



## HOW TO TAKE ON THE US OPEN LIKE A PRO

The [2018 US Open](#) is officially underway and New York City is embracing the 50th anniversary of the Grand Slam event from Flushing to Manhattan and everywhere in between. With athlete appearances, tournament events and surprise guests, the two-week tennis extravaganza is just beginning and can often overwhelm fans not used to the lay of the land.



*Image: The Topsy Traveler (and family) at the 2018 US Open*

Last week, [Lotte New York Palace](#) hosted its fourth annual Palace Invitational, where some of tennis' biggest names battled for glory in a spirited badminton tournament. Guests took in the courtside views while enjoying cocktails and light bites "served up" in honor of America's largest annual tennis tournament, the US Open.

Players included 16-time Grand Slam winner and the #1 player in men's tennis **Rafael "Rafa" Nadal**, legendary sisters **Serena & Venus Williams**, German brothers **Alexander (Sasha) & Mischa Zverev**, and #17 globally-ranked player in men's singles **Nick Kyrgios**.



*Serena Williams, Rafa Nadal, Nick Kyrgios, Venus Williams, Alexander (Sasha) & Mischa Zverev / Image: The Topsy Traveler*



*Serena Williams attends 2018 Lotte New York Palace Invitational on August 23, 2018 / Image: Lotte New York Palace*



*Rafa Nadal attends 2018 Lotte New York Palace Invitational on August 23, 2018 / Image: Lotte New York Palace*



*Alexander Zverev and Mischa Zverev attend 2018 Lotte New York Palace Invitational on August 23, 2018 / Image: Lotte New York Palace*

Throughout the tournament, Lotte New York Palace Executive Chef Cedric Tovar served tennis-inspired bites, including tuna tartare and ice cream macaron sandwiches



*Tuna Tartare hors d'oeuvres at 2018 Lotte New York Palace Invitational on August 23, 2018 / Image: Lotte New York Palace*



*Image: The Topsy Traveler*

While the tournament events are exciting enough on their own, it's the thrill of the tournament that brings tennis enthusiasts back to New York year after year. In celebration of the Grand Slam's 50th birthday, here are my tips to make the most of the 2018 US Open!

#### **TICKETS:**

There's no doubt about it. This is not an inexpensive event, but if you're eager to go and not spend a fortune - go early! Grounds passes are starting at \$60 including full access to upper seating in the new Louis Armstrong and all the outside courts and tournament grounds.

#### **GETTING THERE:**

The US Open is held at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, Flushing Meadow Corona Park, Flushing, NY 11368. USE MASS TRANSIT!!! If you don't have to drive - **DO NOT DRIVE** - it's just a royal pain in the ass, there is always traffic and the train is so much easier.

- **Subway:** The 7 train provides easy service from Grand Central Terminal to Mets-Willets Point Station, including connections for all Metro-North Trains from Westchester and Connecticut. Service is also available from the Port Authority Bus Terminal.



- **Long Island Rail Road:** LIRR provides service to Mets-Willets Point Station from Woodside, and convenient connections from Penn Station for New Jersey Transit customers. For guests with disabilities, get off the LIRR train at 61st/Woodside Station and transfer to the 7 train. Take the 7 train to Mets-Willets Point Station.
- **Schedules Online:** The MTA website, [mta.info](http://mta.info), provides complete schedules and information about the most convenient ways to get to the US Open.

#### EAT:

2018 marks the 50th Anniversary of the US Open Grand Slam event with culinary offerings that are blowing my mind. Gone are the days of hamburgers, hot dogs and overpriced crêpes - famed chef creations, fine dining restaurants and trendy take out now warmly greet tournament attendees at every turn. The grounds have continued to evolve and so has the elaborate menu of food and beverages, to help make a day at the US Open even more memorable. As a serious tennis fan, it pains me to say it, but it's almost worth going for the food alone...especially this year! In honor of their "Gold Anniversary" here are some of my favorites available at Billie Jean King National Tennis Center:

**FIELD TRIP:** Chef JJ Johnson is set to open up his new restaurant in Harlem this fall and is debuting the fast-casual grain concept at this year's US Open. Chef JJ has brought heirloom rice from around the world presented in an array of bowls and buns. Be the first to try these delicious culinary creations:



*Image: The Topsy Traveler*

- **Piri Piri Salmon and Pineapple Black Rice (pictured):** Hand-caught Skuna Bay salmon in a citrusy and flavorful Piri Piri sauce, service with Anson Mills Black China rice along with shaved cabbage, edamame and pineapple
- **Crispy Jerk BBQ Chicken Thigh + Carolina Gold Rice:** A 24-hour brined friend chicken thigh glazed in jerk BBQ sauce with notes of tamarind, habanero, allspice and nutmeg served with fresh market vegetables in a bowl with Anson Mills freshly milled Carolina gold rice
- **Grilled Shrimp, Crispy Coconut Rice + Jollof Sauce:** Sticky coconut rice meets grilled shrimp in a sweet and spicy sauce of tomatoes, eggplant, West African Birds Eye Chili, habanero, cayenne and ginger
- **Grain Bao Bun with Taro Chips:** A grain burger made with quinoa, shitake mushrooms, roasted poblanos, corn and spices topped with smashed avocado and stracciatella cheese

**FUKU:** Momofuku Chef and Founder David Chang and his famous fried chicken sandwich shop return in multiple locations. Stop by the counter when you scope out the new Louis Armstrong Stadium - efficient use of tournament time and there are barely any lines there! This year's menu highlights include:



*Images: The Tipsy Traveler*

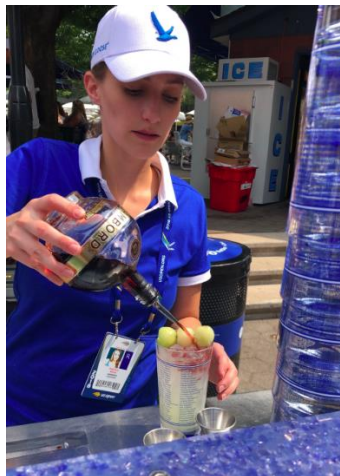
- **Knockout Sandwich (pictured):** Spicy fried chicken thigh topped with seasoned cabbage and knockout sauce
- **110 Burger:** Exclusive to the US Open, the two LaFreida beef patties are topped with cheese, applewood-smoked bacon, pickles, and Fuku Mayo atop Hot Bread Kitchen Bring Bread

**MELT BAKERY:** Hand-made ice cream cookie sandwiches made fresh daily.



*Image: The Topsy Traveler*

- **Lovelet (pictured):** Red velvet Meltcake with cream cheese ice cream - *my favorite!*
- **Classic:** Chocolate chip walnut cookies with vanilla ice cream
- **Bramblebee:** Honeycomb cookies with blackberry violet ice cream



*Images: The Topsy Traveler*

**GREY GOOSE HONEY DEUCE (pictured):** To keep the celebration going, Grey Goose is putting a twist on the official cocktail of the US Open by introducing the all new Frozen Honey Deuce. Both versions are served in a limited-edition 50th anniversary commemorative cup, which features a listing of past men's and women's US Open singles champions.

I am not a fan of most frozen cocktails, so I stuck with the original (\$17), which is made up of Grey Goose vodka, lemonade, raspberry liquor and garnished with honeydew melon balls. The clever cocktail is just as delicious as ever and a welcomed cool down on this sweltering 90-degree days.

**STAY:**

[The Lotte New York Palace](#), New York's largest luxury hotel and perfectly positioned at 50th and Madison (walking distance to Grand Central Station) to be your home away from home during the US Open. The iconic Manhattan landmark provides unparalleled services, spacious luxury accommodations and the chance to spot your favorite players off the court.



Images: Lotte New York Palace

After a full day of tennis and walking around the 22 [courts](#) inside the tennis center's vast 46.5 acres - the hotel's luxury guest rooms and [in-room dining menu](#) offer the perfect relief from a full day on your feet.

*Tip: I recommend the Prime Beef Burger and French Fries followed by a nightcap in Trouble's Trust bar - there's a likely chance of spotting the likes of Chris Evert and Rafa Nadal*





*Image: Lotte New York Palace*

#### **TIPSY'S TIPS:**

There's a lot to do and see at the 2018 US Open. Here are some quick tips to make it as easy as possible:

- **Download the app!** [The US Open Tennis Championships app](#) will help you navigate the grounds. It shows who's playing and where, with realtime score updates - all designed to keep you informed and make sure you see the matches you want. It's not uncommon for tennis matches to run long and your planned itinerary will change, but best to start the day with a flexible plan in place and let the flow of the tournament navigate the rest.
- **Don't bring a bag.** The lines are long and there is a separate line if you go bag-free. It's not always possible, so there is a bag check at before the main entrance lines begin - use them! It will save you time waiting on line to get in.
- **Use the South Gate Entrance.** The trains and parking lots mostly flow directly into the East Gate Entrance, which tends to bottleneck in an overwhelming flow of tennis enthusiasts. Bypass the long wait and walk around to the South Gate Entrance.
- **Don't bother bringing your own water bottle.** While I'm all for limiting the use of plastic bottles, the water in Flushing is less than desirable. Unless you're high-tech water system includes a cooling agent and filtration - you'll be on the Evian line like the rest of us.
- **Wear comfortable, supportive walking shoes.** There are a lot of steps, lots of land and different terrain. You will use them!
- **Walk the paths less taken.** There are a lot of fun booths this year with photo opps and free goodies. Don't be afraid to walk down those less than crowded walkways and see what you discover.
- **Be patient.** There are thousands of fans flocking to Flushing and no matter the VIP status of your tickets, you will wait on lines, you will wait for alternate side game changes to sit down and you will hit some sort of foot or car traffic at some point in your commute. It's all part of the experience, so be prepared and you'll be much happier!
- **ENJOY!** This really is one of the greatest sporting events in the world - and now you don't even need to be to a professional tennis fan to have a great time at the 2018 US Open!