

SELF-GUIDED TOUR | The Ramble



- Rustic trails
- Paved pathways
- Stairs
- Bridges

Discover Responsibly. With more than three million visits each year, the Ramble is a popular destination in Central Park. To minimize your impact, keep dogs leashed at all times, stay on designated pathways, and carry out what you carry in. Feel free to observe and photograph wildlife, but please don't feed any animals you encounter.

Beginning and ending at Belvedere Castle, this self-guided tour should take about 30 minutes. While there are some stairs on this route, the entire path is paved and fairly even.

The Ramble is one of the most intricate and detailed landscapes in Central Park. This woodland, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, was intended to give visitors a taste of the Adirondacks without leaving New York City.

1 **Tupelo Meadow**

The three-trunked black tupelo at the southern edge of this meadow is thought to pre-date the Park, and displays striking shades of crimson fall foliage.

2 **The Gill**

The small stream that threads its way through the Ramble starts here. Although it appears natural, the Gill is sourced from New York City tap water, and can be turned on and off when needed.

3 **Azalea Pond**

Located in the heart of the Ramble, Azalea Pond is a slow-moving section of the Gill surrounded by azaleas that may be over one hundred years old. After falling into a period of decline, Azalea Pond was restored by the Conservancy in 2004.

4 **Balanced Boulder**

Situated strangely atop the large slab of rock, this boulder may be a glacial erratic deposited by the mile-high Wisconsin Ice Sheet that passed through Central Park thousands of years ago.

5 The Point

This narrow peninsula provides beautiful views of the Lake and Bethesda Terrace. In 2009 the Conservancy completed a restoration of the Point to remove invasive plant species and resolve erosion and soil compaction issues. Today this landscape is a popular destination for birdwatchers and hikers.

6 Willow cove

This marshy inlet is nicknamed “willow cove” for the willow trees that grow in the cove. The combination of shallow water, rocky shores, and dry land make this area a wildlife hotspot. Look for turtles basking along the shoreline, as well as birds and mammals on the ground.

7 Exposed Boulder

Resting on a number of smaller rocks by the shore of the Lake, this large boulder was placed by Olmsted and Vaux. Its base was originally covered in soil to make it look natural. Look out into the Lake to the left of the exposed boulder. The small rock that emerges from the water is often used by basking turtles and cormorants drying their wings.

8 Bow Bridge

The delicately arched Bow Bridge connects the Ramble to Cherry Hill. As part of the Central Park Conservancy’s restoration of Bow Bridge in 2008, the bridge’s original cast iron urns were reconstructed. Conservancy craftspeople carefully rebuilt these structures based on historic images and models of the original urns.

9 The Island

Restored by the Conservancy in 2008, the Island is home to an array of native wetland plants, and is a refuge for nesting birds. Its banks are covered in Virginia rose, which have fragrant pink flowers, and develop beautiful fall colors.

10 Gill Bridge

Rustic structures like this wooden bridge and bench are built by Conservancy craftspeople out of trees from Central Park. Each bridge, bench, fence, and gazebo is unique, and many are found in the Park’s woodlands.

11 Woodland Trees

The standing dead trees (called “snags”) and logs that can be seen in the Ramble might look unsightly, but they serve an ecological purpose. Central Park’s woodlands are managed both as landscapes in a popular urban park, and as wildlife habitat. The same features that make the Ramble look a little messy also make it one of the top bird-watching locations in the United States.

12 Belvedere Castle

This miniature castle is one of five visitor centers in Central Park. It is also a weather station, with instruments located on its roof and in a nearby fenced enclosure. The Central Park Conservancy offers a variety of public programs out of Belvedere Castle, including tours, lectures, and family-friendly activities. The Castle’s terraces provide stunning views of the Ramble, Turtle Pond, and the Great Lawn.

Get Involved

The mission of the Central Park Conservancy is to restore, manage, and enhance Central Park in partnership with the public. What’s the best way for you to support the Central Park Conservancy?

Join. Become a member and enjoy access to Member Programs and Park Perks as a thank you for your contribution.
centralparknyc.org/membership

Volunteer. Programs available for all ages and schedules.
Find out more at centralparknyc.org/volunteer