with regular African and Brazilian nights in this downstairs bar in the heart of the West Village. **82 West 3rd Street, +1 212 477 9462, www.zincbar.com**

Barbès

The hippest, hottest little club in Brooklyn. Two to three bands nightly with weekly gigs by Chicha Libre, Slavic Soul Party, Mandingo Ambassadors and many more packed into a tiny back room. **376 Ninth Street, Park Slope, +1 347 422 0248, www.barbesbrooklyn.com**

Miss Favela

Brazilian enclave, a restaurant with stage featuring local bands. **57 South 5th Street, Williamsburg, +1 718 230 4040, www.missfavela.com**

Roulette

They call it a home for 'adventurous music', including world music, dance and the arts. **509 Atlantic Ave, +1 917 267 0363, www.roulette.org**

D'Antigua

Latin club with *cumbia*, Colombian, salsa and more. **84-16 Northern Blvd, Jackson Heights, www.facebook.com/dantiguany**

Terraza 7

Good programming of film screenings and gigs, with an emphasis on Latin music. **40-19 Gleane Street, Jackson Heights, +1 718 803 9602, www.terrazacafe.com**



GOSPEL

Visitors looking for a profound musical experience shouldn't miss the chance to attend a Sunday gospel service, but come early and be ready to queue.

Abyssinian Baptist Church

An urbane service with great tradition and seriousness, less unbridled spirit. **Services at 9:00 and 11:00, 132 Odell Clark Place, Harlem, +1 212 862 7474**

Brooklyn Tabernacle

Home to the renowned Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir. **Services at 9:00, 12:00 and 15:00, 17 Smith Street, Brooklyn, +1 718 290 2000, www.brooklynatabernacle.org**

New Mount Zion Baptist Church

Spirited service, highly recommended. **Services at 7:30 and 10:30, 171 West 140th Street, Harlem, www.nmzbc.org**

RECORD SHOPS

With Tower, Virgin, Sam Goody, King Karol and other great shops gone, there are only two left that cater to all styles.

J&R Music World

The best and biggest selection. **23 Park Row at Beekman Street, +1 212 238 9000, www.jr.com/category/music**

Barnes & Noble

The biggest store is in Union Square. Check the website for other locations. **33 East 17th Street, +1 212 253 0810, www.barnesandnoble.com**

SPECIALTY SHOPS

Academy Records

Used CDs and DVDs, good prices, but the world section has shrunk markedly of late. **12 West 18th Street, +1 212 242 3000, www.academy-records.com**

Casa Latina

Salsa from the 60s and 70s, Cuban, Latin in general. **151 East 116th Street, +1 212 427 6062, www.casalatinamusic.com**

Disc-o-rama Music World

World music and lots of Brazilian. **44 W 8th St, +1 212 477 9410, www.discoramaoverstock.com**

Manhattan Latin Music Center

A great selection of Latin: contemporary and historical **471 W 42nd Street, +1 212 563 4508**

Other Music

Adventurous – some world, indie, electronic and rock. **15 East 4th Street, +1 212 477 8150 www.othermusic.com**

Record Mart

Latin of all kinds, plus jazz and more. **7 Times Square Plaza, +1 212 840 0580**

Academy Annex

Used CDs and DVDs. Some world. **96 North 6th Street, Williamsburg, +1 718 218 8200, www.academyannex.com**

LISTINGS

Flavorpill

www.flavorpill.com/newyork
The New Yorker
www.newyorker.com/arts/events/nightlife
Remezcla (Latin Culture)
www.remezcla.com
Time Out New York
www.newyork.timeout.com/music-nightlife
The Village Voice
www.villagevoice.com/events/concerts
WFMU
www.wfmur.org/arbguide.php
Live Sounds
www.livesounds.org

Co-op 87

Used, all kinds of music. **87 Guernsey Street, Greenpoint, +1 347 294 4629, www.coop87.org**

Coxone's Music City

Reggae. A lot of Studio One, since the late owner created the label. **3135 Fulton Street, +1 718 277 4166**

Ethiopian Taste

Reggae and calypso. **959 Nostrand Avenue, +1 718 774 0804, www.ethiopianataste.com**

Permanent Records

Lots of used CDs and vinyl, some world. **181 Franklin Street, Greenpoint, +1 718 383 4083, www.permanentrecords.info**

Rachid Music Sales Company

Biggest US distributor of Arabic music. Mail order, too. **155 Court Street, +1 718 625 2601, www.rashid.com**

Indian Music

Many shops lining the streets on and around 74th Street. Plenty of CDs and DVDs. And be sure to have a delicious Indian meal at The Jackson Diner. **Subway: Number 7 train to 74th Street**

VP Records

Reggae and *soca*. **170-21 Jamaica Avenue, Jamaica, +1 718 297 5802, www.vprecs.com**