

Massachusetts

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MASSACHUSETTS: IT'S ALL HERE – VISITOR OVERVIEW

Massachusetts offers hundreds of miles of coastline with beautiful beaches, the Berkshire Hills to the west, charming small towns, and some of America's most cherished arts and cultural institutions — plus the sophistication of Boston.

Massachusetts has something for all interests: scenic hiking and bicycle trails, beaches for lounging and swimming, the capital city of Boston with endless shopping opportunities. A wide range of history museums and National Historical Parks make a holiday here a visit through America's history, from the Pilgrim Fathers to the Kennedy's. There are accommodation options of all types, from charming bed and breakfasts to luxury hotels, and restaurants with some of America's finest chefs.

Here is a quick glimpse of the highlights of the 'Bay State' for our UK visitor.

For additional information and excellent travel advice, go to our [Travel Tips page](#), check out the [Transportation page](#) - or scroll through the [main site](#).

BOSTON & CAMBRIDGE

Boston is your gateway to Massachusetts and to all of New England. Just three miles from downtown and easily accessible by public transport, Boston's Logan Airport offers international service from more than a dozen airlines, including direct service from London Heathrow on **British Airways**, **Virgin Atlantic** and **Delta Airlines**. Additionally, **Aer Lingus** serves Boston from Dublin year-round **and UK regional airports**), and Shannon, seasonally, and **Icelandair** offers service from Glasgow, Manchester and London to Reykjavik, with continuing service to Boston. Once you land in Boston, the entire state is easily accessible: a drive from the picturesque coast to the serene Berkshire Hills in the state's western reaches takes just about three hours.

Local Time is 5 hours behind GMT, and the weather in the Bay State varies widely depending on when you travel: winter lows average -2°C, while summer temperatures can reach 35°C, but usually stay around 22°C.

America's oldest city is the Gateway to New England, and matches contemporary culture with 400 years of history. In this 'Walking City', stroll along cobblestone streets and delve into American history on the 2.5 mile (4km) [Freedom Trail](#). Just across the Charles River from Boston is the city of [Cambridge](#), world famous for its prestigious

universities of Harvard and MIT, but offering many off-the-beaten-path neighborhoods. Use the excellent [public transport system](#) to get around quickly. Shop in stylish stores, dine on dishes prepared by America's finest chefs, stay in classy hotels and Bed and Breakfasts.

CONCORD / LEXINGTON: THE CRADLE OF AMERICAN HISTORY AND LITERATURE

The "shot heard round the world" triggered the American Revolution on April 19, 1775. To find out how, why, and where, head for [Concord](#) and [Lexington](#), small towns just west of Boston. Start at the [Minute Man National Historic Park](#). Concord was also home to influential authors: Louisa May Alcott wrote and set *Little Women* in [Orchard House](#); [Walden Pond](#) inspired Henry David Thoreau to write the first "environmental" book more than 150 years ago. Both Ralph Waldo Emerson and Nathaniel Hawthorne lived and wrote in [The Old Manse](#), overlooking the North Bridge.

[NORTH OF BOSTON](#)

As well as being a great seaside destination, what locals call "the North Shore" is rich with heritage. [Salem](#), best known for its infamous 1692 Witch Trials, was also a wealthy port: see the [Friendship](#), a reconstruction of a 200-year-old three-master ship; take a [guided tour of Salem Maritime National Historic Site](#); admire treasures and a Chinese merchant's house at the [Peabody Essex Museum](#). Out on Cape Ann, [Gloucester](#) is the real-life town in the movie *The Perfect Storm*: [cruise on a schooner](#), go on a [whale watch](#). [Rockport](#) is an artist's colony; [Essex](#), [Ipswich](#) and [Newburyport](#) are Colonial gems.

Visit Plymouth, south of Boston, where the Pilgrim Fathers landed in 1620 and learn about life during those times. See [Mayflower II](#) a replica of the tiny craft that carried 102 passengers across the Atlantic in 1620.

What were the Pilgrim Fathers like? How did they speak? What did they think of their new country? Visit [Plimoth Plantation](#), , and you can ask them yourself. In this living history museum the clocks stopped in 1627. Costumed interpreters always stay in character and provide a real flavor of the tough conditions that settlers confronted. In the [Wampanoag Homesite](#), Native Americans carve canoes and build huts.

[CAPE COD](#)

"The Cape" is famous for its long, clean, glorious beaches – and there are 115 from which to choose! But there is much more: romantic inns and bed and breakfasts, arts and crafts galleries, and clam shacks. Stretching some 60 miles (96km) into the Atlantic Ocean, the peninsula is studded with some of America's oldest, quintessential Massachusetts villages, from [Sandwich](#) and [Chatham](#) to [Wellfleet](#). On the Outer Cape, the 50-mile (80km) long [Cape Cod National Seashore](#) includes Eastham's Coast Guard Beach, rated one of the best in the USA. At the tip of The Cape is [Provincetown](#), a

bohemian and artists' enclave and LGBT resort town with a great restaurant scene, beaches and whale watching cruises. Provincetown is also accessible in-season by 90-minute fast ferry service from both Boston and Plymouth.

[THE ISLANDS: MARTHA'S VINEYARD / NANTUCKET](#)

South of Cape Cod, two islands attract presidents and celebrities alike for "away from it all" holidays. Under an hour from the mainland is Martha's Vineyard, with unspoiled beaches, shingled cottages, excellent biking, fine shops, and restaurants. Some 30 miles offshore is picture-perfect Nantucket. Once a great whaling port, this is now a sophisticated holiday destination, offering the simple things in life: fishing, days on the beach, first-class shops, and restaurants.

The BERKSHIRES & [WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS](#)

One of America's great cultural destinations: That's the [Berkshires](#), 3 hours west of Boston. On summer nights, listen to the Boston Symphony Orchestra at [Tanglewood](#), see international dance companies perform at [Jacob's Pillow](#), experience fine acting during the [Williamstown Theater Festival](#), at the [Barrington Stage Company](#), and at [Shakespeare & Company](#). Clustered together are world-class art museums: [The Clark](#) and [Williams College Museum of Art](#) in Williamstown, plus [MASS MoCA](#), the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art in North Adams. Prefer the outdoors? Hike up [Mount Greylock](#) or [Monument Mountain](#), or rent a bike in Adams and cycle the [Ashuwillticook Rail Trail](#).

There is also lots to do and see in the region known as the Pioneer Valley, just to the east of the Berkshires. [Raft down the rushing Deerfield River](#) or explore the [Mohawk Trail](#), one of America's first scenic drives. Check out the funky college town of [Northampton](#), with its boutiques, art galleries and amazing array of restaurants. Visit the [Yankee Candle Flagship Store](#) or step into early America at [Historic Deerfield](#), which interprets hundreds of years of history along an original, mile-long street.

[SHOPPING](#)

As for shopping, Massachusetts has it all. Boston boasts all the top international designers. Check out [Newbury Street](#), charming [Charles Street](#), [Copley Place](#), [the Shops at the Prudential Center](#), and [Faneuil Hall Marketplace](#). There's also the [CambridgeSide Galleria](#) over the river. Looking for a bargain? Then head for the [factory outlets](#) where brand names can be found at incredibly discounted prices. With 170 designer outlet stores, the [Wrentham Village Premium Outlets](#) is 45 minutes southwest of Boston (a bus offers daily trips from major Boston hotels). Massachusetts offers a treasure trove of antiques and local crafts; good hunting grounds are along Route 7 in the [Berkshires](#), along Route 6A on [Cape Cod](#) and in [Essex](#), North of Boston.