

Glimpses of the Games

JUNE 30, 2012: The City Prepares

The world is about to turn its eyes to New York, and, with seven years of preparations complete, the city is ready.

Bright Olympic banners fly from shining new sports facilities along the waterfront. The gleaming Olympic Ferry fleet starts its test runs. The boats that will carry athletes to their competition venues crisscross from shore to shore up and down the river, like athletes warming up for the Games.

A similar scene is taking place beneath the city. The special trains of the Olympic Rail that will carry athletes to the east-west venues also start their test runs. Throughout the sprawling subway system, cars have been refurbished, stations painted and renovated, and platforms enhanced with colorful Olympic pennants and maps with directions for international visitors in six languages. Multimedia kiosks that will provide information about ticket availability and public events, as well as up-to-the-minute competition results and video highlights, are being installed at every city subway station as well as the Long Island Rail Road, Metro-North, Amtrak, PATH, and New Jersey Transit, linking together the region's mass transit systems in a single Olympic Information Network.



New York's iconic skyline will serve as a memorable backdrop for the 2012 Olympic Games.

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Olympic banners fly from every street lamp in the city. All 12,600 of New York's famous yellow taxis have been dressed for the occasion, with Olympic images festooning their doors and rooftops. Along the waterfront, pedestrian promenades have been widened and extended for the countless spectators who will watch the many harbor festivities. New York is ready to welcome millions of people — and billions more watching on television — to a historic spectacle.

JULY 22, 2012: The World Begins to Gather

Arriving from Rome with her mother, an Italian television journalist quickly passes through John F. Kennedy Airport's new International Arrivals Building to the Olympic Arrival Center to receive her official accreditation, as her mother is smoothly cleared through customs. As America's premier gateway, serving almost 18 million international passengers a year, Kennedy Airport has completed its two decades of rebuilding with modern new terminals linked by elevated trams and served by efficient baggage and support services. Now together, mother and daughter step onto the new high-speed rail line that links the airport to midtown Manhattan.

In midtown, they separate for their accommodations. The journalist checks into one of the two modern hotels bordering the Olympic Square, part of the thousands of hotel rooms added to the region's stock of more than 120,000 in time for the Games. Her mother, like so many who will be coming from around the world, takes the subway to the Tremont neighborhood in the Bronx to stay with relatives.

After unpacking in her room, with a stunning view of the Hudson River; the journalist walks across the Olympic Square to find her desk in her network's Olympic bureau at the International Broadcast Center, housed in the new Olympic Tower, next door to the Olympic Stadium. There she quickly tests the on-line Olympic Media Network, whose comprehensive database allows her and every journalist to call up images of every athlete and data from every competition.

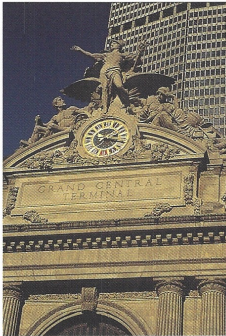
Later, she will visit her network's permanent New York office, across town on Park Avenue, one of 175 foreign media outlets that maintain bureaus with journalists stationed year-round in this global media capital.

JULY 23, 2012:

The Teams Make Their Entrance

The 200-some national teams have been arriving in the United States for weeks, training at sites that allow them to acclimatize fully. One of the last to arrive in New York City is also one of the largest—the Russian squad of 600 athletes, coaches and trainers. On arriving at Kennedy Airport this glorious July afternoon, they move easily to a nearby dock and board a gleaming Olympic Ferry for the voyage to the Olympic Village.

As the ferry moves out of the shelter of Jamaica Bay and into the edge of the Atlantic Ocean, it passes Brighton Beach, the home of New York's vibrant Russian community, where the team is surprised by the enormous signs of welcome, in their native Cyrillic script, hanging from the buildings. A wave of excitement sweeps the decks, growing as the boat rounds Coney Island and enters New York Harbor. The Russian delegation passes beneath the Verrazano Narrows Bridge, whose 50-story towers each feature giant illuminated Olympic Rings. As they enter the Upper Bay, a New York City fireboat sprays an arc of multi-colored water high into the air, framing the Statue of Liberty and her torch of welcome. Passing lower Manhattan, the ferry heads up the East River, gliding beneath the Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Williamsburg Bridges—each decorated with giant Olympic Rings. It is clear that this will be a water-based Olympic Games, and that New York has returned to the water to welcome arrivals from all over the world.

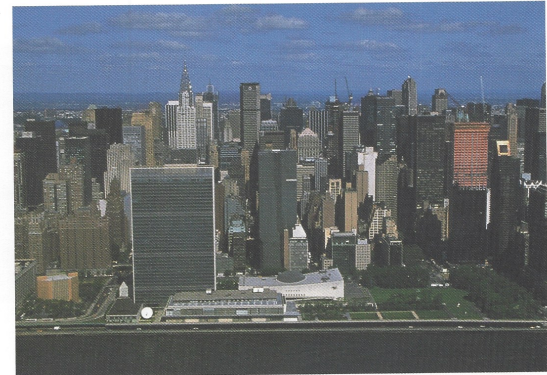


JULY 26, 2012:

Settling into Olympic Village

It is the day before the Games, and the final delegations are arriving. Like each of the teams before them, they are greeted with the traditional welcome ceremony at the Olympic Village's waterfront park, with the playing of their national anthem and their country's flag proudly raised to stand alongside all the world's flags, across the river from the United Nations Plaza where these same flags are raised each day. At day's end, athletes and coaches stroll along the water, intermingling in dozens of languages. It is a calm moment at the Olympic Village, whose waterfront site offers athletes peaceful promenades, an unusual combination of grand vistas, clean air and cool water breezes, and extraordinary security. From their new home, the athletes look out to Manhattan beckoning just across the water—and Manhattan, in turn, looks back with anticipation of the heroism to come.

Directly across the East River from the United Nations, the Olympic Village's high-rises will offer stirring views of the Manhattan skyline.





From jazz to salsa to gospel to classical, Olympic visitors to New York City will encounter a staggering array of musical offerings.

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Later that night, as the flags of each nation are projected in a brilliant laser light show on the city's massive towers, a long-distance runner from Kenya cannot pull himself away from the view. He spends hours sitting at his window, mesmerized by the sweeping skyline, whose thicket of buildings seem as tall and dense as the mountains he runs through every day.

JULY 27, 2012:

Opening Ceremonies and Harbor Celebration

What seems like the entire city — an estimated five million people — has filled every inch of the shoreline, anticipating an event that will exceed anything in the city's history. A flotilla of historic tall ships enters New York Harbor triumphantly at the Narrows, sailing across the bay and up the Hudson River. The ships line the Hudson to form an international honor guard for the Olympians who will soon pass en route to the Opening Ceremonies. Then the shining Olympic Ferry fleet, escorted by fireboats, begins the grand procession to transport the athletes, coaches and officials from the Olympic Village, down the East River, around the tip of lower Manhattan, and triumphantly up the Hudson to the Olympic Stadium on Manhattan's West Side. The harbor is

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jammed with thousands of private yachts and pleasure craft of every size, while visitors from around the world line the waterfront to celebrate the arrival of the Olympic Games in New York.

As the athletes enter the Olympic Stadium, each nation is cheered by visiting fellow countrymen — as well as by New Yorkers with ancestral ties to their land. After the President of the United States declares the Games begun, the Olympic flame ends its long journey as the giant stadium torch is lit. But it is only the beginning. From a point above and behind the Olympic flame, a multi-color laser beam — its five colors symbolizing the five rings and five continents of the Olympic Games — is sent six blocks to the east and over 1,000 feet in the sky — to light the top of the Empire State Building, in turn activating another laser beam which now shoots its light 50 blocks southward — to set the top of the World Trade Center aglow. Watching on giant screens, the crowd in the stadium knows what is coming, as do the millions of New Yorkers watching from the shore. A third and final beam of light is shot from the top of the Trade Center across the water to ignite the upheld torch of the Statue of Liberty, as the greatest fireworks display in history goes off all around the Upper Bay and East and Hudson Rivers — easily visible above the stadium itself.

None of the millions watching in person, or on television, will forget this moving and symbolic "carrying of the flame" — from the Games, to the city, to the entire world.

The festive Opening Ceremonies will draw on New York's rich tradition of parades, festivals, and other celebrations.





Carried from the Olympic Stadium to the Empire State Building to the World Trade Center, the Olympic Flame in 2012 will be echoed atop the Statue of Liberty's majestically outstretched right arm.

JULY 28, 2012:
Getting Around the Games

On the first morning of competition, the Australian squad gathers for a team meeting on a lawn near the Olympic Village promenade. In a few moments, they will scatter to competition and training sites around the city. The field hockey team boards a high-speed Olympic Ferry that will carry them to their match at Baker Field at the northern tip of Manhattan in just 24 minutes. As the ferries move in and out of their docks, electronic message boards indicate each team's gate. A short distance away, their teammates board a special train on the Olympic Rail that will carry them directly to Madison Square Garden and the Javits Center in just 18 minutes for the start of the gymnastics and fencing competitions. Later that morning, team members whose events are still days away will board one of the shuttle ferries stopping at training facilities located up and down the river. This system of special trains and ferries, with precise schedules and rapid travel times, avoids traffic congestion and delay.

JULY 30, 2012:
The Olympic Host Network, Brooklyn

For a long-distance runner from rural Ethiopia — as for all Olympic competitors — getting to the Games could scarcely have happened without the unwavering support of his family. But for his family, who had never traveled beyond their region, let alone overseas, it had seemed all but impossible to witness their son compete in the Games themselves. Thanks to New York's International Host Network, the impossible has happened. An Ethiopian family in Brooklyn has agreed to host the athlete's mother, father and sister in their home, not only providing the family with an economical means of staying in the city, but offering a precious zone of familiarity — a comfortable place to relax and discuss the Games in their native Amharic. As the day of the race arrives, not only the host family but scores of members of the tight-knit Ethiopian community join the runner's family in cheering on their son. Over the course of the Games, this scene is repeated by thousands of visitors of all nationalities who have found that New York is truly the "World's Second Home."

AUGUST 1, 2012:
Olympic Pavilion, the Bronx

Walking to the subway, a Bronx woman and her 14-year-old daughter make a quick stop at the brightly colored Olympic Pavilion at 161st Street and the Grand Concourse to check on the progress of rowing — which, in just a few days of Olympic competition, has become the daughter's favorite sport. Among the dozens of monitors showing ongoing competitions at venues across the

New York's myriad ethnic and nationality communities will provide a welcoming environment for Olympic visitors from nearly every country on earth.





Olympic rowing in 2012 will take place in Flushing Meadows-Corona Park in Queens, site of the 1939 and 1964 World's Fairs.

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city, they stand with a fast-growing group of New Yorkers to cheer on the athletes pulling hard on their oars just a few miles away. In the days since the Games began, the usually silent bustle near the subway station has become a scene of neighbors sharing high-fives over dramatic victories.

AUGUST 2, 2012:
Flushing Meadows Regatta Center, Queens

For a rower from California, competing in the 2012 Games means the culmination of years of dedication and discipline. She has been training right here in the city for the past several months and has mentally rehearsed the race a thousand times. As she awaits the start of the race, she sees the stainless steel Unisphere, symbol of the 1964 World's Fair, towering over the finish line, more than a mile away; the new boathouses facing the viewing stands, filled with an excited crowd of 25,000 spectators. Fifty thousand more, including that 14-year-old girl from the Bronx and her mother, who watched rowing at the Olympic Pavilion the day before, sit on the grassy hills overlooking the course. They watch for free as the rower from California narrowly edges out a Romanian for the gold.

AUGUST 3, 2012:
Greenbelt Mountain Biking Center, Staten Island

Rugged trails are not the first thing that New York brings to mind, but as the Olympic mountain bikers are quickly learning, Greenbelt Park in Staten Island offers some pretty challenging terrain. Large crowds have come over on the

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Staten Island Ferry this morning to watch the competition at this brand-new center. Spectators along the trail erupt into cheers as the bikers zoom through a forest so densely planted that they find it difficult to believe they are still in one of the world's busiest cities. The day before, at the equestrian facility in another area of the massive park, the world's best horses and riders sped along the highly demanding 11-mile cross-country course. But today, the sound is of clicking gears as the bikers strain for the skill and strength that this highly technical course demands. To a 12-year-old boy from Tottenville, on Staten Island's southern end, used to jumping over curbs and benches with his trail bike, today's race has opened the new possibility of an Olympic sport in which he, too, may one day compete seriously.

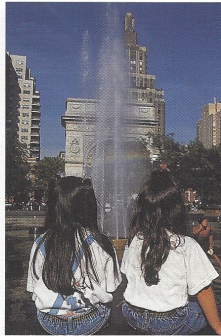
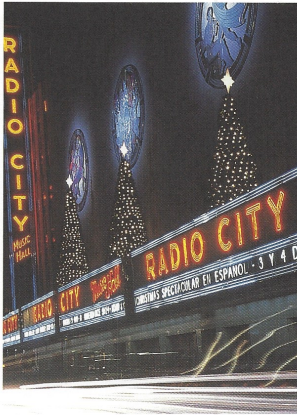
AUGUST 4, 2012:
Cultural Olympiad at Lincoln Center

With the Games half done, the city's Cultural Olympiad continues to delight New Yorkers and visitors alike with public spectacles—from the stylized four-story-tall puppets dancing on barges in the East River, to the spectacular new opera premiering in Central Park before 100,000, to the tribute at the Hudson River Park to jazz legend Duke Ellington, to the great light shows emblazoning Wall Street, Rockefeller Center, and the rest of New York's most celebrated spaces. In Times Square, the seven different electronic "zipper" have been programmed to speak to each other with the words of great New Yorkers, from Walt Whitman to Chris Rock.

At Lincoln Center, where summer Saturday nights have long meant swing dancing in the soft air of the main plaza, tonight's crowd of dancers and onlookers has swelled to encompass athletes and visitors from all over the world. The evening's event has created a festive international party in one of New York's most dramatic outdoor spaces. The Korean handball team is here, working the outdoor dance floor with the same passion and enthusiasm that they brought to their play earlier that day.

Two of New York's many street performers.





Far left: The Cultural Olympiad will draw on New York's world-famous theaters, concert halls, museums, companies, and more.

Left: Washington Square Park, in the heart of Greenwich Village.

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Meanwhile, 20 blocks south, the Brazilian volleyball team has celebrated its victory with dinner on West 46th Street, New York's "Little Brazil." The street has been closed to traffic and tens of thousands from the region's enormous Brazilian community have joined the athletes' families and friends in a jubilant street festival with Brazilian bands, dancing, and food provided by local restaurants. Enormous video screens show a parallel celebration in Rio de Janeiro, where their countrymen cheer at the images on giant screens of the victorious team dancing and singing on 46th Street. It is just one of the many festivals held by New York's nationality communities to honor the heroes of their native countries.

AUGUST 5, 2012: **Sailing Competition, Atlantic Ocean**

Held in the sparkling blue waters off of Coney Island and Rockaway Point, the sailing regatta has been in progress since the third day of the Games, favored by sun and ocean breezes — perfect for sailing. By the seventh day of competition, the 2012 Olympic sailors have come to realize what the Italian explorer Verrazano understood 500 years before, when he first sailed into the bay: there are few places on earth where the open sea transforms itself so

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quickly and gracefully into the shelter of a harbor. From the course, the bridge that bears Verrazano's name is clearly visible. And the cheers of the thousands of spectators watching from the famed Coney Island boardwalk in Brooklyn inspire the sailors as they tack to the finish line.

AUGUST 6, 2012: **Olympic Mobile, Astoria, Queens**

In the lively Greek-American neighborhood of Astoria, in northern Queens, one of the five festively decorated "Olympic Mobiles" arrives for an afternoon street festival celebrating the Greek team — and the origins of the Games themselves. Equipped with sophisticated sound and lighting systems, this mobile entertainment center supports events and celebrations in the city's ethnic and nationality neighborhoods across the five boroughs. For today's events on Steinway Street, the center of New York's Greek community, there is an astonishing outpouring of support for the athletes. Day and night, crowds have gathered outside the social club to watch every performance by the Greek team. Today, the entire region's Greek community has joined in this festive tribute. Local musicians lead the crowd in traditional songs. The cheers are thunderous as the athletes climb onto the mobile stage, greeted, not surprisingly, like the heroes of myth. The scene is carried live by satellite to Greece, where the nation's greatest entertainers participate as well.

At the same time, the four other Olympic Mobiles are in other communities, holding festivals for their hero athletes from the Dominican Republic, the Philippines, India and Nigeria — all celebrated with native food, music and dancing and festive dress and covered by New York's foreign-language newspapers and radio stations — and by the media in their home countries, building a sense of common bond among the world's peoples.

During the Olympic Games, New York's many nationality communities will stage celebrations of their native cultures — like the Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival, which takes place every year in Flushing Meadows-Corona Park.





In 1960, New York welcomed gold-medal figure skater Carol Heiss—now a member of NYC2012's Circle of Olympians and Policy Board—with a festive ticker-tape parade up Broadway. At the close of the 2012 Olympic Games, 10,000 Olympic athletes will receive this traditional New York salute.

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AUGUST 12, 2012: DAY 17: Closing Ceremonies and Ticker-Tape Parade

On this final day, at the Olympic Village docks, athletes board Olympic Ferries for one last trip down the river to Battery Park at the tip of Manhattan. As they dock, the athletes climb into open trucks, double-decker buses, and open-topped cars, and begin the slow procession up Broadway. Instead of the usual silent Sunday, millions of New Yorkers have gathered here to pay tribute as the Olympians pass through the famous "Canyon of Heroes." From the towering walls along Broadway, cheering people peer out from every window, while exuberant crowds fill the streets. The great stone chasm is filled with a blizzard of confetti and shredded paper, piling up all around each vehicle flying the Olympic standard and the national flag of its occupants. This is what Charles Lindbergh and the Apollo astronauts must have felt when the city showered them in ticker tape to celebrate their heroic exploits — just as it now celebrates these Olympic heroes from around the world. The parade files joyously through the streets into the Olympic Stadium for a triumphant Closing Ceremonies.

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JULY 2013: A Year After the Games

It has been nearly a year since the Olympic torch was extinguished in New York, and already the excitement and glory of the 2012 Games have been transformed into an integral part of the city. The Olympic Ferry system now carries hundreds of schoolchildren who ride the fast boats after school to the new aquatics center in Astoria Park, the velodrome at Queensbridge, and the 369th Regiment Armory Athletic Center, where they play, compete and train with dreams of pursuing Olympic medals of their own.

New York has recaptured its Olympic sports heritage, with adults and children alike utilizing the Olympic facilities for regular exercise — and for competition in burgeoning amateur leagues. Basketball games that once went on beneath rickety outdoor hoops now take place in beautifully equipped gymnasiums; the mountain bikes that once crossed vacant lots and crowded streets now climb heavily wooded trails on Staten Island, not far from where equestrians practice in the city's most advanced riding complex; thousands of residents of Queens and Brooklyn have found new pleasure in the water at their doorstep, thanks to the community sailing program at Breezy Point Marina; and, perhaps most remarkably, the once inaccessible sport of rowing has reached a new peak of popularity at the spectacular new Flushing Meadows Regatta Center. Amateur competitions continue to rise, once moribund school sports have been revived, and the leagues sponsored by communities in their nationally popular Olympic sports have flourished in badminton, table tennis and soccer. The city's elite sports training programs are now intensifying their regimen as they plan for 2016, determined to qualify more athletes in fencing, wrestling, judo, swimming, weightlifting, gymnastics, and track cycling, and to bring home medals to New York and the USA.

New and renovated facilities will host world-class sports competitions — and will give the city's young people a much-needed place to play.





In sports ranging from gymnastics to judo, fencing to wrestling, a network of elite training programs will prepare talented young New Yorkers for Olympic competition.

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JUNE 2020: Eight Years After the Games

It has been nearly a decade since 2012, but the memory of the Games remains fresh. How could it not? The legacy of the Olympic Games has continued to grow as the physical improvements created for the Games proved the spark for immense urban transformations.

On Manhattan's West Side, the Olympic Square, surrounded by the expanded Javits Center, hotels, and Olympic Tower, and served by the new mass transit hub, has become the centerpiece of a vibrant new commercial and residential district — Hudson Yards. On the East River, the high-speed ferry system has become a way of life for tens of thousands of New Yorkers living and working along the once-neglected waterfront now lined with parks and recreation facilities, newly constructed housing, and offices, grouped together in lively residential districts on the water's edge.

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For one 22-year-old-resident of Olympic Village — now one of the city's most desirable residential communities — the Games have had a more personal significance. Eight years before, she was that 14-year old, brought by her mother to watch the rowers compete at the Flushing Meadows Regatta Center. It sparked a lifelong passion. Now, after years of tireless training, she has qualified for the U.S. rowing team for the 2020 Games. Out on the course one more time, marveling at its beauty and serenity, she thinks back to nearly a decade before, when the American women seemed to fly across its waters. In the next few days, she will join the team at Kennedy Airport and fly off to pursue her own Olympic dream.