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Go local in: New York

No more carriage rides in Central Park. No more overpriced dinners in Little Italy. Here's how to take the Big Apple trip you'll actually enjoy in the words of resident Sean Hotchkiss.

Written by Jourdan Crouch Fairchild

Stop any average Joe on the street in New York and he'll rattle off exactly where you should get your morning coffee, shop for shoes, and find the best knish in the city. But follow his advice, and there's a great chance you'll end up wandering through god-knows-where Queens—or even worse, Times Square. So we went straight to the kind of source that we can really trust. Not only has Sean Hotchkiss worked for mega brands like GQ and J.Crew, but he's lived in NYC for the past seven years. Follow along as he reveals which downtown spots give visitors the real New York experience—no double-decker tour bus required.

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La Colombe: "They have the best coffee I've ever had—no joke. So I go every day. The line is outrageous and people wait forever, but it's so worth it. I'm not a purist about my coffee, so I usually get a latte." *270 Lafayette St.*



Luke's Lobster: "This is my home away from home. I'm from Maine and so is Luke, the owner of this restaurant. It's a no-frills-kind-of place, and it's just kitschy enough to remind you of the classic seafood shacks that line the coast. Luke even hangs local Maine art inside. Oh, and the lobster rolls are insane." *93 E. 7th St.*



Butter Lane: "I stop by this dessert shop almost daily for their outrageous banana cupcakes. As soon I get my hands on one, I'll devour it right there at the counter, which totally disgusts the girls who work there." *123 E. 7th St.*



John Derian: "When I go in this store, I just feel like an adult. I love trinkets, so it's a really dangerous place because I want to buy everything. And I know it's a different kind of spot because the dudes working there have tattoos and are really rad." *6 E. 2nd St.*



UNIS: "The owner, Eunice Lee, is really cool, and she just gets how guys shop. I picked up the sweatshirt I'm wearing today from there. Oh, and I love the employees. I left my gloves there once for four months, and when I went back, they still had them for me."



East Village Florist: "I have a plant problem. My apartment has a big porch, so I'm always buying plants for it. I'll stop in this shop and they have all of these beautiful plants all potted up and ready to go. Plus, they deliver the same day. I've killed tons in the past, but I've gotten much better at taking care of them." *247 E 10th St.*



Dashwood Books: "This is a hidden gem that's filled with really amazing fashion books and awesome photography books. And it's really peaceful because there's usually only one person in there at a time. They also have really cool book signings (check their Facebook page for details)." *33 Bond St.*

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