



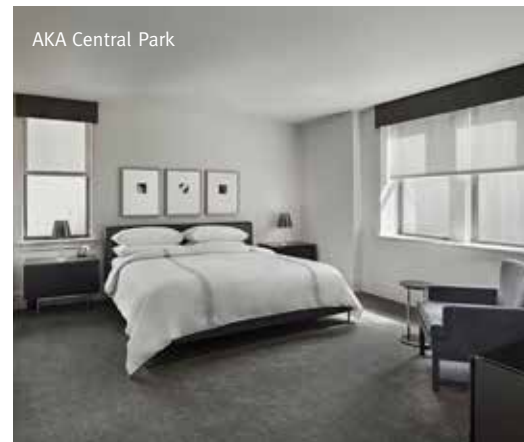
New York State of Mind

Elysia Agnew lives like a local, uncovering culture, coffee and craft fairs in the Big Apple. A city that sparkles day and night, it's a half term hit for the whole family who discover there's so much to explore from AKA's Wall Street and Central Park sites



The concrete jungle. The city that never sleeps. A playground for cultural city-breakers and the home of savvy creative makers. There are so many reasons to fall in love with New York City and as a third-time visitor, I truly believe that this high-rise haven of cosmopolitan life gets better the more you uncover. This trip is all about living like a local. Finding those hidden gems and lesser known secrets of the city. All of which help to create a unique and authentic winter experience in the Big Apple. The magic of NYC is found, not just within the busy streets of Times Square, the lush greenery of Central Park and the breathtaking views over Brooklyn Bridge, you'll find the real treasures of the city in small neighbourhoods, dainty backstreet delis and pop-up parks. It's about ducking, diving and delving deep into the unknown. Of course, you have to wander through Central Park, get your photo taken on the TKS stand in Times Square and you have to stroll over Brooklyn Bridge. But if you keep your eyes peeled and your ears open, you might just find something new and refreshing along the way. Something you can go home and tell your friends about. Something you can add to another traveller's bucket list. Don't jump on the subway and find the easy route. Take to the streets, get lost in the crowds and stumble upon something by

surprise. That is how you really get to know New York. Regular flights from the UK will take you directly to JFK airport - the first port of call on this city escapade. You're sucked into the buzz of the place as soon as you hop off the plane. Yellow cabs are whistled down, big buses are filled with city-goers and trains are packed with commuters and sightseers. AKA's Wall Street residence is our home for the weekend. A swish, city-centre apartment in the business district. The space is almost futuristic in its modern approach, boasting all the high tech treats you'd expect from a Bond-like, sky-scraping pad. Apartment living is a great way to experience New York like a local. AKA's luxury lodging is as easy-going or as accommodating as you wish. Swish, self-catered studios that allow you to really make yourself at home, but with all the benefits of a hotel - if you'd like them. Wall Street on a weekend is a far cry from its mid-week madness. The shops open late, professionals hang out in high-rise apartments and, surprisingly, there's a real laid-back feel about the place. Delis deliver the goods when it comes to mid-morning bagels, speakeasies pop up on street corners as the sun goes down, and blues bars buzz as we break into the early hours. It's cool, it's contemporary, and it's pretty chilled as far as city living goes. Venture into the whirlwind of Wall Street during the week



and it's a different story altogether - but equally as fascinating. Those dressed-down, lower Manhattan locals are suited and booted, swerving through crowds - all with the same goal of turning up to work on time. There's a real buzz about the place, but it's very much business-focused. We're here for the weekend with a Monday crossover - so with AKA Wall Street as our base, we get to experience the two; but the quieter time is perfect for exploring the area. The nearby Eataly NYC Downtown at the Westfield World Trade Center site is a paradise for foodies looking to explore flavours, ingredients and seasonal menus. Eataly is a top-floor taste tour, celebrating Italian biodiversity in the food world. It's an informal place to shop, eat, explore and learn. We get to know the immediate area mainly by foot, stumbling upon shops, restaurants, bars, museums and coffee shops as we go. But if following an itinerary is your preferred way of city breaking, and you don't want to spend hours trailing the internet, LOCALIKE New York is just the ticket.

For us, this trip is about experiencing the wonders of winter in New York City - and living it like a local. So teaming up with a local expert to create a personalised travel itinerary in advance works a treat. After completing a profile online, highlighting interests and preferences, our glorious city guide takes shape - packed with bespoke advice on the most up-to-date and off the beaten track sights, launches, restaurants and events. Whether it's a funky Japanese restaurant that doesn't publish its phone number, access to private resident-only parks in Midtown Manhattan, hidden comedy cellars in Greenwich Village or the best brunch in Soho; it's a real insider's perspective and a refreshing new way of getting to know the city.

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Our local 'know-how' means we uncover some of the city's finest speakeasies, cafes and culture. For a buzzy brunch, swing by Sadelles in Soho. This adorable little spot serves up the best bagels in town. The words 'hoot bagels' are sung out in regular intervals from the in-house bakery inside a glass cube in the centre of the restaurant, making it known that another handmade batch is ready for service. Families feast on bagel towers, couples catch up over coffee and locals pop in to pick up their freshly baked goods. It's busy, it's vibrant and it's exactly how breakfast should be when in NYC. For something a little low key when it comes to morning munching, make a date at Burette - a charming West Village hangout and a perfect presentation of a Parisian-style cafe, with US portions! The glorious neighbourhoods of Chelsea, Greenwich and East Village are within walking distance from AKA Wall Street; perfect places to live like a local. For a fun night out, go to the Comedy Cellar in Greenwich Village - long considered one of the best comedy clubs in the city, bringing in some of the finest funny people on the circuit. If you're not ready to call it a night, swing by arty speakeasy, The Garret. In an understated East Village spot, this place serves up some of the city's finest cocktails and keeps the locals happy with regular pop-up restaurants behind a curious curtain at the back of the building. If gin is your thing, make sure you check out Chelsea's Bathub Gin - intriguing from the outside with just a red light in the window, it's not the easiest to find, but if you're lucky enough to know about this little gem, you're on to a winner. The prohibition-style bar with dim lighting and a huge bathtub in the middle, serves up the most gorgeous gin-based cocktails using rare spirits from all four corners of the world. A meatpacking district must. Our Lower Manhattan location means Brooklyn Bridge is just a ten-minute walk from AKA Wall Street, so a sightseeing stroll over the East River to see Manhattan's beautiful and boisterous friend is a must. This trendy, waterfront wonderland now packed with bars, restaurants and pop-up markets, has transformed its working class roots into a thing of beauty. Brooklyn is a far cry from the swanky



streets of modern Midtown Manhattan, but its impressive architecture and edgy charm is something of an experience. What's a trip to Brooklyn without a local flea market tour? Artists and Fleas in Williamsburg is the place to be every weekend for the latest goods from local artists, designers and collectors. Go here for treats, trinkets and vintage clothing. If you're looking for a market with a bit of buzz about it, Brooklyn's Night Bazaar is your best bet. An urban, after-hours village inspired by South Asia's night markets. A hipster hangout ticking the boxes for shopping, strolling, sipping, eating and entertainment. We leave Brooklyn on a high with a visit to Westlight - a chic rooftop bar inside The William Vale Hotel. Hard to miss, this stylish building on stilts is the perfect base for breathtaking views of the Manhattan and Brooklyn skylines. Our second stay in this sparkling city takes us Uptown. AKA Central Park is our home for a mid-week mini break. With the madness of Midtown just behind us, and the glorious green spaces of Central Park just ahead, we find ourselves juggling the best of both worlds; and after picking up a chai latte in the hotel's a.café, we're ready to explore our new neighbourhood. Whether it's a dash to the designer stores of Upper East Side, a bite to eat at Central Park's Boathouse, or a tourist trip into Midtown Manhattan, we're in the perfect position to see the city sparkle day and night. Ice skating in Central Park is a winter must. Local skaters show us how it's done as we stumble beneath the towering trees. Need something to warm up after a crisp winter wander through the frosty park pathways? Pick up a freshly baked cookie from Levain Bakery on 74th Street. The dark chocolate peanut butter chip cookie is what dreams are made of. Central Park itself is a place you could easily while away the hours. There's a street artist everywhere you turn, each landmark sparks a memorable movie scene, and there are plenty of places to hangout and watch the world go by. A stunning stop-off spot is The Loeb Boathouse - an urban

oasis where you can sit, sip and watch as rowboats drift by on the lake. Go here for burgers, seafood and seasonal salads. If a grab-and-go lunch better suits your busy schedule, venture out of the park and explore Upper East Side, a pretty, tree-lined neighbourhood filled with independent shops, bistros, cafes and delis. Lexington Avenue's Dos Toros Taqueria is the Big Apple's answer to mouthwatering Mexican fast food. Go here for fresh, fully loaded tortillas, ticking all the boxes when it comes to Tex-Mex treats. After getting to grips with the city's gorgeous greenery, it's time to take back to the streets. Take a deep breath and breeze through the hubbub of Times Square; shop, stroll and see why this city 'never sleeps'. If browsing Bloomingdales and mooching through Macy's gets the better of you, rest your legs and check out a Broadway show. We head to Horace Green for our theatre thrills on this occasion. The School of Rock story follows failed rockstar Dewey Finn on his mission to turn prep school pupils into pop-rock superstars. A guitar-shredding, bass-slapping rock band is formed live on stage and before we know it, we're standing to salute the best band in town. A must-see musical for the whole family, if Broadway is on your bucket list. If you're planning a winter visit to this sparkling city, bundle up this Big Apple guide for a bounty of holiday happenings in the city that never sleeps. Whether you're seeking out seasonal speakeasies and supper spots, getting your flea market fix, or looking for foot-stomping theatre thrills, there's something for everyone in NYC. Grab your New York CityPASS for Empire State escapades and sightseeing city cruises, live like a local through LOCALIKE and find hidden gems on foot as you explore the eclectic areas surrounding New York's uber cool AKA residences. www.stayaka.com/aka-wall-street www.stayaka.com/aka-central-park www.localike-newyork.com

