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ny time cities are touted as worthwhile “beer-cation” destinations, you’ll hear many of the same ones pop up: San Diego, Denver, Portland—in both Oregon and Maine. But one place you’ll rarely hear mentioned is big, bad New York City. Why? Because people always

assume this colossus of world-class museums and entertainment, parks and retail, restaurants and cocktail bars can’t possibly have a great beer scene, too. Can it?

It can. In fact, New York’s five boroughs (and the surrounding metro area) offer one of the world’s finest brewery- (and distillery-) trotting experiences. New York is so big you can almost think of each unique area as a great beer city unto itself—whether it’s Brooklyn, Queens or even the nearby Hudson Valley. So pick an afternoon and an area and you may find breweries that are close enough to literally crawl from one spot to the next. Or try to tackle a more expansive area—also easily done by subwaying and cabbing between brewery stops. What other American city has so many top-notch breweries both giant (Brooklyn Brewery) and minuscule (Folksbier) that can be enjoyed without needing a designated driver and a full tank of gas?

Here are some of New York City’s finest breweries to visit for a quick flight of beers or a solid afternoon of hoisting tulip glasses (you won’t, unfortunately, see blurbs for Evil Twin Brewing or Grimm Artisanal Ales, two of the city’s finest breweries, since neither has a taproom just yet). We even threw in a few distilleries to boot, in case you need to cleanse your palate with a nip of local whiskey or gin.

Other Half Brewing

BROOKLYN

You could almost divide the city’s recent craft beer history as BOH and AOH. “Before Other Half” the town was mostly seen as a wasteland, lacking in cool breweries worth an out-of-towner’s time. “After Other Half” arrived in 2014, and all of a sudden the entire country took notice of New York’s burgeoning beer scene. Now one of the most ballyhooed breweries in the world, Other Half specializes in hop-forward beers, offering numerous IPAs,

double IPAs and even triple IPAs. The Carroll Gardens taproom can be a zoo on weekends, especially when the brewery releases “pounder” cans of its highly coveted brews like Mylar Bags and Double Dry Hopped Double Mosaic Dream. otherhalfbrewing.com

Folksbier Brewery

BROOKLYN

Around the corner from Other Half sits one of the newest brewery tasting rooms in NYC. Owner Travis Kauffman was a computer arts



major, has worked extensively in Brooklyn's restaurant biz (Prime Meats) and even has a family hops farm in Northern Michigan. Kauffman makes "simple" beers steeped in a European tradition, but ones that certainly aren't lacking in flavor. His Germanic-American pale ale Morning Dew and French saison Magdalena show that these days one need not overwhelm a beer with hops and fruit to impress. The inviting taproom serves beer cheese and "hunter's" sausage, and it features custom, wood-burned barstools and hand-carved tap handles made from salvaged wood. folksbier.com

Threes Brewing

BROOKLYN

The most gorgeous brewpub in the city sits on the 4th Avenue side of Gowanus. The large, multipurpose space has a daytime coffee shop (Ninth Street Espresso), a private performance space (Tiny Montgomery) and a window-service restaurant (The Meat Hook) offering grass-fed beef burgers and wood-fired veggies. Of course, there's also the large barroom, which not only serves brewer Greg Doroski's brilliant pilsners, IPAs and barrel-aged ales, but also cocktails, local wine and "guest" beers from other breweries. The brewpub draws the neighborhood stroller crowd into its seashell-covered backyard on weekend afternoons. threesbrewing.com

Interboro Spirits & Ales

BROOKLYN

On the other side of the borough is Jesse Ferguson's newest project. The founding head brewer of New Jersey's Carton—not to mention a former record label owner—Ferguson makes juicy, "New England-style" IPAs such as Mad Fat Fluid and roasty imperial stouts such as Ambassador. The rowdy, East Williamsburg taproom resides in a former wood-working shop and draws a hip, young crowd at night. A unique entry on the NYC scene, Interboro also has a distillery component, where Ferguson (along with partner Laura Dierks, formerly of Van Brunt Stillhouse) has so far produced gin, whiskey and New York State applejack. interboro.nyc

KCBC

BROOKLYN

Bushwick was a hotbed for breweries before Prohibition and into the 1970s, but Kings County Brewers Collective is the hood's first new brewery in 40 years. Opened in mid-2016, The Collective consists of three home brew buddies (Tony Bellis, Pete Lengyel and



Zack Kinney) who combined their powers, and recipes, for the better good. The troika makes refreshing, flavor-packed beers including Beach Zombie, a strawberry-guava Berliner weisse, and Janiak Maniac, a hoppy and crisp traditional German pilsner. KCBC's large and minimalist taproom, about a mile south of Interboro, offers communal tables and complimentary board games such as Battleship. kcbcbrew.com

Keg & Lantern

BROOKLYN

Most folks don't even realize Brooklyn's most offbeat brewery is actually a brewery. Sitting in a fratty Greenpoint sports bar with an entire wall made of vintage beer cans, who would believe that sophisticated beers are actually being brewed downstairs in the low-slung basement? Such is the case at Keg & Lantern Brewing Company, where you can watch football and eat nachos while sampling any of about 15 rotating house beers. Don't enjoy this admittedly fun atmosphere? You can grab Crowlers (giant, 32-ounce cans) to go—try the Gastronomical, a mango peachy IPA. kegandlanterbrooklyn.com

Brooklyn Brewery

BROOKLYN

The "old dog" of New York City brewing remarkably has had space in the borough only since 1996, when it opened in a former matzo factory in Williamsburg. It released its famed Brooklyn Lager after its founding

in 1988, but the brewery really started receiving hosannas when brewmaster (and a future James Beard award winner) Garrett Oliver took over in 1994. His influence—and recipes for now-iconic beers such as Black Chocolate Stout—has made Brooklyn Brewery not just a force in the borough but in the world at large: It has joint brewing ventures in Sweden, Norway and at the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York. One of the biggest craft breweries in America these days, Brooklyn is open for tours seven days a week, or you could just relax with a brew or two in the large beer hall-like taproom. brooklynbrewery.com

La Birreria

MANHATTAN

One of only two breweries in Manhattan (Paulaner NYC is the other) and also one of the most underrated, La Birreria is located on the roof of the massive Italian foods complex Eataly. Once you take the elevator to the top floor, you'll have a view of the Flatiron Building (courtesy of a retractable glass roof) as you munch on cheese and charcuterie. The brewery, a collaboration project with Sam Calagione (Dogfish Head) and Teo Musso (Baladin), even offers unfiltered, unpasteurized, hand-pumped cask ales. eataly.com

SingleCut Beersmiths

QUEENS

Launched as Queens' first production brewery in 2012, this Astoria-based spot has really