

The Party Line

There's no place like Manhattan to throw a kids' party. So we scoured the city for top-notch venues that are constantly reinventing their party menus. You won't be disappointed with our top 12 picks.

by *Lambeth Hochwald*

ALICE'S TEA CUP

Here, little girls will delight in a Wee Tea Party that's right out of the pages of *Alice in Wonderland*. Snack on dainty tea sandwiches, scones, and other goodies; birthday cakes that will drive any hatter mad are available on request. Hire an "Alice," who will mesmerize guests as she reads directly from the book. 102 West 73rd Street, 212-799-3006; 156 East 64th Street, 212-486-9200; 220 East 81st Street, 212-734-4832; alicesteacup.com.

APPLE SEEDS

This play space just off M offers innovative themes. Welcome to the Jungle—songs, animal yoga, and more. Build It! Break It! Fix It!, who bulldoze their way through learning about tools, truck materials. Hard hats provided. 110 West 11th Street, 212-792-7590; appleseeds.com.

ART FARM IN THE CITY

Book a two-hour birthday party at this Upper East Side spot and your animal-loving tot will go nuts for the Farm Animal Party. The kids spend an hour with the on-site farm animals, enjoy a decorate-an-animal project, and snack on pizza and juice. The birthday child leaves with a PigCasso T-shirt. 419 East 91st Street, 212-410-3117; theartfarm.org.

BASEBALL CENTER NYC

Your junior Derek Jeter will have a ball at a two-hour party that includes professional baseball or softball instruction, live hitting and throwing games, birthday treats, and a birthday shirt for the birthday child. 202 West 74th Street, 212-362-0344; thebaseballcenternyc.com.

FAO SCHWARZ

At this quintessential New York toy store, choose from a long list of themed parties, including Harry Potter, Hot Wheels Factory, Barbie Styled by Me,

and Jungle/Safari. You'll work closely with a consultant who will arrange for decorations, catering, entertainment, security, and any extras. Your child will be tickled pink! 767 Fifth Avenue, 212-644-9400; fao.com.

LE CARROUSEL IN BRYANT PARK

You'll feel like you've stepped into a Parisian park as you and your guests assemble at New York's most charming merry-go-round. Party packages

TRIBECA TREATS

On Sundays, this sleek neighborhood bakery is transformed into a festive sweets-themed party zone. Watch the dough fly as your kids make their own cookies, or opt for a tea party. Parents get breakfast treats and endless coffee refills. 94 Reade Street, 212-571-0500; tribecatreats.com.

With two Uptown locations, Make is the premier spot for a create-your-own pottery party. Paint for up to 90 minutes, eat, and have fun. You'll also get a birthday plate for all your guests to sign. 1566 Second Avenue, 212-570-6868; 506 Amsterdam Avenue, 212-579-5575; makemeaning.com.

MINIMASTERS

Tribeca's finest family space also custom creates birthday parties. Our fave is the ballet version: a 90-minute event featuring a 30-minute ballet class. Choose from add-ons like loot bags and a face painter. 100 Reade Street, 212-374-1747; minimasters.com.

NBA STORE

Parties here tip-off at Center Court. From there, guests suit up in NBA All-Star jerseys and pose for the "media." After pizza and a themed cake the kids play some ball, as the game is broadcast live

Art Farm in the City



Le Carrousel in Bryant Park



Baseball Center NYC



Your child gets a personalized team jersey and you get to keep the videotape. Fifth Avenue at 52nd Street, 212-515-6221; nbastore.com/nyestore.

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VICTORIAN GARDENS, CENTRAL PARK

It feels like a blast from the past at this old-fashioned amusement park, located in the heart of Central Park at Wollman Rink. Your kids will scream with glee on the Fun Slide or Hydro Racer. Extras include storytelling, karaoke, and clowns. Central Park, between 62nd and 63rd Streets, 212-982-2229; victoriangardensnyc.com.