



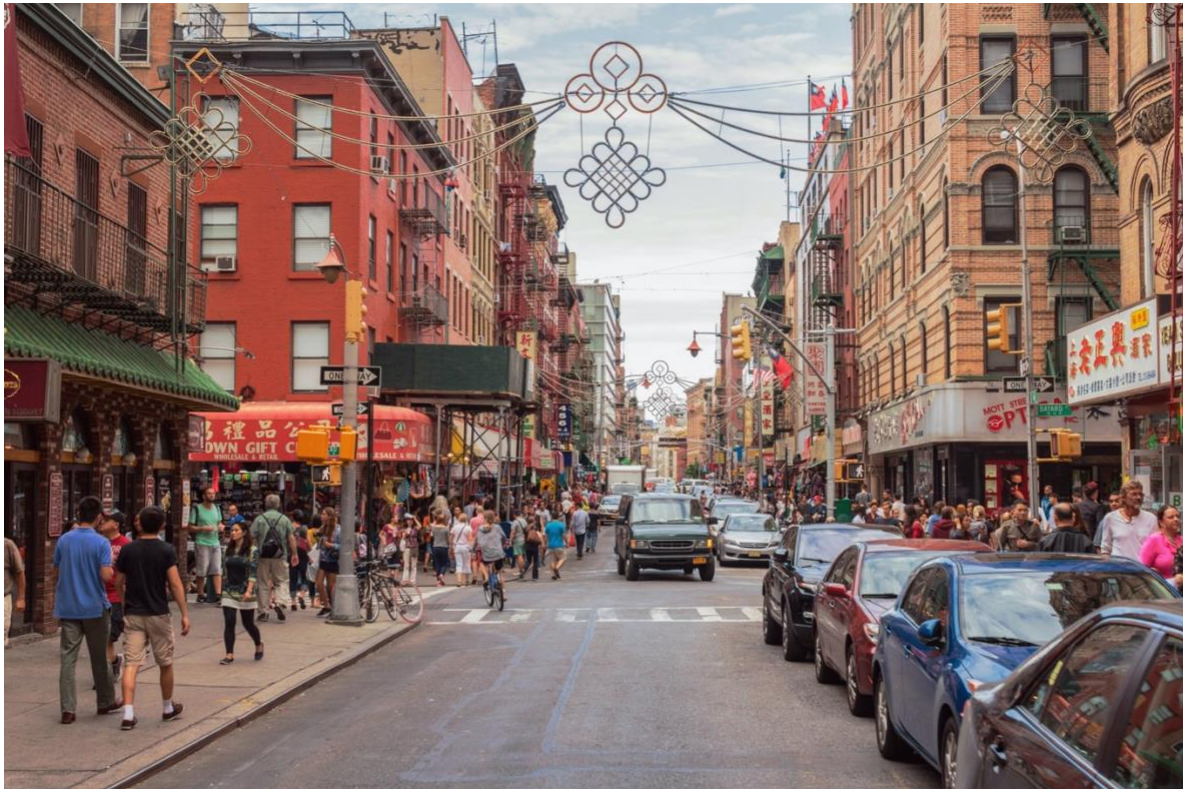
VOGUE

TRAVEL

Overwhelmed in New York? Spend Time on Mott Street



BY MONICA MENDAL



Mott Street in ManhattanPhoto: Getty Image

Ella Fitzgerald sang it best: “And tell me what street compares with Mott Street in July? Sweet pushcarts gently gliding by.” Believe it or not, the romantic side to New York, the one Fitzgerald sang about in Manhattan, still very much exists. It’s easy to overlook the romance of the city when you’re caught in the hustle and bustle of commercialized Midtown or experiencing 30-minute delays on the F train “due to an earlier incident in Queens.” However, New York is not solely home to skyscrapers, wind tunnels, and overcrowded streets. The city maintains its charm with the romantic, quiet streets unbeknownst to foreign visitors and even more local tourists alike. Mott Street has maintained that old-school feel you’ve heard about from the days when people actually referred to New York as Manhattan. (Manhattan just sounds more romantic, doesn’t it?) It’s a soulful community of local shops and old and new restaurants; the perfect amalgamation for a classic New York afternoon.

The best of the cozy old New York block begins around Mott and Prince, tucked just south of Houston Street. Start your day with a sceney Nolita brunch at Cafe Gitane. Like most places on Mott Street, the space is small, so you’ll have to make it early enough to not wait in line. Once seated, you’ll eat among New York’s coolest European crowd and enjoy a French-Moroccan menu. Some of our favorites include the baked eggs, avocado toast, and their most popular, moroccan couscous. If the wait is long at Cafe Gitane, head to the Italian alternative, Emporio, across the street. More commonly known as a dinner spot accommodating large groups, its brunch menu will not disappoint, and you’ll be able to sit quickly without a wait.



Oroboro StorePhoto: Courtesy of Oroboro Store

Next, visit indie boutique, Oroboro, where you'll find emerging designers and handcrafted goods from all over the world that'll inspire a strong sense of wanderlust. Owner April Hughes, a stylist herself, has done a seamless job curating a unique store that makes you feel at home with warm hues and ethical fabrics. Formerly Williamsburg's Beautiful Dreamers, Hughes moved the store to Mott Street this year and changed the name. Uprooting the store from a quiet street in Brooklyn to the city was accompanied with angst; though she was comforted to find a space on Mott, which she describes as a "little oasis amongst the chaos of the city." She continues, "I love that it's a multi-layered community of locals and tourists." For a store inspiring wanderlust, she couldn't have landed on more fitting real estate.



Mott and Spring opens up to a larger intersection that casts light on one of the oldest New York businesses on Mott Street. Lombardi's opened in 1905 as the first pizzeria in the United States. While they no longer sell full pies for 5 cents, they still use the same coal oven to bake the pizza. If you're looking for a slice, this isn't the place. You come to Lombardi's for the experience and the full

pies. So sit down, relax, and enjoy a family-style lunch at this tasty, historic New York City landmark. Walking a block east, drop into Mother's Ruin or Rintintin for an afternoon cocktail after your meal. At all hours of the day, you can expect cool local crowds doing the same.

As you continue south along Mott, you'll find another small shop worth the visit, Warm. Warm's husband-and-wife owners Rob Magnotta and Winnie Beattie met in the ocean while surfing in Hawaii, so opening an escape for urban hippies who long for warmer places felt natural to them. Sharing a love of sunshine, mountains, travel, and family, their store is a treasure trove of hard-to-find warm-weather brands that align themselves with these ethical details. They opened the store on Mott in 2012 because the location felt like an escape in and of itself, "Mott is one of those great New York City streets that has remained somewhat local and small business, and has not been overrun with big chains," Beattie says. "All of us who own our spots live in the neighborhood support and look out for each other. It feels sort of European with the church, Elizabeth Street Garden, the mix of coffee shops, and little old ladies who have been here since the '60s."



St. Frank's NYCPhoto: Courtesy of St. Frank's

If you're visiting New York before January 2018, stop by bohemian home-decor mecca, St. Frank's pop-up on the first floor of Mott Street's Brewster Carriage House. The feel of the old carriage house, built in 1856, was especially appealing for founder and CEO Christina Bryant, whose brand of rare, handmade home products embody the authentic heritage of the artisan communities from which they originate. The architecture of the late 19th-century home, with its high ceilings, archways and reclaimed materials aligned with St. Frank's core values of preserving cultural heritage. Along with the physical space, it was the neighborhood that helped seal the deal. After months of searching, she immediately fell in love with the space on Mott. "We love the energy of Nolita combined with our location on Mott Street that lends itself to a sense of discovery."



Approaching Broome, you'll likely see a line of people waiting to get their cup of matcha at the highly Instagrammable matcha cafe, Cha Cha Matcha. Pop in for a chai matcha, then continue on for a bite to eat at local favorite Two Hands. Co-owner Giles Russell says he and Henry Roberts decided to open their tiny community-focused Australian cafe on Mott Street because it felt like the convergence of many things that make New York what it is. "It's the beautiful boutiques and classic cafes of Nolita, the Italian specialty shops of Little Italy, and the open food markets of Chinatown which sell everything under the sun." (We recommend Shanghai Cafe Deluxe for some of the best inexpensive Chinese food in the city.) While Two Hands is best known for its take on modern food fads like their signature avocado toast and delicious (and beautiful) açai bowls—which you've likely seen all over your Instagram feed—it's the harmonious blend of old and new that drew them to Mott Street. As Russell says, "There's so much history on this street, but at the same time, so much is changing—the connection comes from feeling like you're part of both, which I think is rare in New York City."