

East River Ferry: 20 Fun Things to Do With NYC Kids Along the Route - Mommy Poppins

For a long time, New York City seemed to forget that it was made up of islands. But over the past few years, we've been remedying this situation by reclaiming our waterfronts with riverside parks, and creating new opportunities to get out on the water, whether for transportation or pleasure.

The newest addition to NYC's waterfront culture is the East River Ferry, operated by NY Waterway. With stops in Midtown, Long Island City, Greenpoint, Williamsburg, Dumbo, the Financial District and Governors Island (and Atlantic Avenue and Red Hook on summer Fridays), the East River Ferry is a great way to visit lots of fun spots for a full day out with the kids.



With an all-day pass (\$12 for anyone over age 5), you can hop on and off the ferry at any of the stops throughout the day, so you can hit different attractions in multiple boroughs. My family and I tried it, and we discovered 20 great things to do with kids along the East River Ferry route.

North Williamsburg

We started our day by hitting [Smorgasburg](#), the Brooklyn Food Market that pops up every Saturday just steps away from the North Williamsburg ferry stop. After perusing dozens of vendors selling local foods and exotic delicacies, we bought Korean-style pork buns, Vietnamese noodles, a Mexican sandwich and a couple of fresh lemonades, and then settled on the shady lawn alongside the river for lunch. Smorgasburg was our favorite part of our day out on the East River, and arriving by ferry is definitely the best way to get there. If you go on Sunday, you'll find the [Brooklyn Flea](#) instead, but it's also lots of fun.

Williamsburg has many other fun things to do for families, including [McCarren Park](#), bowling alley [Brooklyn Bowl](#), cool [kids' boutiques](#) and places to eat.

Long Island City, Queens

From Williamsburg, we took the ferry north to Long Island City. Right by the ferry stop is [Gantry State Park](#), a newly refurbished, 12-acre waterfront green space with a cute playground. However, we had a different destination and walked a mile along Vernon Boulevard to [5 Pointz](#), the outdoor graffiti "museum," where

we checked out all of the works, and even saw several artists creating new pieces.

[MoMA PS1](#) is also nearby, but instead of visiting we relaxed with cool drinks in the diner across the street, and then headed back to the ferry.

Dumbo

[Brooklyn Bridge Park](#) has been a top ferry destination for us for a few years now. You can head to the [playground at Pier 1](#), cool off in the great [sprinklers at Pier 6](#), relax in the park, and then reward yourself with a cone from [Brooklyn Ice Cream Factory](#), our favorite ice cream in all of New York City. Of course, there are many other [wonderful things to do in Dumbo with kids](#), like visit [Dewey's Candy Store](#) and various [kids' boutiques](#).

Pier 11, South Street Seaport

There are lots of [cool attractions at South Street Seaport](#), plus nearby [East River Park](#) is being updated with lovely parkland. [Imagination Playground](#) is just steps away from the ferry terminal, or you can stroll across town to [Battery Park City's](#) awesome playgrounds.

Governors Island

[Governors Island](#) (which the ferry only stops at on weekends) can be a day-long destination by itself, but we decided to end our day here. The isle offers free mini golf and tons of complimentary festivals and activities. Or you can just enjoy a light dinner by the water before returning home. You can get back via the the East River Ferry or one of the [free Governors Island ferries](#), which run to South Street in Manhattan or Brooklyn Bridge Park.

As we sat on the boat and enjoyed the cool breeze and sun setting across the harbor, the guy next to me said, "This sure beats the subway." We had to agree.

Greenpoint

We didn't get off at the Greenpoint stop, but there are cool attractions here, including [McGorrick Park](#), indoor play spaces like [Play](#) and [Gym Park](#), and another [Brooklyn Ice Cream Factory](#) outpost.

Midtown

The ferry also stops at 34th Street in Manhattan with a free connecting bus service that loops through midtown.

Things to Know

Bikes and strollers are allowed on the ferry, but there is an additional fee for bicycles (unless you have a folding model): [\\$1 per trip or \\$3 for an all-day pass](#).

The ferry runs approximately every half hour on the weekends, but river traffic can cause delays. [Click here for the full schedule](#).

The ferry boards and unloads very quickly. In the afternoon at popular stops, there are sometimes more people waiting to get on than can fit, so make sure you arrive early and line up, otherwise you may have to wait.

You can buy tickets at any of the stops with a credit or debit card, or you can pay cash on the ferry, but the all-day pass isn't available on the boat. You must purchase that before you board.

Find out more about the [East River Ferry](#) at [NYWaterway.com](#).

Looking for other fun water excursions in the city? Check out our roundup of the [best boat rides in NYC](#), or see our [Summer Guide](#) for other seasonal fun.