



LOWER EAST SIDE



Once one of the most overpopulated neighborhoods in the world, the Lower East Side is a swirling reflection of so many influences — past and present.

The Irish, German and Eastern Europeans that once crowded its streets may have moved on, but their presence lingers on in many of the local shops and eateries. Now, primarily Puerto Rican and Dominican immigrants have taken their place in the tenements of Loisaida (the Spanish word for Lower East Side) reinventing the neighborhood as time marches on. The Lower East Side, defined as much by its strong ethnic enclaves as by its large artistic community, is downtown in every sense of the word.

Since the 20s, artists, painters, and writers with politics and prose too radical for even the off-centered West Village spilled over into the Lower East Side. They are drawn not only by the area's aura of urban realism, but its low-income housing and vibrant communal cohesiveness as well. Local area artistry adorning the walls of most night spots attests to this fostering of artistic expression.

The Lower East Side, or LoHo, as some real estate developers are now calling it, is reveling in this resurgence, reflected in the large number of night spots seemingly springing up every month. From the Middle Eastern vibes at Kush to the ultra-swanky Lansky Lounge, there is definitely something going on these days.



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Type of Establishment
Bar/Live Music
Hours
Daily 7pm-4am
Drink Prices
\$
Food
N/A
Nearest Subway
F to 2nd Avenue
Credit Cards
Cash Only

Arlene Grocery
95 Stanton Street
Between Orchard & Ludlow
(212) 358-1633

Extremely up close and personal you have the feeling you are in a garage listening to a band perform, minus the mistakes and greasy floor. However, it is its small size that gives Arlene Grocery its charm. The music may be loud, but the quality sound system is such that you are enveloped by the music. The dark atmosphere gives way to a multi-colored collage of lights illuminating the band. The crowd is mixed, but as usual there are many Lower East Side local musicians and artists in attendance.

Type of Establishment
Bar/Restaurant
Hours
Su-Th 11am-2am
F-Sa 11am-4am
Drink Prices
\$\$
Food
Southern
Nearest Subway
F to 2nd Avenue
Credit Cards
MC, V

Baby Jupiter
170 Orchard Street @ Stanton
(212) 982-2229

The pale pastel art deco decor is reminiscent of South Beach, Miami-style architecture, but the entertainment is pure downtown eclectic. From comedy to vaudeville and jazz to electronica, Baby Jupiter offers the widest variety of live entertainment downtown and superior acoustic design highlights the effect. The front room is designed diner-style with a lava lamp or two thrown in and features a full menu. Pass through to the main room and enjoy anything from Monday's Improv Comedy to Electro-Fetus party on Wednesday or Mad Groove Saturdays.

Type of Establishment
Cafe
Hours
Daily 9am-12am
Drink Prices
\$
Food
Vegetarian
Nearest Subway
F to 2nd Avenue
Credit Cards
Cash Only

Babylon
237 Eldridge Street @ East Houston
(212) 505-7546

Sandwiched between a couple of bars, Babylon is a haven of calm. An eclectic organic veggie cafe offering sandwiches, eggs and soups, Babylon's moderate prices and relaxed atmosphere make it a real gem. Every six weeks Babylon features new artwork on its colorful walls. So if you're looking for a respite from the bustle of the East Village and prefer sipping a cappuccino, beer or wine surrounded by art, Babylon is a must.

Barramundi
147 Ludlow Street
Between Rivington & Stanton
(212) 529-6900

An atmosphere illuminated by candles and deep red lights welcomes you as you enter this trendy downtown bar. Weather permitting, the real party is out back in the spacious garden. A definite downtown atmosphere here is heightened by the conversation of local musicians and artists who mingle amongst the mixed crowd. If the microbrews and cocktails are not racy enough for you, try one of the many house specials including Rough Riders, Two Gals in a Glass, Horn-E-Ania.

Dharma
174 Orchard Street
Between Stanton & East Houston
(212) 780-0313



Soft sultry percussion slinks out onto Orchard Street and draws you into this comfortable downtown jazz spot. You'll understand jazz is more than music when you see it played in an environment conducive to absorbing every nuance. From the traditional to the experimental, Dharma offers live talent every night except for Sunday. So grab a seat at the bar or fall into one of the comfortable lounge chairs located in the candle-lit lounge areas. And be sure to check out the artwork created by local area artists featured each month.

Idlewild
145 East Houston Street
Between Forsyth & Eldridge
(212) 477-5005

Your boarding pass here is a 21-year-old face, expensive retro designer clothes, and a determination to look important despite your youthful exuberance. Girly flight attendants serve drinks to kids from good homes who act cool and experienced in this cushioned aircraft imitation. Daughters in pricey designer dresses and sons in 70s shirts flirt to funk spun by a DJ, and chat in airplane seats at the chrome bar, in front of the aircraft's many bathroom doors, or in the tail section, where it gets very smoky. A cylindrical aquarium makes the whole place, kept in icy blue, look even cooler.

Type of Establishment
Bar
Hours
Su-Th 7:30pm-4am
F-Sa 6pm-4am
Drink Prices
\$\$
Food
N/A
Nearest Subway
F to Delancey Street
Credit Cards
Cash Only

Type of Establishment
Bar/Live Music
Hours
Daily 6pm-4am
Drink Prices
\$\$
Food
N/A
Nearest Subway
F to 2nd Avenue
Credit Cards
MC, V

Type of Establishment
Bar
Hours
Daily 8pm-3am
Drink Prices
\$\$\$
Food
N/A
Nearest Subway
F to 2nd Avenue
Credit Cards
MC, V, AmEx

Type of Establishment
Bar/Lounge
Hours
Daily 7pm-4am
Drink Prices
\$\$\$
Food
Middle Eastern
Nearest Subway
F to 2nd Avenue
Credit Cards
MC, V

Kush
183 Orchard Street
Between Stanton & East Houston
(212) 677-7328

Step off Orchard Street into the romantic Middle Eastern world that is Kush — where old world music dances with the candlelight. The stucco architecture and ornate artwork and furnishings are complemented by an authentic menu of Middle Eastern delicacies and spirits with a strong Moroccan influence. It's a mixed downtown crowd with a large number of European patrons. Tuesday's Middle Eastern night features a belly dancer, tarot readings, henna painting and a live gypsy band. Tuesday through Saturday Kush offers a DJ including DJ Sasha spinning global fusion on Wednesday.

Type of Establishment
Restaurant/Lounge
Hours
Su-M 8pm-2am
T-Th 8pm-4am
Sa 10pm-4am
Closed Friday
Drink Prices
\$\$\$
Food
Eclectic
Kosher
Nearest Subway
F to Delancy Street
Credit Cards
All Major

Lansky Lounge
104 Norfolk Street
Between Delancy & Rivington
(212) 677-9489

"Down the stairs, through the alley and courtyard, up the staircase, and through the green door. Got it?" said Big John, the imposing dapper don who mans the front door. Open Lansky Lounge's doors and you're instantly transplanted from the late 90s to the late 20s. The old speakeasy takes you back to the days when gangsters like Meyer Lansky were loved and feared, when guys were guys and girls were dolls. Everything on the menu is kosher, so after stuffing yourself with potato latkes, head to the back room and swing the night away.

Type of Establishment
Bar
Hours
Daily 2pm-4am
Drink Prices
\$\$
Food
Bar Menu
Nearest Subway
F to Delancy Street
Credit Cards
Cash Only

Local 138
138 Ludlow Street
Between Rivington & Stanton
(212) 477-0280

Regulars here in this comfortable Irish/English pub really enjoy drinking with friends in the two traditional snugs (semi-private rooms) located in the front of the bar with windows looking out onto Ludlow Street. The design and soft brown finished wood decor may be that of a traditional pub, but the crowd is certainly a bit trendy. Any respectable pub would not be complete if it didn't offer a superior pint of Guinness, and this spot is no exception — stout drinkers, put this place on your list.

Ludlow Bar
165 Ludlow Street
Between Stanton & East Houston
(212) 353-0536

Low ceilings threaten decapitation for anyone 6'2" and over, and with the exception of the gorgeous lamps, the place is not much to look at. The DJs (bless their talented souls) more than make up for Ludlow's decor ... or lack thereof. Throughout the week DJs spin an assortment of everything from b-side hip-hop to bossanova. The crowd, an eclectic bunch of artists and Lower Eastsiders, relishes this 'come as you are' environment. "This is one of my favorite places to DJ," said Cool Marv. "I can play whatever I want. Ludlow Bar is a DJ's dream."

Luna Lounge
171 Ludlow Street
Between Stanton & East Houston
(212) 260-2323

Regulars at this spot say it's like seeing a band perform live in your basement, but you've never had a basement like this. Warm reds, glowing oranges and polished brass makes Luna Lounge extremely easy on the eyes. Two or three bands perform a mix of alternative and pop each night except Monday when comedy takes the stage. Local musicians and artists make up only a small part of this mixed crowd and bands end early so that the atmosphere becomes relaxed enough for socializing and drinking with friends — new and old.

Max Fish
178 Ludlow Street
Between Stanton & East Houston
(212) 253-1922

Whereas most downtown night spots display artwork on their walls, Max Fish invites artists to redecorate the entire bar each month. Aside from the pool table, a handful of statues and the curvy snake-shaped bar, little else remains the same from month to month. The artists vary, except for two special shows each year that are neighborhood favorites — a cartoon show and a show displaying the artwork of mental patients. To attempt to describe the ever-changing decor is unfair, except to say the range is somewhere between contemporary realism and psychedelic carnival. Live music offered the first Sunday of every month.

Type of Establishment
Bar
Hours
Daily 6pm-4am
Drink Prices
\$\$
Food
N/A
Nearest Subway
F to 2nd Avenue
Credit Cards
All Major

Type of Establishment
Bar/Lounge
Hours
Daily 4pm-4am
Drink Prices
\$\$
Food
N/A
Nearest Subway
F to 2nd Avenue
Credit Cards
MC, V, AmEx

Type of Establishment
Bar
Hours
Daily 5:30pm-4am
Drink Prices
\$
Food
N/A
Nearest Subway
F to 2nd Avenue
Credit Cards
Cash Only

Type of Establishment
Lounge
Hours
Daily 3pm-4am
Drink Prices
\$\$
Food
N/A
Nearest Subway
F to 2nd Avenue
Credit Cards
Cash Only

Meow Mix
269 East Houston
Between Avenue A & Avenue B
(212) 254-0688

It's ladies' night every night at this purr-fect alternative downtown local haunt which features live music all week long. The crowd is mostly lesbian, but Meow Mix also taps into the mixed Lower East Side scene on week-ends. Pussycat cartoon drawings, leopard skin chairs and numerous other feline features are of interest, but peripheral. The main focus here is on the music and the conversation.

Try one of the specials including the Flaming Ho-Moe, Real Love or Troye on the Beach.

Type of Establishment
Bar/Live Music
Hours
Daily 6pm-4am
Drink Prices
\$\$
Food
N/A
Nearest Subway
F to 2nd Avenue
Credit Cards
MC, V

Mercury Lounge
217 East Houston
Between Ludlow & Essex
(212) 260-4700

The bands go on at 6 p.m. most nights at this East Village nightclub where the emphasis is definitely on the music. From headliners to local talent, this spot features a wide array of artists and musical styles. It's not exactly hard rock, and not exactly easy listening, but there is strong accentuation on local vocals complemented by an exceptional sound system. There's no cover to drink at the front bar, but if you want to pass through the velvet curtains into the heart of the Mercury Lounge where the bands perform there is a \$6 charge.

Type of Establishment
Bar
Hours
Su-W 7pm-4am
Th-Sa 4pm-4am
Drink Prices
\$\$
Food
N/A
Nearest Subway
F to 2nd Avenue
Credit Cards
Cash Only

Motor City Bar
127 Ludlow Street
Between Delancy & Rivington
(212) 358-1595

The Detroit bar scene has long been a reflection of its neighborly, blue-collar, down-to-earth patrons. Here, in the heart of the Lower East Side, is a slice of that Motor City nightlife. The DJ spins a mix of classic rock tunes, sprinkled here and there with alternative and punk, seven nights a week at this popular haunt for local area musicians. Note: Even though the Detroit Red Wings won the Stanley Cup, Rangers' and Islanders' fans are more than welcome.

Orchard Bar
200 Orchard Street
Between Stanton & East Houston
(212) 673-5350

Wild Kingdom might be a more appropriate name for this bar. With a floor that's reminiscent of rugged terrain, banquettes made of granite, and National Geographic-esque animal flicks playing on a central screen, it's not certain whether one is supposed to grab a drink or pitch a tent. Despite the unnaturally natural look of the place, the staff is congenial and the DJs put on a great show, especially on Mondays. Note: Look for the dripping terrarium in the front window, it's the only way you'll find this place.

Rivertown Lounge
187 Orchard Street
Between Stanton & East Houston
(212) 388-1288

Tapping into the revival of Orchard Street is this collaboration of downtown Irish pub atmosphere and uptown chic. The lounge makes the most of the antique turn-of-the-century architecture by combining the texture of an art gallery with the ambiance of your favorite pub. A polished mahogany bar runs the length of the room and faces a lounge area with walls adorned by the artwork of local area artists. A favorite among many Manhattan bartenders, the Rivertown Lounge has DJs most nights, a live blues band on Sunday and never asks for a cover. Note: Busier and much more exciting after 11 p.m.

Salon bOb
235 Eldridge Street
Between Stanton & East Houston
(212) 777-0588

Regulars at this spot compare it to enjoying conversation and music over drinks in your own living room, only you don't have to cleanup when the party's over. Its comfortable antique decor, bathed in red lamps softened by candlelight, lends itself to meeting friends, both old and new. Sink into one of the cozy leopard skin or blue velvet couches and strike up a conversation with the person next to you who could be anyone from a foreign investment banker to a skateboarder. Various DJs fill out the week — spinning hip-hop, Latin and industrial, with emphasis placed on Sunday's live shows.

Type of Establishment
Bar
Hours
Su-M 6pm-3am
T-Sa 6pm-4am
Drink Prices
\$\$\$
Food
N/A
Nearest Subway
F to 2nd Avenue
Credit Cards
MC, V, AmEx

Type of Establishment
Lounge
Hours
Daily 12pm-4am
Drink Prices
\$\$
Food
N/A
Nearest Subway
F to 2nd Avenue
Credit Cards
All Major

Type of Establishment
Lounge
Hours
Daily 7pm-7am
Drink Prices
\$\$
Food
N/A
Nearest Subway
F to 2nd Avenue
Credit Cards
All Major

Type of Establishment
Lounge
Hours
Daily 7pm-4am
Drink Prices
\$\$
Food
N/A
Nearest Subway
F to 2nd Avenue
Credit Cards
Cash Only

Sapphire
249 Eldridge Street
Between Stanton & East Houston
(212) 777-5153

Stepping into this spot you get the feeling of a large nightclub, only on a smaller scale. Flashing strobes and fluorescent bulbs illuminate the crowd dancing to hip-hop, house and R&B. There's a definite downtown Lower East Side vibe here. The crowd is mostly local, but also has a mixed out-of-town flavor. Friday and Saturday features 80s disco and house compilations.

Type of Establishment
Supper Club
Hours
Su-Th 6pm-2am
F-Sa 6pm-4am
Drink Prices
\$\$\$
Food
French/South American
Nearest Subway
F to Delancy Street
Credit Cards
All Major

Torch
137 Ludlow Street
Between Rivington & Stanton
(212) 228-5151

Torch is a downtown supper club successfully aspiring towards an uptown ambiance. Ornate glowing orange/red wooden fixtures match the larger wall sculpture behind the bar as you walk in. The deep sultry sounds of live musicians are evenly carried throughout the club, providing the perfect appetizer for a menu of French specialties with a South American infusion. Brown suede-textured walls lit by soft golden globes and candlelight make this an ideal place for an intimate dinner.