

# A GUIDE TO FLUSHING IN QUEENS



Big Apple Greeter  
New York City

Ethnic diversity is the hallmark of New York City, and nowhere is this diversity more evident than in Flushing, Queens. Founded in 1645, Flushing, then called *Vlissingen*, was granted a charter by the Dutch West India Company and became a part of New Netherlands. Subsequent periods of immigration resulted in colonization by English settlers, and more recently by settlers from Taiwan, mainland China, Japan and Korea. The result is an ethnic medley to be savored in its streets, shops, restaurants and cultural institutions.



## Where is Flushing?

Located on western Long Island, Queens is one of the five boroughs of New York City. Established in 1683, it was named for the queen consort, Catherine of Braganza, wife of Charles II. The borough of Queens is divided into four “towns,” Jamaica, Long Island City, Flushing, and Far Rockaway. Unlike the other boroughs, mail in Queens is addressed to the applicable town rather than “Queens, N. Y.”

## It's Easy to Get to Flushing

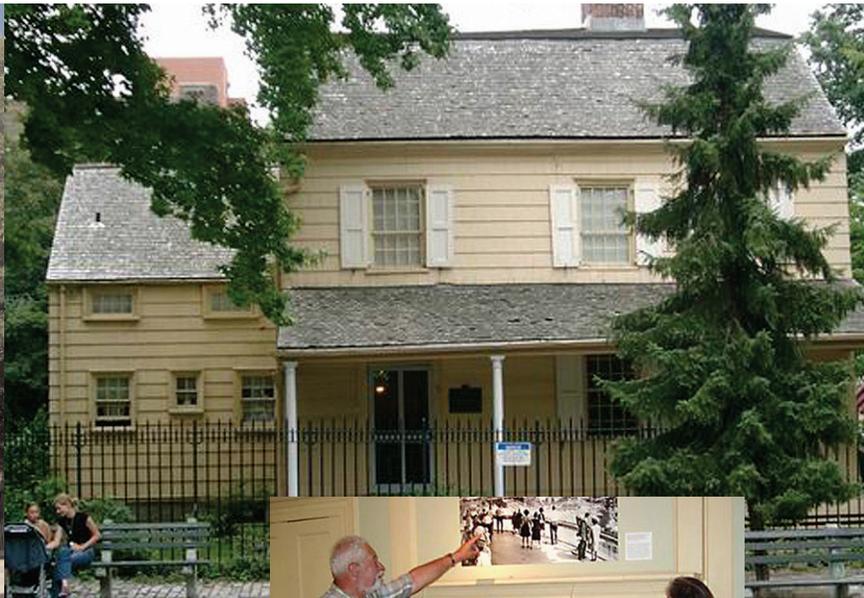
From either Times Square, or Grand Central Station, take the Number 7 train to the last stop and you will be in the heart of Flushing.



## About Flushing

The first settlers in Flushing were, oddly enough, a group of Englishmen who arrived in 1645 from *Vlissingen* in Holland under a patent from the Dutch West Indies Company. Subsequently an influx of Quakers from the English colonial settlements in Massachusetts took place in 1657. With the arrival of the Quakers, Governor Peter Stuyvesant, known as Peg Leg Pete, issued an edict banning all forms of worship other than Dutch Reformed, despite the guaranty of freedom of worship contained in the official Dutch charter. Resistance to the ban contributed to Flushing's prominence in the emerging New World.





## Things to See and Do in Flushing

**1** The Quaker Meeting House, 137-16 Northern Boulevard, has been used continuously since the seventeenth century for religious services by the Society of Friends except for a brief interval during the American Revolution when it was used as a hospital, garrison and stable. At the rear of the house is a small graveyard: the final resting place of John Bowne and his family as well as others who played a role in the history of Long Island. The Quaker Meeting House is open on Sundays only.



**2** The Bowne House, 37-01 Bowne Street (at Northern Boulevard,) dating from 1661, is thought to be the oldest house in Queens. It was John Bowne who opposed the outlawing of the Quaker sect by Peter Stuyvesant. Banished to Amsterdam in the Old World, his fierce opposition to Governor Stuyvesant led to the adoption, on December, 27, 1657, of the Flushing Remonstrance, the first expression of religious freedom in the emerging New World colonies. Declaring that "...we are true subjects both of the Church and State; for wee are bounde by the law of god and man to do good unto all men, and evill to no man...", the Flushing Remonstrance may very well be the precursor to the First Amendment of the United States Constitution which unequivocally declares that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..." [Note: tours of the Bowne House have been temporarily discontinued due to renovation of the facility.]



**3** The Kingsland Homestead, 143-35 37th Avenue, is located in Weeping Beech Park, adjacent to the Bowne House. The park itself is notable for the Weeping Beech Tree, grown from a shoot imported from Belgium in 1847. It is today the headquarters of the Queens Historical Society, and contains exhibits depicting Queens' history. Among the exhibits reflecting its Victorian past are lacework, notebooks, eyeglasses and diaries. *Greeter's Secret. Scattered throughout Flushing are more than two thousand species of trees, largely the progeny of the William Prince Nursery, founded in 1737. The Nursery is no longer in existence.*

**4** Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Boulevard, built in 1862, served for many years as the Town Hall of the then young community of Flushing. After extensive renovation, the Town Hall now functions as a gallery and performance space containing among other things a permanent exhibit on jazz in Queens. As a side trip, you might like to pick up a map of the Queens Jazz Trail to explore the homes of Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong, and Dizzy Gillespie, among the many jazz musicians who have made Flushing a focal point of jazz. For an extra treat on Sunday between noon and 5 p. m. board the Flushing Trolley at the Town Hall and explore the neighborhood's many historic and cultural sites. You may choose from three itineraries, ranging from thirty minutes



to an hour, and best of all, there is no charge. Call 718-463-7700 for information.

**5** St. George's Episcopal Church, Old Parish House and Graveyard, 38-02 Main Street, originally built in 1761 on a prominent site in downtown Flushing, is today the third building on the site, dating from 1854. Frances Lewis served both his country and the Church in 1776 in his dual roles as Founding Father and signer of the Declaration of Independence, and of the church as a vestryman.

**6** The Flushing Public Library, 41-17 Main Street, at the intersection of Main Street and Kissena Boulevard, is more than just a library. Reflecting the ethnic mix to be found in Flushing, the shelves are lined with books in dozens of languages, serving the needs of the many immigrants as they learn the language and customs of their new homeland. The Library is a major resource for information about arts and culture as well as youth services.

**7** Union Street, **8** Main Street and **9** Roosevelt Avenue, south of Northern Boulevard, have developed into the hub of an enormously diverse Asian community of Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Indian immigrants. A walk along the streets reveals a huge number of colorful signs in many Eastern languages. What lies hidden within their many shops and sidewalk stalls is for you to discover.



**10** A Bennetton Outlet at 40-06 Main Street may be just right for you if fashion at a discount is your passion.

**11** The Flushing Mall, 133-31 39th Avenue, is an exciting place to browse. Numerous shops offer a wide variety of goods, both fashionable and artistic, made more palatable by a great food court. For an interesting diversion, mount the steps to the second floor at 133-31 39th Avenue and enter the True Love Wedding Center. On display is a truly delightful photographic collection of preening brides and grooms.

**12** The Magic Castle, a division of Opone, at 138-82 39th Avenue refers to itself as the "...home of precious ethnic products imported from Asia." Its varied offerings include origami, toys, low-priced jewelry and much, much more. A fun place to browse.

**13** A not very well known Greeter's Secret is that Nancy Reagan, wife of former president Ronald Reagan, was born in Flushing in 1921, spending part of her childhood in the frame house at 149-14 Roosevelt Avenue.

One last word: Flushing is very photogenic...do not forget to bring your camera.





## When It's Time to Eat

Food and Flushing are as natural a combination as pancakes and maple syrup. Dumplings, noodles, and fried rice among other succulent dishes, flourish in the many restaurants and food stands scattered in abundance throughout the area.

- Kum Gang San Restaurant, 138-28 Northern Boulevard, provides an inviting atmosphere for its very popular Korean barbecue featuring pork, ribs and beef. A first-rate Japanese-style sushi bar is available at lunch.
- The East Lake Restaurant at 42-33 Main Street is noteworthy for its food rather than its décor. A large fish tank at the entrance is filled with crabs, eels and blackfish. Among its many delicacies are a variety of mouth-watering dim sum specialties as well as more traditional dishes such as scallops in black pepper sauce and Chinese beefsteak.
- The Yi Mei Fong Bakery at 135-38 Roosevelt Avenue is without doubt a place to pause for refreshment. Green Tea, coffee, an assortment of fruit cakes as well as sandwiches are served. The staff is attentive, and the shop is accessible to people with disabilities.
- The beautifully renovated Ocean Jewels Seafood Restaurant (formerly Gum Tong Gung) at 133-30 39th Avenue (across Flushing Mall) has excellent dinner and authentic Chinese dishes. Good dim sum.
- For excellent dim sum try East Manor Restaurant on 46-35 Kissena Blvd. (off Holly Ave.) People trek from all over Queens to come to eat at this restaurant. Go early. It

gets packed fast! On Sundays, go between 10 A.M. -11:30 A.M. to beat the crowds.

## Web Links

A brief history of Queens:

<http://www.queenschamber.org/QueensInfo/history.html>

The Flushing Remonstrance: [http://www.nnp.org/newvtour/regions/Long\\_Island/flushing.html](http://www.nnp.org/newvtour/regions/Long_Island/flushing.html)

Flushing Town Hall: <http://www.flushingtowhall.com/>

The Weeping Beech Tree:

<http://www.preserve.org/queens/beech.htm>

An excellent site for interesting information about New York City is at: [www.askanewyorker.com](http://www.askanewyorker.com)

## About Big Apple Greeter

Founded in 1992, Big Apple Greeter's mission is to enhance New York City's worldwide image while enriching the City experience for its visitors. Connecting with business and leisure travelers from all over the United States and the world, Greeters bring visitors to neighborhoods in all five boroughs, promote tourism throughout the city, and help visitors discover the ease of using public transportation. More than 350 volunteer Greeters, speaking over 30 languages, enjoy giving their time and energy back to their hometown. Big Apple Greeter volunteers research, write and distribute the Neighborhood Information Profiles, a series of five page feature stories describing a New York City neighborhood in text and photographs. Since its founding, Big Apple Greeter — a free public service — has welcomed over 50,000 visitors and been featured in hundreds of newspapers, magazines, television and radio programs all over the world, reaching an audience exceeding one billion potential visitors to New York City.

Big Apple Greeter is proud of its affiliation with NYC & Company and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority. United Airlines is the Official Airline of Big Apple Greeter.

You may learn more about Big Apple Greeter and its many services on our website: [www.bigapplegreeter.org](http://www.bigapplegreeter.org) by emailing us at [information@bigapplegreeter.org](mailto:information@bigapplegreeter.org)

Big Apple Greeter welcomes you to New York.

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Queens Botanical Gardens