



Marie to NJ for Christmas 2019 Trip Notes
December 21 – 26, 2019

Highlights by Marie

- Another Christmas in the books with Tom and Diana. I was so excited to see them and come home to Jersey I couldn't bear it.
- Flying in and seeing the New York skyline made it real that I was home.
- Even though I flew in late Diana, Tom and I stayed up for hours catching up.
- Tom and I had a wonderful time shopping and I was able to wear something nice for my night out with an old friend and for Diana and I's trip into the city.
- I told Diana it's not really Christmas until we go to New York and see all the decorations. We walked to see all the windows at Saks Fifth Avenue and at Bergdorf Goodman before we went to see the Nutcracker at Lincoln Center.
- A ballet - I was amazed by the dancers and the musicians. They make it seem so effortless and at one point I was so enthralled by the dancers for once my attention was taken away from the musicians.
- Afterwards we took a leisure walk to a favorite and a tradition, the Marseille, a French Bistro. I had a three-course meal consisting of escargot, duck, and creme brûlée,
- Diana and I walked off the calories to go see the Macy's windows before catching the bus back home.
- Tired - When Diana and I got back to the bus we were exhausted. We had woken up around 5am to get ready and caught the bus home at 8:30pm, arriving home at 10pm. We walked almost 10 miles in the city.
- For Christmas Day I made Tom's favorite, veal zurichoise.
- I've been on Tom's case about staying hydrated so I've been withholding his Johnny Walker until he drinks at least one glass of water.
- I had a wonderful trip and it was just the kind of healing getaway I needed after a long past month at school.
- I'm sad to go but not for long because we will be reunited in about a week to go to Las Vegas.

Memories of a Well-Traveled Gal:

We went onto www.LibertyLadies.weebly.com and www.TomsKoi.com to see pictures and remembrances past.

International: Vienna 12/12; Paris 3/13; Barcelona 12/14; Portugal 12/15; Italy 12/17; Chile 8/18

Domestic: Salina Ks for Presidential Library; NYC multiple times; Boston; DC three times; Philadelphia; San Francisco in '13; Stanford; Lake George with Kripalu in Berkshires.

Trips on her own: St Louis; Charlotte NC; Houston two times; Chicago; Miami and The Keys two times; St Petersburg FL; San Antonio; Omaha two times; Memphis; Atlanta two times; Arkansas; Cozumel and Grand Cayman on cruise.

The Scientific Reason You Love to Travel - <https://www.travelandleisure.com/articles/science-love-of-travel>

First class? That doesn't hurt easing the travel burden, if there is one.... She got first class upgrade both ways.

Shopping? Yes! At Madewell plus Clarke's in The Grove, at Famous Footwear in Middletown, and surely more. At Chanel in Saks Fifth Avenue in NYC. It's also great fun for Tom. He should have been a fashion designer. He is very clear about what he likes and she wisely goes along with it. I just sit back at home and watch the credit card charges come through and am grateful to avoid the stores.

Marie's Friend from Brookdale's Engineering Summer Camp from about six years ago. We might call him Andrew #2 but surely we can do better than that.... (The recent break up was with Andrew #1.) They'd been in touch all these years but oddly never met again while Marie was in NJ. He is also a music student finishing his final year of college at Rutgers. Lives south and maybe around Ocean Grove, and plays gigs as well as composing music. He took her to a seafood restaurant on the water in Red Bank and then to the PNC Light Show.

Food? Yes! Far too much! The first dinner was at Belford Bistro, a long-time favorite. Marie ordered duck. Of course, Tom and Marie had first courses too, plus dessert which came home in an unusual doggy bag since it was bread pudding topped with ice cream. Then I'd ordered a big-deal banquet from Boston Market with a whole turkey, sweet potato casserole, creamed spinach, mashed potatoes, dressing and gravy, cranberry-walnut salad, rolls, etc. Fortunately, it will freeze because Tom and Marie decided on a Zurichoise dish for Christmas Day. Marie had a meal out with Andrew, we ate at Marseilles in NYC where she had duck again, as well as escargot and a dessert, after an easy breakfast at Rockefeller Center underground, etc.

Christmas Eve Day in NYC – Marie and Diana did all of these, or have done them in the recent past: NYC Christmas guide: Four holiday things you have to do in New York - <https://eu.usatoday.com/story/travel/destinations/2019/12/09/nyc-christmas-guide-four-holiday-things-new-york-rockefeller-center-tree/2595070001/>

We were up at 5am, left the house at 6:45am for a 7:15am bus out of PNC Arts Center, arriving by 8am in NYC (amazingly fast!) being surprised at how much was NOT open that early.

We walked around the Christmas Market at Bryant Square, watched the ice skaters, went into the library that was only partially open, then onto the biggies at Fifth Avenue and the Rockefeller Plaza area. There is the huge Saks Fifth Avenue store with its famous windows, but inside we went for some Chanel advice and purchases.

Breakfast was in the Rockefeller Center underground with a view of the skaters. The crowds were less than I've ever experienced and probably since it was so early.

Marie wanted to walk through some of Central Park before we looked through the windows and inside of Bergdorf Goodman. The Plaza Hotel was not letting anyone without a room key inside – NO Tourists! I wanted to protest that we only looked like tourists, but we'd been in before anyway.



A try for the new Nordstrom Windows at 57th which wasn't worth anything but we didn't go inside. We should have, as it was cold and that was what they were known for – inside Scandinavian ornaments.

Next, a backtrack to Times Square again where it was in fact mobbed. We made a stop for a warm up, toilets and a wine at Angelo's Pizza on Broadway (surprisingly nice) where we had a window seat and two wines for a mere \$36. This is after all NYC.

Secrets of Times Square in NYC - <https://www.travelandleisure.com/articles/secrets-of-times-square-nyc>

Next to Lincoln Center by way of Columbus Circle for our 2pm showing of George Balanchine's famous rendition of The Nutcracker. Our seats were much better than expected despite it being on the 4th Tier. The only other option I had by the time we decided to go was the back of Orchestra, i.e., on the floor, in poor seats underneath the balcony. I'd seen it before, and Marie had seen a rendition in K.C. but this one was truly spectacular, still again. The children were amazing, the pros worth the price of a ticket.

Despite almost hitting 10 miles on our feet, Marie voted to take her new boots and our tired tootsies backwards again to Macy's at 32nd Street as their windows are second or third best only to Saks Fifth Avenue and Bergdorf Goodman.

We caught the last bus home at 8:30pm from Port Authority which was super busy, getting us home at around 10pm. This meant we were on the go for about 17 hours and 10 miles on our feet.



New York City Ballet production of The Nutcracker by George Balanchine at Lincoln Center's Koch Theatre on Christmas Eve - The Pros intermixed with young dancers:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/28/arts/dance/nutcracker-Marie.amp.html>

Pictures tell a story best



Bread Pudding at Belford Bistro. The whole turkey being carved by a couple turkeys who decided on veal zurichoise instead and one more turkey who let them get by with it. Smile.



Lots of little gifts, lots of NYC windows, lots of famous high-rise buildings. Lots of lots of, that's us.



At the Rockefeller tree and skating rink before wandering over to Lincoln Center where we took in the Nutcracker at the Koch Theatre.



Inside is lovely – and oddly modern since its next to the old-style opera house. And on that, after a big meal at Marseilles which included a full carafe of red wine, we say goodnight to the lovely lights of NYC, always a delight for some of us.



A bit of sadness: RIP Sylvie! We lost our little cockatiel Sylvie on Christmas Day. She had been ailing recently and at about 30 years old, her demise should not have been a surprise. But one of us took it more emotionally than expected and maybe because of other deaths this year as well as the recent scare. Tom would like to adopt another cockatiel but I think will wait until our heavy travel schedule is completed this summer. Cockatiels are social creatures and I'd say he needs a young one (a bird!) to bond with. Pandora, the big Mexican Double Yellow Head Amazon, remains, as ornery and noisy as ever. We've had her since January 1980 and she too was a "used" bird when she was acquired. May we all have such long lives, so long as they are quality lives.

Itinerary

Saturday Dec 21

5:05pm Depart Kansas City MCI via UA#3713

9:00pm Arrive Newark EWR

Sunday Dec 22

Shop?

Monday Dec 23

Marie to meet friend from Brookdale Engineering Camp in Asbury Park

Tom to shop for Zurichoise dinner on Wednesday Christmas

Diana to Woodbridge Community Center – purchase bus tickets on way home

2:00pm Ordered full turkey meal from Boston Market for pick up

Tuesday Dec 24

Diana and Marie bus to New York City - limited holiday bus schedule.

7:15am or 8:30am depart PNC to Port Authority

8:30pm last departure from Port Authority to PNC

Walk from Port Authority at 8th and 42nd to Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree

Tour store windows using walking guide by Green Global Travel - Download guide here:

<https://greenglobaltravel.com/nyc-christmas-window-displays-free-walking-tour-in-new-york/>

Includes: Nordstrom new windows at 57th and Broadway

Saks at Rockefeller Center

Bergdorf Goodman at Central Park

Macy's at 34th Street

2:00pm George Balanchine's The Nutcracker by NY City Ballet at Lincoln Center's David Koch Theatre – usually 2 ½ hours

5:00pm Reservations at Marseilles Restaurant
630 9th Ave, New York, NY 10036 Tele: (212) 333-2323

More ideas if time:

Bryant Park, rink, market shops and food lounge

Hudson Yards off Walkway around 32nd – verify – has “Shine On Lights”

Wednesday Dec 25

Marie offers to cook Zurichoise at home

Idea: Walk Red Bank streets to see windows and lights

Thursday December 26

3:29pm Depart Newark EWR via UA#3705

5:56pm Arrive Kansas City MCI

From Green Global Travel's walking tour of window displays.

