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Tips from the top: chef/restaurateur Marcus Samuelsson's guide to New York

From art exhibitions to catch now to the hottest haberdashery in Harlem (via making snowmen in Central Park), the man behind NYC's beloved Red Rooster reveals his local likes

Marcus Samuelsson

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I moved to New York City in 1994 when I started working at Aquavit. I mostly grew up in Gothenburg, Sweden and went to culinary school there, and apprenticed as a chef in Switzerland and Austria. It didn't take long for New York to feel like my home. I love the diversity that this city offers, connecting with new people and learning about different cultures.

I am constantly inspired by my customers and community. Here I've selected a handful of my favourite places and activities in the city.

Museum: The Whitney Museum of American Art



The Whitney's 'Working Together: The Photographers of the Kamoinge Workshop' exhibition includes Herb Robinson's 'Brother & Sister', 1973...



Figure 1... and Shawn Walker's 'Easter Sunday, Harlem (125th Street)', 1972 © Whitney Museum of American Art (2)

I can spend so much time walking through and exploring the different exhibitions at the Whitney in Manhattan's Meatpacking District. The museum exhibits 20th-century and contemporary American art, with a special focus on works by living artists.

I recently visited one of the museum's current shows, *Working Together: The Photographers of the Kamoinge Workshop* (running until March 28). It is a truly special exhibition that showcases a collective of Black photographers from 1960s and '70s New York. The photos are raw, powerful and compelling.

Artist: Sanford Biggers



'Chorus for Paul Mooney', 2017, by Sanford Biggers — one of the quilt-based pieces at the artist's show at the Bronx Museum of Arts © Sanford Biggers



Biggers' interdisciplinary approach straddles sculpture, installation, video, music and performance © Matthew Morrocco

One of my favourite New York artists at the moment is Sanford Biggers, whose interdisciplinary work spans video, sculpture, installation, music and performance. He is a phenomenal artist and I'm always fascinated by what he comes up with.

For his current exhibition called Codeswitch at the Bronx Museum of Arts (until April 5), he uses mixed media to transform quilt-based artworks into interesting narratives about American history and global traditions. He is also set to have a large exhibition on public view at Rockefeller Center throughout May and June.

Neighbourhood: Harlem



Samuelsson loves Harlem for its energy, diversity and creativity



Swing Low', the district's 13-foot bronze memorial to abolitionist Harriet Tubman © Max Burkhalter (2)

I recommend a stroll through Harlem, my neighbourhood in Manhattan that runs from Central Park North to W 155th Street, to support some of the local Black businesses. It's a vibrant, diverse and creative neighbourhood with fantastic places to enjoy live music, eat and drink, and shop.

Over the past year, I've witnessed how entrepreneurs here have pivoted to adapt to the pandemic — people have literally taken their business to the streets in Harlem and started selling their goods on the sidewalk. I've seen barbers cut people's hair outside. It's inspiring to see, and part of the reason why I recently helped launch the Black Businesses Matter Matching Fund that helps multiply support for qualifying small businesses, who we cannot forget during this time.

Shops: Harlem Haberdashery and FlameKeepers Hat Club



Harlem Haberdashery is the retail outlet of the custom-clothing brand 5001 Flavors © Driely Vieira



Marc Williamson, designer/owner of FlameKeepers Hat Club

As hats are one of my favourite things to shop for, two of my top spots to hit up are Harlem Haberdashery and FlameKeepers Hat Club. The co-owner of Harlem Haberdashery, Louis, has great energy and the shop is the retail expression of 5001 Flavors, a custom-made-apparel company popular with celebrities, athletes and musicians. They carry some incredible pieces. At

FlameKeepers, an upscale hat shop, the designer and owner Marc Williamson takes such pride and care in his craft.

Café: Patisserie des Ambassades



The Senegalese/French Patisserie des Ambassades . . .



. . . is Samuelsson's favourite spot for croissants © Max Burkhalter (2)

This West African/French café is a favourite among locals in Harlem. The staff here are always so lovely. The cuisine served is mostly Senegalese, with classic French pastries available from the restaurant's bakery. This is my go-to when it comes to buying fresh croissants in Harlem,

and I'll typically stop by for one here before I head to the office or my restaurant. There's nothing like starting your day with a perfect, flaky croissant.

Green space: Central Park



Winter wonderland: a snow-covered Central Park



Samuelsson enjoyed building snowmen with his son in the park this year © Alamy (2)

I love hanging out with my son Zion in Central Park, one of our favourite places in the city. We've had a real Nordic winter this year with plenty of snowfall, and nothing beats building snowmen together and taking a stroll through the park. I've enjoyed that time spent with him dearly. Central Park is particularly beautiful in the wintertime, but it is wonderful to visit any time of year.

Marcus Samuelsson is the chef and co-owner of Red Rooster Harlem and Marcus Samuelsson Group, an award-winning author and a TV host. He operates more than a dozen restaurants across the US and Europe.