

# TimeOut

## NEW YORK

## The best free kayaking in NYC

Take to the city's waterways and enjoy some free kayaking! NYC unveils some breathtaking views as you paddle.

By [Jillian Anthony](#) and Evelyn Derico | Posted: Friday June 23 2017

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Photograph: Courtesy CC/Flickr/Alec Perkins

Grab a paddle and seek out some free kayaking! NYC's waterways have never looked more beautiful from a kayak (or canoe), where you can enjoy some of the [best views](#) of the city. See popular [New York attractions](#) in a whole new light by paddling on the New York Harbor or East River. Kayaking is certainly one of the best [things to do in summer](#), so check out our roundup of the best places to go.

**RECOMMENDED:** Full guide to [things to do outside](#) in NYC

## Best free kayaking in NYC

1



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Sports and fitness

[Long Island City Community Boathouse](#)

Long Island City



The health-conscious folks at Socrates Sculpture Park in Queens have teamed up with the LIC Community Boathouse to bring you free first-come, first-served kayaking out of scenic Hallet's Cove (weekend dates and times vary; visit website for details). Sessions run 20 minutes, or longer if no one is waiting. If you're feeling adventurous, visit LICCB's website to sign up for gratis organized trips to spots such as Hell Gate Bridge or Brooklyn Bridge Park; or join a "Chill Sunset Paddle" that's optimized for orange-tinted views of the Manhattan and [Long Island City](#) skylines.

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2



Photograph: Courtesy Manhattan Community Boathouse  
Attractions, Ships and boats

### [Manhattan Community Boathouse](#)

Hell's Kitchen



Head out to two locations along the Hudson River for a chance to enjoy some time on the water. Head to Pier 96 or the dock at 72nd Street for first-come, first-served sessions perfect for beginners. After you sign a waiver and strap on a life vest, climb into your kayak from the water-level floating dock and float away for 20 minutes. You will get wet, so wear the right clothing (and try not to drink anything)! You can also volunteer to help out at the boathouse as well as become a member by making a donation of \$20 or more.

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Photograph: Shutterstock  
Attractions, Ships and boats  
[North Brooklyn Boat Club](#)

## Greenpoint



Located at the tip of Greenpoint, Brooklyn boaters offer free canoeing and kayaking throughout the warmer months. Walk up paddle days are typically the second and fourth Saturdays of the month (check the [calendar](#) for details). You can also volunteer to become a deckhand or a trip assistant if you have a good amount of experience and training.

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Photograph: Julienne Schaer  
Sports and fitness

### [Brooklyn Bridge Park Boathouse](#)

Manhattan



Queue up between Piers 1 and 2 to take a kayak out in the majestic shadow of the Brooklyn Bridge. The wait is often long (show up early!), but it's worth it: The BBPB folks have a 25-vessel fleet, and you can play skipper on the East River for twenty minutes on Saturdays (10am to 3pm) and Thursday evenings (5:30pm to 6:45pm). The organization is always looking for volunteers, and pitching in earns you access to volunteer-only outings (for seasoned paddlers only).

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Photograph: Courtesy Downtown Boathouse  
Sports and fitness

## [The Downtown Boathouse](#)

Tribeca



The granddaddy of NYC's free-kayaking scene, Downtown Boathouse offers gratis walk-up outings on Pier 26 and walk up kayaking on [Governors Island](#). Once you've signed a waiver and donned a life jacket, you can take your kayak out in designated areas for 20 minutes at a time—or longer if others aren't waiting. The schedule is by far the best at Pier 26: Free paddling is offered on weekends and holidays from 9am to 5pm until October 9. Evening paddling occurs Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights from 5pm to 7:30pm through September 14.

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Photograph: Courtesy Barry Masterson  
Sports and fitness

### [Kayak Staten Island](#)

Staten Island



For a decidedly less urban paddling experience that's still within the five boroughs, hop the ferry to [Staten Island](#) for free kayaking on Sundays. Wait for one of KSI's Sit-on-Top kayaks (similar to traditional ones except you seat yourself in a depression on top of, instead of inside, the hull) at the company's new location at 850 Page Avenue. From there, you're free to oar around a delineated embankment area in the bay for 15 minutes at a time, and are welcome to get back in line if you fancy a second voyage. Don't worry about the waves—experienced rowers are in the water to help if you get tripped up.

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## [Red Hook Boaters](#)

Red Hook



RHB's upstanding coordinators have a double purpose: Get urbanites out on the water and help breathe life back into Brooklyn's aquatic ecosystem. Like many other organizations, RHB has a free walk-up kayaking program—but there are no idle hands here. While you're waiting for your turn at Louis J. Valentino Jr. Park and Pier, [volunteers](#) have gloves and trash bags available, so you can pitch in with RHB's ongoing mission to pick up refuse on the beach. Knowing that you're helping keep the area thriving will make your 15-to-20-minute paddle in RHB's protected cove all the sweeter.

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