

Chapter 6

DOWNTOWN AND THE WATERFRONT

6

Updated by
Leigh Harrington



 Sights
★★★★★

 Restaurants
★★★★☆

 Hotels
★★★★☆

 Shopping
★★★☆☆

 Nightlife
★★★★☆

NEIGHBORHOOD SNAPSHOT

TOP EXPERIENCES	QUICK BITES
<p>■ Swim with sea life: Touch a shark, watch Myrtle the Turtle feed, and see many of the ocean's creatures at the New England Aquarium.</p> <p>■ Revolutionary history: Explore some of the Freedom Trail's most interactive sites, including Old South Meeting House and the Old State House.</p> <p>■ Savor Asia's authentic flavors: Whether you prefer Cambodian, Vietnamese, or Cantonese, Chinatown is a great place to dine.</p> <p>■ Splendid waterfront views: Stroll along the Harborwalk for gorgeous panoramas of Charlestown and East Boston, as well as fancy yachts, ferries, and maybe a harbor seal.</p> <p>■ See a show: Most of the city's stages occupy Downtown's Theater District, and there's always something playing, from opera to Broadway musicals.</p>	<p>■ Clover Food Lab. Famous for its meat-free menu and eco-conscious approach, Clover is an easy pit stop for food along the Freedom Trail. Expect local, organic ingredients in ever-changing options, but the chickpea fritters are a must-sample staple. ☒ 27 School St., Downtown 📍 www.cloverfoodlab.com 📍 Park, State.</p> <p>■ Dewey Square Food Trucks. On weekday mornings and afternoons, locally operated food trucks congregate at Dewey Square plaza on the Rose Kennedy Greenway, ready to serve Financial District professionals an eat-it-while-you-walk or picnic meal. Typically, 8 to 10 different options offer variety from curry to Korean. ☒ Summer St. at Congress St., Financial District 📍 www.rosekenedygreenway.org/food-trucks 📍 South Station.</p> <p>■ Sal's Pizza. Grab a slice of cheese (be warned: one slice is actually two, and if you order two, you get four) and a soda from this legendary, small local chain, and take it to-go for a picnic on Boston Common, right across the street. ☒ 150 Tremont St., Downtown 📍 www.sals.com 📍 Park, Boylston.</p>
GETTING HERE AND AROUND	
<p>Travelers can access Downtown Boston very easily, as it is centrally situated. Each of the T's four main subway lines run through it: take the Orange Line to Downtown Crossing or State, the Blue Line to State or Aquarium, the Red Line to South Station or Downtown Crossing, or the Green Line to Park. If you're up for burning calories over a few hours, walking can be a great way to explore the neighborhood, with all its winding roads and historic sites to see along the way.</p> <p>For the waterfront, get off at Aquarium and walk southeast, or South Station and walk northeast. You can also use the waterfront as a departure and arrival point when traveling by sea. A few ferry services and Boston Water Taxi (☎ 617/261-6620) operate out of Rowes Wharf and Long Wharf, and feature dozens of stops around Boston Harbor.</p> <p>Driving in downtown is not recommended unless absolutely necessary. Parking is nonexistent, and traffic can crawl no matter the time of day.</p>	

Boston's commercial and financial districts are concentrated in a maze of streets laid out with little logic. They are, after all, only village lanes that happen to be lined with modern, 40-story office buildings. That's not to say the past has been erased; Downtown is one of the city's most historic 'hoods, and here beats the heart of the Freedom Trail.

Take the Green Line to Park and walk east, or take the Red Line to South Station and walk west. Downtown is bordered by State Street to the north, Chinatown to the south, Tremont Street and Boston Common on the west, and Boston Harbor wharves on its eastern edge. Be prepared: the tangle of streets can be confusing. If you get lost, don't worry. These streets are also typically short, so you'll be able to reorient yourself quickly. In the meantime, you just might stumble upon something fun and historic.

Here's an interesting fact about Downtown: It's Boston's original landmass, along with the North End. Back in 1630, when Boston's founder, John Winthrop, sailed through, the place looked nothing like it does today. Look at an old map of the then-called Shawmut Peninsula, and you'll understand. Boston was a low-lying, swampy mess, before landfill projects created the Back Bay and significant portions of Chinatown, the South End, and South Boston, in the 19th century.

Washington Street (aka Downtown Crossing) is Downtown's main commercial thoroughfare. The block reeks of

history—and sausage carts. Street vendors, flower sellers, and gaggles of teenagers, businesspeople, and shoppers throng the pedestrian mall. Shops like Primark and Macy's have been helping to revitalize the area after a dormant period.

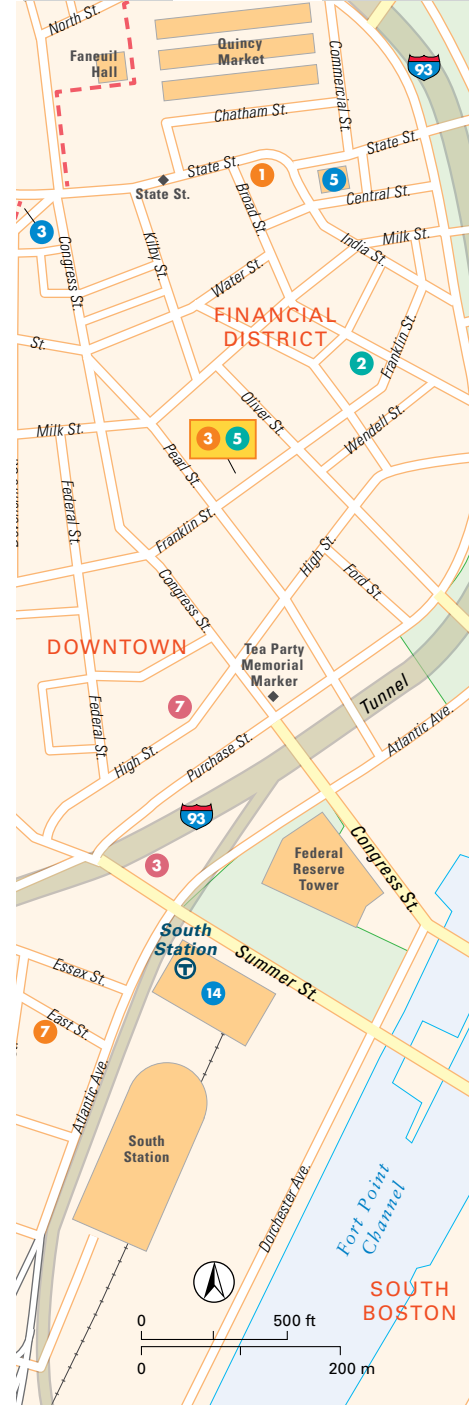
Downtown



Benjamin Franklin Statue/Boston Latin School

PUBLIC ART | FAMILY | This stop on the Freedom Trail, in front of Old City Hall, commemorates the noted revolutionary, statesman, and inventor. His likeness also marks the original location of the Boston Latin School, the country's oldest public school (founded in 1635). Franklin attended Boston Latin with three other signers of the Declaration of Independence—Samuel Adams, John Hancock, and Robert Treat Paine—but he has the dubious distinction of being the only one of the four not to graduate. ■ **TIP** → This is Freedom Trail stop 6. ☒ 45 School St., Downtown ☎ 617/635-3911 📍 www.thefreedomtrail.org 📍 Park.

Downtown, Chinatown, Theater District, and Leather District



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|---|----|---|----|
| Sights | ▼ | Quick Bites | ▼ |
| 1 Benjamin Franklin Statue/
Boston Latin School..... | E2 | 1 Chacarero | F5 |
| 2 Boston Irish Famine
Memorial | F3 | 2 Clover Food Lab..... | E3 |
| 3 Boston
Massacre Site | G2 | 3 Dewey Square
Food Trucks | G6 |
| 4 Chinatown Gate..... | D8 | 4 George Howell
Coffee | D5 |
| 5 Custom House Tower | I2 | 5 Gracenote Coffee | F7 |
| 6 King's Chapel..... | E2 | 6 Great Taste Bakery..... | E7 |
| 7 King's Chapel
Burying Ground..... | E2 | 7 High Street Place
Food Hall | H5 |
| 8 Leather District | F8 | 8 Sa's Pizza..... | C5 |
| 9 Money Museum
of Boston | E3 | 9 Sam LaGrassa's..... | D3 |
| 10 Old City Hall | E2 | 10 Tasty Burger..... | E4 |
| 11 Old Corner Bookstore..... | F3 | 11 Tatte Bakery & Café..... | F2 |
| 12 Old South
Meeting House..... | F3 | 12 Tea Do..... | E7 |
| 13 Old State House..... | F2 | 13 Thinking Cup | C5 |
| 14 South Station..... | H7 | | |
| 15 Theater District | B7 | Hotels | ▼ |
| | | 1 The Godfrey Hotel | D5 |
| | | 2 Hilton Boston Downtown/
Faneuil Hall | I3 |
| | | 3 Hyatt Regency
Boston | D6 |
| Restaurants | ▼ | 4 Kimpton Nine Zero
Hotel..... | E3 |
| 1 Bostonia
Public House..... | H2 | 5 The Langham,
Boston | H4 |
| 2 French Quarter..... | D5 | 6 Moxy | B7 |
| 3 Grana..... | H4 | 7 Omni Parker House..... | E3 |
| 4 haley.henry..... | E3 | 8 Revere Hotel | A8 |
| 5 Hei-La Moon | E6 | 9 The Ritz-Carlton,
Boston | C6 |
| 6 jm Curley..... | D4 | 10 W Boston | B7 |
| 7 o ya | G7 | | |
| 8 Penang..... | C7 | | |
| 9 Pho Pasteur | C7 | | |
| 10 Q Restaurant | D7 | | |
| 11 RUKA..... | D5 | | |
| 12 Shabu-Zen..... | E7 | | |
| 13 Silvertone Bar & Grill.... | E3 | | |
| 14 Taiwan Cafe | E7 | | |
| 15 Yvonne's | D4 | | |

Boston Irish Famine Memorial

MONUMENT | Dedicated in 1998 with this memorial and a small park, artist Robert Shure's two sculptures—one depicting an anguished family on the shores of Ireland, the other a determined and hopeful Irish family stepping ashore in Boston—are a tribute to the rich immigrant past of this most Irish of American cities. *School St. at Washington St., Downtown* *State, Downtown Crossing.*

Boston Massacre Site

MONUMENT | **FAMILY** | A circle of cobblestones in front of the Old State House commemorates the Boston Massacre, which happened about 20 feet away. To recap: it was on the snowy evening of March 5, 1770, that nine British soldiers fired in panic upon a taunting mob of more than 75 colonists who were upset over British occupation and taxation. Five townsmen died. In the legal action that followed, the defense of the accused soldiers was undertaken by John Adams and Josiah Quincy, both of whom vehemently opposed British oppression but were devoted to the principle of a fair trial. All but two of the nine regulars charged were acquitted; the others were branded on the hand for the crime of manslaughter. Paul Revere lost little time in capturing the "massacre" in a dramatic engraving that soon became one of the Revolution's most potent images of propaganda. **TIP→ This is Freedom Trail stop 10.** *206 Washington St., Downtown* *www.thefreedomtrail.org* *State.*

Custom House Tower

NOTABLE BUILDING | One of Boston's most recognizable buildings, the gorgeous 1847 Custom House resembles a Greek Revival temple and features an iconic tower that was added much later, in 1915. This addition gave the building notoriety at the time as the city's tallest. Where the skyscraper once operated as a federal building, today, Marriott owns it as a hotel and vacation club. The public is invited into the Custom House's recently

Did You Know?

On December 17, 1773, when chaos ensued at a place called Griffin's Wharf along present-day Atlantic Avenue, they called it the Destruction of the Tea. Today, we remember that historic, pre-Revolutionary event as the Boston Tea Party. There isn't much left to see at Griffin's Wharf now; in fact, its exact location is debatable. If you're in the area, look for a historical marker commemorating the event affixed to a building at the corner of Atlantic Avenue and Seaport Boulevard.

renovated 26th-floor observation deck for unparalleled views of Downtown and Boston Harbor daily at 2 pm, except Friday. Entrance is free, but space is limited, so call ahead for a ticket at least 48 hours in advance. *3 McKinley Sq., Downtown* *617/310-6300* *www.marriott.com* *Call 48 hours in advance.* *State, Aquarium.*

★ King's Chapel

HISTORIC SIGHT | **FAMILY** | Both somber and dramatic, King's Chapel looms large. Its distinctive shape wasn't achieved entirely by design; for lack of funds, it was never topped with a steeple. The first chapel on this site was erected in 1688 for the establishment of an Anglican place of worship, and it took five years to build the solid Quincy-granite structure seen today. As construction proceeded, the old church continued to stand within the rising walls of the new, the plan being to remove and carry it away piece by piece when the outer stone chapel was completed. The builders then went to work on the interior, which remains essentially as they finished it in 1754; it's a masterpiece of proportion and Georgian calm (in fact, its acoustics make the use of a microphone unnecessary

for Sunday sermons). The pulpit, built in 1717, is the oldest pulpit in continuous use on the same site in the United States. To the right of the main entrance is a special pew once reserved for condemned prisoners, who were trotted in to hear a sermon before being hanged on the Common. The chapel's bell is Paul Revere's largest and, in his judgment, his sweetest sounding. For a behind-the-scenes look at the bell or crypt, take a guided tour. You won't be disappointed. **TIP→ This is Freedom Trail stop 5.** *58 Tremont St., Downtown* *617/523-1749* *www.kings-chapel.org* *\$5* *Park, State, Government Center.*

King's Chapel Burying Ground

CEMETERY | **FAMILY** | Legends linger in this oldest of the city's cemeteries, its first proper burying ground. A handy map of famous grave sites is posted a short walk down the left path. Notable people buried here include Elizabeth Pain, the model for Hester Prynne in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*; William Dawes Jr., who rode out to warn of the British invasion the night of Paul Revere's famous ride; and John Winthrop, the first governor of Massachusetts, along with several generations of his descendants. **TIP→ This is Freedom Trail stop 5.** *50 Tremont St., Downtown* *617/523-1749* *www.kings-chapel.org* *Park, State, Government Center.*

Money Museum of Boston

HISTORY MUSEUM | Although this small museum is only a few years old, the items it houses are not. Call ahead and schedule a private or small group tour for a peek at American currency that dates back as far as the colonial era; exhibits include money made in Boston, the United States, and other parts of the world. Informative and personalized tours are led by a coin and currency expert. *41 Bromfield St., Downtown* *Enter through Colonial Trading Company* *617/451-0665*

moneymuseumofboston.org *Donations requested, depending on group size.* *Park.*

Old City Hall

NOTABLE BUILDING | Built in 1865, Old City Hall is a historic site and served as the municipal seat of government for 38 of Boston's mayors, including famous ones like John "Honey Fitz" Fitzgerald, James Curley, and Kevin White. In its courtyard, find Richard S. Greenough's bronze statue of Benjamin Franklin and a mural marking the original site of the Boston Latin School. Today, Old City Hall is an office building. While you can't really venture too far inside the building, do go up and check out the murals around its entrance. *45 School St., Downtown* *www.oldcityhall.com* *State, Park.*

Old Corner Bookstore

NOTABLE BUILDING | Through these doors, between 1845 and 1865, passed some of the century's literary lights: Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow—even Charles Dickens paid a visit. Many of their works were published here by James T. "Jamie" Fields, who in 1830 had founded the influential firm Ticknor and Fields. In the 19th century, the graceful, gambrel-roof, early-Georgian structure—built in 1718 on land once owned by religious rebel Anne Hutchinson—also housed the city's leading bookstore. There's a plaque on the wall to read more about its history, but today, somewhat sadly, the building is home to a fast-food joint. **TIP→ This is Freedom Trail stop 7.** *1 School St., Downtown* *www.thefreedomtrail.org* *State.*

★ Old South Meeting House

NOTABLE BUILDING | **FAMILY** | This is the second-oldest church building in Boston (although the building is no longer used for religious services), and were it not for Longfellow's celebration of Old North in "Paul Revere's Ride," it might well be the most famous. Today, visitors can learn about its history through exhibits and



Old South Meeting House is Boston's second-oldest church building; it's also where the spark was lit for the infamous Boston Tea Party.

audio programs. Some of the fiercest of the town meetings that led to the Revolution were held here, culminating in the gathering of December 16, 1773, which was called by Samuel Adams to confront the crisis of three ships, laden with dutiable tea, anchored at Griffin's Wharf. The activists wanted the tea returned to England, but the governor would not permit it—and the rest is history. The Voices of Protest exhibit celebrates Old South as a forum for free speech from Revolutionary days to the present. **TIP** → **This is Freedom Trail stop 8.** ☒ 310 Washington St., Downtown ☎ 617/720-1713 🌐 www.revolutionaryspaces.org 🗨️ \$15 (includes dual admission to Old State House) 📍 State, Downtown Crossing.

★ Old State House

NOTABLE BUILDING | FAMILY | This colonial-era landmark has one of the most recognizable facades in Boston, with its gable adorned by a brightly gilded lion and silver unicorn, symbols of British imperial power. This was the seat of the colonial government from 1713 until the

Revolution, and after the evacuation of the British from Boston in 1776 it served the independent Commonwealth until its replacement on Beacon Hill was completed in 1798. The Declaration of Independence was first read in public in Boston from its balcony. John Hancock was inaugurated here as the first governor under the new state constitution. Today, it's an interactive museum with exhibits, artifacts, and 18th-century artwork, and tells the stories of Revolutionary Bostonians through costumed guides. **TIP** → **This is Freedom Trail stop 9.** ☒ 206 Washington St., Downtown ☎ 617/720-1713 🌐 www.revolutionaryspaces.org 🗨️ \$15 (includes dual admission to Old South Meeting House) 📍 State, Government Center.

🍴 Restaurants

Downtown, professionals and execs keep the lunch business booming. While 15 to 20 years ago, the streets would get quiet after 6 pm, it's not so today. Dinner and drinks have become a thing, and the

neighborhood has followed suit featuring a number of social hot spots with fantastic culinary options after dark.

Bostonia Public House

\$\$\$ | AMERICAN | FAMILY | Airy and classic in atmosphere, this modern restaurant focuses on two things: food and local history (it is, after all, situated in a historic 1902 building). The menu features elevated takes on comfort food; at lunch expect more sandwiches. **Known for:** long bar with lots of seating; live music in the evenings; fantastic weekend brunch. ☎ Average main: \$30 ☒ 131 State St., Downtown ☎ 617/948-9800 🌐 www.bostoniapublichouse.com 📍 Aquarium.

Grana

\$\$\$ | ITALIAN | FAMILY | Grand and resplendent in appearance—it is located in a luxury hotel and former Federal Reserve Bank, after all—Grana features upscale yet casual Italian dishes for lunch and weekend brunch that invite you to dig in. The only drawback to this place is that it isn't open for dinner. **Known for:** signature focaccia bread with a half-dozen different topping options; shareable tea cocktail; family-style three-course brunch. ☎ Average main: \$26 ☒ The Langham, Boston, 250 Franklin St., Downtown ☎ 617/956-8765 🌐 www.langhamhotels.com/en/the-langham/boston/dine/grana ☹ No dinner 📍 State, South Station.

★ haley.henry

\$\$\$ | WINE BAR | Charcuterie, tinned fish, ceviche: You can eat well at this excellent Downtown wine bar that's small in size but big in reputation. Definitely make a reservation before showing up; it can be busy, even on a Wednesday night. **Known for:** staff knows their stuff; incredible service; wine from small, independent producers. ☎ Average main: \$35 ☒ 45 Province St., Downtown ☎ 617/208-6000 🌐 www.haleyhenry.com ☹ Closed Sun.–Mon. 📍 Downtown Crossing, Boylston.

Jim Curley

\$\$ | AMERICAN | You're guaranteed a tasty meal at this lively bar restaurant that can really get packed. Beer, American comfort food, and sandwiches—like a killer burger and a Nashville hot chicken—are on the menu, as well as a solid lineup of cocktails. **Known for:** tasty snacks, especially the fried pickles; local beers on draft; a secret back-room steak house. ☎ Average main: \$24 ☒ 21 Temple Pl., Downtown ☎ 617/338-5333 🌐 www.jimcurleyboston.com 📍 Park, Boylston.

RUKA

\$\$ | FUSION | If you've never heard of *chifa* cuisine (yeah, it's a real thing), you'll wonder why not after having a meal at RUKA, where the kitchen creates dishes inspired by Cantonese-Peruvian and Japanese culinary traditions. The menu features bountiful sushi options, raw bar items, and wok-prepared dishes. **Known for:** colorful, artful vibes; interesting sushi options; unique Asian-Peruvian fusion cuisine. ☎ Average main: \$20 ☒ The Godfrey Hotel, 505 Washington St., Downtown ☎ 617/266-0102 🌐 www.rukarestobar.com ☹ Closed Sun.–Mon. 📍 Downtown Crossing.

Silvertone Bar & Grill

\$\$ | AMERICAN | Devotees of this retro-cool basement restaurant with strong cocktails and reasonable prices swear by the no-fuss menu options, such as a truly addictive macaroni and cheese, meat loaf with mashed potatoes, and steak tips. The wine list is compact but varied and has one of the lowest markups in the city. **Known for:** comfort food; laid-back feel; strong cocktails. ☎ Average main: \$20 ☒ 69 Bromfield St., Downtown ☎ 617/338-7887 🌐 www.silvertonedowntown.com 📍 Park.

Yvonne's

\$\$\$\$ | CONTEMPORARY | For a big, brassy, bountiful night out in an iconic Boston building, head to this reimagined supper club inside the ornate former 1862 Locke-Ober restaurant. The buffed and

beautiful sink into plush chairs in the book-packed library or at the original mahogany mirrored bar to swill down ice-cold martinis and large format drinks.

Known for: historic setting; large-format cocktails and shared feasts; glamorous supper club concept. ☎ *Average main: \$45* ☎ 2 Winter Pl., Downtown ☎ 617/267-0047 🌐 www.yvonneshoston.com 📍 Park.

☕ Coffee and Quick Bites

★ Chacarero

☎ | CHILEAN | This place is famous among the city's working professionals, who willingly wait in long lines for the signature Chilean-style sandwich, a delicious combination of green beans, chicken, muenster cheese, tomatoes, and an avocado spread on fresh bread. There are a few other offerings, including empanadas and rice pudding. **Known for:** signature Chilean sandwich; tasty orange cake; bread baked fresh daily. ☎ *Average main: \$13* ☎ 101 Arch St., Downtown ☎ 617/542-0392 🌐 chacarero.com ☺ Closed Sat.–Sun. 📍 South Station, Downtown Crossing.

★ Clover Food Lab

☎ | VEGETARIAN | After more than a decade, locals still love this vegetarian restaurant's chickpea fritters, not to mention the daily changing menu of freshly prepared sustainable and local veg- and vegan-friendly sandwiches and plates. Boston and Cambridge feature a number of Clover locations, but this one is bright and airy with huge windows that open onto School Street. ■ **TIP→ Awesome place to stop for lunch along the Freedom Trail.** **Known for:** housemade juice sodas and George Howell coffee; sourcing ingredients locally and sustainably; chickpea fritter sandwich. ☎ *Average main: \$12* ☎ 27 School St., Downtown 🌐 www.cloverfoodlab.com 📍 Park, State.

Dewey Square Food Trucks

☎ | FAST FOOD | FAMILY | On weekday mornings and afternoons, locally operated food trucks congregate at Dewey Square plaza on the Rose Kennedy Greenway, ready to serve Financial District professionals an eat-it-while-you-walk or picnic meal. Typically, four to five different options offer variety from curry to Korean. **Known for:** always changing options; easily accessible outdoor seating; multiple local food trucks in a gorgeous park location. ☎ *Average main: \$12* ☎ Rose Kennedy Greenway, Dewey Sq., Financial District 🌐 www.rosekennedygreenway.org/foodtrucks 📍 South Station.

George Howell Coffee

☎ | CAFÉ | If you like a premium coffee, head to this fancier-than-mainstream café with origins in Massachusetts. Original, fair-trade roasts are used to make all types of drip coffee and espresso drinks. **Known for:** avocado toast and baked goods; premium coffee roasts; usually having open tables. ☎ *Average main: \$10* ☎ 505 Washington St., Downtown ☎ 857/957-0217 🌐 www.georgehowellcoffee.com 📍 Downtown Crossing, Boylston.

★ High Street Place Food Hall

☎ | FAST FOOD | FAMILY | If you can't agree among your traveling partners what to eat where, this food hall features 20 different local vendors featuring delicious and top-quality foods of all varieties. Gourmet doughnuts from Blackbird, porchetta sandwiches from Pennypacker's, Jewish deli eats from Mamaleh's, sushi at Fuji, and so much more are here. **Known for:** live DJs in the evening; tons of options from local vendors; open anytime you're hungry. ☎ *Average main: \$15* ☎ 100 High St., Downtown 🌐 www.highstreetplace.com ☺ Closed Sun. 📍 South Station, Downtown Crossing.

Sal's Pizza

☎ | PIZZA | FAMILY | Some would argue that this small, local, independent chain may have the best Italian-style pizza in

Boston. Families on the go or solitary travelers looking for a quick bite should stop in for a slice and a soda. **Known for:** great meal deals; convenient location across from Boston Common and Freedom Trail start; pizza by the (large) slice. ☎ *Average main: \$12* ☎ 150 Tremont St., Downtown ☎ 617/227-1010 🌐 www.sals.com 📍 Park, Boylston.

Sam LaGrassa's

☎ | SANDWICHES | FAMILY | It's unlikely you'll simply happen upon this famed Boston sandwich joint, tucked away as it is, but the hefty sandwiches (they weigh pounds) are worth the trouble of looking. The line typically snakes out the door, but while you're standing in it, you can savor the deli-like smells and browse the meats behind the counter. **Known for:** huge portions; a long line that moves fast; pastrami and corned beef made in-house. ☎ *Average main: \$15* ☎ 44 Province St., Downtown ☎ 617/357-6861 🌐 www.samagrassas.com ☺ Closed weekends. No dinner 📍 Park.

Tasty Burger

☎ | BURGER | FAMILY | This local burger joint (there are a few of them, actually) channels a malt shop from the 1950s while serving milkshakes, beer and wine, and soda, the latter in some uncommon flavors like Fresca and Cheerwine. The star of the menu is, of course, the burger, which comes in the most basic version or more daring renditions like a spicy jalapeño or brûléed gorgonzola. **Known for:** tasty milkshakes; value pricing; delicious burgers. ☎ *Average main: \$9* ☎ 48 Winter St., Downtown ☎ 617/303-5055 🌐 www.tastyburger.com 📍 Park, Downtown Crossing.

★ Tatte Bakery & Café

☎ | ISRAELI | This upscale bakery and café takes pastries to the next level. From tea cakes to the Jerusalem bagel, expect hearty baked goods with an air of elegance and influenced by the owner's Israeli heritage. **Known for:** signature nut tarts that are as pretty as they are tasty;

convivial atmosphere; Owner Or's take on traditional North African shakshuka, served with challah bread. ☎ *Average main: \$12* ☎ 125 Summer St., Downtown ☎ 617/488-9525 🌐 www.tattebakery.com 📍 South Station.

Thinking Cup

☎ | CAFÉ | Across from Boston Common, Thinking Cup caters to a mixed crowd of area professionals and students from nearby Emerson College. Rarely is the coffeehouse not packed with caffeine addicts looking for their next fix of Stumptown coffee, whether it's in the form of a single origin pour-over or a macchiato. **Known for:** awesome sandwiches, especially the Jittery Hen, made with coffee-braised chicken; no Wi-Fi access; signature lattes: the hazelnut is made with roasted hazelnut paste, and the honey-cinnamon with a house-made syrup. ☎ *Average main: \$10* ☎ 165 Tremont St., Downtown ☎ 617/482-5555 🌐 www.thinkingcup.com 📍 Boylston, Park.

🏨 Hotels

The Godfrey Hotel

\$\$\$ | HOTEL | This chic, bustling boutique hotel is popular with business folk, who appreciate the ease of walking to the nearby Financial District. **Pros:** Frette linens; complimentary bikes and yoga mats; ideal for business travelers. **Cons:** expensive valet parking; no airport shuttle; added daily "urban fee" of \$30. ☎ *Rooms from: \$350* ☎ 505 Washington St., Downtown ☎ 617/804-2000, 855/649-4500 🌐 www.godfreyhotel-boston.com 🚗 242 rooms 🌐 No Meals 📍 Downtown Crossing.

Hilton Boston Downtown/Faneuil Hall

\$\$ | HOTEL | If you're looking for comfortable downtown lodging, you'll find it at this classic business hotel located inside a 1920s art deco skyscraper, complete with mahogany paneling and soft gold lighting. **Pros:** 24-hour fitness and business centers; clean, quiet, and 100%

smoke-free; ideal for business travelers. **Cons:** pets welcome for \$50 nonrefundable fee; doesn't have a Hilton Honors lounge; \$15 daily Wi-Fi fee. **Rooms from:** \$275 89 Broad St., Downtown 617/556-0006 www.hilton.com 403 rooms State.

Hyatt Regency Boston

\$\$\$\$ | HOTEL | FAMILY | Hyatt Regency Boston sits amid the colorful Downtown Crossing neighborhood right on the edge of the Theater District and just steps away from world-renowned cultural attractions, businesses, and universities like Suffolk and Emerson. **Pros:** steps from Financial District and historic Downtown; 52-foot heated, indoor saline swimming pool; good for business travelers, with a 24-hour business center and free Wi-Fi. **Cons:** views of office buildings from guest rooms; thin walls; \$30 daily destination fee. **Rooms from:** \$400 1 Ave. de Lafayette, Downtown 617/912-1234 www.hyatt.com/en-US/hotel/massachusetts/hyatt-regency-boston/bosto 502 rooms No Meals Downtown Crossing.

★ Kimpton Nine Zero Hotel

\$\$\$ | HOTEL | FAMILY | This Kimpton boutique hotel is sleek, sleek, sleek—all smooth lines, neutral tones, wood, and leather, and then bam! sudden bursts of vibrant color and pop art. **Pros:** in-room spa therapy available; late-afternoon hosted lobby wine reception (daily, 5–6 pm); complimentary bikes and kid's scooters. **Cons:** daily \$25 amenities fee; no airport shuttle; smallish rooms. **Rooms from:** \$350 90 Tremont St., Downtown 617/772-5800, 866/906-9090 www.ninezero.com 190 rooms No Meals Park, Government Center.

★ The Langham, Boston

\$\$\$\$ | HOTEL | One of Boston's most luxurious hotels just got more so: an extensive renovation to the 1922 Renaissance Revival building has both preserved its heritage as the former Federal Reserve Bank of Boston and

elevated it into a contemporary luxury retreat. **Pros:** concierge who specializes in Boston's universities; glass-enclosed, heated indoor pool; lavish rooms. **Cons:** far from Seaport District and Fenway neighborhoods; cost is prohibitive to some; a bit of a walk to public transportation. **Rooms from:** \$600 250 Franklin St., Downtown 617/451-1900 www.boston.langhamhotels.com 312 rooms No Meals South Station.

Omni Parker House

\$\$\$ | HOTEL | FAMILY | There's more than a century and a half of rich and varied history within these walls, where JFK proposed to Jackie and Charles Dickens gave his first reading of *A Christmas Carol*. **Pros:** overflowing with history; great location on the Freedom Trail; in-room fitness kits. **Cons:** thin-walled rooms can be noisy; area parking is very expensive; small rooms, some of which are a bit dark. **Rooms from:** \$320 60 School St., Downtown 617/227-8600, 800/843-6664 www.omniparkerhouse.com 551 rooms No Meals Park.

The Ritz-Carlton, Boston

\$\$\$\$ | HOTEL | FAMILY | The city's only Ritz is puttin' on the ritz with freshly renovated guest rooms inspired by nature and luxury. **Pros:** excellent service; great on-site bar; overlooks Boston Common. **Cons:** food service is expensive; steep valet parking costs; fee to access Equinox Sports Club, unless you're staying on Club Level. **Rooms from:** \$800 10 Avery St., Downtown 617/574-7100, 800/542-8680 www.ritzcarlton.com 193 rooms No Meals Boylston.

Nightlife

BARS

Avery Bar

BARS | Whether you're staying at The Ritz or just stopping by for a drink, the decadent and modern Avery Bar serves some serious, handcrafted cocktails, including a few without alcohol. While

this is a hotel lobby bar to be sure, the experience is anything but. The warm ambience attracts a fortysomething crowd, and there are a few select small plates for anyone who's hungry. *The Ritz-Carlton Boston, 10 Avery St., Downtown* 617/574-7176 Downtown Crossing, Chinatown.

Beantown Pub

BARS | Beantown Pub cleverly posits itself to be "the only pub in the world where you can drink a cold Sam Adams while viewing a cold Sam Adams." And it's true, since this casual bar sits on the Freedom Trail, across Tremont Street from the Granary Burying Ground where the Founding Father is interred. The bar is a fine place to watch multiple sports events on television, shoot pool, or people-watch. There's also a standard pub menu, usually served until midnight. No kids are allowed after 6 pm. *100 Tremont St., Downtown* 617/426-0111 www.beantownpub.com Park, Downtown Crossing.

★ The Fed

BARS | This sumptuous nightlife spot is billed as a "British-inspired cocktail bar with a sophisticated New England twist." Sink into swivel, leather high-top stools at the bar, barrister chairs, or banquettes, and order up fancy food made casual, including the signature three-cheese toastie. They serve excellent craft cocktails and two dozen wines by the glass. In nice weather, The Fed features an outdoor terrace. *The Langham, Boston, 250 Franklin St., Downtown* 617/956-8765 www.langhamhotels.com/en/the-langham/boston/dine/the-fed State, South Station.

Good Life

BARS | This funky bar in a heritage flatiron building mixes exotic martinis and fresh-juice cocktails and boasts a whopping selection of international vodkas. The basement level lounge draws eclectic crowds for dancing and live music. *28 Kingston St., Downtown*

617/451-2622 www.goodlifebar.com Downtown Crossing, South Station.

★ The Last Hurrah

COCKTAIL LOUNGES | Whiskey, wine, and loads of atmosphere: they're all staples within this historic bar at the Omni Parker House hotel, where mahogany club chairs and silver-tray service might make you feel like a Boston Brahmin, even if only for a dram or two. Be sure to order Boston Cream Pie in the place where it was invented. *60 School St., Downtown* 617/305-1888 www.omnihotels.com/hotels/boston-parker-house/dining/the-last-hurrah Park.

★ Mariel

COCKTAIL LOUNGES | Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned* meets the breezy tropics within this Havana-inspired nightlife spot. Mariel best serves those who appreciate good food and drink, a fun vibe, and a vivacious atmosphere—it gets louder as it gets later. Think arepas, plantain dumplings, gulf shrimp, Cuban-style pizza, fresh juices, and mojitos. *10 Post Office Sq., Downtown* 617/333-8776 www.marielofficial.com State.

Performing Arts

FILM

Orpheum Theatre

CONCERTS | At more than 170 years old, this midsize historic theater has hosted everything from vaudeville and film to opera and concerts. To visit the Orpheum today, you must have a ticket to an event. *1 Hamilton Place, Downtown* 617/482-0106 crossroadspresents.com/pages/orpheum-theatre Park.

Shopping

Historically, shopping has been the biggest reason to visit the Downtown Crossing area of the Downtown neighborhood, although its heyday was in the early part of the 20th century. Then and

now, stores collect where Washington and Summer Streets meet and disperse from there. Today, you can find off-price clothing and shoe retailers, department stores like Macy's and Primark, and loads of jewelers.

BOOKS

★ Brattle Book Shop

BOOKS | Bibliophiles can't get enough of this old-timey book store that has been in operation since 1825 and is, literally, chockablock with books floor to ceiling and stuffed into corners. The owner Ken Gloss, who regularly tours with *Antiques Roadshow*, fields queries from passionate book lovers about out-of-print, rare, antique, and foreign-language tomes. If you're simply in need of a read for the ride home, browse the rolling carts in Brattle's adjacent outdoor lot, where books of all genres go for \$5, \$3, or just \$1. ☎ 9 West St., Downtown ☎ 617/542-0210 🌐 www.brattlebookshop.com 📍 Downtown Crossing.

SPECIALTY SHOPS

Appelboom

OTHER SPECIALTY STORE | Dutch luxury pen specialist Appelboom has opened its second brick and mortar location in what used to be Bromfield Pen Shop. You can find all major fountain pen brands, rollerballs, and ballpoints, as well as all types of accessories, from inks to paper goods. ☎ 49 Bromfield St., Downtown ☎ 617/482-9053 🌐 www.appelboom.com 📍 Park.

JEWELRY

Jewelers Exchange Building

JEWELRY & WATCHES | Back in the mid-20th century when Downtown Crossing was truly a shopping mecca, this building drew crowds for its selection of precious gems and metals. Today, this building still bustles with its array of more than 75 independent jewelry artisans, who sell luxury watches, engagement rings, engraved silver, and much more. ☎ 333 Washington St., Downtown 📍 Downtown Crossing, Park.

★ Skylight Jewelers

JEWELRY & WATCHES | This independently owned jewelry store features custom creations, from gorgeous engagement rings to signature carved moonstone jewelry. Men's jewelry is a specialty. ☎ 44 School St., Downtown ☎ 617/426-0521 🌐 skylightjewelers.com 📍 State.

Chinatown, Theater District, and Leather District

The heart of Asian-American life in Boston beats in Chinatown, with its authentic restaurants, cultural festivals, markets, and, of course, thousands of residents. Reportedly, it's the third largest Chinatown in the United States, after those in San Francisco and Manhattan, although today's neighborhood runs the spectrum of many Far East cultures, from Thai to Taiwanese, Korean to Cambodian. Before the 1870s, the area was resettled a few times as immigrant groups moved in and out: Syrian, Irish, Jewish, Italian. Chinese laborers arrived and settled here after 1870, and their families kept coming through the 1950s. Today, Beach Street serves as Chinatown's main street. The neighborhood is bounded by Essex, Washington, Lincoln and Marginal Streets; the Tufts Medical Center complex occupies approximately one third of the area.

Just west of Chinatown, the majority of Boston's historic stages reside in the Theater District, which means the area is a hot spot for ballet, opera, Broadway tours, stand-up comedy, and other performing arts productions. Emerson College students keep the vibe young.

And, then, to the east of Chinatown, a very small enclave known as the Leather District is bounded by Kneeland Street, Essex Street, Atlantic Avenue,

and Lincoln Street. Before its 19th-century brick warehouses (now residential lofts) boomed with leather and textile merchants, it was known as South Cove, a soggy area that was filled in with land during the 1830s. Today, the Leather District features a few destination standouts, including the city's best sushi restaurant and South Station.

👁 Sights

Chinatown Gate

NOTABLE BUILDING | Two foo lions ward off evil for those who pass through the massive, traditional paifang gate that signals your entrance to Chinatown. It was donated to the Asian residents of Boston by Taiwan, in the early 1980s. You'll likely see red lanterns hanging from it; they signify good luck. The main square around the gate acts as a gathering place for the neighborhood's residents, who meet to socialize or play games. The gate is situated at Beach Street, and it also marks the end of the Greenway. ☎ Beach St. at Hudson St., Chinatown 📍 South Station.

Leather District

NEIGHBORHOOD | Opposite South Station and inside the angle formed by Kneeland Street and Atlantic Avenue is a corner of Downtown that has been relatively untouched by high-rise development: the old Leather District. For those who like to get a sense of history through place, this is probably the best place in downtown Boston to get an idea of what the city's business center looked like in the late 19th century as the wholesale supply area for raw materials in the days when the shoe industry was a regional economic mainstay. Today, a few leather firms remain, but most warehouses now contain expensive loft apartments. ☎ Bordered by Kneeland St., Atlantic Ave., and Lincoln St., Chinatown 📍 South Station.

South Station

TRAIN/TRAIN STATION | This gorgeous colonnaded granite structure is to Boston what Grand Central Station is to New York. Behind its grand 1900s facade, you'll find an airy, modern transit center that services the MBTA commuter rail for lines originating west and south of the city, the Red and Silver subway lines, and regional Amtrak trains. Thanks to its eateries, coffee bars, newsstand, and other shops, waiting for a train here can actually be a pleasant experience. South Station's bus terminal for Greyhound, Peter Pan, and other bus lines, is right next door. ■ **TIP** → South Station is a great launching point for exploring a variety of neighborhoods, including Downtown, Chinatown, and the Seaport. ☎ 700 Atlantic Ave., Downtown 🌐 www.south-station.net 📍 South Station.

Theater District

HISTORIC DISTRICT | Bounded by Washington and West streets, Marginal Road, and Charles Street South, the Theater District is fertile ground for Boston's performing arts scene—traditional, avant-garde, and otherwise. Each theater—the Wang, the Shubert, the Majestic, the Colonial, the Wilbur, the Paramount, the Modern, the Charles Playhouse, and the Opera House—has a history all its own and most have been restored within the last two decades. Emerson College and its campus occupy a large part of the neighborhood, and student interest brings in some acts from around the world. Night owls can enjoy stand-up shows at a few comedy clubs or feel the beat at a variety of dance and nightclubs. ☎ Theater District 📍 Boylston.

🍴 Restaurants

When it comes to cuisine, Old World and New World traditions mingle in Chinatown, although the emphasis is definitely on the former. Restaurants are a big draw for this neighborhood, and today, Chinese establishments are interspersed

with Vietnamese, Cantonese, Korean, Japanese, Thai, Taiwanese, and Malaysian eateries, to name a few. Many places are open after midnight. On Sunday, Bostonians often head here for dim sum.

French Quarter

\$\$\$ | **CAJUN** | Tucked in next to the Opera House, the French Quarter's marquee signage fits right in. This ode to Louisiana features a menu of popcorn shrimp, fried okra, sticky chicken, and crab-crust-ed catfish, and toasts the Southern experience with a Vieux Carré and much more. **Known for:** good service; excellent cocktails; pre- or post-theater spot. ☎ *Average main: \$26* ☎ 545 Washington St., Downtown ☎ 617/542-5555 🌐 www.frenchquarterboston.com 📍 Downtown Crossing.

★ Hei La Moon

\$ | **CHINESE** | **FAMILY** | This Cantonese dim sum palace occupies two floors; its contemporary space is decked out with golden chandeliers and ultra-violet decor. Carts of dim sum delicacies are the star attraction here, but diners can also find a menu of Chinese dishes, including eight styles of soup, hot-pot dinners, moo shi, kung pao, lo mein, and egg foo yong. **Known for:** inexpensive prices; hot pot; dim sum. ☎ *Average main: \$10* ☎ 83 Essex St., Chinatown ☎ 617/338-8813 🌐 www.heilamoon.com 📍 South Station.

★ o ya

\$\$\$\$ | **SUSHI** | Despite o ya's tucked-away location and hidden door, the place isn't exactly a secret: critics from the *New York Times*, *Bon Appétit*, and *Food & Wine* have all named this improvisational sushi spot among the best in the country. The chef-owner plates a 20-course nightly omakase dinner with sushi and cooked preparations. **Known for:** expensive prices; advance reservations a must; delicate, beautiful, sophisticated sushi. ☎ *Average main: \$250* ☎ 9 East St., Chinatown ☎ 617/654-9900 🌐 o-ya.

restaurant/o-ya-boston ☺ Closed Sun.–Mon. 📍 South Station.

Penang

\$ | **MALAYSIAN** | If you've never tried Malaysian cuisine before, start with Penang's Hainan chicken, roti, and coconut rice, all favorite menu items. The restaurant is fairly spacious—a rarity for restaurants in the neighborhood—and boasts a unique wooden interior. **Known for:** tasty Hainan chicken; great service; one of the only Malaysian restaurants in the region. ☎ *Average main: \$17* ☎ 685 Washington St., Chinatown ☎ 617/451-6372 🌐 www.penangboston.us 📍 Chinatown.

Pho Pasteur

\$ | **VIETNAMESE** | Day or night, patrons pack this Vietnamese staple of the Chinatown neighborhood known for its steaming bowls of pho. A lengthy menu offers plenty of alternatives, vermicelli dishes, traditional Vietnamese preparations, and about 20 options for vegetarians. **Known for:** unique espresso and soda beverages, plus smoothies; millennial crowd; traditional Vietnamese pho. ☎ *Average main: \$14* ☎ 682 Washington St., Chinatown ☎ 617/482-7467 🌐 www.phopasteurboston.net 📍 Chinatown, Boylston.

Q Restaurant

\$\$\$ | **ASIAN FUSION** | For a more upscale Chinatown experience, look no farther than this sleek Asian outpost with a full cocktail menu, extensive sushi bar, and addictive Mongolian-style hot pot menu featuring rich, robust broths served with a fleet of herbs, chilis, and ginger for further seasoning to taste. Order whatever vegetables, seafood, meats, and noodles you want to cook at the table, from paper-thin slices of Wagyu rib eye to shelled shrimp. **Known for:** good cocktails; long wait times for tables; flavorful, Mongolian-style hot pot. ☎ *Average main: \$35* ☎ 660 Washington St., Chinatown ☎ 857/350-3968 🌐 www.thequsa.com 📍 Chinatown.

Shabu-Zen

\$\$\$ | **ASIAN FUSION** | Hot pot is the name of the game at this neighborhood spot tucked into the heart of Chinatown. As you sit around a central high-top bar, you can dip thinly sliced wagyu beef, pork cheek, or a sampling of seafood into your selection of nearly a dozen different types of broth. **Known for:** serves alcohol; service is top-quality and attentive; excellent options for vegetarians. ☎ *Average main: \$28* ☎ 16 Tyler St., Chinatown ☎ 617/292-8828 🌐 www.shabuzen.com 📍 Chinatown.

Taiwan Cafe

\$\$ | **TAIWANESE** | Unsurprisingly, this Chinatown restaurant specializes in the cuisine culture of Taiwan, and has for 40-plus years. The big challenge is selecting what to eat from the massive menu of authentic dishes, although the tofu and house-special fried pork chop over rice are two of the best. **Known for:** house-special fried pork chop; open late; huge menu. ☎ *Average main: \$20* ☎ 34 Oxford St., Chinatown ☎ 617/426-8181 🌐 www.ordertaiwancafe.com 📍 Chinatown.

☕ Coffee and Quick Bites

★ Gracenote Coffee

\$ | **CAFÉ** | Gracenote roasts top-shelf coffee beans using its own unique process here in Massachusetts, and then serves it in a teeny Leather District storefront just across the border from Chinatown. The flavor is well worth the slightly out-of-the-way jaunt to this hipster haven for pour-overs and espresso drinks that are the focus of the menu. **Known for:** extensive variety of milk alternatives; really friendly baristas; unmatched coffee. ☎ *Average main: \$6* ☎ 108 Lincoln St., Chinatown 🌐 www.gracenotecoffee.com 📍 South Station.

Great Taste Bakery

\$ | **CHINESE** | Just before you reach the Chinatown Gate, this Hong Kong-style take-out bakery offers you red bean buns, milk cake, fruit puffs, and custard tarts, among other sweet and savory baked goods. Prices are a bargain, but there's nowhere to sit, so plan to take your treats to go. **Known for:** low prices; authentic flavors; Hong Kong-style custard tarts. ☎ *Average main: \$5* ☎ 61 Beach St., Chinatown ☎ 617/426-6688 📍 No credit cards 📍 South Station, Chinatown.

Tea Do

\$ | **CHINESE** | You may have to wait in line to get into this Chinatown destination for cold drinks, but the fruity popping bubbles and green tea, aloe vera, and milk bubble tea are worth the wait. If you really want to step up your game, try the cheese-foam tea or the brown sugar tiger milk. **Known for:** lots of flavors; tasty boba; long lines. ☎ *Average main: \$9* ☎ 8 Tyler St., Chinatown ☎ 617/988-8002 🌐 www.teadocafe.com 📍 South Station, Chinatown.

🏨 Hotels

Moxy

\$\$ | **HOTEL** | One of Boston's newest hotels under the Marriott umbrella features a sleek exterior and artful flair (say, like custom murals by well-known street artists), and come nightfall, there's a boisterous, rave-like nightlife scene. **Pros:** 24th-floor rooftop lounge for guest-only use; floor-to-ceiling windows in every room; Bar Moxy work-fun space featuring board games, free Wi-Fi, coffee, cocktails, and food. **Cons:** lots of street noise; small rooms; not good for families. ☎ *Rooms from: \$299* ☎ 240 Tremont St., Theater District ☎ 617/793-4200 🌐 www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/bos-ox-moxy-boston-downtown 📍 340 rooms 📍 No Meals 📍 Boylston, Chinatown.

Revere Hotel

\$\$\$ | HOTEL | This stylish spot embraces New England history with a twist—you'll notice artwork tied to Paul Revere throughout the hotel, like a steampunk sculpture constructed out of recycled metals by a local artist. **Pros:** rooftop pool and bar has amazing city views; balconies in every room; dog-friendly hotel, complete with bedding and a puppy menu of snacks. **Cons:** elevators can get congested; for less mobile folks, it's a bit of a walk to Freedom Trail sites; \$30 guest amenity fee per day. [3] *Rooms from: \$350* ☎ 200 Stuart St., Theater District ☎ 617/482-1800 🌐 www.reverehotel.com ↗ 356 rooms 🍷 Free Breakfast 🍷 Arlington, Boylston.

W Boston

\$\$\$ | HOTEL | Across the street from its sister property, Moxy Hotel, this towering Theater District staple caters to the see-and-be-seen crowd and is fronted by a metal-and-glass awning outfitted with soft, color-changing neon lights that cast a cheeky glow on passersby. **Pros:** expansive on-site Bliss spa; signature W feather-top beds; free electric-car charging stations. **Cons:** late-night street noise; expensive parking; lobby can be loud. [3] *Rooms from: \$399* ☎ 100 Stuart St., Theater District ☎ 617/261-8700 🌐 www.whotels.com/boston ↗ 238 rooms 🍷 No Meals 🍷 Boylston, Tufts Medical Center.

Nightlife

BARS

4th Wall

BARS | This local hangout tries to be seen as a dive bar, but it's much nicer and too new to be called one. The menu features bar bites, hearty entrées, and a burger of the week, all made from scratch in the kitchen, while the bar serves craft beers on draft, craft cocktails, and vodka-soaked gummy bears. To find the 4th Wall from Tremont Street, look for the small, brick building with a gable roof squeezed in by much taller surrounding

buildings. ☎ 228 Tremont St., Theater District ☎ 857/957-0909 🌐 www.4thwall-restaurant.com 🍷 Chinatown, Boylston.

Offsuit

COCKTAIL LOUNGES | Incredibly unique and thoughtful beverages are the stars at this small, under-the-radar cocktail lounge tucked into the Leather District near Chinatown. A recent concoction called the Praying Mantis pairs cachaça and gin with snap peas, green Jolly Ranchers, lime cordial, mint, and sour cream. Offsuit allows a few reservations per night, but most traffic is walk-in, and all table service is limited to 90 minutes. ☎ 5 Utica St., Chinatown ☎ 781/855-6111 🌐 www.offsuitboston.com 🍷 South Station.

★ Shojo

BARS | Fun, lively and contemporary, Shojo puts a shine on its little corner of Chinatown. This family-owned, edgy nightclub serves Asian-inspired imaginative craft cocktails using ingredients like Thai chili-infused vodka, cucumber ice, and yuzu, while the kitchen sends out tasty, modern, and chef-focused small plates that put a spin on traditional Asian preparations. ☎ 9 Tyler St., Chinatown ☎ 617/423-7888 🌐 www.shojoboston.com 🍷 Chinatown.

W Lounge

BARS | Vibrant purples and metallics set the tone at this chic, but accessible, bar and lounge in the W Hotel. The resident DJ—and he's legit—curates music (Thursday through Saturday) based on the crowd, while patrons warm up by the fireplace and nosh on small bites and signature cocktails. ☎ W Hotel, 100 Stuart St., Theater District ☎ 617/261-8700 🍷 Boylston, Chinatown.

COMEDY

Nick's Comedy Stop

COMEDY CLUBS | Boston's oldest comedy club has been yukking it up since 1977—Jay Leno reportedly got his start here. The lineup in this intimate venue is

always funny, whether you catch a local comic on the weekend, or, occasionally, a well-known one. ☎ 100 Warrenton St., Theater District 🌐 www.nickscomedystop.com 🍷 Boylston.

The Wilbur

COMEDY CLUBS | Inside this 1914-built, American-style stage, some of the country's funniest comics—like Tracy Morgan, Whitney Cummings, and Jenny Slate—get audiences laughing and laughing. On nights when comedy is off the bill, The Wilbur hosts more intimate musical performances by some serious national talent. ☎ 246 Tremont St., Theater District ☎ 617/248-9700 🌐 www.thewilbur.com 🍷 Boylston.

Performing Arts

THEATER

Boch Center Wang Theatre and Shubert Theatre

CONCERTS | The historic Wang Theatre, which opened in 1925 and holds an audience of 3,500, and its 1910 little sister, the Shubert Theatre, partner up to create this performance-space complex dedicated to national and international productions, dance companies, concerts, and headlining comics. **TIP** → Check out the schedule online, and order your tickets before you come to town. ☎ 265 and 270 Tremont St., Theater District ☎ 800/982-2787 Wang Theatre, 866/348-9738 Shubert Theatre 🌐 www.bochcenter.org 🍷 Boylston.

Charles Playhouse

THEATER | FAMILY | The Charles Playhouse celebrated its 175th anniversary in 2014 with a \$2 million renovation. The vintage stage—also formerly serving as a church, Prohibition-era speakeasy, and jazz club—has been hosting a long-running local favorite: *Blue Man Group* since 1995. The uniquely exhilarating production features a trio of deadpan performance artists painted vivid cobalt as they pound drums, share eureka moments, spray

sloppy good will, and freely dispense toilet paper. **TIP** → First-timer alert: dress casual, especially if you're seated down front. ☎ 74 Warrenton St., Theater District ☎ 617/426-6912 general box office, 800/258-3626 Blue Man Group tickets 🌐 boston.broadway.com/theatre/charles-playhouse 🎫 \$45-\$95 🍷 Boylston.

★ Citizens Bank Opera House

THEATER | FAMILY | The 2,700-seat, vaudeville-era Beaux-Arts building has been lavished with \$35 million worth of gold leaf, lush carpeting, and rococo ornamentation. Today, it is the city's premier destination for touring Broadway companies as well as the home theater for the Boston Ballet and all its productions, including its famous *The Nutcracker*. ☎ 539 Washington St., Theater District ☎ 617/695-6955 Boston Ballet tickets, 800/982-2787 Broadway show tickets 🌐 www.bostonoperahouse.com 🍷 Boylston, Chinatown, Downtown Crossing.

Emerson Colonial Theatre

THEATER | Welcome to Boston's oldest continuously operated theater, where musical magic was created, performed and transformed by the likes of Stephen Sondheim, Ethel Merman, and George and Ira Gershwin, before traveling to Broadway to become "official"—tryouts included *Porgy and Bess*, *Follies*, *Grand Hotel*, and *La Cage aux Folles*. Today, the Colonial continues to present Broadway tours and headline bands and musicians. **TIP** → The Colonial hosts historical tours typically once monthly; reserve tickets online. ☎ 106 Boylston St., Theater District ☎ 888/616-0272 for tickets 🌐 www.emersoncolonialtheatre.com 🍷 Boylston.

Emerson Cutler Majestic Theatre

THEATER | This gorgeous beaux arts theater and historic landmark was built with opera performances in mind, so it's fitting that Boston Lyric Opera calls it home for some performances today. You'll also see smaller traveling productions. It's owned by Emerson College,

which uses the stage for ArtsEmerson, its presenting arm that focuses on contemporary theater from around the globe. ☒ 219 Tremont St., Theater District ☎ 617/824-8400 🌐 www.emersontheatres.org 📄 *Boylston*.

Emerson Paramount Center

THEATER | Look for the orange-, red-, and yellow-lit marquee on Washington Street, and you'll find the Paramount. Three performance spaces make up this 1930s-era complex owned by Emerson College. Its main stage features an art deco vibe and performing artists from all over. Smaller, alternative productions—think classic and art films, professional puppet shows, circus arts—can also take place in a black box theater or a screening room. ArtsEmerson schedules all events here. ☒ 559 Washington St., Theater District ☎ 617/824-8400 🌐 www.emersontheatres.org 📄 *Downtown Crossing, Boylston, Park*.

Waterfront

You won't hear the sound of crashing waves thanks to Boston's protected and relatively calm inner harbor, but the lean stretch of coastline running from South Station to the North End is one of the prettiest, most serene escapes you'll encounter in this city. And, it manages to slow the pace of the bustling, driven Financial District behind it.

Along the Waterfront, you'll encounter wharf after wharf of harbor activity: private vessels, luxury yachts, harbor cruises, ferries, and more. Long Wharf, Central Wharf with the New England Aquarium, and Rowes Wharf are the three most prominent. Other attractions in this neighborhood include the Boston Harborwalk, the Rose Kennedy Greenway, and the lesser-known gems just offshore, the Boston Harbor Islands. Many upscale hotels and restaurants make the most of the expansive water views.

The Boston Harborwalk



The walking path along Boston's shoreline stretches 43 miles. In the North End, Downtown, the Waterfront, the Seaport, and South Boston, marked signs point the way—plus you can find maps online. The public can hop on and off at their leisure, using the Harborwalk for exercise and other types of recreation. In the Waterfront, the trail navigates the city's many wharves; it also features art exhibits, educational panels, stationary viewfinders, and open green space 🌐 www.bostonharborwalk.org.

👁️ Sights

Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area

ISLAND | **FAMILY** | Comprising 34 tiny islands and peninsulas, this is one of the city's best hidden gems—and it's literally out of sight. Stretching from South Boston (Castle Island) to the coastlines of South Shore towns Hingham and Hull, each island is different, but most feature abundant nature with miles of lightly traveled trails, shoreline, sea life, and wild plants. The focal point is 39-acre Georges Island and its partially restored pre-Civil War Fort Warren that once held Confederate prisoners. Pets and alcohol are not allowed on the Harbor Islands.

■ **TIP** → Ferries shuttle visitors from Boston to Georges and Spectacle Islands daily during summer months. Plan to spend a whole day exploring! ☒ *Boston Harbor Islands National and State Park Welcome Center, 191 W. Atlantic Ave., Waterfront* ☎ 617/223-8666 🌐 www.bostonharborislands.org 📄 *Closed mid-Oct.–mid-May* 📄 *Aquarium*.



Located in the Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area, the 105-acre Spectacle Island is just 4 miles offshore of downtown Boston and accessible by ferry.

Christopher Columbus Park (Waterfront Park)

CITY PARK | This green space bordering the harbor and several of Boston's restored wharfs is a pleasant oasis of benches and a long arborlike shelter twinkling with colorful strands of lights at night. Lewis Wharf and Commercial Wharf (north of the park), which long lay nearly derelict, had been transformed into condominiums, offices, restaurants, and upscale shops by the mid-1970s. There are sprinklers, lawn games, summer outdoor movie nights, a playground, and even free Wi-Fi. The Rose Kennedy Rose Garden is enclosed by a wrought-iron fence in the center of the park. ☒ *Atlantic Ave., bordered by Atlantic Ave., Commercial Wharf, and Long Wharf, North End* ☎ 617/635-4505 🌐 www.foccp.org 📄 *Aquarium*.

Long Wharf

HISTORIC SIGHT | Long Wharf starts east of Atlantic Avenue, and it serves as the launching point for many of the city's water tours, sails, and cruises. Halfway

down the wharf, you can have dinner at Chart House, a nice seafood restaurant, but note that the historic building it houses was once John Hancock's counting house and still contains his vault. The New England Aquarium sits next door, at Central Wharf. ☒ *Long Wharf, Waterfront* 📄 *Aquarium*.

★ New England Aquarium

AQUARIUM | **FAMILY** | As interesting and exciting as it is educational, this aquarium is a must for those who are curious about what lives in and around the sea. The building's glass-and-steel exterior is constructed to mimic fish scales, and seals bark and swim in the outdoor tank. Inside the main facility, more than 30,000 animals of 800 different species frolic in simulated habitats.

In the semi-enclosed outdoor space of the New Balance Foundation Marine Mammal Center, visitors can enjoy the antics of northern fur seals and sea lions while gazing out at Boston Harbor.



Sights

- 1 Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area B1
- 2 Christopher Columbus Park C1
- 3 Long Wharf D1
- 4 New England Aquarium E2

- 5 Rose Kennedy Greenway A7
 - 6 Rowes Wharf D4
- Restaurants**
- 1 Chart House D1
 - 2 Granary Tavern B2
 - 3 Legal Sea Foods C2

- 4 Nebo Cucina & Enoteca B7
 - 5 Rowes Wharf Sea Grille D5
 - 6 State Street Provisions C2
 - 7 Trade B7
- Quick Bites**
- 1 James Hook & Co. C6

- 2 Kane's Donuts. B5
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The real showstopper, though, is the four-story, 200,000-gallon ocean-reef tank. Ramps winding around the tank lead to the top level and allow you to view the inhabitants from many vantage points. Up top, the Yawkey Coral Reef Center features a seven-tank exhibit gallery that gives a close-up look at animals that might not be easily seen on the reef. Don't miss the five-times-a-day feedings; each lasts nearly an hour and takes divers 24 feet into the tank.

Get up close to a variety of species of sharks and rays at the Trust Family Foundation Shark and Ray Touch Tank, the largest of its kind on the East Coast.

Add on to the day at the aquarium's IMAX theater, which takes you on virtual journeys from the bottom of the sea to the depths of outer space in 3-D films. **TIP** → Planning to see an IMAX film or go whale-watching in addition to visiting the New England Aquarium? Ask about combo tickets to save some money. ☒ 1 Central Wharf, Waterfront ☎ 617/973-5200 🌐 www.nea.org 🎟 \$32; \$10 IMAX; \$65 whale watch 🏠 Aquarium.

Rose Kennedy Greenway

CITY PARK | FAMILY | This one linear mile of winding parks marks the path the highway once took through the city (à la the Big Dig). A walk through shows off a wide variety of flora and fauna from the North End to Chinatown. Lawn furniture and games, seasonal farmers' and artists' markets, art installations, water features, live performances, free Wi-Fi, a beer garden, and more make it a lively spot, especially in warmer months. There's a one-of-a-kind, hand-carved carousel; and the food truck scene has grown into a bustling lunchtime destination. ☒ Waterfront ↕ Between New Sudbury St. in North End and Beach St. in Chinatown; along Atlantic Ave. 🌐 www.rosekenedygreenway.org 🏠 State, Haymarket, Chinatown, Aquarium.

Rowes Wharf

MARINA/PIER | Get a feel for "lifestyles of the rich and famous" at Rowes Wharf, where a six-story arched rotunda frames gorgeous views of Boston Harbor complete with mega-yachts and a water-set gazebo. Well-heeled patrons stay and dine at Boston Harbor Hotel and its upscale restaurants. **TIP** → During summer months, stop by any weekday night for free live music performances or film screenings, hosted by the hotel. ☒ Rowes Wharf, Waterfront 🏠 Aquarium, South Station.

Restaurants

Chart House

\$\$\$ | AMERICAN | This may be one of the oldest U.S. buildings you'll ever eat in; John Hancock—yes, that John Hancock—called this place his counting house back in the mid-18th century. Today, it's a seafood restaurant perched on Long Wharf right over Boston Harbor, offering grilled, baked, or blackened fish, prepared seafood dishes, and steaks. **Known for:** excellent selection of crafted mocktails; fresh fish options; historic location with views. ☒ Average main: \$37 ☒ 60 Long Wharf, Waterfront ☎ 617/227-1576 🌐 www.chart-house.com 🏠 Aquarium.

Granary Tavern

\$\$\$ | AMERICAN | This place has a lively atmosphere day or night, with the sounds of revelry bouncing off its exposed brick walls and beams in a building originally designed by historic architect Charles Bulfinch. The kitchen serves up decent, if over-priced, comfort food, and if you're looking for a late afternoon lunch and a couple of drinks, this is your spot. **Known for:** historic digs that enhance the mood; lively atmosphere in a great location; pricey food. ☒ Average main: \$30 ☒ 170 Milk St., Waterfront ☎ 617/449-7110 🌐 www.granarytavern.com 🏠 Aquarium.

Legal Sea Foods

\$\$\$ | SEAFOOD | FAMILY | What began as a tiny restaurant adjacent to a Cambridge fish market has grown to important regional status, with more than 30 East Coast locations, including almost a dozen in Boston. The hallmark is the freshest possible seafood, whether you have it wood-grilled, in New England chowder, or doused in an Asia-inspired sauce.

Known for: family-friendly setting; locations all over town; classic, fresh New England seafood. ☎ *Average main:* \$30 ☎ *Long Wharf, 255 State St., Waterfront* ☎ 617/742-5300 🌐 www.legalseafoods.com 📍 Aquarium.

Nebo Cucina & Enoteca

\$\$\$ | ITALIAN | FAMILY | Its name, Nebo, is an acronym for “North End Boston,” which is the neighborhood where the first iteration of this local restaurant operated for a time. Today, it serves rustic Italian dishes from the owners’ *nonna* in a classy, corner spot on the waterfront.

Known for: 10 different styles of pizza on housemade dough; all-Italian wine list, many by the glass; zucchini lasagna that beat Bobby Flay in his own game on Food Network’s *Throwdown*. ☎ *Average main:* \$30 ☎ *520 Atlantic Ave., Waterfront* ☎ 617/723-6326 🌐 www.neborestaurant.com ☺ Closed Sun. 📍 South Station.

★ Rowes Wharf Sea Grille

\$\$\$\$ | SEAFOOD | Sophisticated and pristine yet unpretentious, this restaurant pairs nautical flair with fresh seafood, fitting for its setting overlooking Boston Harbor. Seafood selections are mainly from near-by Atlantic waters and favor Asian flavors.

Known for: extraordinary seafood towers; afternoon tea service; lovely views of Boston Harbor beyond Rowes Wharf. ☎ *Average main:* \$45 ☎ *70 Rowes Wharf, Waterfront* ☎ 617/856-7744 🌐 www.roweswharfseagrille.com 📍 Aquarium, South Station.

State Street Provisions

\$\$\$ | AMERICAN | Right on the edge of Boston Harbor, this restaurant serves tasty, tavern-style food—seafood, salads, burgers, and crispy pizza—for a fraction of the cost of some of its neighbors. The atmosphere is lively and unpretentious, the cocktails are craft-made, and a tasty brunch is served on the weekends until mid-afternoon. **Known for:** crispy thin-crust pizzas; raw bar featuring East Coast oysters; burger served on an English muffin. ☎ *Average main:* \$25 ☎ *255 State St., Waterfront* ☎ 617/863-8363 🌐 www.statestreetprovisions.com 📍 Aquarium.

★ Trade

\$\$\$ | GREEK FUSION | Trade celebrates the culinary heritage of the Mediterranean region, and more specifically, Greece, with a curated menu by James Beard Award-winning chef-owner Jody Adams. Think perfectly charred flatbreads and pita that fly out of the open-hearth oven, eggplant- and feta-inspired dishes, lamb meatballs, and locally caught fish prepared Greek-style. **Known for:** extensive Greek spirits list; boisterous after-work, professional crowd; lemon-thyme roasted half-chicken. ☎ *Average main:* \$27 ☎ *540 Atlantic Ave., Waterfront* ☎ 617/451-1234 🌐 www.trade-boston.com ☺ Closed Sun.–Mon. 📍 South Station.

☎ Coffee and Quick Bites

James Hook & Co.

\$\$\$ | SEAFOOD | FAMILY | This Waterfront seafood shanty leaves all its frills for its lobster-loaded rolls; they’re served with mayo or with butter, in a bun, and wrapped with foil so you can sit for a minute or eat it on the go. Other specialties include lobster mac and cheese, whole boiled lobster, stuffed clams, and the shrimp and corn chowder. **Known for:** whole-cooked lobsters; rustic vibe and no-frills seating; lobster rolls on the go. ☎ *Average main:* \$31 ☎ *440 Atlantic Ave., Waterfront* ☎ 617/423-5501 🌐 www.jameshooklobster.com 📍 South Station.

★ Kane’s Donuts

\$ | BAKERY | FAMILY | A favorite among Financial District 9-to-5ers, this local mom and pop doughnut shop sells crave-worthy flavors, from the standard honey dip and chocolate glazed to the more elaborate crème brûlée and maple bacon. Kane’s also offers 10 different seriously delicious gluten-free varieties. **Known for:** gluten-free options; the perfect morning coffee break; fluffy doughnuts. ☎ *Average main:* \$6 ☎ *90 Oliver St., Waterfront* ☎ 857/317-2654 🌐 www.kanesdonuts.com 📍 State, South Station.

☎ Hotels

★ Boston Harbor Hotel at Rowes Wharf

\$\$\$\$ | HOTEL | Boston has plenty of landmarks, but none are as synonymous with hospitality as Boston Harbor Hotel. **Pros:** free Wi-Fi and in-room tablet; premier views of Boston Harbor or the city; water shuttle to Logan Airport. **Cons:** the spa books up early, so make an advance reservation; not convenient to the Back Bay, South End, or Fenway neighborhoods; pricey. ☎ *Rooms from:* \$800 ☎ *70 Rowes Wharf, Waterfront* ☎ 617/439-7000, 800/752-7077 🌐 www.bostonharborhotel.com ➔ 232 rooms 📍 No Meals 📍 Aquarium, South Station.

Boston Marriott Long Wharf

\$\$\$\$ | HOTEL | FAMILY | Families favor this spot that looks like a big brick ship docked in Boston Harbor for its proximity to the New England Aquarium, Faneuil Hall Marketplace, and the North End. Guest rooms open to a five-story atrium, and some have views of the park, harbor, or aquarium. **Pros:** beautiful upper-level swimming pool with harbor views; centrally located for family interests; free Wi-Fi. **Cons:** far from the Back Bay; parking is difficult to find; surrounding area is packed with tourists. ☎ *Rooms from:* \$600 ☎ *296 State St., Waterfront* ☎ 617/227-0800 🌐 www.marriott.com ➔ 415 rooms 📍 No Meals 📍 Aquarium.

Harborside Inn

\$\$\$ | HOTEL | With rates that are considerably lower than most Waterfront hotels, this hotel with an understated charm is an exceptional value. **Pros:** free Wi-Fi; close to key tourist sites; inexpensive. **Cons:** no turndown service; no valet; no on-site restaurant. ☎ *Rooms from:* \$325 ☎ *185 State St., Waterfront* ☎ 617/723-7500, 888/723-7565 🌐 www.harborsideinnboston.com ➔ 116 rooms 📍 No Meals 📍 Aquarium.

InterContinental Boston

\$\$\$\$ | HOTEL | Notice the two opulent, 22-story towers wrapped in blue glass facing Boston’s waterfront, and you’ll have found the InterContinental hotel. **Pros:** rooms have panoramic views; Miel restaurant and its seasonal waterfront dining terrace; close to the Financial District and South Station. **Cons:** far from Newbury Street and Back Bay shopping; soundproofing needs improvement; no airport shuttle service. ☎ *Rooms from:* \$400 ☎ *510 Atlantic Ave., Waterfront* ☎ 617/747-1000, 866/493-6495 🌐 www.icbostonhotel.com ➔ 424 rooms 📍 No Meals 📍 South Station.

🍷 Nightlife

★ Rowes Wharf Bar

BARS | Never mind the elegant setting and the extraordinary water views, this is a classic cocktail lover’s bar. On the menu, there are punches, fizzes, slings, and juleps to start, before you move on to sparkling cocktails and spirited specialties, bourbon, whiskeys, and single malts. If you’re one to really sit and savor, do so over Macallan or Louis XIII de Remy Martin. To keep the buzz at bay, the food menu features a few appetizers as well as oysters. ☎ *70 Rowes Wharf, Waterfront* ☎ 617/439-7000 📍 South Station.

Trillium Garden

BEER GARDENS | BYOF (F is for food) for an afternoon or evening spent at Trillium Brewing's seasonal beer garden smack dab in the middle of the Rose Kennedy Greenway and directly across from Boston Harbor Hotel. The place is generally mobbed, especially considering it's both dog and kid friendly, leaving hardly an excuse to stay away. On tap: a rotating variety of beer crafted by the Boston-based brewery. ✉ *High St. at Atlantic Ave., Waterfront* 🌐 www.trilliumbrewing.com/pages/greenway 🚇 *Aquarium*.

Activities

Boston Harbor Cruises

BOAT TOURS | **FAMILY** | From whale watches out to Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary to cruises around Boston's inner harbor at sunset to the "Codzilla" speedboat ride, this long-running water tour company features about a dozen different ways to experience and learn about Boston Harbor. ✉ *1 Long Wharf, Waterfront* ☎ *877/733-9425* 🌐 www.bostonharborcruises.com 🚢 *From \$25* 🚇 *Aquarium*.

Classic Harbor Line

BOAT TOURS | Hop aboard one of the teak-decked classic sailing vessels that are anchored at Boston Harbor's Rowes Wharf for a day sail, evening champagne cruise, or the occasional brunch or live music cruise. ✉ *60 Rowes Wharf, Waterfront* ☎ *212/913-9991* 🌐 www.classicharborline.com 🚢 *\$38-\$70* 🗓 *Closed Nov.-Apr.* 🚇 *South Station, Aquarium*.