ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS URBAN NEIGHBORHOODS IN THE WORLD, Harlem evokes many iconic images: women in elegant hats attending its dozens of churches, Duke Ellington playing at the Cotton Club, amateur night at the Apollo Theater, political leaders speaking on street corners and, recently, increasing numbers of visitors who are coming to appreciate its rich cultural and political heritage.
Where is Central Harlem?
Located in northern Manhattan, Central Harlem lies between W. 110th and W. 155th Streets to the south and north and between 5th and St. Nicholas Avenues to the east and west.

About Central Harlem
Established in 1658 as a permanent Dutch settlement and named for the city of Haarlem in the Netherlands, Harlem remained agricultural and isolated until 1837 when the Harlem Railroad connected it to lower Manhattan. The Great Migration of the early 20th century created the largest population of African-Americans in the United States. In the 1920s and 1930s, writers and artists traveled to Harlem and became part of the literary and artistic movement known as the Harlem Renaissance, when jazz music flourished at many fashionable clubs. Harlem also became a center of black political life. Today, Harlem is an area of rapid gentrification, exemplified by former U.S. President Bill Clinton’s opening his office at 55 W. 125th Street.

It’s Easy to Get to Central Harlem

**BY SUBWAY:** A, B or C trains to Cathedral Parkway, 116th Street, 125th Street, 135th Street, 145th Street or 155th Street.

**D** train to 125th Street, 145th Street or 155th Street. 2 or 3 trains to Central Park North, 116th Street, 125th Street or 135th Street.

**3** train to 145th Street or 148th Street.

**BY BUS:** Bus lines that service Harlem include the M2, M3, M4, M7, M10, M18, M100, M101, M116, Bx15, Bx19 and Bx33.

Things to See and Do in Central Harlem

1. Three subway stations on the 2 and 3 line feature murals that artfully depict Harlem’s history. To learn more about the 116TH STREET STATION, see the website at www.nycsubway.org/perl/artwork_show?26. For the 125TH STREET STATION, see the website at www.nycsubway.org/perl/artwork_show?16. For the 135TH STREET STATION, see the website at www.nycsubway.org/perl/artwork_show?19.

2. **FIRST CORINTHIAN BAPTIST CHURCH** at 1912 Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard and W. 116th Street is one of the most ornate structures in Harlem. Built in 1913 as the Regent Theatre, an early movie palace, its elaborately columned and arched facade loosely resembles the Doges Palace in Venice.
3 **GRAHAM COURT** at 1923-37 Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard between W. 116th and W. 117th Streets was built by the Astor family in 1901 in the style of an Italian palazzo with a large inner courtyard. This 93-apartment property is a designated New York City Landmark.

4 **MOUNT OLIVET BAPTIST CHURCH** at 201 Malcolm X Boulevard near W. 120th Street was built in 1907 as Temple Israel, one of the city’s most prestigious synagogues. You can still see the Stars of David at the top of the four large Corinthian columns and in the stained glass windows. Mount Olivet, an old and influential black congregation in New York, acquired the building in 1925.

5 The Landmarks Preservation Commission named **ST. MARTIN’S EPISCOPAL CHURCH** at 230 Malcolm X Boulevard and W. 122nd Street “undoubtedly the handsomest example” of the Romanesque Revival architectural style in Manhattan. Built in 1887, the church has gained popularity with Japanese visitors in recent years as a site for wedding ceremonies.

6 **STUDIO MUSEUM OF HARLEM** at 144 W. 125th Street near Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard features works inspired by black culture, including a sculpture garden. To learn about exhibits and hours, check their website at www.harlemonestop.com.

7 **THERESA HOTEL** at 2090 Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard at W. 125th Street opened in 1913 and for many years was a center for Harlem civic affairs. Fidel Castro stayed here when he spoke to the United Nations in 1960. Currently an office building, it was declared a New York City Landmark in 1993.

8 **ASTOR ROW** defines W. 130th Street between 5th Avenue and Malcolm X Boulevard. The south side of the street has two dozen semi-attached row houses, built between 1880 and 1883, that are set back from the street with front yards. Most have wooden porches built with turned posts giving an effect that looks more like Savannah, Georgia than Manhattan. The north side of the street has attractive brownstones.

9 **SCHOMBURG CENTER FOR RESEARCH IN BLACK CULTURE** at 515 Malcolm X Boulevard at W. 135th Street is devoted to the history of people of African descent. Poet Langston Hughes is buried here, beneath an art installation and peace memorial. To learn more about public programs, see their website at www.schomburgcenter.org.
10 **ABYSSINIAN BAPTIST CHURCH** at 132 Odell Clark Place near Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard was built into the largest Protestant congregation in the U.S. in the 1920s by Adam Clayton Powell, Sr. His son, Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. (for whom the adjoining street was named), carried on his tradition, and also became the first African-American U.S. congressman from the State of New York. Hear Rev. Calvin Butts address social issues during Sunday services, and also hear gospel music. To learn more, see their website at http://www.abyssinian.org/index.php?l=1.

11 Developed in 1891, **STRIVER’S ROW** has been home to many successful African-American professionals. Designed in row houses on a tract of land on W. 138th and W. 139th Streets between Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard and Frederick Douglass Boulevard, musicians W.C. Handy, Scott Joplin, and Eubie Blake lived here.

**Shopping**

12 **W. 125TH STREET** is a main shopping venue for the area with many smaller independent stores featuring clothes and music. **KAARTA IMPORTS** at 121 W. 125th Street near Malcolm X Boulevard offers a variety of African fabrics and jewelry.

13 The welcoming **HUE-MAN BOOKSTORE & CAFÉ** at 2319 Frederick Douglass Boulevard near W. 124th Street carries a wide selection, including books on Harlem history. Check their website at www.huemanbookstore.com for a schedule of readings.

14 For wonderful red velvet cupcakes and peanut butter cookies, check out **MAKE MY CAKE** at 2380 Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard near W. 139th Street. To learn more, see their website at http://www.makemycake.com.

When it’s Time to Eat

15 For great soul food, try small, cozy **AMY RUTH’S** at 113 W. 116th Street near Malcolm X Boulevard. You'll find all the traditional treats: chicken and waffles, fried catfish, macaroni and cheese, and fresh cornbread. Amy Ruth’s is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner, 7 days a week. To learn more, see their website at http://www.amyruthsharlem.com.

16 **ZOMA** at 2084 Frederick Douglass Boulevard at W. 113th Street spotlights upscale Ethiopian food. Specializing in stews with complex flavors, ranging from mild to extra spicy, there is also an extensive vegetarian menu. To learn more, see their website at http://zomanyc.com.

**Nightlife**

17 **MINTON’S PLAYHOUSE** at 210 W. 118th Street near Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard is the club famed for its role in the development of modern jazz aka bebop. Founded by saxophonist Henry Minton in 1938, the club has been host to many jazz greats, including Thelonious Monk, Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie. For a calendar of events, see their website at http://www.mintonsuptown.com.
Historic LENOX LOUNGE and its ZEBRA ROOM at 288 Malcolm X Boulevard between W. 124th and W. 125th Streets is one of the few original art deco clubs in the city and has been a Harlem institution since 1939. Jazz legends Billie Holiday, Miles Davis, and John Coltrane all performed here. For a calendar of events, see their website at http://www.lenoxlounge.com.

THE APOLLO THEATER at 253 W. 125th Street near Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard has been open since 1914 and has been the launching point for many renowned entertainers. Ella Fitzgerald was one of the first winners of the Apollo’s famous Amateur Night competitions. Stevie Wonder, Michael Jackson, James Brown, and Billie Holiday all performed here. For a calendar of events, see their website at www.apollotheater.org.

Culture

**20** When people think of Central Harlem, the words “gospel brunch” come to mind. If eating and listening to great music appeal to you, you have come to the right place. **Sylvia’s Restaurant** at 328 Malcolm X Boulevard near W. 126th Street is renowned for its wonderful chicken, mashed potatoes with gravy, and, of course, their Sunday gospel brunch. In business since 1962, Sylvia is called the “Queen of Soul Food.” To learn more, see the website at http://www.sylviassoulfood.com.

**21** **Mobay Uptown Restaurant** at 17 W. 125th Street near 5th Avenue offers upscale Caribbean soul fusion cuisine. In addition to the weekend brunch, evening entertainment is also available. To learn more, see the website at http://www.mobayuptownnyc.com.

**22** **Gospel Uptown Restaurant** at 2110 Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard near W. 126th Street offers a healthful soul fusion menu, a lovely gospel brunch and live evening entertainment. To learn more, see the website at http://gospeluptown.com.

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, Greeters 62 (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 or by emailing us at information@bigapplegreeter.org.

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