

Heat Wave Takes Over New York City

by Karen Wang

Monday, July 22, 2019

A heat wave blanketed New York City the third weekend of July, with temperatures peaking at 100 degrees Fahrenheit on Sunday. Different people had different ways of staying cool—or not. When asked what they did over the weekend, some said they tried to stay inside and forgo their usual exercise routines. Others showed up to play despite the heat, including Dejan Gvozdenac who spent his Sunday evening playing tennis at his usual stop, the Yorkville Tennis Club. Despite being an indoor court, the Upper East Side facility doesn't have air-conditioning, so players such as Gvozdenac had to deal with the extreme heat in addition to perfecting their swing. "I was dripping with sweat and my tennis game was really bad," he said after practice.

Another indoor space infamous for lack of air conditioning is the New York City subway platform. One rider, Vy Luu, recalls returning home from a Friday night out with friends in Manhattan's Chinatown and descending into the Canal Street station. "It literally felt like a sauna," she said.

Others found more spiritual ways to deal with the heat. Ray Chen, a member of the First Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn, showed up to Sunday morning sermon where he found solace in the preacher's words: "As a culture we have an obsession with being comfortable all the time. But sometimes this is a reminder to allow ourselves to feel uncomfortable. And also to remember people who don't have access to comfort all the time." The sermon was particularly pointed, considering the large numbers of homeless on the streets who don't necessarily have access to water or cool spaces during a heat wave. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 78,676 New Yorkers experienced homelessness in 2018.

Nevertheless, for anybody who ever finds themselves out and about on the hot city streets, Manhattan-local Rebekah Garcia has some helpful tips. "Hide in the shade of lamp posts—anything helps," she says. "Don't be afraid to duck in a shop and cool off. Everyone knows what you're doing and nobody cares." ♦