Meat Market

New York City
Meatpacking District Guidebook
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Although the Meat Packing district has undergone many changes in the past few years, the opening of the High Line after ten years of planning has had the greatest impact on the neighborhood. Most would agree that it has completely re-invigorated the west side of Manhattan, attracting multitudes of both tourists and local New Yorkers throughout the opening months. By the end of 2009, the Friends of the High Line estimates that over 1 million people will have walked across the elevated park that extends from Gansevoort Street in the Meatpacking district to 20th Street in Chelsea. In our opinion, the High Line is the new Central Park, a public space that will change the face of the entire city.
When completed, the High Line will run through some of New York's oldest industrial neighborhoods, including the Meatpacking District, Chelsea and Hell's Kitchen. The bones of the structure were first completed in 1934. At the time, the High Line stretched from 34th street to Spring Street, transporting milk, meat, produce, and manufactured goods down the waterline in train cars. As the years passed, the growth of interstate trucking led to a drop in railway traffic. In 1980, the last train ran on the High Line, pulling 3 loads of frozen turkeys. For the next 20 years the tracks were mostly abandoned. The elevated land grew wild with local plants and flowers. Despite efforts to tear it down, the High Line survived, remaining a frozen relic of industrial New York.

In 1999, a local group of residents founded by Joshua David and Robert Hammond saw potential for a unique public space in the long stretch of empty elevated land. In 2006, after years of negotiating the terms of construction with private developers and the city of New York, the first railway tracks were raised and the construction of the High Line began.
Photo_Author Unknown, 1934
When Central Park was constructed in the late 19th century, it was hailed as one of the most miraculous and important public works projects in the history of New York City. The park welcomed people of all backgrounds and included attractions such as zoos, art museums and horse stables. It’s hard not to see a comparison between Central Park at the turn of the 20th Century and the High Line at the turn of the 21st century. Today, the High Line attracts a similarly diverse group of visitors and offers them a view of New York City from an elevated perspective. In the curves of the pathways, washed in some places by sun and in others by shade, we think that the park offers some of the most beautiful glimpses of the west side of Manhattan.

The design for the High Line's landscape is striking. Created by James Corner Field Operations in collaboration with the architectural firm Diller Scofidio + Renfro, the park is wild and cultivated, public and private, making it one of the most diverse spaces in the city. It includes many elements from the original rail beds, including 210 species of grasses, flowers, shrubs and trees that grew naturally when the tracks were abandoned in the 1980s. The park is designed to bloom throughout the year, so if you are visiting New York in the winter, you’ll still get the full effect of the wildlife.

Other elements of the design include deck chairs for sun bathing, pathways through the old industrial buildings and food stands that serve gourmet snacks from local bakeries and restaurants. On 17th street, there is a glassed in enclosure that dips below the pathway, offering a unique view up 10th Avenue. Installations by artists Spencer Finch and Felix Gonzalez Torres were exhibited in 2009, and more installations are planned for 2010.
Some of the things that we’ve enjoyed most in the park are the public art exhibitions, live performances and food festivals. We can’t wait for more cultural events organized by the High Line Art Partnerships in the coming year.

Only the first phase of the High Line project has been completed. In 2010, the High Line plans to open the second section of the park, from 20th street to 30th Street. The final phase of the project involves expanding the High Line over the half-mile space between 30th and 34th street. Unfortunately, the space is not currently owned by the city, but by a private real estate company that plans to develop the 12 million square feet of public space into a network of residential skyscrapers. The friends of the High Line have thus far lobbied successfully to prevent this. However, they need our help.

Get involved with the Friends of the High Line today by visiting: www.thehighline.org

**Friends of the High Line**

The High Line depends on the support of members who provide the crucial funding needed to operate the park. And there are great incentives to join. Friends of the High Line receive 10% discounts at some of the best restaurants and stores in the neighborhood including Alexander McQueen, Craftsteak, Earnest Sewn, Theory, Moschino and Three Tarts.

Members aren’t the only people who support the High Line. Part of the proceeds of designer Anya Hindmarch’s silk-screened bag called the “High Line Tote” benefit the Friends of the High Line. To purchase one for yourself, visit Jeffrey’s at 449 West 14th Street.
Last year, the Whitney Museum announced the opening of a new, six-floor, 185,000 square-foot building in downtown Manhattan. Located on Gansevoort Street between West Street and the High Line, the building will be designed by Renzo Piano, the Pritzker-Prize winning architect best known for constructing the Centre Pompidou in Paris, France. His strongly asymmetrical design responds to the industrial character of the loft buildings that surround the site and the majesty of the Hudson River visible from the top floors of the building.

Although the two projects are not related, there will be a clear dialogue between the Whitney building and the High Line. The plans of the museum include over 15,000 square feet of rooftop galleries that will interact and compliment the park along the High Line. A large outdoor plaza at the front of the building will create a public space at the entrance on Washington Street, inviting local residents, tourists, artists, students, educators and gallerists to gather together for public events.

The Whitney Museum will add a completely new dimension to the already blossoming Meatpacking district. We can't wait for the construction to begin sometime in the next year.