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 [Articles](#)  
 [NY Activities](#)  
 [NY Beer Tasting](#)  
 [About Us](#)  
 [Recommended Links](#)  
 [>> Search Page](#)

[Travel Blog](#)

## Visit the United Nations for the Best Souvenir in New York City - Real, Personalized US Postage Stamps Bearing Your Photo

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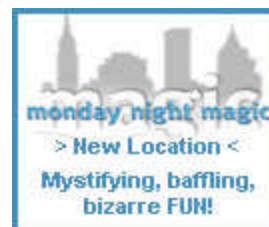
>> Returning from lunch, I explained to my coworkers that I was late because the presidential ceremony I attended lasted longer than expected. I then bragged that President Bush had been so pleased with my contributions that he issued a commemorative postage stamp in my honor.

Now, despite the fact that I'm a vocal Democrat, everyone appeared to believe me, or perhaps they were stunned because in my hands was proof - a full sheet of United States postage stamps featuring my smiling face.



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Visiting the United Nations for almost any reason is a delight. The grounds are beautiful. The tours are fascinating. And the UN serves a variety of tasty international food.

But the real deal? The UN is the only place in NYC where you can purchase the world's most authentic "made in New York City" souvenir. At \$14.95 for a set of 20 legal US postage stamps bearing your image, your UN stamps are as useful as they are a bargain! (The first class postage rate, of course, affects the price of your personalized stamps.)



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## Getting There

Arrive at the UN by walking east along 42nd Street. Enjoy such sights along the way as the Grand Central Terminal, the Chrysler Building, the mysterious Tudor City, and the "secret" alcove steps that lead you down to 1st Avenue and into a stretch of road also known as United Nations Plaza Drive.

## What You'll See

When the United Nations is in session, you'll see 191 national flags flying in colorful flutter. There were only 51 national members when the UN opened in 1945, and all those original flags fit into a curved sweep directly in front of the main assembly building.

Today, UN member flags stretch along several blocks. The flags are arranged in alphabetical order (English), starting with Afghanistan (admitted in 1946) at 48th Street, and ending with Zimbabwe (admitted in 1980) at 42nd Street.



Security, of course, is heavy. What used to be an open park along the East River is now guarded. In front of its grand, Art Deco doors is now an ugly bag checking station. Once in the main assembly building,

however, you'll be mesmerized by the scale of the UN's lobby. You'll see magnificent vistas, large photos from around the world, and views of Long Island City with the famous antique Pepsi-Cola sign on its shores.

Across from the lobby's tour staging area (on the southwest side) is an official branch of the US Postal Service where your personalized stamps are created. Step right in! The whole process takes just a few minutes.

The first thing you'll do, of course, is pay. In return, you get a receipt bearing a mail reorder code you can use for up to one year. Next, your picture is taken and, soon after that, a sheet of stamps appears. The stamps are packed in a large white envelope bearing the logo "UN(ique) Stamps - Thank you for visiting the United Nations," along with a stiff cardboard backing.

Use the stamps on real mail! Your only limitation is that your cards, letters, and/or packages bearing your likeness must be mailed from the UN Postal Station itself. With that in mind, come prepared with a lot of postcards and letters for your friends, and send the mail immediately. Imagine your friends' surprise when they see your smiling likeness peeking out of their mailbox!



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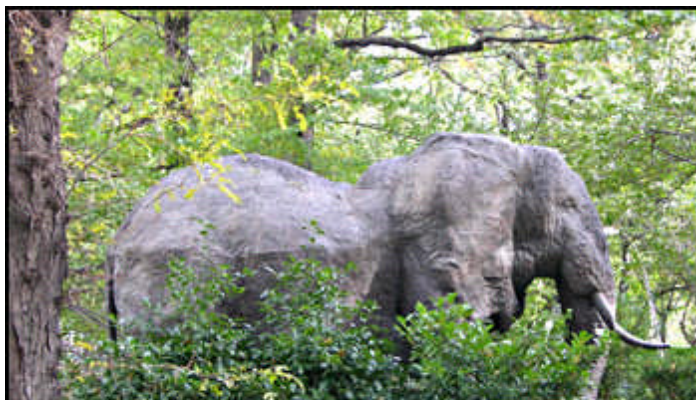
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## Things To Do In and Around the United Nations

After your official tour, stroll around outside. To see the details of park statues in the distance, use binoculars or have a telephoto lens on your camera.

Check out [your nation's mission](#) or simply walk through the residential neighborhoods where the ambassadors and their staff live and work.

In front of the UN itself, walk under all its flags and consider yourself very lucky if you visit during an easterly



wind,  
which  
makes  
the flags  
flutter



directly overhead. Also, make a point of trekking to the far northwestern corner of the UN grounds to see a large elephant hiding in the woods.

Hungry? Not too far from that corner is the tiny-but-tempting **Choux Factory** (865 1st Avenue, between 48th and 49th Streets, NYC), where exceptionally fresh cream (custard) puffs are served. Purchase a sack of them, plus large cups of Hawaiian Kona Coffee, then head to the Dag Hammarskjold Plaza Park at 1st Avenue and 47th Street, NYC. When it's warm outside, this park features gourmet hot dogs, entertainment, and periodic robust political protests. It's a very interesting area, and, with snacks in hand, you'll thoroughly enjoy it!

Questions? Comments?

[Karen Little](#)

Article and photos by [Karen Little](#). Edited by [Iris Schwartz](#). Map annotated from [Microsoft Streets and Trips](#). First published on 11/6/2005. All rights reserved by [www.Littleviews.com](#).

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