

# A very Eloise New York City adventure

**CHRISTINE KNIGHT** takes her own Eloise to discover Manhattan in the footsteps of her namesake.

"I am Eloise. I am six!" The precocious city child who lives at **The Plaza Hotel** in the heart of New York City is an iconic character created by writer Kay Thompson. The whimsical (and somewhat naughty) Eloise has delighted generations of little girls and inspired them to follow in her footsteps on their own Manhattan adventures.

I have a special place in my heart for the very spirited Eloise, as she was the namesake for our daughter. So it's with great delight that I take her twirling through New York City in true Eloise style.

"I absolutely love The Plaza!"

While the fictional Eloise lives on the top floor penthouse of The Plaza, fans can stay at the hotel in a special Eloise Suite, with decor designed by Betsey Johnson. The room is pink, pink, pink, with pretty custom Eloise-themed bedding, Eloise books and even dolls to play with.

Downstairs in The Palm Court, we enjoy the rather fancy "Eloise" children's high tea. Served on Eloise-themed china handpainted especially for The Plaza and including a giant wad of pink fairy floss, it's a luxe treat for us all.

## Museums and more

To run off the sugar, we head across the road to Central Park, the fictional Eloise's stomping ground. We see plenty of dogs that look like Eloise's pet Weenie, and spot turtles that could be Skipperdee (minus the sneakers he wears in the classic book).

A climb on the Alice In Wonderland sculpture is in order, as is a play in Heckscher Playground, the oldest playground in Central Park. After sailing remote-controlled boats around the Conservatory Water, we hit the museums for some art and culture.

Located on the edge of Central Park is the **American Museum of Natural History**, said to be home to one of the largest collections of dinosaur fossils in the world. We roar at the T-rex and crane our necks to take in the Titanosaur, before moving on to the renowned **Museum of Modern Art (MoMA)**.

MoMA is conveniently near The Plaza and time passes quickly as we create projects in the children's space, Art Lab, explore the Sculpture Garden and complete activity cards in the gallery underneath masterpieces by Monet, Matisse and van Gogh.

## Skates, cakes and a Broadway date

The literary Eloise was a lucky little girl who had ice-skating rinks at her fingertips every Christmas, and we have timed it right to take a spin on the ice, too. After pirouetting around The Rink at **Rockefeller Center** we take the elevator to the **Top of the Rock Observation Deck** for a birds'-eye view of the city.

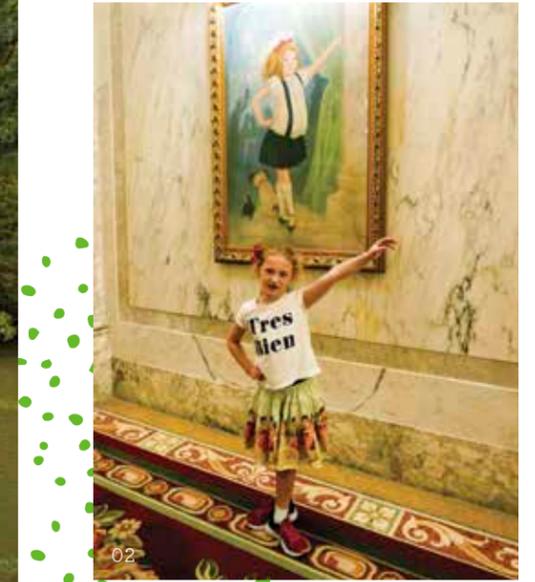
Back in the Rockefeller Center, we can't resist **FAO Schwarz**, the **American Girl** store and **LEGO** store. "Charge it please and thank you very much!" says my Eloise, who has clearly read the books too many times.

Refuelling is required before we see a **Broadway** show, and we're spoilt for choice. **Alice's Tea Cup** not only serves a kid-friendly afternoon tea, but also sprinkles children with fairy dust and loans them fairy wings when they enter. We also love sitting inside a giant cupcake in **Dylan's Candy Bar** cafe and listening to the talented waitstaff belt out Broadway tunes at **Ellen's Stardust Diner**. After filling up, we have a date to see *Wicked*, which has the perfect message for little rebel girls like Eloise: it's OK to be different, defy gravity and be true to yourself.

Our last stop on our whirlwind NYC tour is at the bottom of Manhattan, Battery Park, to ride the fish-themed SeaGlass Carousel and visit the feistiest girl in town, the Fearless Girl statue, facing off against a Charging Bull. Sending a message about the power of strong girls, we reckon the original Eloise would love her as much as ours does. ●

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