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WEEKEND
NEW YORK CITY:
BEST OF 2011ENTERTAINMENT
& NIGHTLIFEBEST THEATER
EXPERIENCE
FOR THOSE
WHO DON'T
LIKE "THEATER
EXPERIENCES"

► **Blue Man Group**
434 Lafayette St.
800-BUEMAN (258-3626)
www.blueman.com
These cerulean performers have been at the Astor Place Theater for 20 years now, but the tricks never get old. Snag a seat in the poncho section for a truly, um, interactive experience.

FOOD
& DRINKBEST FOOD TRUCK
TO STALK UP AND
DOWN MANHATTAN
FOR LUNCH

► **Rickshaw Dumpling Truck**
www.rickshawdumplings.com
Twitter: @RickshawTruck for daily locations

We break into a happy dance when someone spots the Rickshaw Dumpling Truck parked outside of our office. Some may simply call them dumplings; we call Rickshaw's specialty item little pockets of heaven. The dumplings are perfectly steamed and thoughtfully created using antibiotic-free Bell and Evans chicken and organic edamame. Weighing in at less than 300 calories per six-pack, you don't even have to do the why-did-I-indulge-treadmill-jog-of-shame afterwards.

BEST RESTAURANT
THAT'LL REMIND
YOUR GIRLFRIEND
WHY SHE FELL
FOR YOU IN THE
FIRST PLACE

► **La Lanterna Caffe**
129 MacDougal St.
212-529-5945
www.lalanternacaffe.com
Head over here for Italian comfort fare like Lasagna Bolognese and Pizza Ai Quattro Formaggi over candlelight. Ask to be seated in the basement, where the fireplace and low ceilings set a romantic scene.

BEST BROOKLYN BAR
TO TAKE YOUR DOG

► **Washington Commons**
748 Washington Ave., Brooklyn
718-230-3666
This laid-back Prospect Heights bar has a huge outdoor area with large picnic tables that are perfect for sharing with nice neighborhood locals (some of the four-legged variety). The ever-changing beer list keeps things interesting, while the excellent happy hour keeps it affordable.

BEST ALL-OUT,
WHO-CARES-
IF-IT'S-A-MILLION-
CALORIES FOOD
INDULGENCE

► **Banana pudding at Magnolia Bakery.**
Various locations
www.magnoliacupcakes.com
We're sure your mom makes a mean version of this homey, cozy dessert, but Magnolia's would likely give it a run for its money. Globes of crumbly crust mingle with whole chunks of banana in a sweet, thick goop that'll make you rethink ever ordering a cupcake at the shop.

◉ Metro sniffed out the top spots where you can fulfill the most essential needs of a true New Yorker ◉ The best place for a great cupcake, dine-in movie, food truck bite and so much more ◉ METRO

BEST NOODLES OUTSIDE
OF CHINATOWN

► **Xi'an Famous Foods**
81 St. Marks Place
212-786-2068
www.xianfoods.com
The line at this tiny Taiwanese East Village establishment is usually out the door, and for good reason: Its homemade noodles are out of this world. The spicy cumin lamb noodles, spicy tingly beef noodles and barbecue pork sliders are especially recommended.

BEST INDIAN FUSION
LUNCHTIME TAKEOUT

► **Hot Clay Oven**
101 Maiden Lane
212-269-2103
www.hotclayoven.com
There are more than a few Indian fusion restaurants that are claiming to be "The Indian Chipotle," but it's fair to say that Hot Clay Oven is the one that really pulls it off. Choose your base of a wrap (naan or tortilla) or bowl (salad or rice) and top it off with malai or tandoori chicken, channa masala or pork vindaloo. Add veggies and cheese and pile on delicious chutneys and dressings. Everything about the food at Hot Clay Oven is irresistible.

BEST YET-TO-BE
FAMOUS BUT STILL
DELICIOUS CUPCAKE
SHOP

► **Butter Lane**
123 E. Seventh St.
212-677-2880
240 Seventh Ave., Brooklyn
718-369-0466
OK, OK — so the East Village location of Butter Lane might be considered "famous" (it is very popular) but the Park Slope location is still under the cake radar. Butter Lane is unique from other artisanal cupcake shops in that you can pick your cake (vanilla, chocolate or banana) and then choose what type of frosting (peanut butter, coconut, espresso, caramel, tiramisu, French chocolate and on and on) you want. The freedom to choose your cupcake! We can get behind that.

BEST BLOODY MARY
THAT COULD ARGUABLY
BE CONSIDERED A MEAL

► **Locanda Verde**
377 Greenwich St.
212-925-3797
www.locandaverdenyc.com
With a generous chunk of ham and a delicious green olive garnish, Locanda Verde's Bloody Mary is a special wonder at this already fabulous Tribeca brunch spot partly owned by Robert DeNiro.

BEST SPOT TO FILL YOUR
GROWLER AND PICK UP
EGGS TO MAKE
MORNING-AFTER
OMELETTES

► **Whole Foods Market Bowery Beer Room**
95 E. Houston St.
212-420-1320
www.wholefoodsmarket.com/stores/bowery
There are so many places in the city willing to fill glass jugs full of beer for you these days, you'd think it was the second coming of Prohibition. Of course, it's really just a sign of the momentum behind the craft beer movement. Our no-speakeasy-required pick for growler-filling hot spot is the Beer Room at Whole Foods Market Bowery for its Lower East Side convenience and low-key vibe — not that these beer folks are slouches. They'll school you on the latest brews from local breweries like Kelso and Pretty Things, minus the intimidating beer snobbery. And it's all found in the same place you're picking up your eggs and OJ.



BEST PET SHOP THAT DELIVERS FIDO'S FAVORITES

► **Acme Pet Food, Inc.**
628 Vanderbilt Ave., Brooklyn
718-789-8062
Everyone knows the big dogs in Brooklyn (Petsmart, Petco) deliver, but so does the almost Hanna-Barbera-named Acme Pet Food, Inc., which serves up healthy selections and friendly service. And you'll be helping out a local business in the process. Now that is something to make you — and your pets — feel a little better.



BEST NEW SPOT TO GET A MANICURE AND PRESCRIPTION FILLED

► **Duane Reade at 40 Wall St.**
40 Wall St.
212-742-8457
www.dr40wallstreet.com
Duane Reade has refurbished many of its locales to resemble suburban drug stores on steroids, but the new Wall St. location takes the prize for awesomeness. The vast space offers such non-drug store goodies as blowouts, sushi, manicures and a really lovely pharmacy counter with actual nice people working behind it.

BEST PLACE TO PICK UP KITCHEN SUPPLIES AND A SEXY KIMONO

► **Pearl River**
477 Broadway
212-431-4770
www.pearlriver.com
It's the No. 1 spot for beautiful and affordable ceramics. More importantly, there are silk kimonos and Sriracha sauce. Pearl River packs fun luxuries and inexpensive necessities into its sprawling space.

BEST SHOP TO GET FITTED FOR ATHLETIC SHOES LIKE YOU'RE AN OLYMPIC ATHLETE

► **Jack Rabbit**

151 Seventh Ave., Brooklyn
718-636-9000
Who really knows if it works or not (we're no scientists!) but it is very cool that at Jack Rabbit, they make a mini-film of you walking/light jogging on a treadmill to see how your foot strikes the pavement. They then show you shoes that help with your particular foot/gait.

BEST CANADIAN IMPORT WHERE \$100 MAKES YOU FEEL LIKE A BALLER

► **Joe Fresh**
110 Fifth Ave.
212-366-0960
www.joefresh.com
We're loving the recent Canadian fashion invasion. Only at Joe Fresh — an apparel chain created by Joseph Mimran, the founder of Club Monaco, that's sold in Canadian supermarkets (yes, supermarkets!) — can you score multiple high-quality stylish basics without contemplating slashing your credit cards afterwards. We scored a \$60 cashmere sweater, \$40 waffle weave slouchy cardigan and some \$4 polka dot socks. Welcome to the neighborhood, Joe.

SERVICES

BEST "NO-FRILLS" GYM THAT STILL MAKES YOU FEEL LIKE A MILLION BUCKS

► **Planet Fitness**
Various locations
www.planetfitness.com
No classes? No problem. Go at your own pace at this clean gym, which has all the basics you need — treadmills, ellipticals, stationary bikes, weights and a 30-minute circuit zone. Whether you're training for a triathlon or just want to shed a few pounds, the "No Judgment Zone" motto ensures that all are welcome.

BEST USE OF TAXIDERMISTRY IN A HAIR SALON

► **Blackstones**
19 E. Seventh St.
212-353-2680
www.blackstonesnyc.net
The funky decor and many taxidermy animals on the wall

can lend Blackstones a "hipper-than-thou" feel, but don't be afraid, mere mortal. The stylists at Blackstones — although, yes, hip and beautiful — really listen and examine what is going on with that fro of yours. That kind of collaborative experience is great when you want a good, new style without the fear that you'll leave with a pseudo-mohawk.



BEST SALON THAT WILL KEEP IT REAL ABOUT YOUR HAIR

► **Philip Kingsley Trichological Centre**
16 E. 52nd St.
212-753-9600

www.philipkingsley.com
You hair is limp, you're worried it's falling out too much, it never looks right after you blow dry it anymore. Take all of your bad hair day concerns to the Philip Kingsley clinic, where a specialist in trichology (the study of human hair) will assess what's going on with your scalp and locks and create a hair care routine just for you.

BEST SPA TO HANG OUT IN ALL DAY (THAT WON'T KICK YOU OUT, EITHER)

► **The Peninsula Spa by ESPA**
The Peninsula New York
700 Fifth Ave.
212-903-3910
www.peninsula.com
Need a vacation but can't spring for a trip? Pamper yourself with two hours of treatment time at the Peninsula Spa (\$351). Besides a much needed deep tissue massage or microderm facial, the two services get you access to the five star-rated

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