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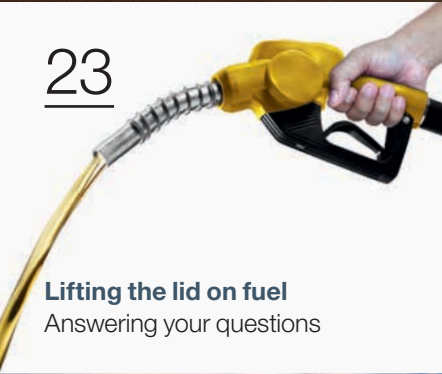
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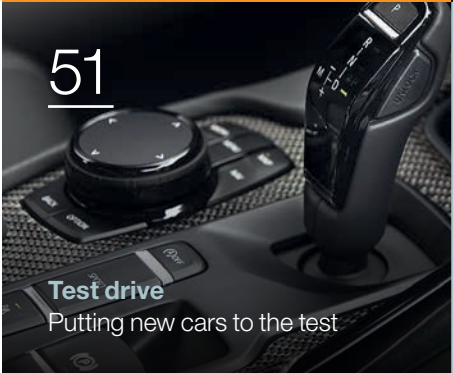
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BOSTON CITY GUIDE

The gateway to the beautiful New England coast, Boston packs a whole lot of US history into one very walkable city. Here's how to get the most out of Boston in just three days.

By Susan Gough Henly

Boston is home to some of America's most grand and diverse institutions. Think Harvard University and The Boston Red Sox baseball team. It is also a City of Firsts as it lays claim to creating America's first public park, first public library, first public school,

first subway, first marathon, and even first cut-price department store (Filene's Basement, still going strong on Boylston Street). A pretty city dotted with parks and brownstone neighbourhoods that frame a bustling waterfront, Boston is the

largest hub in the Northeast and just 3½ hours by train from New York. It also makes a great jumping off point for exploring New England's craggy island-dotted coastline.



ABOVE: George Washington Statue, Boston Public Garden.



LEFT: Fenway Park, the oldest ballpark in major league baseball; ABOVE: Beacon Hill is a historic neighbourhood lined with Federalist red-brick townhouses.

Day 1

The completely renovated Boston Park Plaza hotel is an ideal central base near the Boston Public Garden from which to explore the city.

Start your day at the Boston Common with a Freedom Trail tour. You can easily self-navigate the four-kilometre, red-brick trail past 16 of the city's most historic sites. However, the entertaining 18th century-costumed guides tell stories that bring to life what happened at places like the Old South Meeting House and the Boston Massacre Site in their 90-minute introduction to Boston's revolutionary roots.

Look around Faneuil Hall Marketplace before lunch at the nearby Union Oyster House, the oldest continuously operating restaurant in the United States, with a wide range of seafood and other dishes. You might even be able to sit in Boston native son John F. Kennedy's favourite booth.

At the Boston Tea Party Ships and Museum, costumed narrators give you roles to play at the rowdy Sons of Liberty meeting that took place here on 16 December 1773 to discuss the tyranny of British tax on tea. Then

head down to a replica of one of the three ships that stored the tea. Further exhibits reveal how the Boston Tea Party was the single most important event that led to the American Revolution. Afterwards, enjoy the Chinese teas at Abigail's Tearoom that were so popular back in the day.

Walk over to nearby Row 34 where you can taste some of Boston and New England's finest craft brews on tap while you savour a wide selection of New England oysters, raw bar delicacies, clam chowder and other local seafood.

You can't come to Boston without going to a sporting event in what is perhaps the most sports-mad city in the United States. If you're lucky, the world champion Boston Red Sox might be playing at Fenway Park (March-September). Or perhaps you can see a New England Patriots football match - they're the most highly awarded football team in the country (September-January), or a legendary Boston Celtics basketball game (October-April), or that most New England game of all, a Boston Bruins ice hockey match (October-April). And, of course, there's also the famed Boston Marathon (April).

Day 2

Explore the Boston Public Garden before taking a leisurely 'cruise' on the lagoon on one of its large white swan boats. Head up past the gold-domed State House to Beacon Hill to explore this historic gas lamp-lit neighbourhood lined with beautifully preserved red-brick Federalist townhouses. It is also well worth checking out the Museum of African American History, which includes the oldest black church building and the oldest building housing a black public school in the United States. Check out cobblestoned Acorn Street before walking down to Charles Street, with its interesting boutiques, gourmet shops and antique stores.

If you're a fan of the television show Cheers, have lunch at the original Cheers, where you can eat upstairs overlooking the Boston Public Garden or downstairs, which looks more like the original set. Afterwards, walk down tree-lined Commonwealth Avenue, framed with Victorian brownstone buildings, before shopping on Newbury Street which is chock-a-block with an eclectic array of cafes, bookshops, boutiques and record stores. »



ABOVE: Harvard is the United State's oldest and most prestigious university; RIGHT: The North End is renowned for its Italian influence.



Spend the afternoon at the expansive Boston Museum of Fine Arts to see portraits of key figures of the American Revolution in the celebrated Art of the Americas wing as well as some of the finest Monet paintings outside of Europe. Visit the nearby Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum to discover masterpieces by Titian, Rembrandt, Michelangelo, Botticelli, Manet, Whistler and Matisse in a Venetian-palace-like building with a beautiful garden courtyard. Sports lovers will enjoy a tour of nearby Fenway Park, the oldest ballpark in major league baseball.

Grab a lobster roll or a dozen oysters at Eventide Fenway before enjoying a performance of the renowned Boston Symphony Orchestra near Symphony Hall.

Day 3

Explore the North End where some of the city's oldest buildings, such as silversmith Paul Revere's house and the Old North Church sit amidst cafes, pastry shops, and old-school delis of Boston's classic Italian neighbourhood. Restore yourself with some cannoli at Mike's Pastry before walking the Rose Kennedy Greenway, a beautiful parkway dedicated to the mother of John, Robert and Edward Kennedy,

to get to Nebo for lunch. Started by two sisters with deep ties to the North End, Nebo is the place to try pasta alla vongole and gorgonzola and fig salad.

Head across the Charles river to Cambridge, the home of Harvard, the oldest and most prestigious university in the United States. There's no better way to explore this hallowed Ivy League institution than with a Harvard Tour, the hilarious, unofficial and unsanctioned tour led by Harvard students. You'll not only see important sites, like the Widener Library, the showpiece of the largest university library system in the world, built through donations from the mother of Titanic victim Harry Widener, but you also get the lowdown on famous Harvard dropouts Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg and Matt Damon and much more.

Make time for Harvard's museums, too. The Renzo Piano-designed Harvard Art Museums, house one of the most significant collections of Asian art in the West, plus incredible Pre-Raphaelites, Impressionist and post-Impressionist paintings, as well as German Expressionists and Bauhaus works.

When you're done with all that culture, enjoy great cocktails and more fresh seafood at the atmospheric Hourly Oyster. Cambridge has a host of

fabulous Thai, Cambodian, Middle Eastern, and Ethiopian eateries, too. Afterwards, hang out with the students at any number of bars, craft breweries or music clubs dotted in and around Harvard Square. ■

Fast facts



When to go

Boston is great to visit year-round but is especially appealing during the September-November autumn colour season.



Getting there

Flights from Perth to Boston can be routed either through the Middle East and London or through Sydney/Melbourne and Los Angeles.



Getting around

Boston is one of the most walkable cities in the United States. The subway is also clean and efficient.



Contact us

Explore the beautiful New England coast on a Canada and New England cruise. Contact RAC Cruise Club on **1300 655 898**.