

Museums

One could spend an entire holiday just checking out the city's many museums, which almost always contain something of interest for the kids; the following is a brief overview of the ones that should evoke more than just the usual enthusiasm.

American Museum of Natural History and the Rose Center for Earth and Space
Central Park W at 79th St. Sun-Thurs 10am-5.45pm, Fri & Sat
10am-8.45pm; \$10, students \$7.50, children \$6; IMAX films, the Hayden
Planetarium and certain special exhibits cost extra; tel 212/769-5100, www.amnh.org

The planetarium is sure to sate most kids intergalactic desires, and the dinosaurs are also a sure-fire attraction.

Children's Museum of the Arts
182 Lafayette St (between Broome and Grand sts). Wed noon-7pm, Thurs-Sun noon-5pm; \$5, under 1 free; tel 212/274-0986.

Art gallery of works by or for children. Children are encouraged to look at different types of art and then create their own, with paints, clay, plaster of Paris and any other simple medium.

Children's Museum of Manhattan
212 W 83rd St (between Broadway and Amsterdam Ave). Tues-Sun 10am-5pm; \$6, under 1 free; tel 212/721-1234, www.cmom.org

A terrific participatory museum, with exhibit space over five floors; not to be missed is "Seuss!" - a whimsical area with decor inspired by the Dr. Seuss books, where kids can (literally) cook up some green eggs and ham. For ages 1-12, and highly recommended.

Fire Museum
278 Spring St (between Hudson and Varick sts). Tues-Sun 10am-4pm; \$4, students \$2, under 12 \$1; tel 212/691-1303.

More popular than ever now, this unspectacular but pleasing homage to New York City's firefighters, and indeed firepeople everywhere, has fire engines from yesteryear, helmets, dog-eared photos and a host of other motley objects.

Intrepid Sea-Air-Space Museum W 46th St and
12th Ave at Pier 86. April-Sept Mon-Fri 10am-5pm, Sat-Sun 10am-7pm; Oct
-March Tues-Sun 10am-5pm, last admission 1 hour prior to closing; \$12,
children 12-17 \$9, children 6-11 \$6, children 3-5 \$2, under 2 free; tel
212/245-0072, www.intrepidmuseum.org

The world's fastest spy plane, a guided missile submarine, and other modern and vintage air and sea craft are all here; not recommended for kids under five years.

Museum of the City of New York 1220 5th Ave (103rd St). Wed-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun noon-5pm, Tues 10am-2pm for pre-registered tour groups only; suggested donation \$7, students \$4, families \$12; tel 212/534-1672, www.mcny.org

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The New York Toy Stories is a super way to bring young ones back to simpler times, before video games, when wooden toys, rubber balls, and board games were just about the only options in the late 1800s. For girls (and grownups) there is a worthwhile and surprising group of dollhouses.

National Museum of the American Indian (Smithsonian Institution) 1 Bowling Green (at Battery Park). Daily 10am-5pm, Thurs until 8pm; free; tel 212/514-3700, www.si.edu/nmai

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Kids will enjoy looking at the ancient dolls and feathered headdresses and the replicas of a reservation home and schoolroom. Programs often include theater troupes, performance artists, dancers and films.