Get out and explore New York City!

By Fred Michmershuizen, Dental Tribune

One of the greatest things about coming to the Greater New York Dental Meeting is that you can explore one of the greatest cities on Earth. When you are done at the Javits Center, there is always plenty to see and do in the Big Apple. It doesn’t matter whether this is your first time in New York or if you come here every year. There is always something new to discover. Here are some ideas.

Visit an art museum
For a limited time only, you can see one of the most celebrated and recognized images in art history. Edvard Munch’s iconic painting, The Scream, is on view at the Museum of Modern Art (www.moma.org), located at 11 W. 53rd St. A haunting rendition of a hairless figure on a bridge under a yellow-orange sky. The Scream is installed in the museum’s Painting and Sculpture Galleries, along with a selection of prints by Munch drawn from the museum’s extensive collection of his work.

At the Guggenheim (www.guggenheim.org), the Frank Lloyd Wright–designed edifice located on Fifth Avenue at 89th Street, you can take an elevator to the top and then stroll down a winding spiral of galleries. On view currently is “Picasso Black and White,” the first exhibition to explore the remarkable use of black and white throughout the Spanish artist’s prolific career.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art (www.metmuseum.org), located on Fifth Avenue at 82nd Street, houses one of the most impressive collections anywhere. Of particular note is the newly renovated American Wing, which includes more than 15,000 paintings, sculptures, and decorative arts objects located on four floors.

See a Broadway show
New York City is known for its live theater. There are literally dozens of Broadway and Off-Broadway shows to choose from, and getting tickets has never been easier and more convenient. Just head over to the Theater Development Fund’s TKTS booth (www.tdruk.org), located under the distinctive red staircase in Times Square. Don’t be scared by the long lines; they move quickly. You can get discounted tickets to many of the shows right up until curtain time, and they now accept credit cards in addition to cash and travelers checks.

New this year: You can now purchase full-price tickets to future performances for all shows and same-day full-price tickets to shows that aren’t being discounted.

Honor the fallen at the 9/11 Memorial
One of the first things you’ll notice

Go figure skating
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.tktsgroup.com/east/iceRink.

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.

See New York from above
You can see just about everything in New York City from the top of Rockefeller center, an Art Deco masterpiece of a building. The lines for Top of the Rock 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.

Enter Manhattan on foot
Try this one if the weather is nice. You can get a priceless view of lower Manhattan by walking across the Brooklyn Bridge from the other side of the East River.

Here’s how. Get on the Brooklyn-bound A Subway train to High Street. Then look for the walkway entrance next to the Federal Court Building. There are stairs on Cadman Plaza East and Prospect Street, or a ramp entrance on Johnson and Adams streets.

The stroll takes 20 minutes to an hour, depending on how much time you spend taking pictures and reading the informative plaques along the way. (You’ll learn, among other things, that when the bridge was completed in 1883, its towers were the tallest manmade structures in the Western Hemisphere, easily eclipsing all of the buildings in the city!)

You’ll also have views of the Manhattan and Brooklyn skylines, the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island and the South Street Seaport.

If you don’t want to brave the Subway, you can access the bridge from the Manhattan side. That entrance is at Park Row and Centre Street, across from City Hall Park, east of City Hall.

Ride the Staten Island Ferry
One of the greatest things about New York City is the Staten Island Ferry, which goes from the lower tip of Manhattan to the St. George section of Staten Island. It’s one of the most enjoyable trips you’ll ever take—and the best part is that it’s free!

Once you board, you can move about as you pass by the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island to the west, Governor’s Island, Queens and Brooklyn to the east and the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge off to the south in the distance. A round-trip excursion will take an hour. You’ll have to get off in Staten Island and get back on the 1, N or R Subway train to South Ferry; or the 4 or 5 to Bowling Green.

Get your Christmas shopping done
New York City has some of the best shopping you will find anywhere. For some of the finest clothing and accessories, take a stroll through SoHo and browse the many boutiques.

For fine art, look in some of the many galleries located throughout Chelsea. For those with more expensive tastes, there’s the Diamond District, on West 47th Street between 5th and 6th avenues. (But watch out, a bargain there can be too good to be true!)

If you don’t want to actually part with your hard-earned cash, you can go window-shopping instead. The Christmas displays in New York City give new meaning to the phrase “over the top.” There is plenty to see. Take a stroll north along Fifth Avenue beginning at 42nd Street. You’ll pass Cartier, Tiffany and Saks. At 59th Street, you might want to check out the Apple Store.

The TKTS booth in Times Square now sells tickets for all shows, not just the discounted ones. (Photo/NC and Company)