

PHOTOGRAPHING NEW YORK HARBOR & ITS MARITIME ACTIVITY

BY TED SCULL

For maritime enthusiasts, the Port of New York and New Jersey provides one of the world's most exciting harbors to explore and photograph. The variety of marine traffic includes cruise ships from the mega to the mini, container vessels trading to all parts of the world, passenger ferries darting from Brooklyn to the Bronx, Manhattan to several landings in New Jersey, Queens to Wall Street, through the Narrows to North Jersey and the Rockaways, and the grandest of all, the Staten Island Ferry operating 24 hours a day.

Excursion boats link the Battery with Ellis Island and Liberty Island and circumnavigate Manhattan, while tall ships cruise Upper New York Bay during the day and into the evening. Hardworking tugs maneuver fuel oil and traprock barges, passenger ships and freighters. The city's Department of Environmental Protection operates a fleet of handsome vessels (believe it or not) that move New York's sewage sludge between water treatment plants. Coast Guard and police boats protect the harbor and the bridges that cross it, while impressive new fireboats stand at the ready to respond to any waterfront emergencies in both states.

Described below are some of the best locations in New York and New Jersey for photographing maritime activity in the Harbor, along with travel directions by public transit (rail, road and water). Consult the PONY Cruise Schedule on the website (www.worldshipny.com) for a complete list of cruise ship arrivals and departures.

NEW YORK LOCATIONS

The Battery



The American Merchant Mariners' Memorial and the historic 1886 City Pier A at The Battery. (Stuart Gewirtzman)

The Battery, at the southern tip of Manhattan, affords sweeping views of the Upper Bay, and vessels navigating the Hudson and East Rivers and passing through the Narrows. A waterfront promenade continues eastward past the Whitehall Ferry Terminal used by the orange boats of the renowned Staten Island Ferry (see below), the Battery Maritime Building (used by Governors Island ferries), the Downtown Manhattan/Wall Street Heliport, the Wall Street/Pier 11 ferry landing and South Street Seaport. Westward from the Battery, the promenade continues past the Statue of Liberty/Ellis Island ferry slips and the historic 1886 City Pier A (now housing drinking and dining establishments). North of Pier A begins the Hudson River Greenway, a continuous pedestrian and bicycle path that follows the waterfront north through Hudson River Park to the George Washington Bridge.

Transit Access: Bowling Green (4, 5), South Ferry (1) and Whitehall Street (R, W) subway stations; NYC Transit M15, M15 SBS, M20 and M55 bus routes.

Further Information: www.thebattery.org

Governors Island



View of a Molinari-class Staten Island Ferry passing the Statue of Liberty. (Ted Scull)

Governors Island (seasonal: May 1 - October 31) is a 172-acre island with parkland and historic buildings. A walkway circumnavigating the island offers views of vessels navigating the entire Upper Bay, parts of the South Brooklyn waterfront, and Buttermilk Channel, the location of the Brooklyn Cruise Terminal (where Cunard’s *Queen Mary 2* berths) and the Red Hook Marine Terminal which serves mid-size container ships. The island has a man-made hill that provides an excellent 360-degree photo location.

Transit Access: Ferries from the Battery Maritime Building at South Ferry, Manhattan. (See “The Battery” entry, above, for connecting subway/bus services.) Weekend-only service available from Pier 6 at Brooklyn Bridge Park and via NYC Ferry’s East River Ferry route.

*Further Information: www.govisland.com
www.nps.gov/gois/planyourvisit*

The Staten Island Ferry and St. George Ferry Terminal



View of Celebrity Cruises' Celebrity Summit from a passing Staten Island Ferry. (Ted Scull)

View maritime traffic in the Upper Bay from the ferry, then once ashore at St. George on Staten Island, head to an observation point just outside the ferry terminal's north side to view all manner of traffic moving through the Upper Bay, including cruise ships leaving the Cape Liberty Cruise Port in Bayonne, New Jersey, tankers, and container ships and auto carriers using the Kill van Kull to reach Port Newark, Port Elizabeth and the New York Container Terminal facility at Howland Hook on Staten Island. The ferry ride is free, and operates between the Whitehall Ferry Terminal at South Ferry at the southern tip of Manhattan and the St. George Terminal on Staten Island every 15 minutes during rush hours and every 30 minutes during other daytime hours.

Transit Access: Whitehall Ferry Terminal (South Ferry) – Bowling Green (4, 5), South Ferry (1) and Whitehall Street (R, W) subway stations; M15, M15 SBS, M20 and M55 bus routes. St. George Ferry Terminal – more than 20 NYC Transit bus routes serve the terminal as does the Staten Island Railway.

*Further Information: www.siferry.com
www.mta.info*

Fort Wadsworth – Gateway National Recreation Area, Staten Island



View from Fort Wadsworth of Cunard's QUEEN MARY 2 outbound at the Narrows. (Stuart Gewirtzman)

An excellent elevated site located on the grounds of this former military installation provides views of ships passing under the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, inbound through Upper New York Bay and outbound into Lower New York Bay. Outbound ships approaching the Narrows can be photographed with the distant Manhattan skyline as a backdrop.

Transit Access: A 15-minute ride along Bay Street on the S51 bus which runs to/from the St. George Ferry Terminal and is timed to connect with ferry arrivals and departures. Disembark at the Bay Street & Fingerboard Road stop and walk approximately four blocks south onto the grounds of Fort Wadsworth. (Some buses operate directly into the fort—ask the driver—in which case you can disembark at the fort entrance.) Turn left onto Mont Sec Avenue and then right on Hudson Road for splendid views of the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, Bay Ridge in Brooklyn, the Upper Bay and the distant Lower Manhattan skyline. All the deep-sea traffic entering and leaving the Port of New York and New Jersey passes by here.

Further Information: <https://www.nps.gov/gate/learn/historyculture/fort-wadsworth.htm>

Staten Island – Kill Van Kull

The Kill van Kull is a strait between Staten Island's North Shore and Bayonne, New Jersey that provides access to the marine terminals at Port Newark and Port Elizabeth in New Jersey and at Howland Hook on Staten Island. Several access points along Richmond Terrace afford close up views of the container ships, car carriers and tug and barge traffic sailing to and from these facilities. Ships passing under the Bayonne Bridge make for an exciting setting.

Transit Access: S40 local buses operate along Richmond Terrace to/from the St. George Ferry Terminal as far as South Avenue in the Mariners Harbor neighborhood. Sit on the right side of the bus and disembark at locations where you have a clear view of the waterway and the Bayonne Bridge.

Manhattan's Hudson River Waterfront



Saga Cruises' SAGA RUBY sails down the Hudson River past Exchange Place, Jersey City. (Ted Scull)

The following is a brief list of Hudson River photo locations on Manhattan's West Side between the Battery and the U.S.S. INTREPID Sea, Air & Space Museum.

1) Just north or south of the Brookfield Place/Battery Park City ferry landing for views of Hudson River traffic with Jersey City backdrops. 2) Chelsea Piers recreation complex – view visiting yachts, dinner boats, excursion vessels and tall ship cruises. Note the collection of large black and white photo murals that highlight the history of the piers. *Transit Access via crosstown M14 SBS buses on 14th Street and M23 SBS buses on 23rd Street¹.* 3) Pier 84 (at West 44th Street) is a recreation pier adjacent to the U.S.S. INTREPID, a World War II aircraft carrier now a Sea, Air & Space Museum. The end of the pier is a good spot for photographing cruise ships arriving or leaving Piers 88, 90 and 92 at the Manhattan Cruise Terminal. *Transit Access: M42 crosstown buses operating along 42nd Street.*

Further Information: www.chelseapiers.com
www.hudsonriverpark.org
www.intrepidmuseum.org

¹ SBS - Select Bus Service. Pay for ticket prior to boarding using a MetroCard at sidewalk vending machines located at each stop.

NEW JERSEY LOCATIONS

There are a variety of locations along New Jersey's Hudson River (aka North River) waterfront that provide excellent opportunities to photograph passing ships. The lighting is especially good for afternoon departures from the Manhattan Cruise Terminal, with various locations offering bow, broadside and/or stern shots with the Midtown, Chelsea, Greenwich Village or Lower Manhattan skylines as a backdrop. Many of these locations are accessible from Manhattan via public transit services including: **NY Waterway** ferry service operating between multiple locations in both Manhattan and New Jersey; **NJ Transit** bus service between Manhattan's Port Authority Bus Terminal and Hoboken, NJ; **PATH** trains operating from midtown Manhattan and Greenwich Village to Hoboken, and from the World Trade Center to Exchange Place in Jersey City, NJ, and Hoboken; and **Hudson-Bergen Light Rail (HBLR)** service that operates on a north-south alignment along the New Jersey waterfront through Weehawken, Hoboken, Newport and Exchange Place. Locations are listed below from north to south, with information on transit access provided for each location.



NY Waterway ferry BAYONNE. (Ted Scull)



HBLR train arriving at Hoboken Terminal. (Ted Scull)

Port Imperial/Weehawken – NY Waterway Terminal



View of the Manhattan Cruise Terminal from Weehawken, NJ, with CARNIVAL GLORY at Pier 90 and VEENDAM and NORWEGIAN GEM at Pier 88. (Stuart Gewirtzman)

NY Waterway's Port Imperial/Weehawken ferry terminal is located opposite the Manhattan Cruise Terminal and provides a water-level vantage point with good afternoon sun for photographing departing ships reversing into midstream before sailing south.

Weehawken – Palisades

For a view of ships departing the Manhattan Cruise Terminal from an elevated vantage point, exit the Port Imperial/Weehawken ferry terminal, cross the street and walk south approximately one block to a pedestrian bridge that connects to the HBLR station and a (long) stair up the Palisades to connect with a sidewalk along Pershing Road at the top. An adjacent linear park just to the north gives shade while waiting for photo opportunities. The view from the top is worth the climb. Also, Hamilton Park, a short walk to the south, provides another photo location and an attractive spot to relax.

Transit Access: NY Waterway ferries operate between Port Imperial and the Midtown/West 39th Street ferry terminal in Manhattan. NY Waterway also provides free connecting shuttle bus service along several crosstown Manhattan routes. Board the bus and pay when you reach the ferry terminal. On the New Jersey side, Hudson-Bergen Light Rail trains serve the Port Imperial/Weehawken ferry terminal. The route runs south along the river, turns inland through Hoboken, and then returns to the proximity of the waterfront as it continues south from the Hoboken Terminal through Newport and Exchange Place in Jersey City.

Further Information: NJ Transit and HBLR - <https://www.njtransit.com>

NY Waterway - <https://www.nywaterway.com/FerryTerminals.aspx>

Hoboken – Stevens Institute of Technology Campus



View of Cunard's QUEEN ELIZABETH outbound from the Manhattan Cruise Terminal from the campus of Stevens Institute. (Ted Scull)

The Stevens Institute of Technology Campus, located on a bluff overlooking the Hudson River, provides a terrific elevated vantage point for photographing ships with the Manhattan skyline as a backdrop, especially for afternoon sailings from the Manhattan Cruise Terminal.

Transit Access: The Stevens Institute campus is an approximately 15-minute walk north of the historic Hoboken Terminal, which is served by NJ Transit trains, PATH trains from midtown Manhattan and World Trade Center, Hudson-Bergen Light Rail (a north-south line that connects waterfront communities including Weehawken, and Newport and Exchange Place in Jersey City), and NY Waterway ferries from three terminals in Manhattan (Midtown/West 39th Street, Brookfield Place/Battery Park City and Pier 11/Wall Street). The campus is also a 15-minute walk south of NY Waterway's Hoboken/14th Street landing served by ferries from Midtown/West 39th Street and Brookfield Place/Battery Park City.

Further Information: NJ Transit and HBLR - www.njtransit.com

NY Waterway - www.nywaterway.com/FerryTerminals.aspx

Hoboken – Pier A Park



View from Hoboken's Pier A Park of Disney Cruise Line's outbound DISNEY MAGIC with midtown Manhattan as a backdrop. (Stuart Gewirtzman)

Pier A Park extends out into the Hudson River just north of the historic Hoboken Terminal and provides unobstructed water-level views of passing ships and harbor craft, with midtown Manhattan and Greenwich Village as a backdrop.

Transit Access: The historic Hoboken Terminal is served by NJ Transit commuter trains, PATH trains from midtown Manhattan and World Trade Center, Hudson-Bergen Light Rail (a north-south line serving waterfront communities including Weehawken, and Newport and Exchange Place in Jersey City), and NY Waterway ferries from three terminals in Manhattan (Midtown/West 39th Street, Brookfield Place/Battery Park City and Pier 11/Wall Street).

Further Information: Pier A Park - www.hobokennj.gov/location/pier-a-park

PATH - www.panynj.gov/path/en/index.html

NJ Transit - www.njtransit.com

NY Waterway - www.nywaterway.com/FerryTerminals.aspx

Exchange Place, Jersey City



View from Exchange Place of Carnival Cruise Line's outbound CARNIVAL SPLENDOR passing lower Manhattan. (Stuart Gewirtzman)

A waterfront plaza adjacent to the Hyatt Regency Jersey City along with the neighboring J. Owen Grundy recreation pier provide sweeping views of the Hudson River and Upper New York Bay with the lower Manhattan skyline as a backdrop.

Transit Access: Hudson-Bergen Light Rail trains connecting Exchange Place to Hoboken and Weehawken; NY Waterway's Paulus Hook/Jersey City terminal served by ferries from Midtown/West 39th Street, Brookfield Place/Battery Park City and Pier 11/Wall Street; and PATH trains operating on the Newark-World Trade Center Line and to/from Hoboken.

Further Information: PATH - www.panynj.gov/path/en/index.html

NJ Transit - www.njtransit.com

NY Waterway - www.nywaterway.com/FerryTerminals.aspx