

THE VANCOUVER SUN



TRAVEL

48 HOURS

FAIRYTALE OF NEW YORK

There's holiday shopping, and then there's shopping, NYC style

W hen it comes to getting you in the holiday spirit, everyone knows New York City is hard-wired to have you instantly spinning — and spending — merrily on high. From the twinkle of lights on the vertiginous Rockefeller tree, to oversized candy canes and nutcrackers, to ice-skating rinks, to the high-octane shopping of Fifth and Madison avenues, and the whiff of street vendors' roasting chestnuts, it's like a kaleidoscopic winter wonderland writ large.

We're hitting the ground running as fast as a New York minute on a 48-hour mission from Vancouver made possible by the effortlessly direct Cathay Pacific red-eye flight.

Our killer retail routes in Midtown and Lower Manhattan — buffered by a decent dose

of culinary and cultural hits — are strategically mapped out (who wants to feel like a human pinball, after all?); our credit cards, most important, fully limbered. Our first port of call? Well, as the first passengers to breeze through JFK Airport's customs (it opens at 6 a.m.),

we're fuelling up by watching the sun come up with a coffee and challah french toast.

This may be the city that never sleeps, but there are a few hours to wait for the stores to swing open their heavy doors.

It's a treat to rise and shine with a city — the frenzied deliveries, workers heading into towers, the lost tourists, the vogue for cabbages springing up around street lamps, the guy with the cat on his head at which no one looks twice.

In the distance, the recently finished One World Trade Center with its distinctive spire — dubbed the Freedom Tower — glimmers as a new marker on the ever-changing skyline.

And closer to breakfast destination the Wayfarer restaurant and our neighbouring Quin Hotel (both bright new offerings near Central Park in

Delta One	\$619	Delta One	\$719
Delta Comfort	\$399	Delta Comfort	\$499



Fairy tale of New York

Midtown), stands Manhattan's tallest yet-to-be-opened residential megolith.

Dwarfing surrounding buildings with gargoyles and gilded art deco punches, it's little wonder there's a buzz over 432 Park Avenue; it boasts a flummoxing 96 floors and height of 426 metres.

Of course, NYC is all about skyscrapers that push the building envelope ever upwards, and there's nothing like seeing them from 243 metres at nearby Rockefeller Plaza.

We shoot up to the Top of the Rock's observation deck (obligingly open from 8 a.m. to midnight) to absorb the speed, energy and adrenalin of Manhattan that will keep us going all day.

FAIRYTALE OF NEW YORK

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LUCY HYSLOP

SPECIAL TO THE SUN

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CONTINUED ON H2

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(It certainly helps to fly to the Big Apple in a fully flat bed complete with built-in knee room, a fresh orchid from Bangkok by your seat — and all that after a Champagne dinner.)

Greedily glancing from Central Park, to the George Washington Bridge, to the Empire State Building and to “everybody’s gal” (a.k.a. the Statue of Liberty), we have a virtual Felix Baumgartner view of the shopping nirvana we’re about to conquer.

Back at street level, fantastic window dressing by the department stores is holly-jollying us along in tune with festive music.

Among Fifth Avenue’s critical mass of shopping, Saks treats us — and its cordoned-off line of rubbernecking tourists — to wondrous stuff. Framed by holiday lights are animated

For a more modern touch, however, we make a pilgrimage to UNIQLO — dubbed the Japanese Eddie Bauer — and its “global headquarters” (read: 90,000 square feet, 100 dressing rooms and 50 cash registers) and take a retail breather with the Matisse exhibition at the nearby Museum of Modern Art (MOMA). Glorious.

Our search for a little more shopping elbow room — the hub without all the hubbub — brings us south to SoHo (south of Houston) and Lower Manhattan for a more edgy flair. We hit vintage central via Scoop NYC (labels such as SAM and Orlebar Brown); dosa’s unique collections designed by Christina Kim; the stalls of Union Square’s holiday market; and eclectic Fishs Eddy’s kitchenalia and extraordinary New York-centric gifts. (Food inspection and parking tickets morph into serving platters.)

fairy tale spectacles, including Little Red Riding Hood and her wolfie grandmother. (We swing through the flagship’s wintry displays inside for high-end designers Phillip Lim, Antonio Berardi and Alexander McQueen and NYC’s rag & bone.)

Nearby, the dazzling creations at Bergdorf Goodman pay homage to “The Arts,” including a crimson display of literature greats such as Shakespeare, Ibsen and Sheridan; as well as a mannequin striking a pose in front of a neon stage in a designer Julien Macdonald gown. (Nothing beats this old-timer’s basement beauty floor, where the counters are set up like you’re at your own intimate dressing table.)

Over on Madison Avenue, it’s down the minds of movie director Baz Luhrmann (*The Great Gatsby*, *Moulin Rouge*) and

costume-designer wife, Catherine Martin, to lure us into an enchanting whirl of ice princesses, metal owls and old-fashioned mix tapes in Baz Dazzled at Barneys. (While the sticker shock of the ground-floor bags may have your customs’ allowance eaten in one gulp, check out the eighth-floor ‘Coop’ of more affordable, casual stuff for both sexes.)

In a city I’d never call pretty, the glamorous hammed-up window moments evoke the romance of Paris or London. Add into the mix jewelry superstar Tiffany & Co’s glowing green-and-white gems on the outside of its building. The iconic UNICEF Snowflake — with its 16,000 Baccarat crystals designed by Ingo Maurer — glows at Fifth Avenue and 57th Street.

NYC’s star-wattage is on full beam.

of holiday legends Frank Sinatra and Bing Crosby.

Perhaps it’s all the flashing lights, but my partner and I are too excited to sleep on the night flight home. We slink our seats — already angled toward each other in the centre — forward toward our shared cocktail table; our bags, needless to say, taking up a lot more real estate on the way back (two are checked free for each cabin class). In a city that’s always outdoing itself come the holidays; well, it’s outdone itself again in 2014. Take a bow, NYC.

The writer travelled as a guest of Cathay Pacific, which did not review or edit this article.

If you go ...

Cathay Pacific (cathaypacific.com/ca) offers flights from \$582, including tax, on its daily non-stop flights from Vancouver to New York’s JFK Airport.