Welcome to this audio guide to Spanish Harlem. Walking along the cobblestone streets past museums and row houses, you'll think you've traveled back in time, when in fact you're in Spanish Harlem. This New York neighborhood makes up a diverse tapestry of many ethnic groups including: African American, Mexican, Dominican, Puerto Rican and South American. After World War II, this area became home to many immigrants, most of Puerto Rican descent. Harlem was their first stop in pursuit of the American Dream. As East Harlem Latino population grew, the area earned a new name: Spanish Harlem, or El Barrio, which means 'the neighborhood' in Spanish. Make no mistake - Spanish Harlem is a ghetto! It's far more vibrant than slummmish but it is just as raw and on the edge as you'd expect. But unlike notorious inner city segregated areas from America's other large cities, East Harlem is very accessible and right in the thick of uptown Manhattan, allowing anyone to discover the area.

1. **Restored Old Spanish Harlem**—your first stop should be on 104th St. between Lexington and 3rd Ave. to see a block of restored Old Spanish Harlem
   - This area is filled with restored tenement housing originally built in the 1870’s. Though these run down apartments barely met minimal living standards, this is where many of today's Puerto Rican-American families started. As more and more newcomers crammed into the housing, the New York City Housing Authority realized the deteriorating conditions of the tenements. The housing became the prime target for a federal slum clearance outlined in the Federal Housing Act of 1937. The New York City Housing Authority began razing the dilapidated East Harlem slums, replacing them with modern high-rise housing projects that still exist today.

2. **St Cecilia's**—125 East 105th Street, between Lexington and Park Avenue.
   - This Catholic church was built in 1883. It was originally the church of a small Irish population in East Harlem. Today it is a place of worship for parishioners of countless origins. It's usually open for viewing and worth stopping by to see the domed, frescoed ceiling and stained glass windows. The building directly across the street houses a number of activities, including studios for all BET and local cable channel cooking shows. You can enter the main lobby and check with the concierge if you're interested in getting tickets for the audience of a show.
3. **Botanicas**—116th & Park Avenue
   - This concentration of shops sells religious artifacts for the practice of the Afro-Cuban worship of Santeria. Often compared to Voodoo, Santeria is popular among Cuban-Americans. The island-based practice is often deemed bizarre by conventional western standards but it actually originated as a combination of Roman Catholicism and Native American traditions. These traditions including trances to communicate with ancestral deities as well as animal sacrifice and sacred drumming. Most of the herbs sold here arrive from Miami, the Dominican Republic, or Puerto Rico. The Botanicas are a unique setting that promotes the reproduction of healing as they welcome neighbors, patrons, and healers a place to worship.

4. **La Marqueta**—The shops of La Marqueta are under the Metro North railway on Park Ave between 111th street and 116th Street
   - This market was originally an informal gathering place for immigrant pushcart vendors and merchants. Today only three of the original five buildings that housed the market are still standing. In its heyday, in the 1950’s and 60’s, over 500 vendors operated out of La Marqueta selling food, traditional medicines, and Latin music. It was an important social and economic venue for Spanish Harlem. The shops were known across Manhattan. In the 1970’s, La Marqueta’s business declined as neighborhood supermarkets were introduced. The city of New York has repeatedly tried to revive La Marqueta but has failed to find a business model that pleases both local residents and politicians.

5. **Tito Puente Way** is on 110th Street between Madison and Park Ave.
   - If you are a music and dance buff, you’re sure to recognize the name Tito Puente. Born in 1923, the famous Latin performer grew up in a tenement on this block. He was a Puerto Rican Jazz and Mambo musician known for 50 years of dance-oriented compositions. Puente is credited with bringing Afro-Cuban and Caribbean sounds like the mambo and cha-cha to mainstream audiences. He is fondly known as \textit{el rey} (or the king) of Latin music. The musician has won six Grammy Awards including the 2003 Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2000, Tito Puente Way was dedicated to the mambo king in honor of his death.

6. **Graffiti Hall of Fame**—106th Street at Park Ave
   - This collection was founded in 1980 by New York community activist Ray Rodriguez known to neighbors and friends as Sting Ray. He launched the Graffiti Hall of Fame to provide street artists with a positive medium to display their skills.
its early years, the Hall of Fame served as an exclusive space for reputed subway graffiti artists from all 5 boroughs. These walls have been the canvas of some of the greatest hip-hop graffiti artists of all time. Today hip-hop style graffiti has gained international popularity therefore the Spanish Harlem Graffiti Hall of Fame now attracts graffiti artists worldwide hoping to catch a spot on the famed concrete walls.

7. **El Museo del Barrio** (three kings day parade) 1230 on Fifth Ave between 104th and 105th Street on New York City’s Museum Mile. 212-831-7272
   - The museum is located on New York City’s Museum Mile, which is also home to 8 other museums such as the Guggenheim, the Jewish Museum, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Founded in 1969 by a group of Puerto Rican educators, artists, parents and community activists from Spanish Harlem, El Museo del Barrio is New York’s leading Hispanic cultural institution. It is the only museum in New York City specializing in representation of the diversity of art and culture in the Caribbean and Latin America. Performing arts events, cultural celebrations, and education programs complement the museum's exhibits. El Museo’s most popular event is the January celebration of the Three King’s Day Parade, a Spanish holiday honoring the three king’s visit to baby Jesus, bringing him gold, frankincense and myrrh. On this day, the streets are filled with lively music, colorful dancing, and *parrandas* (or carnival-like street parties).