

40 hours

# Boston

The beating heart of old-world America has plenty to offer new visitors, finds **Alice Barnes-Brown**

**b**rownstone buildings, lashings of sea air and unmistakable

Atlantic accents – Boston has maintained a fierce identity since the 17th century.

Set on the Charles River, the Massachusetts capital is one of the US's great academic and artistic centres, but the city is also heavenly for foodies, with its blend of Italian, Asian, Irish and even Armenian influences found in its American cuisine.

Just six hours from the UK – and with Logan International near downtown – Boston makes a feasible weekend break. Plus, Virgin Atlantic is upping its service from Heathrow to twice-daily on March 31. ➤



PICTURES: Visit Boston/Kyle Klein; Shutterstock/minizen

ASK THE  
experts



Martha J. Sheridan,  
president and chief executive,  
Meet Boston

"A second daily Virgin Atlantic flight, coming hot on the heels of Raffles' choice of Boston to open its first North America property, tells of how exciting Boston is set to be in 2024. We will also be welcoming our second Citizen M hotel to the Back Bay this summer, complementing an exceptional collection of global brands, from large luxury to independent and boutique accommodation. With its diverse cultural and culinary offerings, Boston is a compelling visitor destination in any season. Beyond our history and museums – not to mention the sports teams and seafood – this pioneering hub of innovation features 23 eclectic neighbourhoods, each teeming with experiences that are sure to create lifelong memories."

BOOK IT

**America As You Like It** offers seven nights' bed and breakfast at Boston's Harborside Inn from £1,455 per person. The price includes Virgin Atlantic flights from Heathrow for a mid-April departure. [americaasyoulikeit.com](http://americaasyoulikeit.com)



FROM FAR LEFT:  
Harvard University;  
Fenway Park; Quincy  
Market; Boston Tea Party Ships  
& Museum; Boston Harbour;  
Boston's Freedom Trail; Isabella  
Stewart Gardner Museum; Boston View

PICTURES: Visit Boston/Michael Blanchard Photography, Kyle Klein, Brandon Miles, MXPhotography, Shutterstock/Jan Bilous, Marcio Jose Bastos Silva, iNF images, CD Leong

DAY ONE

**09.00:** Head to the heritage Omni Parker House for a slice of Boston's beloved cream pie – a custard-filled and chocolate-topped cake – for breakfast. The rich treat was invented in this very hotel and can be enjoyed in the panelled restaurant, which has walls lined with mysterious cameos that hint at the semi-regular hauntings in the rooms above.

**10.30:** Get your step count up on a stroll around Boston Common. Founded in 1634, this swathe of urban greenery is the US's oldest park. In spring, the willows and tulips burst into bloom, while the oval-shaped Frog Pond (usually a children's spray pool) turns into an ice rink when the temperature dips below freezing. That should work up enough energy for a hearty Italian meal in neighbouring Beacon Hill – try Toscano for top-notch antipasti.

**13.30:** Take the T-Train (Boston's underground railway) southwest to

Fenway, where you'll find the city's top art museums: the Museum of Fine Arts and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. Among the former's 450,000-plus pieces are works by Andy Warhol and Claude Monet. At the front is the evocative 1909 bronze sculpture *Appeal to the Great Spirit* by Utah sculptor Cyrus Dallin, featuring a Native American man with his arms spread enigmatically skywards. The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, meanwhile, is perhaps better known for its own colourful history than the Renaissance paintings inside. Built in the style of a pink-hued Venetian palazzo, the *fin-de-siècle* museum's construction was funded by the bold philanthropist Isabella Stewart Gardner, who spent her life collecting treasures from around the globe. However, in 1990, a group of thieves disguised as policemen broke into the museum and stole 13 works of art. Neither the thieves nor the paintings were traced, but the remaining paintings are displayed in an

interactive and thought-provoking way, with no conventional labels; visitors are encouraged to find their own meaning in the canvases in front of them.

**16.00:** A 15-minute wander through the Back Bay Fens park – look for the Japanese temple bell dating back to 1675 – brings you to Boston's most famous hangout: Fenway Park, the home of the Boston Red Sox baseball team. Before sitting down to an evening of home runs and hot dogs, arrive early to enjoy the entertainment on Jersey Street. Big League Brian the stiltwalker is a particular delight to see tottering through the crowds. Craft beer fans should make a pit stop at Trillium Brewing Company, a Bostonian institution with fruity and fresh ales and stouts on tap.

**19.30:** Return to the city centre and whizz up to the 50th floor of the Prudential Tower to enjoy sunset at the Boston View observatory, which opened in June. Tickets to

the 230m-high attraction cost from \$30, and it's a huge upgrade on the previous incarnation, which shut during the pandemic. Visitors to Boston View start on the 52nd floor, where they'll be wowed by the seamless blend of glass towers that glint in the sunshine and the warm glow of hearth-filled Victorian homes. Then, it's down one storey for photo ops and a sleek indoor/outdoor cocktail bar, before finishing the experience on the 50th floor with dinner at The Beacon, where the pan-seared Nova Scotia salmon offers a taste of the region's culinary pedigree. For afters, hit the Back Bay neighbourhood for cocktails at Hecate, a hidden speakeasy-style basement bar with witchy vibes.

DAY TWO

**10.00:** Downtown, partake in a bougie brunch, or opt for donuts at Kane's – the cinnamon-frosted coffee roll is the size of a dinner plate, and can be shared with a companion for a truly decadent

start to the day. Next, take the train across the Charles to see the leafy quads and gothic halls of the Harvard University campus on a student-led tour. Finish up your collegiate experience at Harvard Square, where indie bookshops, cool coffee joints and preppy pizzerias add to the area's small-town atmosphere.

**12.30:** The 2.5-mile Freedom Trail is a journey through the American Revolution in 16 landmarks, starting at Boston Common and ending on this side of the river at the Bunker Hill monument, which commemorates a major battle that took place in 1775. Walk the trail in reverse to pass by historic sites including Boston's oldest church, the lattice-windowed house of Founding Father Paul Revere and Faneuil Hall. The Old State House is a pretty and petite building that seems incongruous compared with its skyscraper neighbours, but was at the turning point of American history when its forecourt was drenched in the blood of five US revolutionaries

shot by the British Army during the Boston Massacre. Hop over the road to grab a late lunch at Quincy Market. There are more than 50 food outlets, so if you can't decide, a plate of BBQ-and-bacon-tinged Boston baked beans will fill you up in true Boston style.

**15.30:** Tea lovers may be aghast when they hear the tale of the Boston Tea Party – in which crates of tea amounting to 18 million cups were cast into Boston Harbour in a tax-related protest by champions of American independence, such as Samuel Adams – but the Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum will soon have even the occasional tea drinker up in arms. A raucous representative from the Sons and Daughters of Liberty niles visitors against the unfair taxes of King George III's government, before taking the newly recruited revolutionaries on board a replica ship to hurl tea chests overboard. There's also a documentary explaining the Tea Party's role in the American Revolution, as well as

a Thirteen Colonies-style tearoom where visitors can try the era's most beloved tea blends.

**17.00:** For a different way to study the past, head to Boston Public Library's main building in Copley Place, where visitors can pick volumes from the shelves to read in the vaulted main reading room. Grand though it may be, the library remains true to its revolutionary and egalitarian roots, with educational, cultural and family events free to all throughout the year.

**19.30:** For the perfect way to end a Boston stay, try the creamy seafood staple, clam chowder, at Legal Sea Foods' harbourside restaurant. The clams here are plucked from Cape Cod, and simmered slowly with potato, onions and milk to create a soup so special, the restaurant claims it has been served at every presidential inauguration since 1981. The US might love Boston as much for its food as for being the birthplace of the nation. **TW**