

#NORTHAMERICA

A Guide To The Best Independent Bookstores In NYC

Manhattan edition.



NORTHAMERICA

UNITEDSTATES

NEWYORK



By Jacqueline Parisi 24 JULY 2019

As the literary capital of the world, New York City is filled with bookstores to satisfy any traveling bookworm's dreams. In Manhattan alone, there's hole-in-the-walls lined floor-to-ceiling with musty vintage editions and expansive, department-store sized spots sporting a never-ending maze of winding aisles. There's stores that double as well-designed cafés, inviting you to slow down, linger for a while. And others that skew minimalist, perfect for a quick pop-in. Some pay homage to a theme, or a country, or a discipline, while others lean general. But *all* are worth a visit.

GET STARTED

Plan Your Trip

Destination



Ex. Tokyo



Get My Itinerary

DISCOVER

Top Stories

- 1 Chef JJ Johnson On What It Means To Cook Food Of The African Diaspora
- 2 Ultimate Guide To The Rockaways
- 3 10 Things To Do Outdoors During A Long Weekend Or Day Trip In Westchester, NY
- 4 The Best Pizza In New York City: A Complete Guide [2020]
- 5 Joaquin "Quino" Baca Of NYC's Newest Izakaya Restaurant, Būmu, On The Inevitability Of Fusion

EXPLORE MORE →

1. Book Culture On Columbus

For families



There’s a palpable, corner store charm to Book Culture on Columbus—one of the few Upper West Side institutions that still manages to retain a local, neighborhood vibe. Founded in 1997 as Labryinth Books, Book Culture first opened its doors by Columbia University on 112th street, eventually opening up the Columbus location in a former taxi and antique warehouse

EXPLORE

Destinations

- Africa
- Asia
- Europe
- Middle East
- North America
- Oceania
- South America

GET INSPIRED

Featured Journeyer



SUKHJEET BATTU
Experiencing Japan
With A 16-Month-
Old



“We’d used Journy before for little, 2-3-day trips here and there, but this was a bigger trip with a lot more things we wanted to fit in and see and do—and it was so easy.”

SEE A SAMPLE
ITINERARY



GET INSPIRED

Travel by Interest



Food & Beverage

one occupied by Endicott Booksellers in 2014 under the co-ownership of Rick MacArthur, president and publisher of Harper’s Magazine.

Get lost browsing the diverse selection of new and classic fiction and nonfiction, mysteries, cookbooks, graphic novels, craft books and travel guides—and if you’re traveling with kids don’t miss the whimsical Children’s Reading Room downstairs. Outfitted with family-friendly books, as well as games, puzzles, art supplies and toys, it’s the perfect respite from the hustle bustle of the city.

Neighborhood: Upper West Side
Address: 450 Columbus Avenue
Hours: Mon - Sat 9:00am - 10pm, Sun 9am - 8pm










Other locations: Harlem (536 W 112th Street and 2915 Broadway), Long Island City (26-09 Jackson Avenue)

2. Albertine

For Francophiles... and architecture buffs



As the only bookstore in New York devoted solely to books in French and English, Albertine is stocked with more than 14,000 contemporary and

-  Family Friendly
-  Outdoor Adventures
-  Relaxation
-  Wellness
-  History, Art, & Architecture
-  Hotels & Accommodations
-  Shopping
-  Local Culture
-  Travel Hacks

GET STARTED

Talk To Our
Travel Experts
For Free



How can Journey

help you?

We custom-build
itineraries so you can
jetset stress-free

classic titles from 30 French-speaking countries. In partnership with the Cultural Services branch of the French Embassy, they host regular debates, discussions and lectures.

[Schedule a free call](#)

The store lines Central Park and is housed in the historic Payne Whitney mansion designed by Stanford White, the same architect behind New York's famed Washington Square Arch. Jacques Garcia—the interior designer that worked on The NoMad Hotel—was tasked with dreaming up the decor for Albertine, which includes a hand-painted mural of constellations, planets and stars modeled after the ceiling of the music room at the Villa Stuck in Munich, Germany.

Neighborhood: Upper East Side

Address: 972 5th Avenue

Hours: Mon - Sat 9:00am - 10pm, Sun 9am - 8pm

Although there's only one Albertine location, they do partner with select bookstores across the country to provide curated selections of French and Francophone titles. So if you can't make it here, keep an eye out for the "French corners" at these stores across the country:

[Politics and Prose](#) (Washington DC)

[Elliott Bay Book Company](#) (Seattle)

[Brookline Booksmith](#) (Boston)

[The Book Cellar](#) (Chicago)

[Green Apple Books on the Park](#) (SF)

[Book Soup](#) (LA)

[Seminary Co-op](#) (Chicago)

[Community Bookstore](#) (Park Slope, Brooklyn)

3. Rizzoli Bookstore

For those in search of a good coffee table book



If you're by Madison Square Park or wandering the aisles of Eataly, head three blocks north to Rizzoli, the only US outpost of the Italian bookseller (the other location is in Milan). Their specialty? Illustrated coffee table books on architecture, interior design, fashion, photography, cooking and the fine arts. There's also an extensive foreign language collection, with a dedicated Italian section for kids. And if you're looking for a New York City-specific souvenir to bring back home, don't miss their Big Apple guidebooks, history books, maps, photographs and novels.

Fun fact for all the Hollywood fans out there: Rizzoli has been featured on *The Sun Is Also A Star* and *Law & Order*.

Neighborhood: Nomad

Address: 1133 Broadway

Hours: Mon - Fri 10:30am - 8:00pm, Sat 12:00pm - 8:00pm, Sun 12:00pm - 7:00pm

“Outstanding recommendations and service. *Outstanding*. Couldn't have found the recommended gems on our own. Our Journey trip designer hit a home run. Made a tremendous difference for our trip. Highly recommend!”

Jeffrey

Google Trips NYC

[Plan My Trip](#)

4. Housing Works Bookstore Café

For people watching (for a good cause)



Because everything at Housing Works Bookstore—from books to music and movies—is donated, with the store staffed entirely by volunteers, 100% of the profits are donated to the nonprofit of the same name, which works to fight the twin crises of HIV/AIDS and homelessness.

The dark wooden paneling gives the airy space an endearing, old-fashioned feel, with winding staircases leading to an upstairs balcony that lines the four walls. It's the perfect place to perch yourself for the afternoon and read, stopping only for intermittent bouts of people watching... or to refuel at the fully stocked café serving coffee, juice, soda, seltzer, pastries, sandwiches and soups. If you're there in the evening, take advantage of their fully licensed bar and grab yourself a beer, glass of wine or cocktail.

Neighborhood: Nolita

Address: 126 Crosby Street

Hours: Mon - Wed 10:00am - 9:00pm, Thurs, Fri, Sun 10:00am - 6:00pm, Sat 10:00am - 4:00pm

5. Dashwood Books



Dashwood Books opened in September 2005 in a tucked away, basement-level storefront on the cobblestone-paved Bond Street in Noho. It has since become a staple for artists, collectors, photographers and advertisers to seek out rare, limited-edition titles imported from Japan, Germany, the Netherlands and elsewhere. With a singular focus on contemporary photography, Dashwood curates collections for museums, educational institutions, reference libraries and fashion houses—including the [Gucci Wooster bookstore](#) in Soho.

Neighborhood: Noho

Address: 33 Bond Street A

Hours: Mon - Sat 12:00pm - 8:00pm, Sun 12:00pm - 7:00pm, closed Monday

6. Shakespeare & Co.

For those interested in book printing





This iconic Manhattan bookstore, which opened its doors in 1983 on the Upper East Side, eventually made its way across the park to its second location on the Upper West Side in November 2018. As the official brick-and-mortar bookstore for Hunter College, Shakespeare & Co. (which bears no relation to the Paris bookstore of the same name) carries a broad range of academic textbooks, in addition to best-selling fiction, non-fiction, children's books and more.

But what truly sets this uptown gem apart is its in-store patented book printing machine, which can produce bookstore-quality books in minutes from a catalog of over 7,000,000 in-copyright and public domain titles. While you're waiting for your book to print, pick up an almond croissant and latté from the quaint café.

Neighborhood: Upper West Side

Address: 2020 Broadway

Hours: Mon - Fri 7:30am - 9:00pm, Sat 9:00am - 10:00pm, Sun 10:00am - 8:00pm

Neighborhood: Upper East Side

Address: 939 Lexington Avenue

Hours: Mon - Fri 7:30am - 8:00pm, Sat 8:00am - 7:00pm, Sun 9:00am - 6:00pm

7. The Strand

For those interested in literary landmarks



Over its 90+ year history, The Strand has become synonymous with New York City and is the sole survivor of “Book Row:” six blocks of 48 bookstores that once lined Fourth Avenue (but ultimately shuttered after the Depression).

It all started when a 25-year-old man by the name of Ben Bass saved up \$300 of his own, pooled it together with a \$300 loan from a friend, and ventured to open a bookstore named after the London street where Dickens, Mill and other avant-garden writers would convene. Little did Bass know that The Strand would eventually grow to carry over 2.5 million used, new and rare books that, if placed side-by-side, would extend over 18 miles in

length.

Fun fact for all the hopeless romantics out there: countless hand-written love letters have been found over the years tucked in the pages of used books.

Neighborhood: Union Square

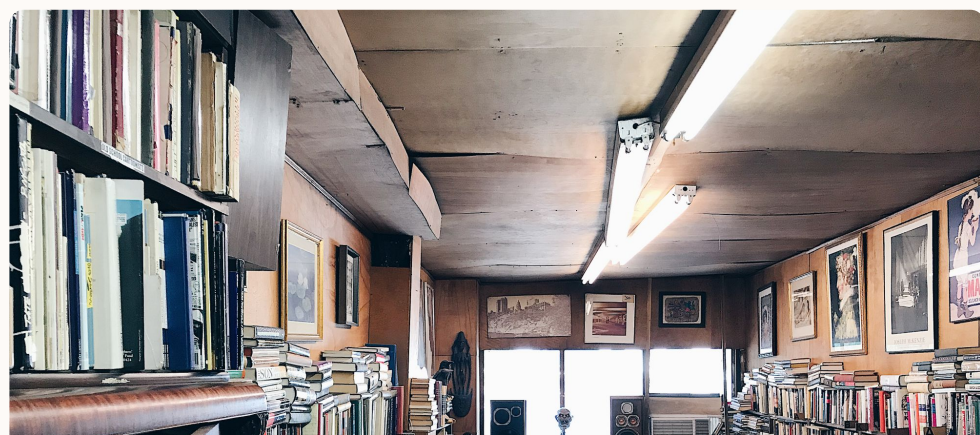
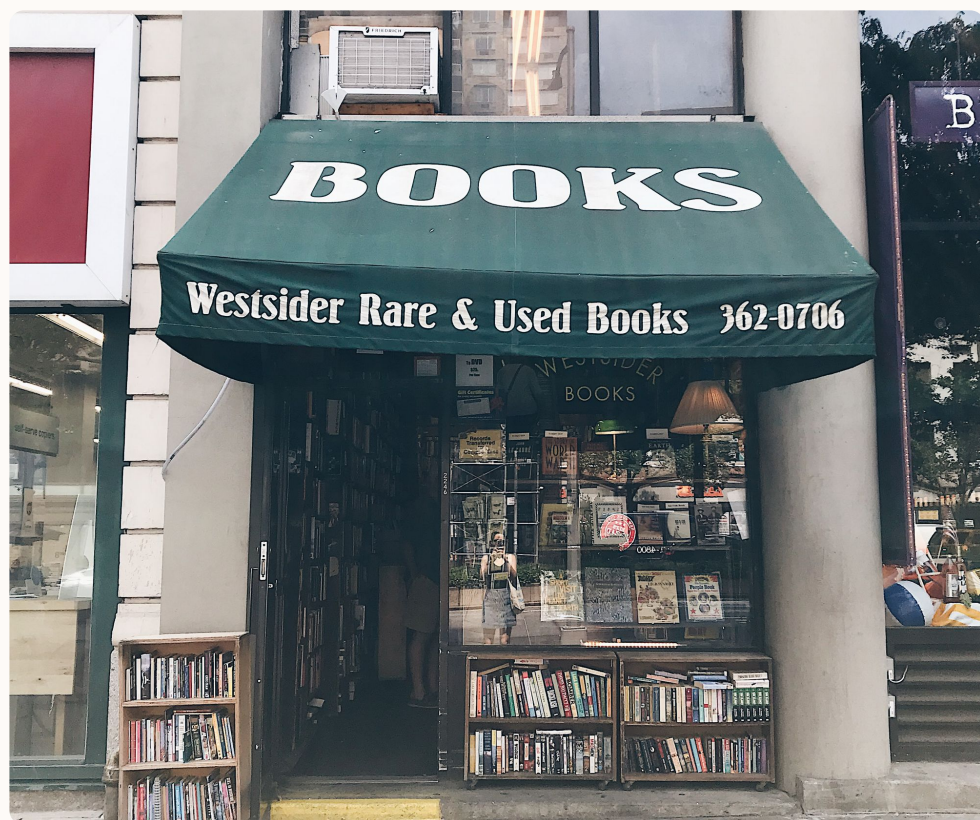
Address: 828 Broadway

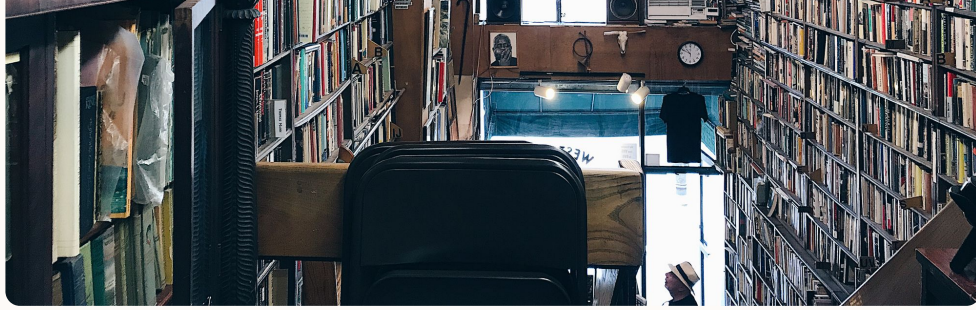
Hours: 9:30am - 10:30pm

READ MORE: [The MoMA Is Closing This Summer. Here Are 5 Other Great Ways To Get Your Modern Art Fix](#)

8. Westsider Rare And Used Books

For a cozy, hole-in-the-wall feel





When Westsider announced in January 2019 that it'd be closing its doors after 35 years on the Upper West Side, the local community rallied to raise over 50k on GoFundMe to keep it open. And once you pop in to the tiny space with narrow aisles lined floor-to-ceiling with stacks of dusty used books and a creaky staircase leading to the second floor, you'll understand exactly why the small space, which began as a wheelbarrow full of used books, has so-charmed locals and tourists alike for decades.

Neighborhood: Upper West Side

Address: 2246 Broadway

Hours: Mon - Fri 10am - 9pm, Sat 10am - 10pm, Sun 11am - 8pm

9. McNally Jackson Independent Booksellers & Café

For rotating themed displays



At McNally Jackson, all books—from hard-to-find titles to bestsellers—are organized by nation across two floors, with themed displays as niche as “women writing about Manhattan” on rotation all year round. Be sure to stop by the café—all fresh pastries and bagels are sourced locally from the likes of Balthazar, Ovenly, Murray’s and Sarabeth. Although there are only two locations at the moment (Nolita and Williamsburg), rumor has it that two additional stores are opening up in South Seaport and City Point, Brooklyn later this summer into fall 2019.

Neighborhood: Nolita

Address: 52 Prince Street

Hours: Mon - Sat 10am - 10pm, Sun 10am - 9pm

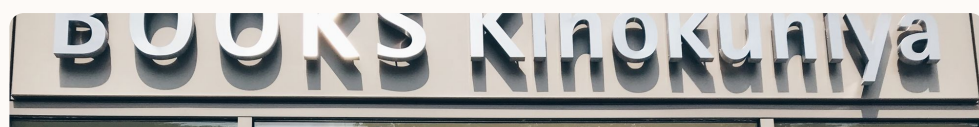
Neighborhood: Williamsburg

Address: 76 N 4th Street Unit G

Hours: Mon - Sat 10am - 10pm, Sun 10am - 9pm

10. Kinokuniya

For Japanophiles





Founded in 1927 in the Shinjuku district of Tokyo, Kinokuniya opened its first US branch in San Francisco in 1969, followed by New York in 1981. Today, it offers a variety of novels, magazines stationery and DVDs from Japan—along with manga, graphic novels, cookbooks, travel guides and children’s books in both English and Japanese.

Neighborhood: Midtown

Address: 1073 6th Avenue

Hours: Mon - Sat 10am - 8pm, Sun 11am - 7:30pm

READ MORE: [How To Plan A Trip To Japan: 15 Essential Travel Tips](#)

11. Bookoff

...Also for Japanophiles



Books don't begin to cover it at Bookoff, a used-everything slice of heaven. There's Japanese manga, anime, records, DVDs, toy collectibles...you name it. Their slogan says it all: For the people who don't waste. There are six stores in California and two in Hawaii, but this is the only location in New York.

Neighborhood: Midtown

Address: 49 W 45th Street

Hours: 10am - 8pm

“Sarah (our trip designer) got right to work delivering superbly tailored itineraries. I was expecting a sterile schedule but received a flexible and well-thought out vacation plan.”



Jasmine

Couples Trip to Japan

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12. Bonnie Slotnick

For home cooks



When you walk into Bonnie Slotnick, you'll be promptly greeted by Bonnie Slotnick herself, a cookbook publishing alum-turned-bookstore owner who first opened her eponymous store in October 1997 in a basement office on Washington Place and Barrow Street before moving to the bottom of a red brick townhouse on East 2nd. There's a charming, mom-and-pop ethos of warm hospitality to the space, which feels less like a store and more like the cozy living room you wish you had.

Take your time browsing the seemingly endless selection of rare cookbooks, magazines and antique volumes—some of which date back to the 18th century!—and before you head out be sure to ask Bonnie for a map of the neighborhood, which she eagerly hands out to anyone interested in supporting the local, small business community.

Neighborhood: Bowery

Address: 28 E 2nd Street

Hours: 1pm - 7pm

*Hours may vary week-to-week, so double check the website to be sure.

13. Three Lives & Company

For a community feel



On a quaint corner directly across from the Van Leeuwen ice cream shop in the West Village sits Three Lives & Company, an unassuming bookstore that, upon entering, presents itself as anything but. It's easy to see why the Greenwich Village Historical Society referred to the store as a "pocket of civility" back in 1991. It's a calm haven, where the wood floors creak as you peruse the thoughtfully curated displays, and the well-read staff exudes a genuine graciousness as they chat with customers.

Neighborhood: West Village

Address: 154 W 10th Street

Hours: Mon - Sat 10am-8:30pm, Sun 12pm - 7pm

14. Idlewild Books

For travel and language enthusiasts





Idlewild, which was the original name for New York's International Airport before it was renamed JFK in December 1963, is one of the last travel bookstores in the country. It's tiny, but the range of guide books and travel writing novels is extensive. Run by a staff that's equally as well-traveled as they are well-read, Idlewild also fittingly hosts language classes in French, Spanish, Italian, German and Portuguese.

Neighborhood: West Village

Address: 170 7th Avenue South

Hours: Mon - Thurs 12-8pm, Fri - Sun 12-6pm

15. Karma Bookstore

For artists



Part-gallery, part-bookstore, part-publisher, Karma specializes in artists' printed books. The sleek, minimalist space, which features exhibitions on rotation, contains an artful selection of periodicals, artworks, artists' editions and rare and out-of-print items. It's all too easy to miss when you're walking down 3rd, since the sign is unassuming, so keep an eye out for the basketball courts directly across the street.

Neighborhood: East Village

Address: 136 E 3rd Street

Hours: 11am - 7pm

16. The Mysterious Bookshop

For Sherlock Holmes fans



@[themysteriousbookshop](#)

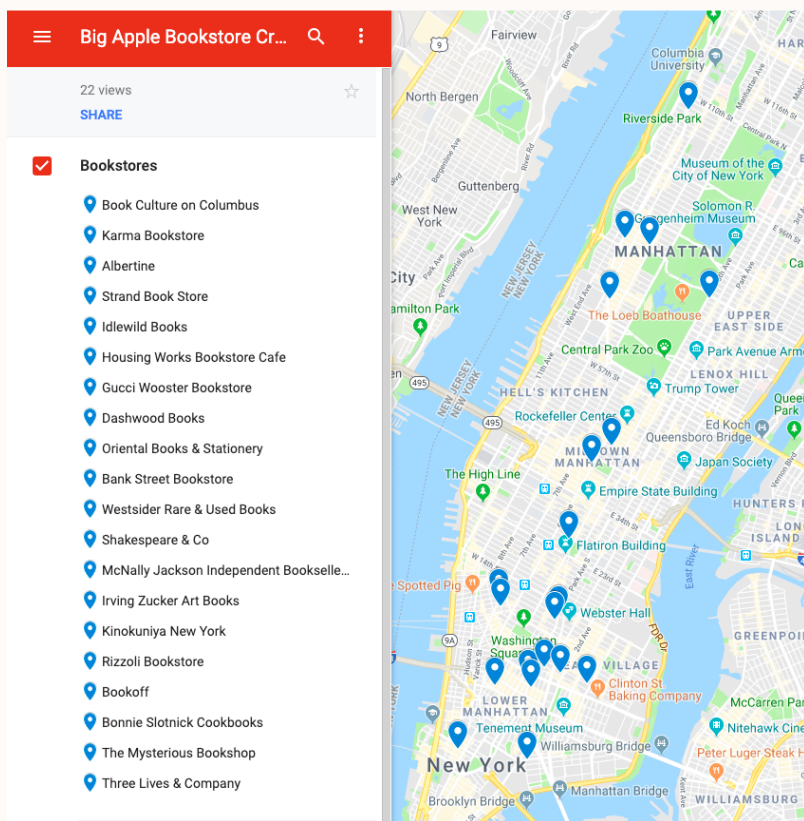
The name of this Tribeca bookstore says it all. Opened in 1979 by Otto Penzler, a prolific editor of mystery fiction, The Mysterious Bookshop is the oldest mystery specialist bookstore in America. Its shelves contain mystery hardcovers, paperbacks, periodicals and limited edition works by the likes of James Ellroy, Lee Child and Michael Connelly—along with Sherlockiana. There's even a "Bibliomystery" series featuring novellas by some of the biggest mystery authors written *exclusively* for the store.

Neighborhood: Tribeca

Address: 58 Warren Street

Hours: Mon - Sat 11am - 7pm

For a custom Google Map containing all these locations (along with a few additional spots that we're particularly fond of), [click here](#). Big Apple bookstore crawl, anyone?



Making your way through New York City's bookstores is a sure way to work up an appetite. Here are some suggestions for where to fuel up:

- [The Best Foods In NYC, According To These Locals](#)
- [Chef Ohm Suansilphong Of NYC's Fish Cheeks On What "Authenticity" In Thai Cuisine Means To Him](#)
- [The Best Pizza In New York City: A Complete Guide \[2020\]](#)
- [Chef JJ Johnson On What It Means To Cook Food Of The African Diaspora](#)



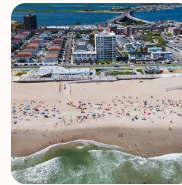
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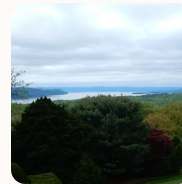
Chef JJ Johnson On What It Means To Cook Food Of The African Diaspora



5 Of The Best Socially Distant Getaways Along The West Coast



Ultimate Guide To The Rockaways



10 Things To Do Outdoors During A Long Weekend Or Day Trip In Westchester, NY

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