



FRIDAY

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CITY LIVING By Magdalene Perez

# A visit to Glendale: The Teutonic turf of Archie Bunker and Harry Houdini



Photo credit: Deng Chan

See a gallery of our Glendale photos [here](#).

If you're looking for the quintessential Queens experience, you just might find it in Glendale, a small residential community in western Queens.

With more than a dozen cemeteries in the neighborhood and no nearby access to subways or the Long Island Rail Road, Glendale can best be described as quiet. Here, single and two-family homes are the norm, many of them just like the area's most famous residence, a modest two-story frame house many Americans would recognize as Archie Bunker's dwelling on "All in the Family."

Not long ago, the area was a tight-knit enclave populated almost entirely by German immigrants. In those days, German could be heard spoken in Myrtle Avenue's many German restaurants and beer gardens, and most local businesses were mom-and-pop endeavors.

Margaret Handler, an Austrian who immigrated to the area at the age of 6, said she remembers the strong sense of community in those days.

"In the 1960s, you could walk on Myrtle Avenue at night and there were no gates on the windows," Handler said. "Everybody had a trade and everybody knew everyone. It was nice."

Today, Glendale is becoming more diverse, but the strong sense of community remains, with families gravitating to the area for its good schools and peaceful reputation.

### Find It

Glendale, in Queens, is bordered by Woodhaven Boulevard to the east, Fresh Pond Road to the west, several cemeteries to the south, and the Long Island Rail Road to the north.

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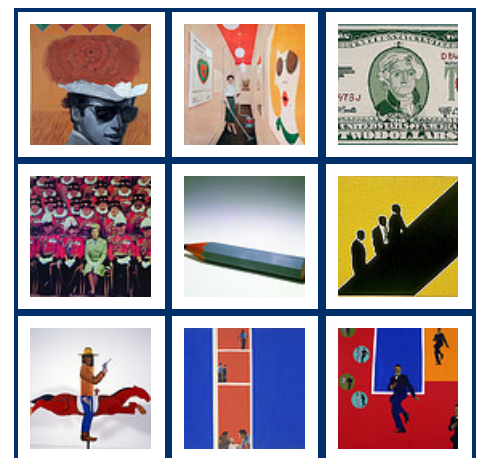
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69-46 Myrtle Ave.,  
718-386-3014

There's no better place to get a taste of the neighborhood's rich German heritage than at this authentic Bavarian restaurant on Glendale's main drag. A beloved area landmark since the 1970s, Stammtisch (photo above) serves all the schnitzel, sauerkraut and brats you can handle in a cozy pub setting. So settle in, order the jagerschnitzel, and wash it down with a tall stein of genuine German lager.

### Did You Know?

Glendale used to be a swamp. Formerly known as Fresh Ponds, the land was once characterized by its fresh water pools. A developer renamed the neighborhood after a small town in Ohio in 1860.

### To Eat

Glendale has a surprising breadth of eating options for a quiet Queens neighborhood. Japanese, Latin and vegetarian restaurants spice up the traditional mix of favorite German standbys, diners and pizza joints. Plus, for the suburban at heart, the Atlas Park mall offers chains such as Chili's and California Pizza Kitchen, and nearby "restaurant row" on Metropolitan Avenue in Forest Hills offers even more variety.

Simply Fondue  
71-19 80th St.,  
718-416-3755

The soft candlelight and baroque decor make this fondue restaurant a great spot for dates. Couples can cozy up in a semi private booth and select from a menu that includes cheese and dessert fondues, do-it-yourself grilled meats, and an extensive handcrafted cocktail menu.

Organic Village  
79-15 Cooper Ave.,  
718-894-4369

Easily the area's only raw foods restaurant, Organic Village packs a healthy and fresh menu into a diminutive space. Chefs in the open kitchen serve up gluten-free shitake burgers, sunflower falafel, and pasta made with zucchini and squash "noodles," plus raw chocolate and vitamin-rich shakes.

### To Shop

Glendale shoppers are well provided for, with a healthy mix of high and low options. Mom-and-pop shops and dollar stores line the neighborhood's main drag on Myrtle Avenue, while the Atlas Park mall offers pricier boutiques and national retail chains.

The Shops at Atlas Park  
8000 Cooper Ave.,  
718-326-3300

Not so great turnout at Glendale's recently opened outdoor mall has led to its sale on the foreclosure market, but its stores and restaurants — including women's clothing stores, a Borders books, and even a wine store and bicycle shop — are still open as the property changes hands. Outside of retail, other highlights include a farmer's market, Regal Cinema, a New York Sports Club, and ample indoor parking.

Cook's Arts & Crafts Shoppe  
80-09 Myrtle Ave.,  
718-366-6085

This family-run craft shop got its start in 1970, after customers of the family's old TV and radio repair shop asked the owner's wife if she could teach them to crochet. A lot of yarn, glue and creativity later, Cook's is still holding its own against the ubiquitous arts and craft megastores, with personal touches such as a blog that offers craft ideas and tips.

Alster Pavilion  
62-14 Myrtle Ave.,  
718-497-8352

This small German gift shop has a unique selection of porcelain figurines, beer steins, and cookoo clocks. Plus, imported chocolates, and German-language magazines, greeting cards and video rentals.

### To Play

Being a family neighborhood, Glendale has more in the way of wholesome fun than late-night haunts. Neighborhood recreation programs, dance classes and live music are all to be found, as well as a handful of neighborhood watering holes. For those who crave more nightlife, locals also flock to nearby Forest Hills and Middle Village.

Queens Symphony Orchestra  
70-31 84th St.,  
718-326-4455

The oldest professional arts organization in Queens likes to celebrate the traditional while keeping things fresh. In addition to a concert season featuring Verdi, Mozart and Strauss, the orchestra brings music education to Queens neighborhoods with a "Symphony 101" demonstration series in public libraries.

Christ the King  
68-02 Metropolitan Ave.,  
718-417-6770

With continuing education programs for all ages, Christ the King High School in nearby Middle Village is a great place to sign up for activities from photography to tae kwon do. Plus, with an all-new dance studio opened this fall, there's even more dance, including hip hop, jazz, ballet, tap and acrobatics.

Manor Oktoberfest  
8000 Cooper Ave.  
The Shops at Atlas Park  
718-326-2201

Sure, the space is small and located in a mall, but this bar wins hearts anyway with cold German brews and good grub, outdoor seating and \$4 pints for happy hour. Not to mention the infamous two-liter beer "boot" for \$20.

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## To See

Glendale's low density and small-town feel have made it the face of suburban New York for several popular television series, including "All in the Family," "The King of Queens," and at least one episode of "NYPD Blue." Some of the locations can still be seen today, along with the neighborhood's abundant cemeteries and natural outdoor beauty in Forest Park.

Archie Bunker's House  
89-70 Cooper Ave.

If you have a special place in your heart for the wildly popular 1970s comedy "All in the Family," you won't mind the short hike up Cooper Avenue to see the one and only Archie Bunker house. Not in Astoria as the show suggests, the modest home featured in the show's opening credits sits on a quiet street across from St. John's Cemetery.

Forest Park  
Myrtle Avenue and 79th Lane

At 538 acres, there's hardly an activity you can't do in Forest Park. The Victory Field sports complex has a running track, handball courts, and baseball field, while you can also enjoy an 18-hole golf course, a historic children's carousel, and three nature trails for hiking, horseback riding and mountain biking.

Yer Man's Irish Pub  
70-26 88th St.,  
718-894-4442

In a previous life, this bar was featured on the working class sitcom "The King of Queens." Since reinvented as a neighborhood sports bar, Yer Man's has live music, karaoke, and a kitchen that serves burgers and Irish pub fare.

Machpelah Cemetery  
82-30 Cypress Hills St..  
718-366-5959

There's magic in the air at this Jewish cemetery, where the late Harry Houdini rests in peace. The great Hungarian magician, who died on Halloween in 1926, is buried with all his family but his wife, whose Catholic family would not allow her at the plot. Today, two stately granite benches, once vandalized, have been restored with the help of David Copperfield and other magicians and every fall, the Society of American Magicians marks his death with a wand breaking ceremony at the site.

## The Buzz

The railroad is still an important part of Glendale, and though the commuter Long Island Rail Road no longer stops in the neighborhood, freight trains constantly pass through. Neighbors don't exactly enjoy the commerce, said Community Board 5 District Manager Gary Giordano. Early morning loads filled with garbage wake residents, and locomotives idling at the Otto Road rail yard pollute the air, he said.

"Those trains can be spewing a lot of emissions," Giordano said.

In response, residents have opposed a proposed cross-harbor tunnel for rail, and formed an activism group, Civics United for Railroad Environment Solutions, or CURES, to pressure for change.

So far the effort has already born some fruit: in April, New York & Atlantic Railway announced it would spend \$1 million to curb train emissions.

## Real Estate

In Glendale, most of the housing stock is made up by single- and two-family homes, either semi-detached or detached frame structures or attached brick Tudor-style houses, with many between 50 and 60 years old, said Lou Pastorini, sales manager for Coldwell Banker Phillips.

Homeowners pay higher prices than most of Queens for the quiet and stability of the neighborhood. Single-family houses range from \$400,000 to \$540,000, and two-family buildings can run \$440,000 to \$600,000, Pastorini said. The prices are similar because most single families have a garage, while two families don't, he said.

"That's a big range because it's a big neighborhood," Pastorini said. "There are homes that will go for more."

There are also many rentals in the neighborhood, often in cases where an owner lives in a two family and rents the house next door, Pastorini said. One bedrooms go for \$650 to \$900, and two bedrooms between \$1,200 and \$1,500.

### To Buy

\$409,000 for a detached single-family home with an enclosed porch and large, private yard. Address not disclosed.

\$498,000 for a three-bedroom, two-bath townhouse built in 1920 with a new roof and a garage. 78-53 76th St.

\$520,000 for a two-family home with two bedrooms and a two-car garage, 2,004 square feet. 88-40 79th Ave.

\$449,000 for a three-bedroom single-family home with private yard and formal dining room, 1,210 square feet. (Address not disclosed)

### To Rent

\$1,280 for a three-bedroom railroad in a third floor walk up. (65th Place)

\$1,100 for a one-bedroom basement apartment with kitchen and bath, utilities included. (67th Street)

\$1,350 for a second-floor two bedroom in a six-family home with newly renovated kitchen. (66th Street)

\$1,550 for a second-floor three bedroom with a new bathroom and kitchen floor. (60th Street and Cooper Ave.)

Contact: Lou Pastorini, 718-326-3900 ext. 111

## Q&A

Markus, 50, and Elena Gruber, 40, with kids Lukas, 15, and Maria, 11, former Glendale residents who were visiting their old haunts recently at Zum Stammtisch.

Tell us about your roots in Glendale.

Markus: For 20 years, from 1980 to 2000. I lived here on my own, then I got married and lived here seven years with my family.

What was the neighborhood like?

Elena: It used to be very, very German, to the point where you could speak German to anyone. You still can, but not so much. It's changing over a little bit now. There are more Polish people and people from different backgrounds.

You're gone now, but why do people like living here?

Elena: Its close proximity to Manhattan. You can take the express bus right into Manhattan. That's what my grandmother liked, because she didn't drive, so she didn't have to because everything was in walking distance.

Markus: It's a good place to raise children, to raise families. It's mostly two-family homes. The schools here are still very good. It's just very family oriented, I would say.

The area's German heritage runs deep. Tell us about how it shaped your life.  
Elena: We're born here, but our parents came from Germany. We're dressed up for the Steuben Day Parade, for General Friedrich von Steuben. He helped George Washington during the American Revolution.

Markus: He helped Washington at Valley Forge. It's like our St. Patty's Day parade.

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