There are endless paths to travel in Central Park, and even lifelong New Yorkers can discover something new in its 843 acres. Check out this month’s featured landmarks to learn more about their history and about the Central Park Conservancy’s mission to restore, manage, and enhance Central Park.

Central Park Zoo
The Wildlife Conservation Society keeps the Zoo open year-round, and winter is a great time to visit. The crowds die down, and many of the animals are more active in the cooler weather. Catch a glimpse of the sea lions as you pass through, or stop inside to meet all of the Zoo’s residents, including penguins, seals, and snow leopards. Families with children can continue north to the Tisch Children’s Zoo, home to potbellied pigs, sheep, and the only cow in Manhattan.

Delacorte Clock
Before you exit the Zoo, stop at the Delacorte Clock to hear the nursery rhymes or seasonal tunes that play every half hour. Donated by philanthropist George Delacorte, the clock was dedicated in 1965 and features a band of whimsical animals—a penguin banging a drum, a hippo on violin, a bear and his tambourine, a concertina-playing elephant, a goat with pipes, and a kangaroo blowing his horn—that circle the tower as the music plays. The Conservancy works to ensure the outdoor clock spreads musical cheer all year-round.

Balto
In honor of this month’s Iditarod Great Sled Race, we pay a visit to the statue of Balto, a sled dog who helped deliver diphtheria medicine to the residents of Nome, Alaska after an outbreak in 1925. Only 10 months later, a monument to Balto and his team was erected in Central Park, and it has since become one of the Park’s most popular statues. Balto himself, along with his musher, Gunnar Kassen, were present at the dedication ceremony, making this the only statue in Central Park to have had the honoree present at the unveiling.

Rumsey Playfield
Now synonymous with the popular cultural series, SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield has always been an area for entertainment. Over the last century, this space has housed the Ladies’ Refreshment Saloon, a respectable place where women could dine in public without a male escort; the Casino, the Park’s first formal restaurant for coed dining and an Art Deco night club; a playground; and SummerStage, which continues today. In 2016, the Conservancy restored the landscape around Rumsey Playfield, rebuilding paths and expanding the irrigation infrastructure.

The Mall
When Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux designed Central Park, they envisioned a formal promenade as one of the Park’s most important features. The only straight line in the Park, the Mall is lined with rows of American elm trees, displaying one of the largest and last remaining stands of American elms in North America. The trees create a canopy above the pedestrian walkway. This design was intended to rival the famous gothic cathedrals of Europe and evoke feelings akin to a religious experience for those walking down the path.

Bethesda Terrace
The Mall culminates at Bethesda Terrace, which is considered the heart of Central Park. On the Terrace’s piers, ramps, and balustrades, you’ll notice elaborate carvings that represent time and the four seasons. Down the steps is the arcade, an atmospheric space underneath the Terrace, which was originally conceived as an open-air reception hall. Its highlight is the magnificent Minton tile ceiling, which the Conservancy restored in the 1980s. Finally, walk out to the main plaza and take in the bronze statue, Angel of the Waters, a symbol of purity and healing.

Want even more of the inside scoop? Join us for an Official Central Park Tour. Click here for the full schedule.