



The Tour Guide: Walking and Talking New York (Fieldwork Encounters and Discoveries)

Jonathan R. Wynn

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Everyone wants to visit New York at least once. The Big Apple is a global tourist destination with a dizzying array of attractions throughout the five boroughs. The only problem is figuring out where to start—and that's where the city's tour guides come in.

These guides are a vital part of New York's raucous sidewalk culture, and, as *The Tour Guide* reveals, the tours they offer are as fascinatingly diverse—and eccentric—as the city itself. Visitors can take tours that cover Manhattan before the arrival of European settlers, the nineteenth-century Irish gangs of Five Points, the culinary traditions of Queens, the culture of Harlem, or even the surveillance cameras of Chelsea—in short, there are tours to satisfy anyone's curiosity about the city's past or present. And the guides are as intriguing as the subjects, we learn, as Jonathan R. Wynn explores the lives of the people behind the tours, introducing us to office workers looking for a diversion from their desk jobs, unemployed actors honing their vocal skills, and struggling retirees searching for a second calling. Matching years of research with his own experiences as a guide, Wynn also lays bare the grueling process of acquiring an official license and offers a how-to guide to designing and leading a tour.

Touching on the long history of tour-giving across the globe as well as the ups and downs of New York's tour guide industry in the wake of 9/11, *The Tour Guide* is as informative and insightful as the chatty, charming, and colorful characters at its heart.

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