

Welcome to New York City!



Big Apple Greeter  
New York City

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# The Big Apple Greeter Guide to East Harlem

**EAST HARLEM, ALSO KNOWN AS SPANISH HARLEM,** was memorialized in the Ben E. King R&B song of the same name. Once a quiet Dutch village, the neighborhood has a long and interesting history with many historical and cultural sites worth visiting.

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# The Big Apple Greeter Guide to East Harlem



THE HARLEM MEER



THE CONSERVATORY GARDEN

## Where is East Harlem?

East Harlem is in northern Manhattan, extending from 5th Avenue to the Harlem and East Rivers bordering the west and east and from E. 96th Street to E. 148th Street bordering the south and north.

## About East Harlem

Originally settled by the Weckquaesgeek Indians, New Amsterdam Governor Peter Stuyvesant established the village of Nieuw Haarlem in 1658. This quiet area began an era of rapid urbanization when the Lexington Avenue subway line completed a station at 125th Street in 1919. Today, East Harlem is home to people of Latino background, as well as recent immigrants from Asia and the Middle East.

## It's easy to get to East Harlem

**M** **BY SUBWAY:** 4 or 5 trains to the station at 125th Street. 6 train to the stations at 96th, 103rd, 110th, 116th and 125th Streets.


**BY BUS:** Bus lines that service Washington Heights include the **M1, M2, M3, M4, M35, M60, M96, M98, M101, M102, M103, M106** and **M116**.


## Attractions

**1 THE ISLAMIC CULTURAL CENTER** at the corner of 3rd Avenue and E. 96th Street is the largest mosque in the city.

Regularly drawing over 4,000 people for Friday prayers, the building ignores the street grid and is oriented to face Mecca.

**2** Many of the most beautiful buildings in East Harlem are churches. One fine example is the **ST. NICHOLAS RUSSIAN ORTHODOX PATRIARCHAL CATHEDRAL** on E. 97th Street between Madison & 5th Avenues. Completed in 1902, this church has five distinctive onion domes and is the center of Russian Orthodoxy in the United States.

**3**  **EL MUSEO DEL BARRIO** at 1230 5th Avenue at E. 104th Street is the leading Latino cultural venue in the city. El Museo houses a large collection of Caribbean and Latin American artworks ranging from pre-Columbian vessels to contemporary installations. Check their web site at [www.elmuseo.org](http://www.elmuseo.org) for hours and current exhibits.

**4**  **THE MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK** at 1220 5th Avenue at E. 103rd Street offers exhibits on various aspects of New York City, past and present, including photographs and films. Check their web site at [www.mcny.org](http://www.mcny.org) for hours and current exhibits.

**5 THE CONSERVATORY GARDEN**, Central Park's only formal garden, is

**GREETER'S SECRET:** Every January 6, El Museo del Barrio organizes a Three Kings Day parade and concert. This Christmas tradition features the wise men and their camels joined by hundreds of schoolchildren in costumes.

actually three separate gardens representing Italian, French and English landscape styles. At the garden entrance at 5th Avenue and E. 105th Street

you will see the gate which originally stood before the Vanderbilt Mansion. Thousands of new tulip bulbs are planted here each year and the prior year's bulbs are given to neighborhood gardening groups. Every autumn, thousands of chrysanthemums bloom.

**6 THE HARLEM MEER** (the Dutch word for lake) in the northeast corner of Central Park near E. 108th Street and 5th Avenue is stocked with fish for your angling pleasure. There is no charge to borrow a bamboo pole and bait to try your luck with the catch and release fishing program. You may also just sit and watch the water fowl on the small lake shore beach.

**7 ST. CECILIA'S CHURCH** at 125 E. 105th Street between Lexington and Park Avenues was built in 1883 for the area's Irish community. Look for the bas-relief of St. Cecilia over the arched entryway and admire the wonderful stained glass windows.

**8 THE CHURCH OF ST. EDWARD THE MARTYR** at 14 E.109th Street between 5th and Madison Avenues was built in 1887 and is a lovely example of Gothic style architecture.



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**9 THE DUKE ELLINGTON STATUE** located at the corner of E.110th Street and 5th Avenue is a 25-foot tall memorial with an eight-foot sculpture of the famous musician standing next to a grand piano.

**10 THE GRAFFITI HALL OF FAME** is located inside a schoolyard on the northwestern corner of E. 106th Street and Park Avenue. The colorful wall featuring numerous graffiti styles is visible from the street.

**11 MARCUS GARVEY PARK** on Madison Avenue between E. 120th and E.124th Streets features the city's only remaining fire watchtower built in 1857 when fire prevention was performed by round-the-clock watchmen at strategic vantage points. Although its intended use is now obsolete, its distinctive steel structure serves as an important community landmark.

**12 THE HARLEM COURTHOUSE,** built between 1891 and 1893 at 170 E. 121st Street between Lexington and 3rd Avenues, is one of the most impressive buildings in East Harlem. A designated city landmark, the striking building has a granite base, red brick façade, and five-story corner tower. Originally both a courthouse and a prison, since 2001, it has housed a community justice center.



**GREETER'S SECRET:** The Collyer brothers became city legends after their death in 1947 revealed their eccentric, junk collecting lifestyle. They lived their reclusive lives in a brownstone at E. 128th Street and 5th Avenue. The lot of their demolished house was designated as a "vest pocket" park in the 1960s; perhaps inevitably, the park has fallen into disrepair.

**13** Directly across the street from the Harlem Courthouse is **SYLVAN COURT MEWS**, a private walkway with seven brick townhouses built in the 1880s.

**14 THE METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH** at 1975 Madison Avenue at E. 126th Street was built in 1869. The neo-Gothic design features a bell tower and a spacious vaulted interior with galleries on three sides.

**15 POET/PLAYWRIGHT LANGSTON HUGHES** lived on the top floor of a townhouse at **20 E. 127TH STREET** between 5th and Madison Avenues from 1947 until his death in 1967. Many of his works were written while he lived here.

**16 THE HARLEM ROSE GARDEN** at 6 E. 129th Street between 5th and Madison Avenues is open weekend afternoons from April to October.

**17** A lovely wood frame house at **17 E. 128TH STREET** between 5th and Madison Avenues, built during the Civil War, offers a rare glimpse of Harlem as a rural village.

**18 THE CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS** at 47 E. 129th Street at Madison Avenue is an ornate Venetian Gothic building designed by James Renwick, Jr., who was also the architect for St. Patrick's Cathedral. Dedicated in 1893, the imposing building has patterned brickwork, terra cotta details, wheel windows and a tall bell tower.

## Shopping

**19** East Harlem has many small stores offering Hispanic music, religious statues, and natural fragrances, as well as clothing and food stores. Many Mexican restaurants and shops have opened on **E. 116TH STREET BETWEEN 2ND AND 3RD AVENUES**, creating a business and cultural district for the growing number of Mexican residents in the area.





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THE NATIONAL  
BLACK THEATER

**20 THE DEMOLITION DEPOT & IRREPLACEABLE ARTIFACTS** at 216 E. 125th Street between 2nd and 3rd Avenues is a building salvage store with a large selection of vintage plumbing fixtures, doors, windows, shutters, gates, stone and terracotta pieces, and religious objects, geared towards customers re-creating period homes. The store contains the most extensive architectural reclamation operation in the world.

**21 LA TIENDA** at El Museo del Barrio offers a wide selection of goods related to the collection and exhibits of el Museo.

## When It's Time to Eat

**22 SISTERS CARIBBEAN CUISINE** at 47 E. 124th Street near Madison Avenue is open every day for lunch and dinner. Offering the cuisine of the islands, specialties include jerk chicken and callaloo (spinach, okra and coconut).

**23 FISHERS OF MEN** at 32 E. 130th Street near Madison Avenue is open Tuesdays through Sundays for lunch and dinner, offering a wide variety of seafood, and delicious home baked cakes.

**24 LA TROPEZIENNE BAKERY** at 2131 First Avenue near E. 110th Street is a French bakery serving sandwiches, salads and espresso, as well as pastries.

**25 GRAN PIATTO D'ORO** at 1429 5th Avenue near E. 117th Street is an upscale choice offering fine Italian cuisine.

**26 EL PASO TAQUERIA** at 237 E. 116 Street between 2nd and 3rd Avenues is a popular choice in the neighborhood. Try the pozole (corn soup) with soft tacos, and their excellent margaritas and homemade guacamole.

**27 RAO'S RESTAURANT** at 455 E. 114th Street between 1st and Pleasant Avenues has been a neighborhood fixture since 1896. Considered one of the finest Italian restaurants in the city, it is almost impossible to get a dinner reservation, but the bar is always open if you would like a cocktail.

## Culture

**28 THE NATIONAL BLACK THEATRE** at 2031 5th Avenue near E. 125th Street offers workshops, symposia, special events and theatrical productions. To learn more, see their website at <http://www.nationalblacktheatre.org/default.htm>.

**29 JULIA DE BURGOS LATINO CULTURAL CENTER** at 1680 Lexington Avenue near E. 106th Street offers workshops and cultural programs that address the needs of the neighborhood and its residents.

**30 THE POET'S DEN GALLERY AND THEATER** at 309 E. 108th Street between 1st and 2nd Avenues celebrates the arts via various media. To learn more, see their website at <http://www.eastharlempresents.org>.

## About Big Apple Greeter

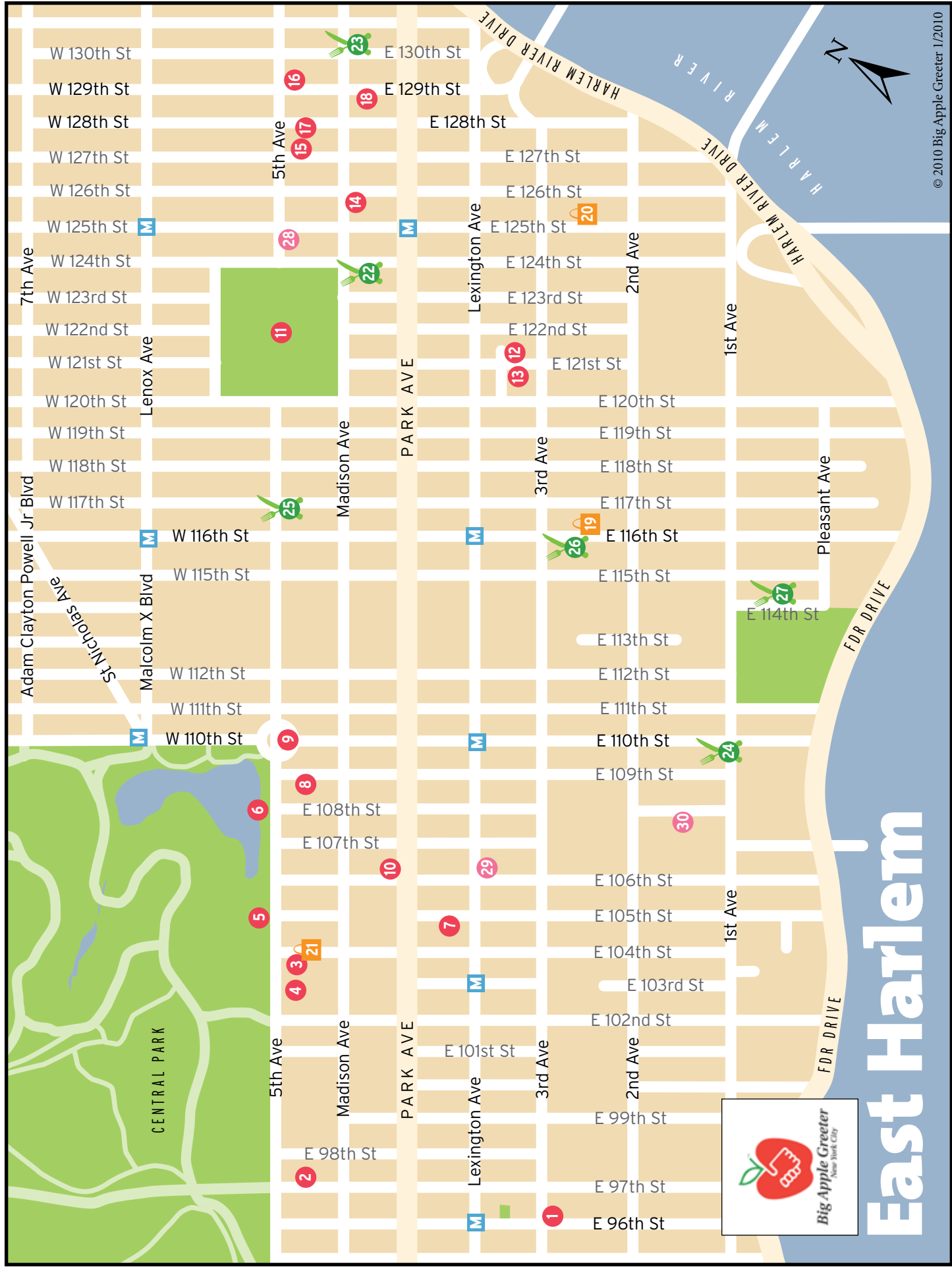
Founded in 1992, Big Apple Greeter's mission is to enhance New York City's worldwide image while enriching the city experience for its visitors. Connecting with business and leisure travelers from all over the US and the world, Greeters take visitors on informal, unscripted walks through one or more neighborhoods in any of the five boroughs, promote tourism throughout the city, and help visitors discover the ease of using public transportation. Over 300 volunteer Greeters speak collectively almost 25 languages and enjoy giving their time and energy back to their hometown. Since its founding, Big Apple Greeter—a free public service—has welcomed over 90,000 visitors and been featured in thousands of newspapers, magazines, and television and radio programs all over the world, reaching an audience of over one billion potential visitors to New York City. Big Apple Greeter is proud to partner with NYC & Company, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the Make-A-Wish Foundation® of Metro New York.

## About the Global Greeter Network

Big Apple Greeter is proud to be part of the Global Greeter Network, a voluntary association of welcoming programs around the world, all based on the Big Apple Greeter model: free and open to all visitors; offer greeter services as an individual or very small group experience (no more than 6 visitors); and are characterized by enthusiastic, local residents who love their home city, love to meet people from around the world, and volunteer to conduct these visits.

The Global Greeter Network currently spans seven countries on four continents and includes the following members: Cicerones de Buenos Aires in Argentina; Adelaide Greeters and Melbourne Greeter Service in Australia; Tap in TO! (Toronto) in Canada; VisitBrighton Greeters and Kent Greeters in England; Paris Greeter, Les Greeters de Nantes, Greeters62 (Pas-de-Calais), Lyon City Greeters and Marseille Provence Greeters in France; Den Haag Greeters in the Netherlands; Big Apple Greeter (New York City), Chicago Greeter, and Houston Greeters in the United States.

You may learn more about Big Apple Greeter and its many services on our website: [www.bigapplegreeter.org](http://www.bigapplegreeter.org) or by emailing us at [information@bigapplegreeter.org](mailto:information@bigapplegreeter.org)



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