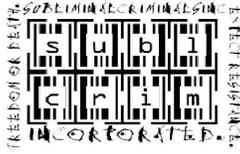




the
Starving **A**rtist's **G**uide
to
newyork**city**

by johnny sanford



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This book is dedicated to the artists who have
helped make this book possible. You know who you
are.*

*You are painters, drawers, bar-crawlers, writers, actors, bare-knuckle brawlers, stand-up comedians, improv comedians, sculptors, guitarists, drummers, bassists, singers, pianists, oboists, clarinet players, xylophonists, dancers, photographers, children, adults, grandparents, pacifists, dadaists, Taoists, Buddhists, the green party, socialists, Jeffrey Lebowski, people with passion, people without insurance, my mom, my dad, Kate and Anne, Sean K., Laura W., Jen K. Lisa F., all of my friends, everyone who has donated talent and energy to the podcast and everyone who calls this city home.

*If I was just gonna say one thing to y'all tonight,
I'd say "Set the artist free."
I'm talking about the artist in here, set it free!
I'm saying "Quit your day job."*

~Tenacious D

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Introduction: Who are You?

First off, Who am I?

My name is Johnny. I am a writer, musician, and an artist. I moved to Brooklyn three years ago to find myself and make it in the world of writing and music. In my spare time, I like to go to the movies, see bands, and drink at bars with my friends. However I've also been living on the edge of poverty for the last three years with a working commitment to my craft as an artist. Because of my passion for art, I would describe my life as positively abundant with happiness and fulfillment; I write every morning for about five hours and then work with kids after school as an art instructor in New York City. I teach them how to create their own comic books, scrap books, recycled sculptures and also teach a woodworking class.

In short, I can make ends meet working with kids for three hours a day, while also working on what I *love* doing, which is composing music and writing fiction. I also post for my own blog, www.starvingartistsguide.com, and do a podcast available through iTunes every Sunday. On the show, I interview fellow artists, musicians, comedians, writers, dancers, directors, and actors about how they make ends meet. I've collected hundreds of tips and tricks in their artistic fields and this book is the result.

How do I survive?

The trick to survival in such an expensive place is both luck and planning. I got very lucky and found an apartment that is rent controlled. On the flip side of this, I had to share it with a 60 year old Chinese woman and my best friend for the greater part of six months, before she moved away. If you're willing to sacrifice for art, you will be just as lucky.

Another trick was to replace my needs with wants. In college, I *wanted* to go perform my music in a hip Lower East Side club, but I *needed* to sit on my ass and watch cable. When I could no longer afford cable after I moved to the city, it was an easy change. I also *needed* Chinese takeout, but I what I really wanted was a cheap, home-cooked meal. Now I can get by on less than five dollars a day for food. I've included a \$2 recipe section on page 105 if you want a snack already.

If you're only in this for the hotspots, feel free to skip ahead. I've listed hundreds of different things to whet your proverbial whistle for this city. The rest of this chapter would be classified as "inspiration for a young artist." In the chapters ahead, I try to include all of the great places, websites, bars, clubs, etc. that I've personally been to and reviewed, with the closest subway stop so you can scope things out at your leisure. Not everything in this book is "free," though a lot of it is. This book isn't a substitute for common sense or food stamps. You can be your own guide after reading through a few of the listings. I'm only one person, so I can't be everywhere. If you have any tips or tricks yourself, please email me at starvingartistsguide@gmail.com and I can put them in the next edition.

If you Move to NYC to Find Yourself...

After the cable is cut, it will feel like you've had a mental colonoscopy. All of the stupid but unbelievably catchy commercials that get stuck in your head (think of one that you hate) will be rooted out and expelled. Once this is completed, you are well on your way to finding the creative path. Many people decide to move here in an effort to "find themselves," and I have to admit, this was one of the reasons that I moved here myself.

Should you attempt to find yourself here, you will also find all of the mental baggage that you

decide to bring. To quote Ralph Waldo Emerson, “I pack my trunk, embrace my friends, embark on the sea, and at last wake up in Naples, and there beside me is the Stern Fact, the Sad Self, unrelenting, identical, that I fled from.”

Let go of this baggage as fast as you can. Once you do, it opens the floodgates of creativity. That's not to say I haven't had my share of monumental writer's block, occasional mental breakdown and bouts of depression. These things are normal in the “wake-up” process. You need to find the bottom in order to find the top, right?

So is it really worth it?

Yes.

Like Neo taking the red pill, once you've committed yourself to the artistic lifestyle, you can't curl up in the fetal position and pretend to be happy watching reruns of “Rock of Love” on VH1. It's much more fulfilling once you start to pick up the pieces. Be the artist you were born to be. Personally, I've met more interesting people in the last three years than most people meet in their entire lives. I've gotten VIP treatment, been wined-and-dined by PR, seen incredible bands, seen genius comedians close enough to spit on and life is on the continuous upswing.

Hell yes it was worth it!

You only live once on this beautiful blue planet, which is spinning at 65,000 miles-an-hour in an infinitely vast and mostly empty cosmos, so I say fuck it. Yeah. *Fuck it!* Do what you want to do in life, and take yourself to places you've never gone before. Ride trains and planes and buses and bikes, and always go down a street you've never set foot on. If you die with a penny in your pocket, you've led a richer life than one who dies with a trillion dollars tucked under his mattress. It might be the last time you ever get the chance. Life is a lot like roulette. Time to believe in yourself and put it all on the line.

New York City is an intertwining beast of a city that is as intimidating as it can be friendly. Don't be afraid to embrace it's love-hate relationship with you. People in this city come and go, and you probably will meet them, love them, and might even lose them. Artists in this city are busy, like-minded people who want nothing but to succeed in what they love to do. You gotta love 'em for it.

That being said, they all have better things to do than sit around and watch a movie on a Tuesday night. They would rather be active in what they love to do. And you should feel the same way too. If movie-night at home every night is your thing, rethink your move to New York. Artistically, it won't be worth it and you will find yourself quickly moving back home because it's a cruel mistress. The truth be told though, that's okay too. We all live and learn and if you want to see if this city works for you, using this guide will irrevocably make you a more passionate, creative and *active* person. Van Gogh didn't create *Starry Night* by sitting on his couch watching *Seinfeld* reruns. He was active in what he loved, which was to create. Find your inner Van Gogh.

That being said, don't be afraid if you move here and your creativity dies for a bit. When I moved here, I was scared to death. I stayed in my apartment for a month. I was afraid to go down that dark city street. It was the unknown. Consequently, my creativity dried up to a metaphysical prune-like state until I felt *comfortable* in my surroundings. This guide will hopefully offer you some of that comfort. If I can survive here, anyone can. Also, get yourself a pint of Ben & Jerry's *Americone Dream*.

I eventually persevered, just like you will. I started taking the risks. I started meeting people. It's culminated with writing this book, doing my podcast, creating a website, and consequently I am always meeting new and wonderful artists. Hopefully, I can share a bit of knowledge, provide a few laughs, and maybe we can find it in our busy schedules to share a few beers sometime. That sounds like fun to me. But before we get to that, you need to know a few things. For starters...

Why Should I Really Buy this book?

I haven't convinced you with my pep talk? Well, maybe you shouldn't buy this book. This book is written for people who want to save money. This book is for thrifty artists who want to paint the

world with their creative thoughts. Do you want to turn your lifestyle into that of a free-range vagabond who gets free drinks at sketchy bars and bargains with thrifty old merchants at Flea Markets? Are you talented at some aspect of art, music, writing, dancing, directing, acting or comedy and want to know the ins and outs of getting gigs, selling manuscripts, playing shows, and ultimately selling small pieces of your soul for fifteen dollars a pop? *Well, do ya, kid?!*

If the answer is yes, you have found the Rosetta Stone to figuring out this city. You are already going down the rabbit hole as we speak. What you have in your hands is the very least I could do to help you, noble artist, to help give back to the world and reap the benefits of living like a king on a peasant's budget.

What do I mean by “Starving Artist?”

The term “starving artist” is an oxymoron. If you're having problems with money, you're more than likely a good 90% of the population. We artists might be a bit masochistic in our desire for fame and fortune; but to starve is to grow. We begin to understand a bit more about the world, beauty and life when we lack. We realize that we already have so much richness in our lives that we are bursting with it. Plant a garden for a couple of bucks and you'll understand that real beauty has function and purpose, is variably “cheap” but is invariably *priceless*. Those of you who are on the path to finding your true self through the process of creation will find yourself *much* happier than any average worker bee who crunches numbers for some succubus day job at a soulless corporation. To starve is to be fulfilled. If truth through art is what you seek, you will overflow with so much meaning in your life that you will help give other people meaning to their lives too.

The road to being an artist is paved with big egos. You will find pretension bridges and carnival sideshows along your way. One friend is worth a hundred enemies and it's important to connect with the people you meet. I believe that the best art is created when it has nothing to gain in terms of wealth, fame, or worldly trinkets. True art is a blank mirror for the rest of the world to see the innate beauty within ourselves. True art is being yourself, even if it means working at a succubus day job at a soulless corporation.

Trippy, right? We are the reflection of god in all its form.

Modern Art, or (2+2=5)

If you believed in reincarnation, you might be convinced that we live in a day and age in which the recycled souls of every Renaissance man, dadaist, cubist, wandering minstrel and bard who has ever walked the earth now exists. We are collecting untold numbers of art, music, comedy, film and books every day that contend with the best art ever created in the history of mankind. The mainstream might convince you otherwise, but I believe a swell of independent creativity is building, the likes of which have never before been seen. New York City will be struck by a tsunami of artists, musicians, comedians and the like once we realize our true potential. We just need to connect with the people. The blinders of the mainstream must be removed.

With so much art, a lot of it seems to get lost in the shuffle. The mainstream is too easily transfixed on fluff reality television and watching people get a hit in the balls to see the brilliant artists of today. Imagine a world where we had control of the media, instead of a few people at the top of the pyramid. It's time to put on our rocket boots and head to the top.

We must begin the deprogramming of the United States of the Uninspired. As we march towards the crossroads of human history, everything is at stake. Our guitars are our AK47s. Our paintbrushes—grenades. Our films are cannons and we are in a holy war for quality art for the public. We need entertainment with *substance*—for the people, by the people. Our tanks come in the form of old VW Buses that we fix up to take on tour. We are fueled by Ramen Noodles and passion. The battle cry is “*Give us back what you've taken from us! We survive to create art. We create art to survive!*” Our

enemy is on every billboard, every TV screen and every top forty radio station. They have control of the airwaves, the newspapers, the magazines. But we are guerrilla artists. We must fight against staggering odds and use the one weapon we have—truth. The internet is still ours, and we must keep it at any cost. The gatekeepers are slow; their weakness is their pride and they believe that nothing can change the system. They have underestimated the power of unity to change.

In order to fight in this war against the status quo, you must do the following as an artist.

1. Break the hypnotist's spell. Unplug your television.
2. Let go of the past.
3. Seriously, let go. You aren't in college anymore. *So what?!* Make something of yourself and stop whining.
4. Don't give in to the pressure to conform to demands of salary comparisons and mental masturbation.
5. Love what you do.
6. Persist in doing what you love.
7. Fear nothing and no one.
8. Enjoy the ride.

Enjoy the ride.

Chapter 1: Moving to the Big Apple

One rumor as to why New York City was nicknamed “The Big Apple” in the early 20th century was because jazz musicians around the city would get a gig here and it would pay well. Another rumor is that during the Great Depression, former Wall Street financiers who were fired would head to the streets in their business suits to sell apples. Wouldn't that be hilarious?

If you are looking for those streets paved in gold like every other seemingly lost twenty-something, moving to New York City is a big decision. You are in good company, because thousands upon thousands of artists of all backgrounds move here every year just as lost as you are.

As one of the most diverse towns in the world, approximately 8 million people call NYC home. The first thing you're gonna need to know about New York City is that it's really five separate Burroughs, each of which has a different vibe.

Coollest Burroughs to live in, in Descending Coolness

5. Staten Island—Staten Where?
4. Queens—This is gaining in coolness, but just because there are beer gardens, doesn't mean I'm gonna drink at 'em. Cool because Astoria is pretty close to the city, has a pretty happening thing goin' on.
3. Bronx—This place is still kinda scary, though there are pockets of coolness around Columbia University. Plus it's pretty close to Manhattan when it comes down to it. Try not to get mugged.
2. Brooklyn—No matter what everyone says, Brooklyn still ain't as cool as Manhattan. It just doesn't have the history or mystique. That being said, it's awesome, cheap, and has the best scene of the outer Borroughs.
1. Manhattan—The home that I rarely sleep in.

For most artists, you will probably focus on moving near Williamsburg, Green Point, DUMBO, Park Slope, and Downtown Brooklyn. These are the artist hotspots of Brooklyn. The closer to Billyburg you live, the more expensive. Much of the time getting gigs requires going into Manhattan, which still maintains a relevant music scene in the Lower East Side, comedy scene around Penn Station, art scene in Chelsea/Meatpacking District, and film scene in Tribeca. Buying a [Not For Tourists Guide](#) (See pg. 22 for more details) at a bookstore is my first recommendation.

Leasing VS. Subletting

An important difference between leasing and subletting is that **leasing** is a contractual obligation for living at a location for a set period of time. This is usually a one-year agreement. These are fairly ironclad and you will have to put up the first and last month's rent as a security deposit. If you aren't sure about how long you want to live in the city, I would recommend subletting. **Subletting** is an agreement between a tenant and you, which is usually less than a year. These are less formal but still binding contracts. You can sublet, which is what I did to see if I wanted to stay in the city. Try searching “Sublet” on www.nyc.craigslist.com to see what you can find. Getting a rent-controlled place is ideal. Splitting a single room with a friend is a good way to save even more money and make you feel a bit more comfortable in the city. You might want to get a Landlord Agreement form printed out if you aren't provided with one. You can find it at <http://www.thelpa.com/lpa/free-forms.html> for free.

Top 10 Things You Will Need for your Move

1. Toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste, contacts, shampoo, glasses, medicine, electric

- shaver)
- 2. Bedding (Pillows, pillowcases, sheets)
- 3. Towel
- 4. Laptop computer
- 5. Inflatable bed
- 6. Watch or alarm clock
- 7. Some form of entertainment (dvds for computer, books, ipod, etc.)
- 8. Posters (to feel at home)
- 9. Expendable cash
- 10. A week's worth of clothing

These are the basic necessities you will need if you plan on staying in the city for a few months. Expendable cash is an absolute necessity because you need to go out and meet people if you want to enjoy the city. Remember that you should also be looking for a job if you haven't found one yet.

While on the topic of expendable cash, one must bring up the *nest egg*. If you've been financially responsible, you should have a decent amount of money, so long as you haven't spent it on hookers and drugs yet. A good amount of money to come to the city with is two to three-thousand dollars as a base. This will give you about a month to find a job and get settled into your new life on your own. If you decide to split a room with a friend, you shouldn't have to pay more than five hundred dollars a month for rent if you're in Brooklyn or Queens. Subtract your part of the security deposit and you should have about a thousand dollars to live on for the entire month.

Manhattan

It's a large peninsula on the Eastern Seaboard that also happens to look like the side-view of flaccid penis on the subway map. People's lives are bought and sold in Manhattan, and you'll probably end up shipping yourself in on a daily basis. Take time to visit some of the famous places here like Times Square, Central Park, Broadway, Chinatown, Little Italy, Penn Station, Grand Central, Union Square, Greenwich Village, Lower East Side and the Wall Street Douche Bag Factory.

Something historical/famous has happened on every cross-street in Manhattan. Most people want to check out the Statue of Liberty, which I think is pretty cool. Originally a gift from the French Illuminati, this is basically a really big paperweight that has no intrinsic use. You can check it out for free by taking the Staten Island Ferry from the South Ferry/Whitehall St. Subway Station on the R,W,E. Trips run on the half hour and you can get a tall-boy of Bud Nasty for \$3!

Another great thing to do is to walk down Broadway for as long as your feet can hold you up and take a look in all of the windows at pieces of clothing that cost more than an entire month's rent for me. It will help you get your bearings and allow you to become more familiar with the city itself.

Take some time to visit 42nd St Times Square, as well as Central Park. These two scenes couldn't be more polarizing and are located within an hour walking distance from each other.

Rent

You can pretty much live in Manhattan if your parents set up a 100K trust fund when you were conceived. Other than that, you can rack up some pretty hefty NYU loans and live on the corner of Union Square, in SOHO, etc. I know this sounds tempting, ("*Grad school is fun, right?*") but I'd say stick to the plan, Stan. You can find some pretty cheap rent in areas like Harlem, Brooklyn, and Queens which are all home to some great neighborhoods and cultures. For what it's worth, it's better to party in Manhattan like it's a sexy mistress and go home to your safe wife apartment in Queens or Brooklyn.

Things to Do:

There is quite literally a near-infinite choice of things to do in Manhattan, which is part of what makes it so appealing. If you're new to NYC, you need to approach partying in Manhattan as if you're getting in a hot bath. Take it slow. I don't know how many times I've fallen asleep on the train back to Brooklyn and ended up in Coney Island because I partied a bit too hard. This is not only dangerous, but incredibly inconvenient. I once had to navigate 20 avenues and 20 blocks to get back to my home at two in the morning because I missed my subway transfer. It ended up to being quite the adventure. I managed to find sustenance outside a green grocer who had thrown away his day-old watermelons. Don't worry, they were covered in plastic! After a delicious, nutritious snack from the garbage, I trekked my way with a Swiffer Mop handle as my walking stick and a belly full of watermelon and booze. It was a two-hour hike, but I felt good once I made it home and conked out on my couch at 4 am. Let that be a lesson for all the lightweights.

Regardless, it's much safer and convenient to stay alert and semi-sober while in Manhattan. One friend has been robbed a couple times while he fell asleep on the train! You might want to invest in a bottle of mace. It's not technically legal, but you can buy it at a bike store under the name “dog repellent.”

Brooklyn

How we love you, dear Brooklyn. It's quickly becoming the new cultural epicenter due to the obscene cost of renting a lego-sized apartment in Manhattan, and for good reason. All of the artists (and the poseurs too, unfortunately) have gathered in areas like downtown Brooklyn, DUMBO, Bushwick, Park Slope, Prospect Park and Williamsburg. The rent's cheaper and the apartments are bigger.

Lately though the trend of obscene cost of space has started to trail into Brooklyn, as well, particularly along the L train on the first stops in Brooklyn, which are demanding fierce rent prices these days. Many of the artists I know today are being outpriced and moving further to areas in Bushwick or my current Bat Cave all the way out in Bay Ridge. Wherever you move, make sure you are happy with your neighborhood. I first moved to Brooklyn with a friend and we naively settled into a nice apartment in Bensonhurst. With a mere hour-long commute to Union Square, it was hardly the artist's colony we had hoped all of Brooklyn to be. I'll do the task of analyzing rent prices and areas in this chapter so you know what you're getting into. Be forewarned—I haven't been at every stop on every train in Brooklyn, so I am doing the most modest of tasks here. I leave it up to you to find exactly where you want to live.

Much like the sixties were the era of the hippies, this new generation of hippies has found its East Village. Williamsburg is ultrahip, ultracool and has already become an ultraexpensive place to live within the last fifteen years. One of the problems with Williamsburg is the infestation of poseurs and wannabe hipsters. When I meet someone that wears clothing that looks like it cost \$2 at a thrift store but really cost \$50, I politely pick up my beer and move as far away as I can. This is because I really do shop at thrift stores and appreciate them wholeheartedly (See page 155). I say check it out and see if it's for you. Downtown Brooklyn, DUMBO, Park Slope and Bushwick are reliable alternatives to the Williamsburg scene.

Rent

For a detailed look at what you're going to pay for rent, use craigslist. This is one of the biggest assets

for being a starving artist that you will ever have. You can do anything from sell your own art, connect with other artists, find that drummer you've been looking so hard for, find an affordable studio to record your music in, find a job, or even hire a hooker when times are rough (just kidding, of course!). The list goes on and on for what you can accomplish with nyc.craigslist.org. Peruse the site to see what I mean.

Williamsburg and DUMBO (Down Under Manhattan Bridge Overpass) are by far the most expensive parts of Brooklyn. For what it's worth, you might as well find a place in some of the cheaper parts of Manhattan for the \$1400-\$2200 a month rent for anywhere in Billyburg or DUMBO. If you've got this kinda money, check out Ave A, B, C, and D, otherwise known as Alphabet City in the Lower East Side of Manhattan Around East Houston St.

Affordable, safe areas with rent around \$600-\$900/month or less include, but are not limited to Bay Ridge, Sunset Park, Bensonhurst, Prospect Park, Bed-Stuy, Bushwick, and Astoria in Queens. These are all very culturally diverse areas that make the outer Burroughs incredible.

Keep in mind: If you are living in Brooklyn it is more likely than not that you'll have at least a 30 minute commute into Manhattan. If possible, try to rent an apartment near an express train to make your life easier, with less waiting for trains. Reliable express trains are the N, D, Q, L, E, 4. Notoriously bad trains include the G, M, W and J lines. Also, the fewer transfers you have, the less waiting. According to Straphangers.org, a survey done to rate the train system, the top three most reliable train lines are the 7, the L and the N. The worst ranked subway line was the C. I've never had a problem with the C myself, though.

Always give yourself extra time before an important meeting or interview because the trains almost always have delays. Give yourself a window of 15-20 minutes to arrive, and if you are early take some time to get to know Manhattan a little better.

Queens, the Bronx, and Staten Island

To be honest, I'm sure there are some awesome things to do in these three Burroughs. However, due to time constraints, I didn't include them in this edition of the *Starving Artists Guide to New York City*. If you live in one of them, my apologies. You may politely put this book down and search for something that might help you a bit more. The primary reason that I focus on Brooklyn and Manhattan is, well, it's where most of the cool stuff *that I know about* happens. I'm sure your area is really cool. Maybe you should quit your day job and start writing a guide about it! Just hurry up before I get the next edition, because it should have something in it regarding Queens, the Bronx and Staten Island in it. For now, the market is yours...

Chapter 2: Websites to Rock your World

I put this section in because I know that so many artists these days are connected by the hip to their Macbook. Yeah, I just made a generalization! Get used to it. Check out these websites to make your life a whole lot better.

My Open Bar

Cost: Free

What to Look for: Free Open Bars around the city. Sign up for their email list for a weekly update!

They also have an iPhone application at http://iphone.myopenbar.com/#_list_ny

Website: www.myopenbar.com

This is one of the greatest websites ever made for starving artists. A long day requires a night cap, and here's a great way to get one for free. That's right. Gratis. Go to myopenbar.com and check out the list all of the bars in NYC that have a free open bar every freakin' day. Some have a cover charge, some you have to call ahead to get on a list, some are sponsored by soulless corporations. These are really fun to go to on holidays, and I went to one two years ago on Halloween. They had Bud, Bud Light, Coors, Coors Light for free and had live music by Deer Hunter and a DJ until 4am! All of this was free, of course. Bring some friends and have a great time! For those of you who have iPhones, check out their "Free Booze" application. This gives you daily info on free bars around the city. Check out www.thrillist.com/new-york as well for a similar website.

Open Wifi New York City

Cost: Free

Website: <http://www.openwifinyc.com>

This site lists the most up-to-date locations around New York City that have free wireless Internet for when you don't want to look for a job at home. Check out some of the parks, like Union Square, which has access to WIFI on the North Edge. Battery Park is also equipped with WIFI. Most Barnes & Nobles and most Starbucks in the city now have free access, as well as other cafés and restaurants.

NYC Hostels

Cost: Free

Website: <http://www.hostels.com/us.ny.ny.html>

So if you don't know whether or not you want to live in New York City yet, you might as well plan a trip and stay in a hostel. This is a great chance to meet a bunch of friendly strangers, stay out past your bedtime, and maybe even have a one-night stand. Most of the folks who stay at hostels are foreigners, and will definitely be as lost and loose as you are. Here's your chance to be adventurous and ask a stranger to walk around this strange beastly city with you. You can even use this book as a guide!

Freegan.info

Cost: Free

Website: www.freegan.info

What to look for: Trash Tours where you get to take someone else's garbage.

“What has this world come to? Are we so vain?” These are the questions that Freegans ask the capitalist consumer driven hive-mind that throw out perfectly good stuff, only to replace it with more perfectly good, albeit *shinier* stuff. Of the things that I've “salvaged” on garbage/recycling night, my greatest treasures have included—a ceramic tree table with a glass top, a tea kettle, an original 1976 Star Wars© Lunch box (Filled with *Star Wars*© Trading Cards!), a television, a sofa, two speakers, a brand-new outdoor grill, an ipod, lamp shade and countless books. Never underestimate the treasures that people think is garbage. Freegan.info is a great site to meet like-minded people, so get out of the house and do some down-and-dirty garbage hunting.

Free Stuff to Do in New York City (The Website)

Cost: Free

Website: <http://www.freenyc.net/>

This is a great resource for any of you peeps who love free events to mill about and shoot the shit with other cheapskates who love to mill about and shoot the shit at free events. Sign up for their mailing list and get their daily emails—they are always giving the goods on what's happening around the city for free.

Going.com

Cost: Free

What to look for: Great upcoming shows, art openings, free things to do around the city on a weekly basis. Sign up for their email list!

Website: www.going.com

This is another great website that sends weekly calendars directly to your email, giving you the great cheap/free things to do around the city for the week. They have a great service called “Recession Busters,” which lists the cheapest events, usually from \$5 to \$10, with an occasional \$15 event

sneaking in as well. They also list the festivals that are going on throughout the city under the “Festivals” tab. For up-to-date info on the great stuff that NYC has to offer, check out going.com.

Broke Ass Stuart

see also: *Broke Ass Stuart's Guide to Living Cheaply in New York City*

Cost: \$14.95 for his book

What to Look for: Acerbic sense of humor, \$5 shot and beer combo list, free bar food list

Website: www.brokeassstuart.com

This is an incredibly well thought out look into living/partying/shopping cheaply in New York City, and it's funny to boot. It's not only helpful, but it also reads like a friend's journal, so it makes it interesting to read. He focuses mainly on shopping, drinking, partying and eating cheap grub. He focuses mainly on Manhattan, but also covers downtown Brooklyn, Park Slope and Williamsburg. He's got some great resources in the book like where to find the \$5 Shot and a Beer Combo throughout the city, and a list of bars that serve free food!

Not For Tourists

Cost: \$11.55

What to look for: Maps that actually tell you information that you need, like the nearest ATM, bar, thrift store or café around Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx.

Website: www.notfortourists.com

Every copy of the *Not for Tourist* book I've ever bought I've ended up giving away to someone who was more lost than I was. I love this resource (when I have it) because it's updated every year and seems like it is written by spunky personalities who tend to write on bathroom stalls. Why do I say this? Because they review places in under five words. For a review of Melody Lanes, they wrote “Way better than Bowlmor.” It's so *existentialist*. Simple. To the point. I also agree. Maybe I should try it.

Brokelyn

Cost: Free

What To look For: Great blog about saving money in NYC.

Website: www.brokelyn.com

Do yo' self a favor and check it out.

Yelp.com

Cost: Free

What to Look for: Reviews of every place, thing, rock, tree and soul around the world

Website: www.yelp.com

If it hasn't been reviewed here, check out yelp.com, where average Janes and Joes do their thing to review anything and everything in New York City. This is a very good resource for anyone who likes anything. Beware, however, that when a large number of people who have widely varying likes and dislikes come together on one site to review a huge number of bars and restaurants, it becomes difficult to find an opinion to trust. Always take this site with a grain of salt.

Hopstop.com

Cost: Free

What to look for: Directions around the city via bus, subway, taxi, and walking.

Website: www.hopstop.com

This is a tremendously helpful website that you will use constantly when you first get to New York City. I've been here for three years and I still use it on a fairly regular basis. Hopstop will take your home address and the address of where you want to go and give you directions on what subway you should take. It also can give you taxi and bus directions as well. When you first get here, you'll be overwhelmed by the sheer size and immensity of such a city that you'll probably get lost at every intersection. Here's a tip: Hopstop will get you pretty close to where you need to go, but always have a backup plan. Sometimes there is an easier way to get to where you need to go. It often helps to click the "reroute" button just to see if there's another way to get where you need to go. The estimated times are fairly accurate—if you need to be somewhere on time, give yourself fifteen minutes extra in case you get lost or have train delays.

Check Your Local Listings

There is so much to do on a weekly basis that it's hard to get it all in one book without using sources. Your best sources for a weekly summary of what is going on around the city are *The Village Voice* and *The Onion A/V Club*.

The Village Voice—Find it on pretty much every corner in NYC and Brooklyn; it has an in-depth listing of what's going on from Wednesday to Tuesday of every week. Not to mention, it can be a fairly entertaining way to spend a half-hour on the subway when you forget to pack your ipod.

The Onion—This is a great source for what's going on in the city, though it is traditionally a bit less in-depth than the *Village Voice* in the A/V section. Otherwise, it's probably the most entertaining "newspaper" that has ever been available on a weekly basis for free. Though they are a little harder to find than *the VV*, it is certainly worth looking around your neighborhood to find this gem. The newest edition comes out every Thursday.

New York Press—Even harder to find than *The Onion*, this is a liberal rag that also tells you the hottest new shit that is happening in the city. The writers all seem young and angry at "the system," so it can get to be a chore to read. Isn't it funny how all hipsters seem to hate other hipsters?

L Magazine—This is called "the Poor-Man's Time Out New York" because it's free, it's in a nice glossy magazine format. *L Magazine* also lists the same events as its more expensive counterpart. *L* is fairly easy to find in Manhattan, but it doesn't travel far out into Brooklyn. If you find it, grab it!