



## Why I Love ... Manhattan

Whether it's whiling away an afternoon at a museum or popping into a sushi joint for tempura, talk show legend **Dick Cavett** says there's no better place to live than the Upper West Side

Dick Cavett made a career out of his ability to spot societal trends or size up wily politicians, but when it comes to New York City, his adopted hometown, he's downright wistful. The Midwest native got his first taste of the city while on a three-day layover en route to his first semester at Yale.

"My very favorite place in New York is the first step I ever took when I came from Nebraska on the train," he says. "I remember the exact spot: 44th Street and Grand Central. I stepped out into the night air and kept saying to myself, over and over, 'Am I in New York City at last?'"

After graduating from college, Cavett knew there was only one place he wanted to live. "I knew I belonged in New York, and I hated not being there," he says. His first Big Apple residence was a studio on West

76th Street. "It was a roach-infested dump and \$60 a month," he recalls. "My second apartment [on the same street] was wonderful because it had two rooms and looked down into the garden of Carl Ballantine." Now Cavett's life as a New Yorker revolves largely around the Upper West Side, the neighborhood he has called home for more than 40 years.

Cavett is still passionate about the city, and his mind is a steel trap for memorizing addresses. He can rattle off the street names and building numbers of every place he has lived in Manhattan during his rise through the world of television writing, and later as host of his own Emmy-nominated talk show. Cavett got his start writing jokes for Jack Paar's *Tonight Show* in the '60s. That stint led to a brief stand-up career at clubs such as the Bitter End and his own acclaimed talk shows on various networks. His 2010 memoir, *Talk Show: Confrontations, Pointed Commentary, and Off-Screen Secrets*, was a best-seller, and he currently contributes to a blog for *The New York Times*.

Cavett has come a long way from his one-room bargain. His current digs overlook Central Park and he's fonder than ever of his neighborhood.

"I do love the West Side. I would never use the word funkier ... God, I just did," he muses. "But I love the kinds of stores, restaurants and museums that are here. Theater is nearby and, of course, there's the park. I don't go to the usual hangouts in Central Park. I've discovered a few secret places where no one can find me."

—STACEY MORRIS

## The best places to ...

### GET AWAY FROM IT ALL

#### Central Park

"I love Belvedere Tower," Cavett says. "And there are one or two places that you can hide completely. I got the idea from Katharine Hepburn, who had her own secret place in the park where she was able to climb on rocks, get some sun and not be seen."

### PRACTICE YOUR JAPANESE

#### Raku II

57 W. 76th St.; 212-873-1220; [rakuupperwest.com](http://rakuupperwest.com) • "This is one of my favorite neighborhood restaurants ... and I always like to shock the waiters by ordering in Japanese," says Cavett, who is fluent in the language. "I love the Raku sushi and seaweed salad, and the vegetable tempura is crisp and lovely."

### SIP A COCKTAIL WITH ATMOSPHERE

#### The Blue Bar at the Algonquin Hotel

59 W. 44th St.; 212-840-6800; [algonquinhotel.com](http://algonquinhotel.com) • "It's one of my favorite places," he says. "Even their lobby is wonderful. I'll always remember the time I saw James Thurber there."

