

## Your Mini-Guide to Boston, Massachusetts



Although I've lived in New York City for the last few years, I was actually born and raised in the Boston area. Boston is a much smaller city located about four hours north of New York by train (or 3.5 – 6 hours by car or bus, depending on the traffic). Here are some key things to know about my home city:

### **Pahkin Yeh Cah in Hahvihd Yahd**

One of the most unique things about Boston is its accent. Notoriously difficult to imitate, it has been the bane of many a Hollywood actor (see: Laura Linney in "Mystic River," yikes). The phrase that is famously used to demonstrate the nuances of the accent is: "park your car in Harvard yard." The Boston accent is best known for dropping the r's out of words, so, from the mouth of a true Bostonian, the phrase sounds more like, "pahk yeh cah in Hahvihd Yahd."

Like many other American cities, Boston has a few words and expressions you won't often hear elsewhere. For example:

Wicked ~ very

Bang a u-ey ~ Make a u-turn

Bubbler ~ water/drinking fountain

Dunks ~ Dunkin' Donuts (popular donut/coffee chain of Massachusetts origin)

Ripper ~ giant, wild party

Chowderhead ~ an idiot

The T = the metro in Boston, short for MBTA (Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority)

Now you can talk like a local, which is "wicked awesome, kid."

### **Weather**

Boston-area winters are very cold, dark, and snowy. Summers are hot and humid. The area is hit by weakened hurricanes in August and September, and can also be hit by storms called nor'easters during colder months. Sounds pleasant, non? The leaves change in the fall and some flowers can be seen as early as mid-March in spring. It's not unusual to see snow as early as October and as late as April.

### **Sports**

Boston is a big sports town, with champion baseball (the Red Sox), football (the New England Patriots), basketball (the Celtics), and hockey (the Bruins) teams that all enjoy enthusiastic – some would say crazy – fans.

The Red Sox are widely known for their long-running rivalry with the New York Yankees. So mythic is this rivalry that I think it best to leave its full description to another day. In a nutshell: do NOT wear a Yankees hat in Boston.

If you get the chance to visit Boston one day, a Red Sox game at Fenway Park is well worth your time. For me, there's nothing quite like walking out into the stands under the bright lights, the crowd cheering and the Green Monster (the park's famous left field wall) waiting for a home run.

The Boston Marathon is one of the most famous and competitive marathons in the world. It's also known to be a difficult course, with a series of hills toward the end of the race, the last of which is nicknamed Heartbreak Hill.

The Head of the Charles Regatta is a rowing competition held every fall. Spectators line the river and eat junk food in their warmest jackets while they watch fit college kids race down the chilly river.



## Food

The Boston area is famous for a few foods:

Chowder: New England-style clam chowder is cream-based and usually contains clams, potatoes, and some other vegetables (and sometimes bacon for the extra healthy version). Clams and other seafood in general are a part of Boston and New England life. My family always dug up their own clams on Cape Cod in the summer, to make steamers and fried clams. In summer, Boston hosts Chowderfest, a tasty clam chowder contest.

Boston Baked Beans: Beans made with molasses and other ingredients were traditionally a very popular dish in the area. So popular, in fact, that one nickname for the city is "Beantown."

Molasses: Boston molasses is unfortunately famous for another reason. The Boston Molasses Disaster of 1919 killed more than 20 people, when a tank burst and released a wave of molasses that swept through the streets of the North End. Even today, there are those who claim you can sometimes smell molasses in the neighborhood on hot days.

New England brown bread: Mention this bread anywhere else in the U.S., and people will likely look at you like you have two heads. This is a slightly sweet, soft bread, often steamed in a can. Good with clam chowder too, of course.

## History

The Boston area was one of the first places the early European colonists settled in the United States, and was also central to the American Revolution. There are countless historical sites to visit in and around the city.

Boston, like many American cities, has long been a point of entry and new home for immigrants. In the 1800s, Boston attracted many immigrants from Ireland, a fact reflected today in the Irish last names of many of its residents, the plethora of Irish pubs, a popular St. Patrick's Day parade, and a large Catholic population.

These days, the largest incoming populations of immigrants are from Asia and Latin America – specifically countries such as China, Haiti, Vietnam, and Brazil.



**Academia:**

Boston has long been a hub for academics, with many universities in the city and surrounding areas, including some of the oldest and most prestigious. Student life is a big part of the city culture, as each year hundreds of thousands of students study there. But they can't park their cars in Harvard Yard. Harvard Yard is actually a pedestrian-only zone.