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These Are a Few of My Favorite Hacks for Grand Central: Cameron on Transportation

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There is possibly no more beautiful railroad station in the world than New York City's Grand Central Terminal. As the destination of more than 55,000 daily rail commuters from Connecticut, it's a place where many of us spend a fair amount of time.

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I've been riding in and out of Grand Central for more than 50 years. So to help you maneuver the station's labyrinth of tunnels, ramps and stairs, here are some of the secrets of Grand Central.

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Underground access

Sure, you can enter Grand Central from street level, but in bad weather you can get there underground from blocks away. The north-end entrances at Madison Avenue and 47th Street, Park Avenue and 48th Street and the Helmsley Building walkways are dandy, though not all open on weekends.

But did you know you can also access from 43rd or 45th streets, west of Vanderbilt, from inside the Chrysler Building, the Hyatt Hotel on 42nd Street or via the subway's shuttle station, on the south side of 42nd Street, just west of Park?

Lift for lower level

If your train dumps you on the lower level, forget about the ramps or stairs for the long climb to street level, especially with luggage.

Walk to the forward end of the train and look for the elevator near Track 112. It'll take you to the upper level or, better yet, to within steps of Vanderbilt Avenue. Getting to the lower-level platforms from the street is just as easy.

On the upper level, look for the elevators and take them to the "P" (platform) level and avoid two flights of stairs.

Bathroom break

The new bathrooms at the west end of the lower level have helped a lot, but there's still often a line.

Take the nearby escalators up one level, turn around, and on your left is the Stationmaster's Office complete with a small waiting room and bathrooms — but only for women.

Another option is to go right and just before the ramp up to 42nd Street and Vanderbilt, look on your left for the Oyster Bar sign. Go down the steps into the bar and you'll find ornate bathrooms known only to a few.

Hailing a cab

Forget about the long line at the taxi stand on 42nd Street east of Vanderbilt. Instead, go out the west end of the Main Concourse, up the stairs and onto Vanderbilt Avenue.

Cross the street and wait at the corner of 43rd. Taxis flow through here, dropping off passengers every few seconds. If you're heading west, you'll avoid the traffic on 42nd Street.

Lighting up

Want to enjoy a cigar before your train? Forget about lighting up anywhere inside the station. Instead, go to the Hyatt Hotel just east on 42nd Street. From street level, take the escalator up two levels to the hotel taxi stand on the raised Park Avenue as it wraps around GCT.

These are a few of my favorite hacks of Grand Central. Send me an email with yours and I'll include them in a future column.

Some other transportation tips from Jim Cameron:

- [Strategies for Getting the Right Airline Seat, or Any Seat on Metro-North: Cameron on Transportation](#) (April 19)
- [How to Save What You Can as the Flood of Train Prices Rises Around You: Cameron on Transportation](#) (Some of this is not outdated; April 5)
- [What You Can Learn by Riding with a State Trooper on I-95: Cameron on Transportation](#) (June 18, 2017)
- [Metro-North Commuting 'Like Getting Hit With a 2-by-4' — Cameron on Transportation](#) (Feb. 18)
- [By 2020 You'll Need a 'Verified' Drivers License If You Want It for ID Before a Flight: Cameron on Transportation](#) (Dec. 17, 2017)
- [To Vermont by Train: Slow, But Relaxing and Weatherproof: Cameron on Transportation](#) (Oct. 29, 2017)
- [Think Air Travel's Crazy? You Don't Know the Half of It: Cameron on Transportation](#) (Oct. 7, 2017)
- [Check Out This Airline If You're Going to France: Cameron on Transportation](#) (July 28, 2017)
- [If You've Never Taken a Long Distance Train, You're Missing Out: Cameron on Transportation](#) (Sept. 24, 2017)

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