





**THE LAKE** Make like John Lennon and **rent a rowboat** to paddle past ducks, geese, and other wildlife. “I remember John rowing the boat—my son and I smiling—all three of us having the greatest time in the world,” says Yoko Ono. Up to six passengers at a time can take a Venetian gondola ride with a serenading gondolier.

**WEST DRIVE AT 91ST STREET** While the 1.7-mile southern loop road is mainly for horse-and-carriage rides, the full loop (the East and West Drives) is six miles long, ideal for runners, cyclists, and in-line skaters who want **paved surface**. “When I Rollerblade the loop, my favorite place is the overlook from the top of the hill at West 91st Street,” says American Ballet Theatre principal dancer Angel Corella. “There’s an incredible view.”

There are 275 species of birds in Central Park, and the best place to see them is the Ramble.

**THE JACQUELINE KENNEDY ONASSIS RESERVOIR** Best known for its 1.58-mile **dirt jogging track**, the reservoir has attracted everyone from Jackie Kennedy to Madonna. “Far from the hustle of bicyclists, in-line skaters, and cars, this path is runners’ turf with a spectacular midtown skyline,” says *Town & Country* senior editor Thomas P. Farley. “For me, one loop equals ten minutes of paradise.”

**TURTLE POND** The terrace of Belvedere Castle, where New York City’s weather is forecast, offers the most panoramic view of Turtle Pond. Designated a **quiet zone**—loud music and noisy activities are banned here—it’s an ideal place to meditate. Says composer Jed Feuer, “You can’t see any skyscrapers, only trees, turtles, swans, geese, and ducks. It’s so bucolic that Wordsworth, Goethe, or Jesus could have written about it.”



**HARLEM MEER** Surrounded by lush woodlands on one side and Harlem on the other, the Meer is one of the park’s most picturesque but underutilized spots. “I go to the Meer because it’s very therapeutic,” says Harlem community activist Deirdre Hamlin. “I even have meetings there because people are nicer to each other in the park.” There’s also a Discovery Center where visitors can **borrow fishing rods** to try catch-and-release fishing.

The park’s busiest spot, the Mall is some ten degrees cooler in summer due to a canopy of elms.



**BETHESDA TERRACE** This split-level terrace is the **architectural heart** of Central Park. “From here, you can watch the whole world go by,” says Zagat Survey CEO Tim Zagat. “Some on skates, some in strollers. Some being pulled by Great Danes, some carrying their teacup Chihuahuas. Old ladies with blue hair, young men with dreadlocks. Some in suits, some in sweats.”

**BALTO** One of the most **beloved statues** in the park is a memorial to Balto, a sled dog who led a team of huskies through a blinding blizzard to Nome, Alaska, to deliver diphtheria antitoxin to the sick. So many children have climbed the statue that Balto’s ears, back, and tail are partially yellow-gold. “I breed and show standard poodles, so dogs rule, and my dogs and I do not leave the park without our daily visit to Balto,” says children’s book author Karen LeFrak.



**SHEEP MEADOW** Sheep grazed here until the 1930s, and **Tavern on the Green** used to be the sheep barn. These days, thousands of people, including broadcaster Tom Brokaw, come to sunbathe, throw Frisbees, fly kites, or canoodle. “I love the north edge of Sheep Meadow at dusk in the early winter when the skyline along Central Park South lights up, signaling the beginning of another exciting evening in the world’s greatest city.”



SIGHEED LAVDA/GETTY IMAGES (TOP); STEFANO AMANTINI/CORBIS (MIDDLE LEFT); MEDIONAGE/GETTY IMAGES (MIDDLE RIGHT); STEFANO AMANTINI/CORBIS (BOTTOM); NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAPS