

# See New York like a local

IAN STALKER

Sara Teckenberg and Andreas Leuzinger are offering to help both first-time and repeat New York City visitors explore their sometimes overwhelmingly expansive adopted hometown.

Germany native Teckenberg and Swiss-born Leuzinger run LOCALIKE New York, which can provide those planning to visit the huge metropolis with either a customized or a standard itinerary, providing recommendations on the likes of restaurants, nightclubs, galleries and museums that visitors are likely unaware of.

## Something unique

The couple say that their service is a unique one, with those wanting a personalized itinerary feeding information about themselves and their interests into the [www.localike.com](http://www.localike.com) website, and the firm then preparing a suggested itinerary for a day or more and sending it to the client.

“These are unique, authentic experiences,” Teckenberg says. “The idea is that instead of a tourist, you experience New York like a local.”

The places LOCALIKE New York may suggest are “not necessarily tourist hotspots,” she adds, with the company noting suggestions can range from a Tibetan restaurant in the likes of Jackson Heights – a district that outsiders likely are unaware of – to a guided tour of Gramercy Park, the only private park in Manhattan and a “symbol of New York’s high-society exclusiveness.”

## Overwhelming

Tourists who choose to explore the United States’ largest city without seeking help may find it “overwhelming,” Teckenberg says. Leuzinger adds that those who Google New



photo courtesy LOCALIKE NEW YORK

**LOCALIKE New York is able to direct tourists to parts of New York they've likely never heard of.**

York travel tips will receive a staggering number of suggestions that would require a huge amount of time to navigate through.

Providing the information needed for LOCALIKE New York to draw up an itinerary in turn takes about 15 minutes, with the company asking for five working days to create that itinerary. LOCALIKE will “prioritize” itineraries for those who will be arriving within less than five days.

The company charges US\$79 for a one-day customized itinerary, US\$129 for 2 and US\$40 for each additional day that might be requested.

## Extensive network

Teckenberg says first-time New York City visitors tend to spend time taking in popular landmarks, such as the Empire State Building and Times Square.

But she adds a one-day visit is a “super short” opportunity to take in a city that has a huge number of attractions, many unknown to non-residents. “You could stay weeks and wouldn’t run out of things to do.”

LOCALIKE New York is touting an “extensive network” of places it can recommend to

visitors. Among other things, it has a list of some 300 restaurants that its staff has actually visited, being familiarized with the quality of food, prices and ambiance.

If a client insists on a the likes of a restaurant that LOCALIKE New York is wary of, it will include it in an itinerary while mentioning its concerns.

Leuzinger says LOCALIKE New York won’t recommend anything before he or Teckenberg take a first-hand look at the establishment, adding it doesn’t receive commissions from places it suggests to clients.

Manhattan is at the core of New York City’s tourist trade but Leuzinger and Teckenberg say all of the city’s five boroughs have points of interest, although reaching some may be more time-consuming than others.

Those who receive personalized itineraries can find tips on the likes of nearby subway stops.

## Bespoke itineraries

LOCALIKE New York will change up to 30% of a customized itinerary at a client’s request without any additional charge.

Leuzinger says LOCALIKE New York – which began in 2012, providing services exclusively in German, and started catering to English-speakers in January – is eager to work with travel agents, paying them 10% commission. The company will recommend hotels to clients but won’t actually book them, nor does it book travel to New York City, avoiding competition with agents.

LOCALIKE New York can also provide standardized packages revolving around the likes of arts and culture, shopping, restaurants and food, nightlife and the outdoors. Those packages are available for \$49.



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