

The US open experience from David's " Point of View"- Navigating the tennis championships in New York.

The US Open championships are held at Corona park, an area in Flushing Meadows-Queens NY. The Billie Jean Tennis Center, named after the legendary tennis icon, hosts the US open , a tennis major event owned by USTA. It's a huge complex and houses several tennis courts, amenities , shops and other buildings on the property. Sections of the space can be rented during the off peak tennis season. A few years ago before the tournament, it was rented by the Fortnite video gamers worldwide! To experience the best of your time, it's best for you to do some planning and know what to expect or not to. Having attended the open 20 years in a row (in 2025) , I have seen the transformation of the facility year after year and wanted to share some of my interesting moments and thoughts of how you can experience the best of your time and what to look out for.

Parking - Parking is available for about \$40 near the stadium and some parking spots do have a shuttle to get you close to the stadium. If you are traveling into the city , say from Connecticut , New Jersey or Long Island, you can park at your local train station and just use the subway system to get you to the stadium. Train 7 from Midtown Manhattan gets you to and from the stadium. Driving to and from the center can get you into some traffic and navigating the NY traffic is a nuisance sometimes.

Tickets- Buying your tickets in advance from reputable ticket sellers like Ticket-master or Stub-hub is advisable .You can get tickets at the stadium as well , though you may not be guaranteed to get the ticket you want. Buying your ticket in advance secures your entry but there are additional costs to purchasing tickets online compared to in person. I usually buy my tickets in advance, but I do remember one year, I ended up spending \$500 for a final ticket (not actually bad considering the circumstances) at the very last minute because of the way I purchased my previous ticket.

Food and Drinks- Attending the US open is somewhat a costly event, where prices of food and drinks can be on the high side. The time you get to the stadium matters, so you should be prepared to spend a bit of money. Dining out or after the games is an option depending on your plans and party. If you are entertaining some clients, discuss your meal plans. If you don't want to spend \$5 per bottle of water, carry an empty reusable bottle to help quench your thirst.

Accessing Stadium Matches - Access to Arthur Ashe, Louis Armstrong and Grandstand stadium requires tickets. The majority of highly ranked players play their matches in those stadiums. Most of the Top 10 players in the singles and doubles will play their matches in Ashe Stadium. Tickets in Ashe stadium are pricey compared to other stadiums, this is where the best matches are played including the finals. You can still see some well recognized players on some grounds outside courts. Watching the matches on the ground courts is a great experience as you get to see the player close up and if you are a big follower of tennis you can enjoy the pressure moments of the game up close. You can also catch some practice sessions both by the outdoor courts and on the grounds of the facility. The week before the main event starts, you can watch some pre qualifying matches and those cost zero dollars, the best deal of the tournament.

Wheelchair Tennis- What about it? This is one of the hidden secrets of the open, there are matches usually the second week of the tournament and finals running up to the other draws. Many people may not realize that wheelchair tennis exists, but it does have a good presence at most majors and you can

see some high quality matches. There is a two bounce rule for the ball, but it's very spectacular to see that level of tennis being played.

Planning The Day- Gates for morning sessions start at 11 am and the gates open at 10 am , day matches end just after 6 pm and close to 7pm for the first week. Night sessions gates open at 6 pm , and matches start at 7 pm. You can watch up to two , sometimes three matches in the three big stadiums per session.

Safety- In my 18 years of attending the US open, I have not witnessed an emergency or safety issues, but there are first aid zones on the premises. Just ask one of the officials to point you somewhere. Carrying a few band aids is a good idea and you can possibly help someone. There is staff and personnel on the property and you can easily recognize them and ask for help or directions.

Vendors and Stores - There are several stands - from merchandise, to food, drinks and products on sale or display - around the property. It's always a pleasure to walk around and check out some of these stands. The USTA has a fan center where they have kids's games and some racquet demo clinics and also some cool new high tech innovation display for tennis.

Accommodation- Stay or sleep ? For years I drove in the city and drove back. The down side of that was finding parking and losing out on time because of traffic. Over the last few years, I have gone a day early and spent a night at one of the hostels nearby. I also use the time to be a tourist in the area for a day or two. If you are booking a hotel room, do it a few months in advance. There are several hotels in the NY metropolitan area and you can easily access the subway to get to the stadium.

Final Thoughts- I do hear people say how expensive it has become. I do understand the burden and hustle of putting the whole trip together, but the truth of the matter, it's a unique experience and world class event watching world class athletes. An event like this will come with a lot of restrictions, costs and planning . There is security to law enforcement to make sure you enjoy your time. There are a few thousand workers during the three week tournament and run up to the event. Expect some inconveniences and situations and try to deal with them in a calm manner. I have learnt from the mistakes that robbed me quality time, mostly because I was ill prepared. I remember one year when Agassi was retiring, the tournament was delayed for several hours and days. We walked around hoping that we would see the last match of Agassi. We had no luck that day and our tickets were to be honoured the following year, which USTA graciously did. There were moments when night matches ended at close to 3 am the next morning, that was quite the experience. Years ago I was given two courtside tickets and watched the portorican Jessica Puig in Louis Armstrong stadium . My Puerto Rican friend that went with me was delighted to watch his fellow countrylady. One year I watched Mal Washington do some open interviews on camera discussing player development. In recent years, we have seen how American players like Jessica Pegula, Francis Tiafoe, Taylor Fritz, Emma Navarro and others created a buzz at the open and in the city and brought a fresh air to the event.. Travel light, a small tote or light back pack is advisable to carry your electronics , small cameras etc. Be alert and watch your steps, it's crowded at some moments and I have tried to give other people space whether I need to get a drink or shop or walk. I have gone so many times and the memories of me, my family , friends and colleagues are well treasured. Overall enjoy the tournament and keep the memories.

Regards,

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