

A Very Clichéd U.S. Trip



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Everyone who loves travelling, and even those who don't, have always wanted to tour the USA. Now, you may not agree with some of its foreign policies, but you can never deny it's a heck of a country to visit.

NEW YORK CITY

This city, to be completely honest, isn't much to look at. In fact, it'll remind you vaguely of Dhaka. True, the public transports are more sophisticated and there are no rickshaws/CNGs but with the traffic, the dirty streets, the large population and most importantly, the excessive busyness, us Bangladeshis can't help titling it as "the Dhaka of the U.S."

We visited the Statue of Liberty on our first day. Apparently, to be able to go inside the statue, you needed to book your tour months earlier which we hadn't. So we took the ferry cruise over the Hudson which turned out to be pretty good since we got a view of the whole Manhattan while on it.

The statue of Liberty is a sign of freedom and the United States. Unlike most things, it was made in France, not China. Up close, she looks grand but a lot less than the movies make her out to be. I, personally, enjoyed the view of the skyscrapers of Manhattan a lot more.

Apart from these, Ellis Island is notable among the places I visited. It is famous for being the busiest immigration inspection station from 1892 to 1954. It is said that almost every 3rd generation immigrant can trace an ancestor back to Ellis Island. As the narrator put it, "it was the gateway to the American Dream."

The guy was being so American, it was hilarious.

NIAGARA, NEW YORK

The Niagara Falls is the biggest and one of the most beautiful waterfalls in the world. It is a combination of three falls. The popular opinion is that the view from the Canadian side is better. On our first evening, the view wasn't as stunning as we anticipated. But we can blame the fatigue from an eight hour bus ride or because we were expecting too much. However, it seemed much more magnificent the next morning with a rainbow over

it. If you're a permanent resident of the U.S., you can visit the Canadian side as well since it's just a walk across the Rainbow Bridge.

The ride on the Maid of the Mist boat totally makes up for the slight disappointment of the first evening. The most incredible part is when we went directly into the



waterfall and were drenched from top to bottom. We got a clear view of all the three waterfalls from the boat and could understand how truly majestic they are.

Among the other places to visit in Niagara, the whirlpool park is the most spectacular. There's also a Native American dance show which is worth a visit.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

This is one city you should never miss out, if you ever

visit the U.S. The monuments, the memorials, the beautiful architecture; you won't run out of things to see. But the thing that'll catch the eye most is how clean and well organised it is compared to New York.

There are about 135 memorials and monuments in Washington D.C., and even if you want to visit the most important ones, you'll need a few days. So it's best to have some time in hand when you're visiting D.C. Make sure you visit the Roosevelt Memorial, Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument at least. The White House is also worth a visit but you won't be allowed to go that close to it.

UNIVERSAL ORLANDO RESORT, FLORIDA

Two theme parks, Islands of Adventure and the Universal Orlando Resort lie side by side. We only had a day, so we visited the latter only.

To be precise, the Orlando Resort is a theme park comprising of different rides and shows based on popular movies made by the Universal Studios. Having grown up with the *Harry Potter* books, I headed off to the Harry Potter theme park straight away. The Universal Studios has the Diagon Alley part of the theme park while Islands of Adventure has Hogsmeade.

Diagon Alley is everything you'd want it to be. A little more crowded, but hey, it's the summer holiday season, so everyone's probably there to buy their school supplies. Custom made wands were so expensive, I had to buy Alastor Moody's wand. Still, better than Dean Thomas' wand! And I now know why brooms were such a luxury for Ron. I only managed to buy a Golden Snitch and a Chudley Cannon badge from Quality Quidditch Supplies.

Among the rides, we got on the roller coasters of Gringotts, the Mummy and saw a few other shows.

USA is a huge country. So we tried to make the best of our 17 days and visited most of the East Coast. Summer might not be the best time to visit the USA because of the heat, but then again, we're used to high temperatures.

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