

Where to live in NYC in 2020

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Your guide for picking the best neighborhood to call home right now

When deciding where to live in New York City, it helps to accept one truth early on in your search: No single neighborhood will have everything you want—you can get a good deal, or a decent-sized place, or a good location, but rarely all three together. And while it might be easy to prioritize what's most important to you, even the most seasoned New Yorker can have a hard time [choosing a neighborhood](#) that checks enough of their boxes.

Add to that the fact that the idea of [affordability](#) has all but disappeared in many parts of the city, displacement continues to tear apart longstanding communities, and myriad subway issues make even the most accessible locales hard to reach, and the decision becomes downright daunting. But even with all the challenges, the city's five boroughs offer a plethora of choice, and we have some suggestions on where to look.

Why should you consider these seven neighborhoods right now? In some cases, it's because inventory is high—areas like [Downtown Brooklyn](#) and the [Lower East Side](#), for example, are getting [hundreds \(if not thousands\) of new apartments](#) in 2020. In other cases, the neighborhoods we chose are relatively affordable (though further from Manhattan's core) and offer vibrant communities, easy connections to transit, an expanding slate of parks—or if you're lucky, all three.

Lower East Side

THE DRAW: A hip neighborhood with plenty of transit options and a 24/7 vibe

SIMILAR NEIGHBORHOODS: Williamsburg

THE COMMUTE: You've got several subway lines to choose from: the F and J at Delancey Street and Essex Street, and the B and D at Grand Street

This Lower Manhattan neighborhood isn't exactly under the radar; its reputation—first as a bohemian enclave, then as a playground for young, upwardly mobile New Yorkers who snuffed out that bohemian spirit—keeps people moving there in droves. And thanks to a wave of new development, mostly from the nine-building [Essex Crossing megaproject](#), there are hundreds more apartments about to come to market. But renters looking in the neighborhood will still pay dearly for the privilege of living on the LES: The average rent in a non-doorman building is more than \$3,000/month, according to brokerage [MNS](#).

Still, there's much to appreciate. The Lower East Side is known for its nightlife—there are tons of bars, clubs, and restaurants in the area, some of which have [drawn the ire](#) of longtime locals. (If you're looking for a quiet place to hang your hat, this isn't it.) On an ideal day, you can learn about the neighborhood's immigrant history at the Tenement Museum, then grab a bite to eat at Russ & Daughters Cafe, an offshoot of the famed appetizing counter that's been a local institution for more than a century.

Downtown Brooklyn

THE DRAW: Convenience is key, with tons of transit options and lots of inventory

SIMILAR NEIGHBORHOODS: Financial District

THE COMMUTE: Hubs like Atlantic Avenue-Barclays Center and Jay Street-MetroTech

Located just over the Brooklyn Bridge, at the nexus of several other neighborhoods—Brooklyn Heights, Boerum Hill, Dumbo—there’s no shortage of inventory in Downtown Brooklyn. In the past few years, new buildings have sprouted throughout the neighborhood, bringing with them [tens of thousands of apartments](#) (both rentals and condos). This means the area’s amenities have also improved; the [City Point megaproject](#), home to the [DeKalb Market Hall](#) and the borough’s first Alamo Drafthouse outpost, is especially popular. Plus, there’s spectacular access to transit thanks to a confluence of subway and bus lines that get you to Manhattan in as little as 15 minutes.

Since much of the development is new, prices tend to be high; the average cost of a rental topped \$4,000/month in 2019, according to MNS. Still, convenience is the buzzword here: Downtown Brooklyn is close to trendy neighborhoods like Fort Greene, and has plenty of options for shopping, restaurants, and culture.

Jackson Heights

THE DRAW: Diversity; affordability; convenience

SIMILAR NEIGHBORHOODS: Sunnyside; Astoria

THE COMMUTE: Learn to love the Jackson Heights-Roosevelt Avenue transit hub

Located in Central Queens, Jackson Heights is one of New York’s most diverse, vibrant communities: The [oft-cited statistic](#) is that there are more than 150 different languages spoken by neighborhood residents, which includes thriving South and Central American and South Asian communities. The neighborhood is also known for its affordable apartments, many of which are stately co-op buildings from the area’s [founding](#) as a utopian “Garden City.” Now, the [median home price](#) is just around \$450,000—a relative bargain compared to other neighborhoods.

Jackson Heights also has a good number of parks and playground—Travers Park is the biggest—and a new public school just opened in the summer of 2019. If you’re seeking a family-friendly neighborhood with a welcoming vibe and easy access to Manhattan—you’re 30 minutes from Midtown with access to five subway stops—look no further.

Prospect Lefferts Gardens

THE DRAW: A quintessentially Brooklyn neighborhood at a fraction of the cost (for now)

SIMILAR NEIGHBORHOODS: Crown Heights

THE COMMUTE: The B or Q near Prospect Park or the local 2 train

This small Brooklyn enclave, located east of Prospect Park, hasn’t yet become the hotbed of development as nearby neighborhoods (see: [Crown Heights](#)), but there are signs that such a transformation may not be far off. Luxury rentals have popped up in the neighborhood (including the Parkline, a 24-story building a

block from the park), and StreetEasy named it one of [the neighborhoods to watch in 2020](#), with searches for apartments in the neighborhood booming.

Its charms are myriad: In addition to its proximity to the park, it's close to the B and Q trains, as well as the 2, all of which will get you to Manhattan in about 30 minutes. The streets are lined with a number of lovely 19th- and early-20th-century row houses that are quintessentially Brooklyn. You can also have a park-centric life without paying Park Slope prices; the median rent in PLG is around \$2,350/month, according to [StreetEasy](#).

Jamaica

THE DRAW: Plenty of bang for your buck

SIMILAR NEIGHBORHOODS: Downtown Brooklyn

THE COMMUTE: Access to dozens of bus lines; several subway lines; commuter rail

Jamaica is the outlier on this list—quite literally, since it's basically the last stop in Queens before you hit Long Island. But there are reasons to consider the neighborhood if you're looking for a new place to live in 2020. And it would appear that plenty of people already are—according to [StreetEasy](#), searches for apartments in the area were up by 44 percent in 2019.

Both rental and sale prices are still relatively affordable; the median for the former is \$2,170/month, and the latter is \$649,000, according to [StreetEasy](#). The neighborhood is also preparing for [a massive influx of apartments](#) across nine buildings, including more than 650 alone in the Crossing at Jamaica Station, a rental complex that's rising near the neighborhood's Long Island Rail Road station.

While it's not as dense with nightlife or culture as other parts of the city, its proximity to transit (the subway and LIRR, as well as JFK Airport) and the fact that it's still a bit sleepy may make it attractive for those looking for more space, or for anyone who likes to get out of the city quickly and easily.

Inwood

THE DRAW: Quiet, close to one of Manhattan's best parks, and—crucially—still affordable

SIMILAR NEIGHBORHOODS: Bay Ridge

THE COMMUTE: Embrace the very last stop on the A train

Looking for a pocket of affordability in Manhattan? Search no further than Inwood, a neighborhood on the brink of major changes—assuming [a contested rezoning](#) is allowed to move forward. Located at the northernmost tip of Manhattan between the Hudson and Harlem rivers, the neighborhood has a median rent around \$2,000/month, according to [StreetEasy](#), while the median home price is just under \$500,000.

But the area's affordability is just one of the things that makes Inwood special: It's located next to [Inwood Hill Park](#), one of the city's most beautiful (and spectacularly wild) green spaces, and the area's diversity—it has large Dominican, Irish, and Puerto Rican communities—is a big draw.

The neighborhood was due to be rezoned to allow for more dense residential buildings as part of the de Blasio administration's affordable housing goals, but a judge [nullified](#) the city-backed measure late last year. How that decision will play out in the coming year remains to be seen.

Greenpoint

THE DRAW: New development without the hypergentrification of nearby Williamsburg

SIMILAR NEIGHBORHOODS: Gowanus

THE COMMUTE: Make friends with the G, which connects Brooklyn and Queens

Though it's geographically close to trendy Williamsburg, the vibe in Greenpoint is much more low-key. That may be due to its relative isolation, transit-wise; the neighborhood is only served by the G train, several buses, and as of a couple of years ago, a NYC ferry stop.

But this neighborhood on the northernmost tip of Brooklyn has tons of residential projects—both rentals and condos—in development, many of which are part of the larger [Greenpoint Landing megaproject](#). Eventually that colossal development will bring around 5,000 apartments to the neighborhood, along with new waterfront parks.

Even with an influx of new development and residents (and the shops selling the \$10 coffee they inevitably attract), this historically Polish neighborhood still has plenty of New York-y charm. Many of the apartments for rent in the area are located in modest two- to three-story homes, and the median rent is around \$2,600 for a one-bedroom, [according to MNS](#).