



introduction



WHAT IS A CURIOSITY?

Great question. I like you already!

A curiosity is anything you wouldn't find in a typical guidebook. So, if you're searching these pages for a good hotel room in Niagara Falls, you've bought the wrong book. If you want to know the scientific reason why they call Niagara Falls the "Honeymoon Capital of the World," keep reading. If you want to know how to get to the Statue of Liberty . . . um . . . do you still have your receipt? But if you're curious about who's waving back to Lady Liberty from the Brooklyn side, congratulations! You're gonna love this book.

It includes everything from a house shaped like a group of mushrooms in Rochester and a jailhouse-turned-restaurant in Owego to the Loch Ness Monster's long-lost cousin in the Adirondacks and a man who built his own castle with found objects in the Hudson Valley.

It's meant to be part guidebook, so, where possible, I'll tell you where you can go to see some of these cool things. Other stories are about private people doing cool things, such as the guy in Brooklyn who missed his home country so much that he built a replica of the Greek island he came from in his backyard. Please use your discretion with those stories; don't stand in the yard and gawk!

I'm going to give you a ton of material for your next cocktail party or watercooler show, and perhaps a few more reasons to get out there and see New York State. So, sit back in your coziest armchair and come along for the ride. Then, get in your car and drive.

WELCOME TO NEW YORK

Before we hop in the car and start meeting people, I thought we could take a little helicopter ride to get you acquainted with the state.

Ready? Headphones on, seatbelts fastened.

New York is the nation's twenty-seventh-largest state, clocking in at 54,471 square miles. I fear you won't be able to concentrate if I don't tell you the top three largest states, so here goes: Alaska is number one, at more than 650,000 square miles, followed by Texas, which is half that size, and California.

