



Best Things to Do with NYC Kids: October 2013 Go List

SEP 29 2013 BY STEPHANIE



October brings all kinds of [fall fun](#) like [harvest festivals](#), [pumpkin picking](#) and a host of [Halloween happenings](#). But there are also wonderful [family-friendly exhibits](#) and [children's theater shows](#), plus cultural celebrations like the citywide [Open House NY](#) and the [Historic House Festival](#), and [National Design Week](#) at [Harlem's Cooper-Hewitt Design Center](#). With so many amazing options, how is your family ever going to choose? Well, that's what our October Go List is for. Behold, the best 14 things to do throughout the month.

As always, if an event piques your interest, be sure to click through to our listing for all the details, including address and time. And keep in mind: In NYC, really cool things to do with kids often get booked up quickly. So buy your tickets ASAP or, in the case of FREE events, arrive as early as possible to try to beat the crowds.

Now get your calendars ready! Here are the top 14 things to do with kids in New York City this October, seven of which are FREE.

[Empire Drive-In – Corona](#)

Friday, October 4-Sunday, October 20 but [movie schedule varies by date](#)

I'm really excited to check out this massive multimedia installation in the New York Hall of Science's parking lot, which reimagines the old-school drive-in experience with an artsy twist. Instead of going in your own vehicle, the exhibit features 60 junked cars and trucks to sit in while you watch a movie on a 40-foot screen. Before each flick, enjoy a slide show of drive in-themed photography and entertainment like Bollywood dance lessons, live music and dancing forklifts. The screenings take place after dark and are aimed at grown-ups. However, a few have kid appeal, such as [The End of the Road: Cars & Other Junk with Greg Saunier's Casio Orchestra](#): silent shorts *One Week* with Buster Keaton, *One A.M.* starring Charlie Chaplin and *Kid Speed* featuring Oliver Hardy accompanied by live music and "car percussion." For families with younger kids, there's [Animation Flip Out](#), a night of cartoons and flip-book making. Even when movies aren't being screened, the installation will be open to explore. Exhibit is free with admission: \$11 for adults, \$8 for children ages 2-17; movie screenings cost \$10-\$20 per person.

[Peter Pan – Midtown West](#)

Friday, October 4-Sunday, October 13

Our [brand-new partner, the New Victory Theater](#), kicks off its season with a clever adaptation of J.M. Barrie's iconic

fairy tale by Australia's Belvoir Theater. No green tights or aerial stunts here; this version focuses on the wonders of imagination instead of special effects as the Darlings venture to the fantastical Neverland without ever leaving their 1980s-era bedroom. Bonus: After the Saturday evening performance on October 5, you can enjoy [TXT Marks the Spot](#), a free high-tech scavenger hunt throughout the theater themed around the show. My family and [went on one last season](#) and they're a ton of fun and really enhance your experience. \$14-\$38

BRIC House Grand Opening – Fort Greene

Saturday, October 5

BRIC Arts—the nonprofit organization behind annual summer favorite [Celebrate Brooklyn!](#)—moves into its massive new [Fort Greene](#) digs: a 40,000-square-foot interdisciplinary art and media center located in the former Strand Theater. The new culture spot includes a performance space, an art gallery, a public access television studio, a cafe, classrooms and The Stoop, a gathering place for no-cost cultural programs. In celebration of the grand opening, there will be a FREE art-filled block party in front of BRIC House featuring pan-Caribbean steel drum group the Natural Expression Rhythm Band, stilt dancing troupe the Brooklyn Jumbies, Afro-funk brass band Underground Horns and interactive performance art by Aisha Cousins. Plus complimentary mac and cheese for all! FREE

Ragamuffin Parade – Bay Ridge

Saturday, October 5

Get into the [Halloween](#) spirit a little early at this charming costume parade, which made our list of NYC's [top annual processions for kids](#). Since 1967, Brooklyn families have been proudly putting on their outfits and marching down Third Avenue in Bay Ridge alongside bands, cheerleaders and makeshift floats. All kids who participate snag a toy, and bicycles are given to the children with the most creative costumes. If you live in the neighborhood, consent forms allowing kids to march are distributed in local schools and day cares. You can also pick one up at community businesses like the [Kaleidoscope Toy Store](#) and [, or you can download](#) one on the organizer's site. FREE

Chile Pepper Fiesta – Crown Heights

Saturday, October 5

The Brooklyn Botanic Garden's festival features plenty of fiery fun for families. Kids can pot chile pepper plants to take home, catch hot performances like pepper juggling and fire breathing, and sample tons of spicy chocolate. There will also be nonstop live music on two stages, a farm stand where you can shop for locally grown peppers, lots of tasty grub to sample and colorful autumn leaves. \$20 for adults, \$15 for students, free for children under age 12

St. Francis Day: Blessing of the Animals – Morningside Heights

Sunday, October 6

A celebration for animal lovers of all faiths. Bring your four- (or two- or no-) legged friends to the Cathedral Church St. John the Divine in honor of St. Francis Day. Watch a procession of exotic animals, including alpacas, tortoises, bees and a camel, head into the church (usually around noon) and then hit the close to get your pets blessed starting at 1pm. There will also be a fair with dancing, face painting, a petting zoo, food and other activities. Note: Advance passes for the 11am service are sold out but a few will be distributed that morning on a first-come first-served basis starting at 9:15am. Personally, I think it's more fun to just hang outside and watch the animal parade. FREE

Little Red Lighthouse Festival – Washington Heights

Saturday, October 12

Although this fest in [Fort Washington Park](#) is part of Open House NY and the Historic House Festival (more on those below), it's such a big annual favorite we wanted to spotlight it on its own. The main event is the chance to explore the interior of Manhattan's only remaining lighthouse, made famous in Hildegarde H. Swift's 1942 children's book [The Little Red Lighthouse and the Great Gray Bridge](#). Take note: Tickets for the tours are distributed starting at noon but

the line for them begins forming hours before, so plan ahead! Can't stand waiting around? The fest also promises great food, fishing, fantastic views and readings of Swift's classic. FREE

Open House NY and the Historic House Festival – Citywide

Saturday, October 12-Sunday, October 13

Every Columbus Day weekend, hundreds of New York City's historic buildings and architectural marvels—including private residences, cultural institutions and offbeat spots like cemeteries and artist studios—open their doors to the public as part of OHNY. The site listings for the 11th annual edition will [be available on Wednesday, October 2](#) so as of this writing we don't have exact details. However, in years past many spots offered special kids' activities. For the third year in a row, the Historic House Festival ([formerly a separate event](#)) has teamed up with OHNY, which means 23 additional buildings will be offering no-cost admission and special programming with a focus on our city's food history. For both fests, you can drop in to many FREE activities while others require advance reservations and a small fee. Be sure to check the schedule when it goes up on October 2! Lots of popular tours (like Tom Otterness' private Gowanus studio) book up super-fast. Mostly FREE

National Design Week – Harlem & Midtown West

Saturday, October 12-Sunday, October 20

Creative kids can head to Harlem's [Cooper-Hewitt Design Center](#) for a week of crafty fun in honor of the museum's [National Design Awards](#). A series of no-cost hands-on design projects are planned for school-age kids like paper lantern making, duct tape creations and daily open craft sessions. Toddlers can get in on the action, too, with storytimes that include creative play and simple art activities. For teens, there's the [Teen Design Fair](#) in Midtown West, where aspiring designers can get face time with pros including this year's National Design Award winners. All programs require [advance registration](#) and are expected to book up fast. FREE

Haunted Halloween Sail with Dr. Blood – South Street Seaport

Saturday, October 19

Enjoy a terrifyingly fun [Halloween](#) sail around New York Harbor on Mommy Poppins' final [Family Cruise](#) of the season. We'll be traveling to the Statue of Liberty on [Manhattan by Sail](#)'s haunted Clipper City Tall Ship with the gory Dr. Blood. The demented doc will perform crazy science experiments, creepy magic tricks and maybe chop off a (fake) limb or two. Other attractions include face painting, a kids' costume parade, nautical skills and incredible views, plus Rice Krispy treats from the Treat House and a New Victory Theater goody bag for every child. \$39 for adults, \$25 for children under 13

Cinderella – Upper West Side

Wednesday, October 23-Sunday, October 27

For a sumptuously take on the Brothers Grimm's tale, head to Lincoln Center to catch this limited engagement of Christopher Wheeldon's *Cinderella* performed by the San Francisco Ballet. Set to Sergei Prokofiev's emotional music, this production incorporates darker story elements like an animated tree that grows out of her mother's grave and four fates who watch over her. Lavish costumes, video projections, stunning sets and large-scale puppets bring the tale to life. Tickets are going fast! In fact, some performances only have limited availability. \$29-\$129

Children's Fall Festival – Floral Park

Sunday, October 27

My family loves this seasonal fete at the bucolic [Queens County Farm Museum](#). Celebrate [all things autumn](#) at this massive bash featuring traditional games like sack races and find the trinkets in the haystack, live music, bouncy houses, a haunted house, pony rides and a petting zoo. Families are encouraged to attend in costume, and this is the perfect day to hit the farm's Amazing Maize Maze and [pumpkin patch](#). \$5 admission but there are additional fees for certain activities.

Day of the Dead – East Village

Thursday, October 31-Sunday, November 3

Day of the Dead—or *Día de los Muertos* as it's known in Spanish—is observed by many Hispanic cultures. While it has no relation to Halloween, it occurs around the same time and features many of the same trappings (skulls, colorful outfits, parades, etc.). Revelers honor friends and family members who have passed on by building altars and adorning them with colorful paper flowers, grinning skeletons and candles. It's a really joyful way to celebrate the deceased without freaking kids out. Mexican culture organization Mano a Mano throws one of the best Day of the Dead events in NYC at St. Mark's Church in the [East Village](#). The four-day fest includes live musical performances, traditional dance processions and a communal altar where you can place photos and other remembrances of your dead loved ones. There will also be cultural workshops for all ages like paper flower making, poetry writing and bread baking. FREE

Halloween – Citywide

Throughout October

We can't curate a list of the best things to do with kids in October without highlighting [Halloween!](#) But there are so many parades, parties and celebrations around town throughout the month, it's impossible to pick just one. That's why we have an entire [Halloween Guide](#). In addition to updating our annual posts about [Halloween parades](#), [no-cost Halloween events](#) and the [best places to trick-or-treat](#), we'll be launching a brand-new post: the top ten Halloween celebrations for NYC kids. Stay tuned for that and in the meantime, bookmark our [Halloween Guide](#).

Honorable Mentions

NYC always has so many incredible things going on, it's difficult to choose. So here are a few more cool events (mostly FREE) that are worth considering for your October calendar. Be sure to [sign up for our FREE newsletters](#) so you can get our weekend picks delivered to your inbox every Thursday morning.

Pick the perfect jack-o'-lantern at a [nearby pumpkin patch](#).

Stroll through Central Park's [Hallett Nature Sanctuary](#) every Tuesday afternoon this month. The area, which was previously closed to visitors, has been transformed into a native woodland garden complete with birds and wildlife. FREE

Enjoy a hands-on [family workshop](#) on October 19 at the New-York Historical Society new *The Armory Show at 100: Modern Art and Revolution* exhibit, which marks the centennial of the legendary 1913 New York Armory Show featuring works by Duchamp, Matisse, Picasso, Cézanne, Gauguin and Van Gogh.

If you missed the [Construction](#) exhibit last year you're in luck: The winning sculptures from the 2012 competition will be on display in two NYC office buildings starting on Monday, October 21. FREE

Gawk at amazing acrobats and animal acts at the Big Apple Circus's brand-new show [Luminocity](#) at Lincoln Center, which begins Friday, October 25.

http://mommypoppins.com/nyc-kids-things-to-do-best-family-events-activities-october?quicktabs_1=5