

Getting from New York City (including Kennedy International Airport) to I-Park (3/25/07)

From the airport

The system for getting from the major metropolitan airports to New York City is not ideal. These are the best choices we know of. If you have or discover a better way, please let us know.

If money is not an issue, we would recommend taking a taxi from the airport to Grand Central Terminal at 42nd Street between Lexington and Park Avenues. At this time, it's a flat \$45 fee (plus tip, total \$52, assuming no bridge or tunnel tolls) to go from the airport to any location in the city. Unlike some cities around the world, the airport taxi service is fair and reliable. You get a receipt upon entering the cab that tells you your rights as well as the cab's identity and a phone number to call in case you have a problem. Of course, the quality of the taxi cars and many of the roadways are not so great and some of the cab drivers can be rude (sometimes they just don't respond to your comments – either they know it all or are too bored). For probably a majority of taxi drivers, English is a second language so it's best to be very clear as to where you're going or to write it down and hand them a note. However, they have an incentive to get you where you're going as quickly as possible and they're generally very knowledgeable of the city.

There are alternatives to the taxis. You can take a bus from the airport to Grand Central (New York Airport Service, www.nyairportservice.com/). The fare is presently \$15 for a one-way ticket and runs about every 20 minutes (travel time approximately an hour and 15 minutes). Check with the information counter in the airport for where you can pickup these buses. Also, this is NOT a 24-hour service, in the event you have a late arrival.

There's also the AirTrain system from JFK that hooks up to the New York City Subway system. This is cheaper yet, at \$5 plus the current \$2 subway fare. We'll refer you to the website for specific information (www.panynj.gov/airtrain/from_jfk.html). The initial AirTrain that you get on at the terminal is modern and efficient, and, at least theoretically, you could get into the city quicker at those times when there's lots of traffic congestion. And as of this writing, the service runs 24 hours a day. Nonetheless, our opinion is that, unless you don't mind carrying your luggage quite a bit, including likely on a crowded subway car, and have some knowledge of the subway system (or have a desire for adventure), this is probably not worth the trouble.

If you want to dig deeper into the public transportation options in New York City, the Port Authority (which controls this) website is: www.panynj.gov.

If you're already in New York City

Get to Grand Central. You're looking for the New Haven Line of Metro North. That's the suburban rail service that runs to the northeast out of the city.

You'll first need a ticket to New Haven. Currently, the rate is \$14 one-way (off peak). The ticket kiosks are pretty easy to navigate or you can stand in line at the counter. You can also purchase tickets on line – see below. You should definitely buy your ticket before getting on the train because there is a heavy penalty for buying it on the train.

Then, if at all possible, we ask that you take a second train from New Haven to Old Saybrook, as this saves us quite a bit of driving for the pickup. However, the train from New Haven to Old Saybrook only runs on weekdays (Monday through Friday) and, at that, only in early to mid-morning and in the late afternoon and into the early evening (it's mainly a train intended for Connecticut commuters who work in the city). So, if your schedule does not allow your train ride to New Haven to connect with the Old Saybrook schedule, we'll have to meet you in New Haven – not a big deal.

The train ride from Grand Central to New Haven runs a little less than 2 hours, with another 45 minutes from New Haven to Old Saybrook. Although the New Haven to Old Saybrook train is technically on another system (Shore Line East), the two systems co-ordinate their schedules and allow enough time for you to switch trains in New Haven. If you don't understand the announcement on the public address system, just ask a conductor where you go for the Shore Line East connection. For the Old Saybrook train, you can buy that ticket on the train (you probably won't have time to go to the station and we don't believe they can be purchased in Grand Central). The present fare is \$5.75.

And just for the record, the trains and tracks on the New Haven Line are in horrible shape. The cars are rickety, somewhat dirty, uncomfortable and often noisy – just so you know (good idea to go to the bathroom before getting on the train).

For full fare and scheduling information, go to www.mta.info (go to the Metro North, New Haven line section) and www.ShoreLineEast.com for the Old Saybrook information. Note that there is a distinction between peak and off-peak fares and that the schedule is different on Saturdays and Sundays and some holidays (weekend schedule).

There is an alternative to Metro North that will bring you from New York City to Old Saybrook, and that's Amtrak. Amtrak runs out of Penn Station as opposed to Grand Central. It has fairly decent cars, comfortable seating and even 'quiet cars.' The negatives, however, include: high fares, limited schedule and unreliability (the trains coming through Connecticut quite often run late, sometimes several hours late).

If at all possible, we ask that you call the I-Park office (860-873-2468) from Grand Central or somewhere else along the way confirming that you're on the train and your time of arrival. We generally meet New Haven arrivals outside the main entrance (at the top of the escalator, take a right and go out the doors). There's very limited parking there and we generally have to stay with our vehicle. If you get into Old Saybrook, there's plenty of parking so we can generally greet you either in the station (if you arrive before we do) or where the platform meets the parking lot.

Bus Alternative

We recently discovered that there is also one bus per day that runs from the New Haven railroad station to the Old Saybrook railroad station (5:45 pm leaving Old Saybrook to New Haven, 5:40 am leaving New Haven to Old Saybrook), but only on weekdays – pretty useless, but there you have it (www.dattco.com).