



## Tenement Museum Travel Guide

### What am I getting myself into?

Are you ready to literally take a step back into time? When I say literally, I mean it in the Kardashian sense of course. So literally meaning figuratively-- just so we are clear. But grammar and semantics aside, the Tenement Museum is a wonderfully preserved testament to life in early New York.

It beautifully and lovingly captures the tragic circumstances that new immigrants found themselves in once they disembarked in Ellis Island. However, through struggle and resistance, they survived and moved out. Many of them undoubtedly filling their own versions of the American dream. As they moved on other families took their places, restarting the cycle. And around them through regulation and changing times the walls themselves changed. Indoor plumbing was introduced, ventilation was installed, and electricity brightened up the night.

And through it all, New Yorkers ate, slept and lived within the confines of the tenements.

### How long does it take?

There are three main attractions of the Tenement Museum: a building tour, a walking tour of the neighborhood and a meet and greet with tenants. Each activity is 90 minutes, so how long it takes depends of the level of experience that you are looking to have.

### What's the history and stats of this place? / What has it been used for in the past?

The Museum was founded in 1988 nearly one hundred and twenty-five years after it was built., Built by a Prussian immigrant Lukas Glockner in 1863 the original building was comprised of 22 apartments and a saloon on the bottom floor. Overtime, the apartments on the lower floors were converted into storefronts; which was one of the many changes that to the building over the years. At the turn of the century, indoor plumbing was installed which featured luxuries such as cold running water and two toilets on every floor. The pièce de résistance was an air shaft which provided clean air and health to all of the residents. However, in 1935 the owners of the tenement decided that they had had enough of the modifications and shut the apartment down. The residents were evicted, the apartments were sealed off. They weren't open again to the public until the opening of the museum.

### When's the best time to go?

What's the best time to visit the Tenement Museum? Any time you want to go! However, keep in mind that indoor heating and air conditioning was not a part of any of the renovations made over the years. In all seriousness, doing a walking tour in the snow or rain may be best left to people who like doing Civil War reenactments. You know,

people who like putting themselves through unnecessary pain and difficulty in order to have an “authentic” experience. For the rest of us with common sense, try heading there during the spring and summer. And if you have to go head there in the winter, dress warmly.

### **Recommended for...**

While it is great to take your kids, it would be even better to head to the tenements with your favorite “well, actually...” friend or relative. You know the one. The one who responds with any set of facts with, “Ummm...Well, actually.” They aren’t necessarily trying to be disrespectful, they strictly adhere to factualness that any deviation the uttermost truth must be rectified. Generally, trips to museums or historical sites with people like this is a nightmare. But as the Tenement Museum features a performance from “actual” residents, there is no way that your companion will be able to one-up you here.

### **How to get there?**

The museum is located at 102 Orchard Street. By subway, you can get there by the B, D, J, M, Z, or F.

In order to get there, you can take the B or D to Grand Street. Exit at Grand and Chrystie. Walk east (away from Bowery) on Grand Street for four blocks. Take a left at Orchard Street and walk north for two blocks to the Museum Shop 103 Orchard Street.

F to Delancey Street or the J/M/Z to Essex Street. When you depart the subway, walk two blocks in the opposite direction of the Williamsburg Bridge on Delancey Street to Orchard Street. Once there, turn left and walk 1/2 block south to the Museum at 103 Orchard Street.

For wheelchair access, be aware that the Delancey-Essex F/J/ M/Z station doesn’t have an elevator. The nearest wheelchair accessible subway station is at Broadway-Lafayette Street. The B/ D/ F/ M/ and 6 trains all stop there.

You can also reach the museum by bus. Both the M15 Buses and the Sightseeing Buses have stops nearby. These buses stop at the corner of Grand and Allen Streets. Exit the bus and walk one block east to Orchard Street. Then walk one 1/2 block north towards Delancey Street.

### **Adventure scale**

As fun as it is to travel back in time, this is relatively low on the adventure scale. But what it lacks in history and uniqueness. How many people back home can say that they got to visit a New York tenement and made it out without contracting cholera?

### **Price scale**

Tickets to the various tours range from \$20-\$25 dollars. Adults 18 and up pay \$25, everyone else pays \$20 per tour.

### **Where to buy/sign up?**

Tickets can be bought in advance [here](#) or at [tenement.org](http://tenement.org). To guarantee that you will be able to access the tour that you want, you should purchase the tickets a week or so in advance.

Happy touring!