

DENTAL TRIBUNE

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Fans line up in front of the Ed Sullivan Theater to get in to see David Letterman. (DTI/Photo Fred Michmershuizen, DTA)

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Coming to GNYDM? There's plenty to do in NYC!

by Fred Michmershuizen, DTA

NEW YORK CITY: If you are coming to the Greater New York Dental Meeting, keep in mind that there is always plenty to see and do in the Big Apple. It doesn't matter whether you have an hour or all day, whether you have money to spend or you are on a tight budget.

When your business is finished at the dental meeting, head out on the town for a memorable time. Here are some ideas.

Laugh it up at a comedy club

Before comedians appear on the Jay Leno show or tape specials for HBO, they cut their chops before live audiences at one of New York City's many comedy clubs. Audiences are typically small and intimate, and laughs always abound. There's usually a nominal cover charge and a one- or

two-drink minimum. Check out Carolines on Broadway, 1626 Broadway between 49th and 50th Streets, (212) 757-4100, www.carolines.com; Comedy Cellar at 117 MacDougal St., between West 3rd and Minetta Lane, (212) 254-3480, www.comedycellar.com; or Gotham Comedy Club, 208 W. 23rd St. between 7th and 8th Avenues, (212) 367-9000, www.gothamcomedyclub.com.

Practice your figure eight

The Rink at Rockefeller Center is open to the public. You can skate beneath the gilded statue of Prometheus and the glittering Christmas tree. You can even get skating lessons there if you like. For more information, call 212-332-7654 or visit www.patinagroup.com/east/iceRink. And if you are too shy to skate with thousands of tourists gawking at you from above, check out the Wollman Rink in Central Park, 212-439-6900, www.wollmanskatingrink.com; or the Sky Rink at Chelsea Piers at 23rd Street and the Hudson River, 212.336.6100, www.chelseapiers.com.

Escape to Houdini exhibit

Through impossibly daring feats, Harry Houdini (1874-1926) captivated audiences worldwide, and his legendary escapes instill awe to this day. "Houdini: Art and Magic" — the first exhibition in a major American art museum on the master magician and his lasting influence in visual culture — features magic apparatus, posters, broadsides, period photographs, archival films and contemporary artwork inspired by the great magician and escape artist. The exhibition reveals how Houdini's reputation has evolved over time, and how the edgy performances and physical audacity excited audiences at the turn of the twentieth century. It's at the Jewish Museum, 1109 Fifth Ave. at 92nd Street, (212) 423.3200, www.thejewishmuseum.org.

Visit an Irish pub

New York City has some of the best ethnic restaurants in the world. You don't have to spend a fortune to have a great meal, either. Whatever your tastes, there is something sure to please your palate. For example, if you want traditional Irish fare, wander in to one of the many pubs scattered throughout Midtown. If you are hungry for Italian food, you can't go wrong at any of the authentic eateries along Mulberry Street. Those who have a taste for Indian will want to head to Gramercy Park or the East Village.

Pay tribute to John Lennon

John Lennon, who would have been 70 this year, lived with his wife, Yoko Ono, in the Dakota Apartments across the street from Central Park. Strawberry Fields is a 2.5-acre garden that pays tribute to the late singer, songwriter, musician and peace activist. Named after the title of the Beatles song "Strawberry Fields Forever," the teardrop shaped region was re-landscaped by the Central Park Conservancy with the help of landscape architect Bruce Kelley and a \$1 million donation from Yoko Ono. To visit Strawberry Fields, enter from Central Park West between 71st and 74th Streets.

Laugh with Letterman

New York City is home to dozens of television shows, allowing fans to get in on the action by being part of the studio audience. Unless the president of NBC is your brother-in-law, forget about "Saturday Night Live." But if you are willing to stand in line, your might hit the jackpot with standby tickets to another show. For "The Late Show with David Letterman" (CBS), visit the Ed Sullivan Theater at 1697 Broadway, between 53rd and 54th Streets. A limited number of standby tickets are available. Letterman tapes one show per night Monday through Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. and two shows on Thursday, at 4:30 and 7 p.m. For more information, call (212) 975-5853 or visit www.lateshowaudience.com. For "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart" (Comedy Central), go to 513 W. 54th St. Doors open at 5:45 p.m. Monday through Thursday, but lines form earlier. For "Live With Regis and Kelly" (ABC), you have a good chance at same-day tickets. Go to the corner of

67th Street and Columbus Avenue as early as 7 a.m. to request a standby number. After ticket holders are seated, standbys are seated on a first-come, first-served basis. You don't need a ticket for "The Today Show" (NBC), which tapes on the ground floor at the corner of 49th Street and Rockefeller Center. Simply gather outside Monday through Friday from 7 to 10 a.m. at 30 Rockefeller Plaza, between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, to watch and to try to snag time in front of the camera.

Learn about tenement life

Want to travel back in time? The Lower East Side Tenement Museum, located at 97 Orchard St., tells the stories of immigrants who lived faced challenges of making a new life, working for a better future, and starting families with limited means. Built on Manhattan's Lower East Side in 1863, this tenement apartment building was home to nearly 7000 working class immigrants. Visitors take guided tours of apartments that re-create immigrant life in the 19th and 20th centuries. Along with a glimpse of the past, tours offer insights into current debates about immigration and public health. All tours begin at the Museum Shop, located a few doors down, at 108 Orchard St. Call (212) 982-8420 or visit www.tenement.org for more information.

Kick it up with the Rockettes

If you are in town with children, you might want to treat them to the annual Radio City Christmas Spectacular, featuring the Rockettes. This Christmas tradition has been delighting audiences young and old every holiday season for the past 75 years. For tickets, call (212) 307-1000 or visit www.radiocitychristmas.com. Shows are every day, but they sell out months in advance. So if you strike out with the box office, ask the concierge at your hotel to help you.

See a Broadway show

There are dozens of Broadway and Off-Broadway shows to choose from, and you can get discounted same-day tickets at the Theater Development Fund's TKTS booth in Duffy Square. For evening performances, tickets go on sale at 3 p.m. For Wednesday matinees, the booth opens at 10 a.m., and on Sundays it opens at 11 a.m. To score your tickets for a show tonight, head over to Broadway and 47th Street. Look for the gleaming red steps.

Get to the Top of the Rock

You can see just about everything in New York City from top of Rockefeller center, an Art Deco masterpiece of a building. The lines for Top of the Rock here are much shorter than at the Empire State Building, yet the views are just as awe-inspiring. Tickets are expensive but worth it. It's located in Midtown at 30 Rockefeller Plaza. For information, call (212) 698-2000 or visit www.topoftherocknyc.com.
