

41°-74° CLUB OF NEW YORK, INC.

The Premier Association for Professional Women in Travel

Note from the President:

41°-74° CLUB YEAR 2025-2026

Happy February! As winter certainly made itself known here in *New York City* with the recent severe storm, we know many of you have been navigating challenging conditions. We hope you and your loved ones are staying warm, safe and taking care as we move through the heart of the season together.

I am happy to say that our *January 8* event at the *ila Only Spa*, the Lotte New York Palace, saw a great turnout with **thirty** total members, auxiliaries and guests in attendance - **thanks to Denise Womble, EVP 41°-74° Club of New York**, for securing the *ila Only Spa*, which provided refreshments of canapes and champagne. Our host for this event was Josh, the manager of the spa, who gave a short speech about the origins and background of the spa and then offered sample complimentary treatments to everyone there. I chose the robot massage!

The NBA legend Stephon Marbury made a surprise guest appearance bringing further excitement into the room.

I was so happy to see no fewer than seven past presidents of our club at this event including **Lisa Conway, Natasha Lee Soy, Roberta Long-Kelleher, April Dawn VanWagner, Iris Salazar, Denise Womble** and **Sharon Ulrick**.

The **Aruba Tourism Authority** represented by **Natasha Lee Soy** offered nine \$100 vouchers toward spa treatments at *ila Only Spa*. The winners were chosen by drawing the business cards collected at the start of the event. Finally, the 50/50 raffle was won by one of our new members, Norella Pena, who took home \$250. The club will be donating the other half of the 50/50s from all club meetings in this club year to a local community-based charity, **JoyJ Initiative**. The *JoyJ* mission is compassion in action to end homelessness and serve the poor in New York City.

I am also thrilled to announce and to extend a warm welcome to the six newest members of 41°-74° Club of New York:

- **Melody Edemen** - Key Tours Vacations - joined *November 18, 2025*
- **Lindsay Feinberg** - Belle Voyages - joined *January 12, 2026*
- **Michele Gallo** - Travel World Showcase - joined *January 6, 2026*
- **Josephine Mascolo** - Advanced Travel Inc. - joined *January 12, 2026*
- **Sharina Muñoz** - Adventures D'or - joined *January 14, 2026*
- **Norella Pena** - ITA Airways - joined *December 17, 2025*

We look forward to introducing them at one of our upcoming events. Thank you to **Roberta Long-Kelleher**, our Vice-President, who oversees membership for helping our newest members to get onboard.

Our next club event will be held on *February 12* at the **Waldorf Astoria Hotel**, NYC, sponsored by **Kensington Tours** represented by our Auxiliary Members, **Leigh Sassone**.

On behalf of the entire Board of Directors of the 41°-74° Club of New York, I want to express once again my deepest gratitude for everything our members do to keep our club the premiere association for women in travel!

Warm regards,

Corrine Mutarelli

President 41°-74° Club of New York, Inc.

Club Year 2025-26

"The Premier Association for Professional Women in Travel"

OUR MISSION

*For nearly 90 years, the 41°-74° Club of New York has had a three-prong mission ~
Philanthropy, Networking, and Professional Development.*

PHILANTHROPY

Club events and activities raise much needed funds, make the holidays brighter and help provide essential resources to selected charities and community groups.

NETWORKING & SOCIALIZING

Members are some of the travel industry's most interesting and accomplished women. The club's dinner meetings and annual events are remarkable experiences held at top rated private clubs and restaurants.

PROFESSIONAL

DEVELOPMENT

Members learn about the people, places and things essential to success in the travel industry. Join us and discover what distinguishes top travel professionals.

Celebrating Our Chosen Charity: JoyJ!

*We are delighted to announce that **JoyJ - Compassion in Action to End Homelessness & Serve the Poor** has been selected as the official charity partner for the remainder of the 41°-74° Club of New York's 2025-26 philanthropic fundraising efforts.*

*We are also pleased to share that proceeds from our **January 50/50 raffle - \$250**, already being directed to support JoyJ's impactful work. Their mission and hands-on approach to serving those experiencing homelessness align closely with the Club's values and philanthropic goals, making them a fitting and inspiring partner.*

★ *We also invite members to get more directly involved in our philanthropic efforts. At present, **Astra Williams** has generously stepped forward as our Philanthropic Chair—but she can't do it alone! If you are interested in lending your time, talent and ideas, please consider joining her.*

We look forward to coming together as a Club to raise awareness and funds in support of JoyJ's important mission!



Networking & Socializing in Action: Be Part of the Impact!

Our **January 8, 2026 Special Event** was a wonderful example of how networking, collaboration and community come together to create meaningful experiences. **Hosted by Ila Only Spa** at the Lotte New York Palace Hotel and proudly **sponsored by the Aruba Tourism Authority**, the evening brought together 28 Club Members, Auxiliary Members and industry peers for an engaging and memorable gathering.

We were delighted to welcome a strong turnout of Members and Auxiliary Members alongside valued industry guests, all contributing to the vibrant energy of the evening. A special thank you to Member and Sponsor **Natasha Lee Soy**, who represented the *Aruba Tourism Authority* and helped make the event such a success.

Adding to the excitement, the *Aruba Tourism Authority* generously donated **nine \$100 vouchers** towards Ila Only Spa treatments, awarded to nine lucky winners: **Joann Armine-Costagliola, Irene Sino, Sharina Munoz, Astra Williams, April Dawn Vanwagner, Denise Kahoud, Michele Gallo, Michele Fazio-Weiss** and **Corrine Mutarelli**.

The evening also featured a **50/50 raffle**, with **Norella Pena** taking home the winning prize of \$250 — a perfect example of how our social gatherings continue to support both connection and impact.

Events like these reflect the heart of the **41°-74° Club of New York**: building relationships, supporting our partners and coming together with purpose. We look forward to many more opportunities to connect and make an impact together!

ARUBA by Natasha Lee Soy

The **Aruba Tourism Authority** was delighted to sponsor the January 41~74 Club of New York anniversary special event. The evening featured speaker **Natasha Lee Soy**, a long-time and valued member of the Club.

As Aruba Tourism Authority continues to roll out its refreshed messaging around **responsible tourism**, one key focus is the growing **wellness** niche. What better way to begin 2026 than by recharging — immersing yourself in spa experiences, giving back to yourself and taking a moment to pause, breathe and reconnect? In Aruba, we encourage visitors to slow down, be present and truly enjoy the beauty of their surroundings.

Travel Advisors are invited to join our exclusive **Facebook Group - Aruba Travel Experts** - to connect directly with the Aruba Tourism Authority and fellow advisors. For destination updates, insights and community, we encourage you to become part of Aruba Travel Experts today.

Additionally, **Travel Agent University** offers the **ACE** (Aruba Certified Expert) Program, designed to deepen your knowledge and help you confidently sell the destination. Click [here](#) for more information.



ila Only Spa at the Lotte New York Palace Hotel by Josh Rohoman

Which exclusive features does ila Only Spa offers in the heart of Manhattan?

You can indulge yourself, get healing therapies and revive your body, mind and soul at the holistic wellness spa NYC loves to visit. A New York spa that caters to those seeking elite services, ila Only Spa delivers advanced therapies, elegant surroundings and expert care to energize and detoxify your body. The high-end treatments and features at this Manhattan spa include:

- Seven plush, soundproof treatment rooms that ensure your privacy
- The best massages in the City, delivering targeted health benefits
- A full menu of signature facials to brighten and tighten your skin tone

Touchless high-tech treatments, including:

- Hyperbaric oxygen therapy, which envelops you in pure oxygen to turbocharge your immune system
- Red light therapy, harnessing low-wavelength light to refine your skin tone
- Compression therapy to flush out toxins and ease muscle fatigue
- Pulsing electromagnetic field (PEMF) therapy, which applies low-frequency electromagnetic waves to revitalize your body at the cellular level
- Robotic massage that kneads your body into relaxation without personal contact
- Full-body wraps that detoxify, firm and fortify your skin so you feel renewed
- Multiple saunas and steam rooms for your cleansing rituals
- Elite waxing and grooming services that transform your body into smooth, sleek contours
- A full service premium nail salon for deluxe manicures and pedicures
- A spacious relaxation lounge, a private yoga studio and a large fitness center

Celebrating our New Members of The 41°-74° Club of NY:

Melody Edemen - Key Tours Vacations

Lindsay Feinberg - Belle Voyages

Michele Gallo - Travel World Showcase

Josephine Mascolo - Advanced Travel Inc.

Sharina Muñoz - Adventures D'or

Norella Pena - ITA Airways

We are most delighted to extend a warm welcome to All the newest members of the 41°-74° Club of NY. Your presence strengthens our community and we look forward to sharing great times, building friendships and creating lasting memories together.

Welcome aboard!



Happy Birthday to our Dear Members celebrating birthdays during the month of February!



Michael Lonergan

Sharina Muñoz

Norella Pena

Lucille Putzu

Kelly Sahrer

Judi Stern

Deb Traussi

May your day be filled with joy, laughter and everything you wish for!

Warmest wishes for a fantastic year ahead.

The 41°-74° Club of New York

Save the Date!

41°-74° Club of New York Book Club

"The Little Provence Book Shop"

by Gillian Harvey

Time: Tuesday, March 10, 2025 06:00 PM EST

Join Zoom Meeting at

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83463238619?pwd=I9f4M3eqD732hPZb7cf1Jmcr173sw2.1>

Meeting ID: 834 6323 8619

Passcode: 817561

Upcoming Book Club Selections:

May, 2026: "Daughter of Egypt" by Marie Benedict

July, 2026: "The Astral Library" by Kate Quinn

Regards,

Roberta Long-Kelleher

The 41°-74° Club of New York Vice President

2025-26 41°-74° Club of New York

Meetings and Special Events:

Thursday, February 12, 2026 - Open Meeting - The Waldorf Astoria Hotel NYC - **Sponsored by Kensington Tours** - Representative Leigh Sassone.

Thursday, March 12, 2026 - Open Meeting - Omni Berkshire Place NYC - **Sponsored by Omni Hotels** - Representative Claire Gallagher.

April 2026 - Special Event - (details TBA).

Thursday, May 14, 2026 - Open Meeting - Fushimi NYC - **Sponsored by Delta Vacations** - Representative Lisa Orlando.

Thursday, June 11, 2026 - **Annual General Meeting and Elections** - Arte Cafe NYC - **Sponsored by American Cruise Lines** - Representative April Piazza.

**41°-74° CLUB OF NEW YORK
- OPEN MEETING -
MARCH 12, 2026**



OMNI
HOTELS & RESORTS

March 12, 2026 @5:30 - 7:30 PM
**Omni Berkshire Place, 21 E 52 St, New York City,
NY 10022, USA**

**41°-74° CLUB OF NEW YORK
- OPEN MEETING -
FEBRUARY 12, 2026**



KENSINGTON

February 12, 2026 @5:30 - 7:30 PM
Waldorf Astoria, 301 Park Ave, New York, NY 10022, USA

Spaces are limited - reserve your spot today @<https://www.4174club.org/upcoming-events>

FROM MEMBERS' DIARIES:

A Spanish Journey into "The Land of Don Quijote"
by **Sharina Muñoz**, CEO & Travel Advisor,
Adventures D'or

The Adventures D'or Guide to Castilla-La Mancha

Maybe you've been dreaming of strolling down the buzzing boulevards of Madrid or the sandy beaches of Mallorca. But there's another, often overlooked, region of Spain that is sure to thrill you: **Castilla-La Mancha**.

Castilla-La Mancha is an inland region in Spain, comprising historic cities, picturesque castles and windmills, and a unique rhythm all its own. In fact, the cities and countryside of Castilla-La Mancha are the setting for the influential 17th-century novel by Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quijote*. In the early summer of 2025, I was invited by the Castilla-La Mancha tourist board to discover the pleasures of this part of Spain for myself—alongside a select group of other luxury travel professionals.

This allowed me to tour the area as an insider, armed with the guidance—and special contacts—that opened doors to incredible opportunities. I continued my visit to Seville & Barcelona, so that my Spanish journey wove through five unforgettable and unique cities.

Now, I'm thrilled to share my journey with you. In this guide, you'll find a detailed recap (and personal photos) of everywhere I stayed, the standout restaurants I dined at, and the immersive cultural experiences that captured my heart forever. Read on to discover this slice of Spain for yourself:

Cuenca—Castilla La Macha's Hidden Gem

Cuenca, with its UNESCO-Heritage-designated Old Town, is a peaceful city with little foot traffic all year round—making you feel less like a tourist and more like a true explorer. Known for its historic “hanging houses” that are perched dramatically on cliffs high above river gorges, the city boasts truly breathtaking views. With every turn I took, a new vista of dramatic cliffs rising above verdant green valleys was revealed.

Hotel Convento del Giraldo

Once a convent, this enchanting accommodation embraces you within its thick stone walls, vaulted ceilings, and an atmosphere that carries centuries of stories. Yet the historic hotel is also warm and welcoming. From the windows, you can see Cuenca stretching out in the golden light; I found myself lingering over the view, grateful to be there—and almost reluctant to put words to a beauty that felt beyond description.

Raff San Pedro Restaurant

Hidden away in the stone heart of Cuenca in converted 16th-century horse stables, Raff San Pedro feels like a secret only you have discovered. The restaurant, serving traditional cuisine with a contemporary twist, is carved right into ancient stone walls, its setting both rustic and elegant. I love that here, history itself becomes part of the dining experience.

The city at dusk and a guided walking tour

I adored wandering Cuenca's cobbled streets, listening to the stories, and discovering hidden corners that seemed to appear at every turn.

- Cuenca Cathedral - Nuestra Señora de Gracia y San Julián

From the outside, the cathedral looks humble in appearance, but once inside, you quickly realize how vast it truly is. Walking through the nave, I felt as though the space kept unfolding. Just when we thought we had reached the end, our guide led us deeper, revealing more chapels and sharing bits of history with each step. The cathedral is beautifully preserved, and I was amazed at the creativity woven into every corner, from the side chapels to the intricate details in the stonework. It felt endless, like a treasure chest that kept revealing more than I ever expected.

Image item

- Puente de San Pablo

Continuing our walk, we arrive at the Puente de San Pablo. From here, the “hanging houses” wooden balconies appear to hover over the gorge, offering one of the most unforgettable images of Cuenca. I couldn't bring myself to stand in the very middle of the bridge I'm afraid of heights but from the end, I was still able to take in the sweeping scenery. It turned out to be an excellent spot for photos, the kind of place where the beauty of the city and the thrill of its setting come together perfectly.

As the sun began to dip and the sky softened, I caught myself just breathing it all in, grateful to be there. Cuenca's historic grandeur made me feel both small and deeply connected, as though I had stepped outside of the present into something timeless.

- The Warmest Welcome at Pago de la Jaraba: Wine, cheese, and olive oil

On the way from Cuenca to Consuegra, we stopped at a farm near El Provencio, which boasts its own cheese factory, wine cellar, and olive oil mill. One of the owners himself welcomed us and personally drove us around the farm, which made the whole experience feel intimate and special from the start. We started our visit learning about one of Spain's most iconic culinary delights: Manchego cheese. The farm's owner showed us the sheep, explained how their milk is collected, and walked us through every step of the process. Holding the cheeses at different stages of aging made me appreciate just how much patience and care go into producing it.

From there, we moved into the olive oil mill, where he revealed the craft of producing their olive oil. The same went for the wine cellar—cool stone rooms lined with barrels—where he shared not only how their wines are made but also the different events and experiences they host for visitors.

We ended the tour by sitting down with him for lunch; I loved that it didn't feel like a formal lunch, but rather a meal shared among friends. We sampled their exquisite wines, paired with local foods, and he spoke openly about the stories of guests who had visited. There was laughter, warmth, and the kind of generosity you only find in family-run places. We left with bottles of their wine and olive oil in hand—treasures to take home—and with a memory that felt more like being welcomed into someone's world than simply visiting a farm. The family even showed us their windmill—standing tall and timeless, a reminder of La Mancha's history and tradition. It was a magnificent experience, one that touched every sense: sight, taste, smell, and above all, heart.

- Consuegra—A Place Full of Warmth

A small city of fewer than 10,000 inhabitants, Consuegra will steal your heart. We stopped here on our way to Toledo, and the warmth of the locals here blew me away. We tasted our way across the landscape, and I truly felt transported to the land and time of Don Quijote most unforgettably.

Consuegra's windmills and castle

Consuegra is known for its beautiful windmills that dot its hills. The drive into Consuegra felt like traveling deeper into the heart of Don Quijote's Spain as the famous white windmills came into view. At the site, one of the employees shared the legends of the place. To my delight, there was even a man there dressed as Don Quijote himself! The most unforgettable moment came when he caught my gaze and, with a courtly bow, called me “mi Dulcinea”—the beloved lady from the novel. For a heartbeat, it felt as though I had stepped straight into the story.

Spanish wines—and local hospitality

As if the day wasn't already extraordinary, it ended in the most intimate way possible: with a wine tasting at a local woman's house. She welcomed us in like old friends, leading us into her backyard where a simple but beautifully set table was waiting. Over glasses of her wines, she shared not only the flavors but her own life stories and the traditions of her land. Each glass carried not just taste but memory.

This experience was special in the purest sense: personal, unpolished, and deeply authentic—a reminder that sometimes the most meaningful experiences happen not in monuments or museums, but at someone's table, in their own home.

FROM MEMBERS' DIARIES:

Continued...

Toledo — A Captivating Capital

The province of Toledo is Castilla-La Mancha's rural heart, with family-run farms, wineries, and artisan producers dotting the astonishing landscape. The city itself is a World Heritage Site and is considered one of Spain's most beautiful. With excellent transport links to the rest of the country, this region is not to be missed—especially by foodies!

Cigarral Santa María Hotel

This hotel had an elegance that matched the city, with a spectacular entrance lined with tall trees. Located in a peaceful area away from the crowds of Toledo's old town, it offered the perfect balance of tranquility and proximity. The grounds were expansive, with a beautiful outdoor area, a refreshing pool, and lovely plants that made every corner feel inviting. Breakfast there was calm and unhurried, an ideal beginning before diving into the city's stories. I was fortunate that my room overlooked Toledo's old town, offering truly unforgettable views.

Toledo's greatest cultural treasures

We set out with our guide for a tour of the city, and Toledo unfolded like a living museum. The cobblestones, the narrow winding streets, the weight of history in every stone—it all left me breathless! This city is home to endless masterpieces, and we saw as many as we could, including El Greco Museum, the cathedral with El Greco's painting "El Expolio," the Sephardic Museum devoted to Jewish cultural heritage, and the Tornerías Mosque.

Seville—Scintillating Andalusian Culture

The city of Seville left me in absolute awe. Each day was layered with art, music, and culture that went beyond observation—it was all about participation, immersion, and connection. Seville is the capital of Andalusia, a distinct region in Spain's southwest that has had an outsized cultural impact on Spain and the world. This is the home of Spanish tapas, of Flamenco dance, of intoxicating Moorish architecture. As our last official stop on our hosted trip, Seville was a fitting end to a dream journey through Spain's most special places.

Hotel Cavalta Boutique

This charming boutique hotel is a gem in the lively neighborhood of Triana—you're so close to all the action, with countless restaurants, bars, and historic sites right at your doorstep. I loved how the rooms had their own unique distribution within the space, thoughtfully and gorgeously designed. Every detail seemed carefully chosen, adding to the sense of character and personality throughout the property. And then there's the rooftop—complete with a pool—that's just the perfect spot to unwind.

Hotel Colón

An icon of Seville, this five-star property is just minutes from the cathedral and radiates timeless elegance. Our group enjoyed a cocktail-style lunch here that perfectly showcased the hotel's sophistication and warm hospitality. What struck me most, though, were the doors—each one uniquely decorated with wallpaper inspired by the works of renowned artists. It was a truly creative and unexpected detail, transforming something as simple as a doorway into a piece of art. Walking through, I found myself pausing to admire them, each one different, each one a reminder of the hotel's thoughtful blend of luxury and artistry.

Casa Guardiola

When we arrived, the heat of the day lingered, but the moment the flamenco dancing began, everything else faded away. The space, the food, the music, the raw emotion of the dance—it was electric in an almost spiritual sense.

Alcázar Palace

We visited the Alcázar Palace, one of the official residences of the Spanish royal family, with a guide who delighted us with the history. The stunning palace dates back to the 10th century and features fine examples of the Mudéjar style popular throughout the Iberian Peninsula.

The city by water

After a morning spent exploring the Museum of Fine Arts, our guide took us to the neighborhood of Triana and led us through Triana's colorful streets toward the Guadalquivir dock for a boat ride. Along the way, we paused at the market, where she shared insights into local olive oil and the everyday foods Sevillanos treasure. The boat ride itself was a welcome pause and an excellent chance to relax and take in the city's beauty from the water.

Seville's distinctive music and dance

The city's Flamenco Dance Museum gave us a chance to participate—we learned how to play the cajón (flamenco percussion box), laughing and clapping as we tried our best to produce the beat. Later, at Foronda Shop, we discovered the delicate art of silk shawls, those stunning accessories worn by flamenco dancers. We tried them on, took pictures, and even had the chance to bring one home—an experience that blended artistry with tradition.

The best view in the city

The following day brought us to Las Setas de Seville—a remarkable wooden structure rising above the city. From the top, the views stretched endlessly, and we ended the evening with a cocktail reception as the sun bathed the skyline in warm light.

Seville's finest venues

If you happen to be celebrating something special in Spain, consider renting out a historical venue to experience a "behind-the-scenes" experience of the city. That's exactly what our hosts did for us! At Real Venta de Antequera, a historic event venue dating back to 1929, we delved even deeper into Andalusian culture as we learned flamenco steps, sampled olive oils, and soaked up the stories of Seville's history. Our journey concluded in elegance at the Casino de la Exposición, where we enjoyed a formal dinner in one of the city's most stunning cultural centers. It felt like the perfect conclusion—a celebration of everything I had learned, tasted, and experienced.

Barcelona—The Vibrant Catalan Capital

While our hosted trip ended in Seville, I continued to the breathtaking city of Barcelona. Here, I visited family and the city's multitude of cultural highlights. Barcelona provided a softer ending to my travels—family time combined with art, architecture, and music. From the sunny streets to Gaudi's whimsical genius, from rooftop views to the rhythm of flamenco, it reminded me once again why Spain feels so special to me: it's not only about the beauty you can see, but about experiences that stay in your heart.

The sun-splashed waterfront

My first day in Barcelona began in Barceloneta, where I walked along the waterfront with my aunt and cousin, simply soaking in the sea air, the sun, and the joy of being with family. We settled at a restaurant facing the ocean for a cocktail. It was one of those perfect pauses spent sipping, chatting, and watching life unfold around us. It felt like the essence of Barcelona itself—vibrant, warm, and full of life.

FROM MEMBERS' DIARIES:

Continued...

Barcelona's grandest boulevards

I loved strolling along Passeig de Gràcia, where the architecture itself feels like an open-air museum. Every building seemed to carry its own character—ornate, imaginative, and distinctly Spanish.

Majestic Hotel

I received an invitation from Blanca Calvo Luna, the Sales Director of this hotel, to enjoy a light bite and prosecco on their rooftop with my family. The views over Barcelona from the hotel were nothing short of spectacular, a real moment of elegance and calm above the city's energy.

The genius of Gaudí

That night, we had the privilege of a private visit to Casa Milà, also known as La Pedrera, one of Antoni Gaudí's UNESCO World Heritage masterpieces. With a private guide, we uncovered the fascinating story of its design and the genius of Gaudí's vision. The evening ended on the famous warrior rooftop, where a breathtaking light show turned the chimneys into glowing sculptures. It felt surreal—a blend of history, innovation, and pure imagination.

Priceless artistic treasures

To escape the intense sun, I spent an afternoon at Barcelona's National Museum of Art. The heat outside was nearly unbearable, and climbing the long stairway to reach the museum felt like a pilgrimage—but once inside, surrounded by masterpieces, it was all worth it. The art was overwhelming in the best possible way, a reminder of Spain's immense cultural richness.

Barcelona's twist on Flamenco

One more special moment was in store: I was invited by the Chief Commercial Officer of Teatro Flamenco to attend a special performance. Experiencing flamenco in Barcelona, after having already connected with it in various ways throughout Spain, felt like a perfect thread tying my journey together. The music, the dance, the raw emotion—it was yet another moment of falling deeper in love with Spain's culture.

Ready to discover the wonders and rhythm of Spain for yourself?

***I'm here to help! Book a complimentary consultation.
Let's Connect***



DID YOU KNOW?

Tokyo's long-held title as the world's most populous city has effectively ended.

According to The Economist, for seven decades Tokyo was typically considered the world's largest city, but new data released by the United Nations shows this is no longer the case – and that the historic view overstated Tokyo's relative position due to inconsistent definitions of urban boundaries.

For seven decades Tokyo was considered the world's most populous city. That was 15 years too long, according to data released last month by the UN. Until recently the organisation's statisticians accepted national governments' definitions of where their cities began and ended; their latest report accepts the reality of urban sprawl. By their new measures, Jakarta (pictured), Indonesia's capital, jumps to the top of the board with 42m people, about as many as Canada. Dhaka, capital of Bangladesh, with 37m, has also pulled ahead of Tokyo, with 33m. Delhi and Shanghai, with around 30m people each, fill out the top five.

The UN's latest figures highlight tremendous urbanisation. These days 45% of humanity lives in cities (with at least 50,000 people); another 36% inhabit towns (with at least 5,000). The data also show that much of the growth is happening in middle-income Asia. Only one of the world's ten biggest cities lies outside that continent. And only seven of the world's 33 "megacities" (boasting over 10m people) are in rich countries. By 2050 Jakarta and Dhaka will between them add another 25m people, nearly as many as live in Australia.

These migrations should help make people better off. "Dhaka changed my life and secured my kids' education," says Clinton Chakma, who found a job as a waiter after migrating from a farm in 2022. Yet there is also a huge risk: that as Asia's cities expand, squalor, pollution and gridlock increasingly undercut the economic boost they provide. "People move to cities to be part of the labour market," says Alain Bertaud of New York University. But if the labour market does not work "you build a poverty trap".

Jakarta, Dhaka and Delhi already rank among the world's worst cities to live in, according to the Economist Intelligence Unit, our sister company. Jakarta ranks 132nd out of 173 cities; Delhi is 145th. Dhaka comes third from last, with only Damascus and Libya's Tripoli behind. If Asian countries are to break out of the middle-income trap, they must solve the problems that plague their cities. The best way of doing that is not through piecemeal projects, but by taking a hard look at the dysfunctional ways urban areas are governed.

Jakarta—nobody's idea of a lovely city—is as good a place as any to see all this on the ground. After years of expansion it now encompasses the neighbouring cities of Bogor, Depok, Tangerang and Bekasi (see map). Yet there is far too little co-ordination among these neighbouring authorities. A settlement as populous as some countries is governed as coherently as a clowder of cats.

The cost of this fragmented governance is perhaps best seen in Jakarta's notorious traffic. It is the world's 12th-most congested place (Dhaka ranks third and Delhi seventh). Unable to afford housing near their workplaces, many Jakartans live in far-flung suburbs. A vastly inadequate public transport system encourages them to travel by two-wheelers or in cars, which jams up the roads and causes air pollution. All this cuts productivity. The government of Jakarta reckons traffic jams cost its economy \$6bn each year.

In 2019 Jakarta got its first metro line. But it stops abruptly at the city's official administrative boundary, short of commuter neighbourhoods. There is an urgent need for co-ordination within the agglomeration, says Adhika Ajie, the head of research and innovation at Jakarta's city government. "Otherwise it's useless." Good luck with that. "Throughout my time there was very little conversation with other mayors of surrounding cities," says a former official in the city administration.

Similar problems affect megacities elsewhere in Asia. Dhaka has enveloped satellite cities with which it has little co-ordination. But it also suffers from being run by two municipal corporations, a national development authority, several ministries and dozens of different agencies which are individually responsible for things such as water, sewage and transport. A mayor of Dhaka North City Corporation once complained that he lacked the authority to deal with 80% of the problems that affect his city, including traffic and flooding.

Parts of India, now home to five "megacities", are in the same boat. Governance in Delhi is split between municipal bodies, a state government, the national government and several bodies created to oversee matters such as housing, planning and the metro rail. The Kolkata metropolitan area (the world's ninth-largest) contains no fewer than 423 different governing entities, according to the World Bank.

DID YOU KNOW?

Continued...

How do successful cities do it? One model is Shanghai, which is run by the central government as a province rather than a city. It exercises strong, centralised authority over all major urban functions, from planning to transport. But China's governance model is unique: pressure on leaders comes not from voters but from bosses in Beijing. Party leaders cannot afford to let areas of the city grow unruly.

A better model is Tokyo. The Tokyo Metropolitan Government (TMG) is responsible for big-ticket public services such as water, sewage and public hospitals. Beneath it sit 23 wards and a host of peripheral cities and towns. Each municipality has its own elected mayor and assembly, responsible for services such as schools, waste management and community planning. The TMG co-ordinates between them. It is a sensible split that clearly delineates authority while also making sure that decision-making is joined up.

Like the megacities of middle-income Asia, Tokyo has no single government body for the greater metropolitan area, which includes parts of the neighbouring prefectures of Kanagawa, Chiba and Saitama. But the national government plays an important role in co-ordinating between them. And a dense metro and commuter-rail network ties the region together. Over 90% of people in the greater Tokyo area live within a 20-minute walk of a station.

It helps, of course, that Tokyo is richer than other Asian megacities. When it became a city of 20m in 1965, Japan's GDP per person was \$9,500 (at 2011 prices). When Dhaka hit that number in 2005, per person income in Bangladesh was \$1,900. Yet making Jakarta, Dhaka, Delhi and other Asian megacities more liveable can start with changes to governance, not with huge investments. Overhauling power structures is harder than splurging on big projects. But the potential pay-offs are mega.

Stay Connected. Stay Inspired. Be Part of the Movement!

*Our strength as a Club comes from staying connected: sharing ideas, celebrating achievements and supporting one another beyond our in-person events. We invite **all Members** to follow and engage with us on:*

*--> **LinkedIn** - "4174 Club of New York"*

*--> **Facebook** - "41-74 Club of New York"*

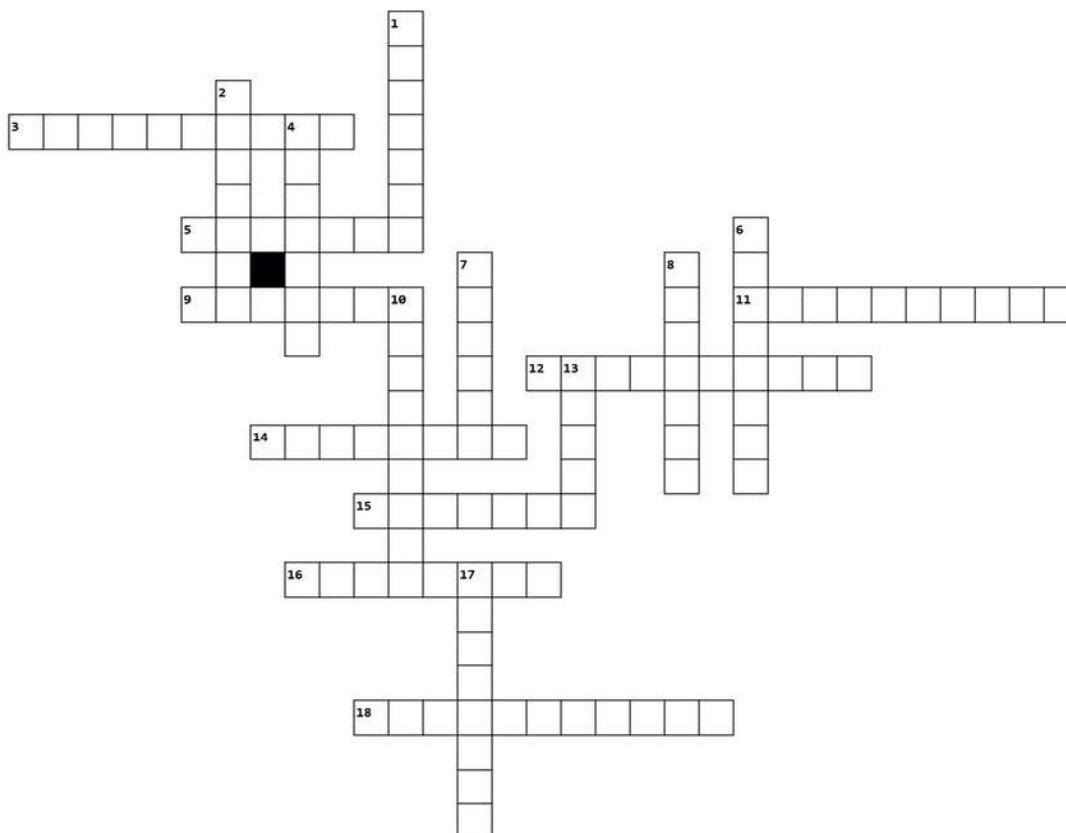
*--> **Instagram** - "4174clubny"*

Also, it enables you to stay up to date on upcoming events, industry highlights, philanthropic initiatives and moments that matter.

*Your voice, your presence, and your participation help amplify the impact of the **41st-74th Club of New York**. Join the conversation, share the journey and help us continue building a powerful, connected community.*

*✨ **Follow us. Engage with us. Grow with us!***

In Between Mapping Trips: Take a Break with Our Crossword - “Where in the Caribbean am I?”



ACROSS:

- 3. A US territory with Spanish heritage
- 5. Blue Mountains produce world famous coffee
- 9. I'm made up of over 700 islands
- 11. A volcanic island with hot springs
- 12. I'm a French Caribbean Isle
- 14. East coast is for surfing west coast is calm
- 15. Volcanic beaches and waterfalls
- 16. Port of Spain is my capital
- 18. Famous for underwater sculpture park

DOWN:

- 1. My capital city is St Johns
- 2. St George's is my capital
- 4. I produce blue liqueur
- 6. Capital is The Valley
- 7. Smaller than my twin island to the west
- 8. Historic railway and a volcanic peak
- 10. Split between two nations
- 13. Arid landscapes and white beaches
- 17. Has boiling lakes and hot springs