

BOSTON

1 MINUTE/1 HOUR/1 DAY GETAWAY

Boston easily lays claim to being the commercial and cultural epicenter of New England. While it continues to embrace its Colonial heritage, Beantown, as it's affectionately known, has developed into a first-class, fashionable, contemporary city in America.

1 MINUTE

The "Skinny House"
44 Hull St., North End

Rumor says this "house" was built to block light from a neighbor's house. Along the Freedom Trail for over 200 years, this 10x30-foot, four-story landmark never ceases to amaze. It's wedged between two buildings, and you'll probably never see anything so oddly interesting again.

Boston Public Garden
At Charles and Beacon Sts.

Bask in Boston's historic charm with a stroll through the oldest botanical garden in the U.S. You'll feel a pang from childhood when you see the adorable statues that pay homage to Robert McCloskey's "Make Way for Ducklings." Relax beside the pond or check out the famous swan boats, which offer cruises in warmer months.

1 HOUR

Museum of Fine Arts
465 Huntington Ave. • 617-267-9300

Count 43 Monet paintings among its collection of Impressionist works. You'll also find modern and contemporary art, plus Egyptian artifacts, medieval sculpture, even woven tapestries. Take a free guided tour or pick up a booklet before venturing off.

Beacon Hill
North of Boston Common and the Public Garden • 617-523-9490

For one square-mile, it's like stepping back into the 19th century, with cobblestone alleys, gas-lit streets and secret gardens. Here you'll find funky boutiques, art galleries, cozy bookstores and an array of cafés along Charles and Cambridge Streets.

Museum of Bad Art
580 High Street, Dedham • 781-326-0409

Located about 8 miles south of downtown Boston, MOBA dedicates itself to the collection, preservation and exhibition of bad art in "all its glory". Works range from amusing pieces by established artists who've run horribly astray to oddly mesmerizing canvases by artists new to the brush. Stop by the gift shop for a truly thought-provoking souvenir. Admission is free.

1 HOUR (CON'T)

Cambridge

Known the world over as home to Harvard University, this neighborhood just across the Charles River is also home to 95,000 of the most culturally diverse citizens on the East Coast. Browse Harvard or Inman Squares for dining, boutiques, bookstores and nightlife. Check out Kendall Square, home MIT and the state's high tech giants. Or pop by Porter Square, which boasts an array of Japanese shops and eateries.

Newbury Street
Between Arlington St. and Massachusetts Ave.

Spanning 8 city blocks, Newbury Street is Boston's answer to Fifth Avenue. Architecture offers a feel for what the area looked like in the 19th century, and you'll discover outdoor cafés, antique shops and boutiques galore.

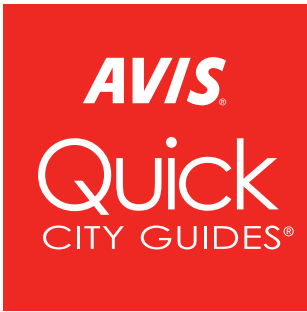
1 DAY

Inman Square
At Cambridge and Hampshire Sts.

Nestled in the town of Cambridge, it epitomizes funky galleries, creative restaurants and cozy coffeehouses. Spend the day going in and out of trendy vintage shops, like Absolutely Fabulous. For an Italian sandwich, there's City Girl Café. For a warm weather treat, there's Christina's Ice Cream Shop with over 40 flavors.

Salem
978-744-0004 (Chamber of Commerce)

Just 16 miles north of Boston, you can explore the charming hamlet of Salem, famous for the Witch Trials of 1692. Visit the display stones dedicated to the 24 victims who died as a result of superstition and hysteria. Salem's rich architectural heritage is worth exploring, too. Take a tour of the House of the Seven Gables or stroll down Chestnut Street, considered one of the most beautiful streets in America.



BOSTON

GOURMET DINING AND LOCAL FAVORITES

GOURMET DINING

Aujourd'Hui

Overlooking the Public Garden in the Four Seasons Hotel, tuxedoed waiters serve fine French cuisine. Dishes, like Maine lobster, are prepared with fresh, rare ingredients flown in that day. The made-to-order dessert soufflé is a local favorite.

200 Boylston St. • 617-338-4400

Icarus

Soft lighting from art nouveau lamps set the mood in this modern-day supper club. The menu is seasonal, but you can expect imaginative dishes of seafood, sautéed duck and grilled beef tenderloin whenever you visit. The molten chocolate soufflé cake for two is a specialty, plus live jazz on Friday nights is a nice touch.

3 Appleton St. • 617-426-1790

Top of the Hub

Expect nothing less than exceptional service, white tablecloth elegance and breathtaking views from the 52nd floor. Live jazz accompanies the ever-changing contemporary American menu with fresh local seafood, like yellowfin tuna.

800 Boylston St. • 617-536-1775

No. 9 Park

Located in an elegant Beacon Hill townhouse, No.9 provides an intimate backdrop for regionally-inspired Italian and French cuisine. Start with the chestnut bisque, then try the venison with apples and cardamom or the scallops with shrimp and watercress velouté. Call ahead to enjoy a nine course Chef's Tasting.

9 Park St. • 617-742-9991

Clio and Uni

Bostonians flock to Clio's subtle-toned dining room for its inspired French-Asian cuisine. Appetizers include crayfish bisque with coconut and morels, and the Kobe rib eye, though pricey, makes a stunning entrée. Uni, in the Clio lounge, is an equally innovative sushi bar, featuring delicacies like octopus with yellow pepper and black mint, and cocktails like the shiso mojito.

370 Commonwealth Ave. • 617-536-7200

LOCAL FAVORITES

Parker's Restaurant

It's home to the Boston cream pie and Parker House roll, a light, puffy bun. Yet within the setting of dark woods and glowing chandeliers lies an American/Continental menu that changes seasonally, with the New England clam chowder a house favorite.

60 School St. • 617-725-1600

Legal Sea Foods

Follow the locals here for the freshest seafood around. With many casual locations, you can expect a menu that includes swordfish, salmon and bluefish, plus their infamous crab cakes and clam chowder.

26 Park Plaza • 617-426-4444

Lala Rokh

Only a block from Charles Street in Beacon Hill, Lala Rokh enchants regulars with Persian and Middle Eastern dishes. Rich hues and textures distinguish the interior, and you'll find a variety of slow-cooked meats and poultry, like try the stewed lamb accented with dried limes as well as game and fish marinated in herbs and expertly grilled.

97 Mt. Vernon St. • 617-720-5511

Grafton Street

This hip, affordable neighborhood pub has it all. Enjoy a simple pasta—or go for something more complex, like the grilled sea scallops with shiitake risotto. Tall rounded booths, a stylish bar and glass lamps in reds and blues create a contemporary but casual vibe. In warmer months, the windows overlooking Harvard Square open for perfect people-watching.

1230 Massachusetts Ave. • 617-497-0400

Blue Room

This neighborhood gem featured an open kitchen, heavy ceiling timbers and exposed brick. Expect creative fare inspired by locally grown ingredients and cuisines from around the globe. The Blue Room Sunday brunch offers everything from buttermilk pancakes to scrambled eggs with spinach and feta cheese to pork chicharrones with tamarind BBQ. Outdoor dining in warmer months.

1 Kendall Sq, Cambridge • 617-494-9034