

Things to do and places to eat in Boston and Cambridge

Things to do:

Boston and Cambridge are places of firsts in America and there is a plethora of things to do and see, especially in the Fall when the weather is cooler. Most of the places listed you can get to by taking the T (the subway system-MIT is on Red Line), by walking, renting one of the Blue Bikes, or Uber/Lyft. Driving in the city for those who have been here before, understand it is a nightmare and parking is expensive and the meter police are vigilant.

- 36 hours in Boston by the NY Times: https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/07/04/travel/things-to-do-boston.html?unlocked_article_code=1.K04.p-Rd.fS0XjMsDOn7n&smid=url-share
- [Boston Duck Tours](#) – land and water tour through Boston/Cambridge
- [Boston Pub Crawl](#) – Combining history and drink for those who imbibe the spirits.
- [Boston Public Garden](#) – Boston. The oldest public garden in the US. When finished you can stroll up Newbury or Charles Streets and get something to eat or shop. The Mass State House is also across from the garden and the new [Embrace Monument](#) in the Garden close to the Tremont Street side. Or one of my favorites diagonally across from the State House is the [Boston Atheneum](#), a private-membership library, which is absolutely beautiful to tour (very biased here) and has an incredible book and art collection and a newly opened café next door.
- [Boston Public Library](#) – Back Bay Boston. It was the first large free municipal library in the United States, the first public library to lend books, the first to have a branch library, and the first to have a children’s room. Make sure to go to the older section of the library and around the inner courtyard, which holds concerts in the summer. In addition, there is a restaurant that serves high tea. When over there, you can shop at Prudential or Copley Place or walk over to Newbury Street, which used to be considered the high end shopping in Boston.
- [Charles River Canoe and Kayak](#) – You can rent a single or double kayak or canoe and paddle as far as you want on the Charles River. The season ends mid-October so you are in luck.
- [Charles River Walk](#) – The Charles River Walk is a picturesque pathway that stretches along the banks of the Charles River, providing a beautiful setting for walking, jogging, cycling, or simply enjoying the outdoors. The walk spans **approximately 20 miles**, starting from the Museum of Science in Boston and extending westward to Watertown. But you can do a [shorter 3 mile route](#) starting from the MIT conference center and crossing into Boston over one bridge and coming back over another. If you want to, you can stop on Charles Street in Boston for ice cream, pizza or a healthier meal option.
- [Harvard Museums](#) – Now free to everyone. Favorite is the [glass flower museum](#).
- [Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum](#) – Boston. Famous art heist occurred here and because of stipulations in Isabella Stewart Gardner’s will the places that used to house these works are vacant.

- [Longfellow House and George Washington Headquarters](#) - National Historic Site preserves a remarkable Georgian house whose occupants shaped our nation. It was a site of colonial enslavement and community activism, George Washington's first long-term headquarters of the American Revolution, and the place where Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote his canon of 19th-century American literature.
- [Mass General Hospital Russell Museum of Medical History and Innovation](#) – A leader in medicine, MGH was a place of many medical firsts. Their new museum showcases these. It is a nice walk across the river from the conference center or you can take the Red Line getting off at the Charles River T stop.
- [MIT Museum](#) – new location. Free to MIT community including alums who can also bring a guest for free.
- [Museum of Fine Arts](#) – Boston. An always must see on tourist's list.
- [Museum of Science](#) – Boston walking distance from the conference center. You can also catch a Duck Tour from here.
- [P.E.M](#) – this is further afield in Salem, MA but has an interesting exhibit now on conjuring art, magic and mediums. Salem is unfortunately known for the witch trials and leading up to Halloween each year, many tourists will flock to the various [Salem](#) museums and activities focusing on withes and pagan rituals.
- [Seaport District](#) - A newly developed section of Boston. You can walk from the conference center there, take the T or do a combination of the two, depending on your energy and fitness level. MIT to Seaport is 3 miles one way. Seaport has many shops and restaurants as well as the [ICA museum](#) and has been sometimes called a mini-NY with the prices to match.
- [The Freedom Trail](#) - You can do this trail on your own or via a guided tour.
- [Whale Watching](#) - The [New England Aquarium](#) partners with [Boston Harbor City Cruises](#) to offer some of the city's best whale-watching tours. Not only will you cruise along in comfort on their speedy catamarans, but you'll also be joined by naturalists from the Aquarium, who are there to share all of their whale knowledge with you—and answer your questions. Snacks, sandwiches, drinks and even cocktails are available for purchase while aboard.

Special events happening week of September 29-October 6, 2024

Check out the Boston Calendar of Events: <https://www.meetboston.com/events/>. This website also list other things to do in Boston, including what is playing at the theaters.

Places to eat:

Check out [Eater Boston](#) for a list of restaurants. But also check out the restaurant reviews in Yelp, Open Table or Resy. Sometimes the best of restaurants do not deliver on the hype.

Boston and Cambridge (cheap eats):

Many of the one-offs café/bakeries have now sprouted other locations. Two well-known are [Flour](#) and [Tatte](#) both have locations walking distance from the conference center. Of course, there are chains of others around the T stop in Kendall Square [Chipotle](#) and [Clover Food lab](#) (vegan).

There are also many pizza places around MIT, but more authentic pizza can be found in the North End section of Boston, which you can get to by taking the T or if you are interested in a long walk, it is about 2 miles one way. A few pizza places worth noting:

- [Ernesto's](#)
- Galleria Umberto – Does not have a website but is located at 289 Hanover Street. Cash only. Sicilian-style slices—a bargain at \$1.85 each—sometimes sell out before the restaurant closes at 2:30 p.m.
- [Regina Pizzeria](#) – They have branches outside of the city but not as good as the original.

Cambridge (pricier options):

- [Alden & Harlow](#) – Harvard Square. Well known for their hamburgers, which they make in limited supply each night. But their other food is good as well. Loved their kale salad.
- [Bar Enza](#) – Harvard Square in Charles Hotel. Italian-Neo Trattoria. Chef is Tony Susi, acclaimed for his stints at Capo, Gepetto, Olives, and Sage.
- [Catalyst](#) – Kendall Square. Limited menu but food is good. Love their French fries. Walking distance from conference.
- [Forage](#) – Cambridge. Farm-to-table.
- [Gepetto](#) – Cambridge Crossing. Italian classics with a modern twist.
- [Giulia](#) – Between Harvard and Porter Square but closer to Harvard. Italian.
- [Harvest](#) – Harvard Square. A staple in Harvard Square.
- [Oleana](#) – Inman Square. Eastern Mediterranean cooking. Ana Sortun's restaurant started a trend in Boston and her chefs have gone on to open other restaurants in the city. She has a more casual sit in and take out in upper Cambridge on Watertown/Belmont border called [Sofra Bakery and Cafe](#).
- [Pagu](#) – Central Square. Japanese. Helmed by Tracy Chang, a wunderkind who got her start at O Ya.
- [Row34](#) - See under seafood. Kendall Square
- [Sarma](#) – Somerville. Modeled after the traditional meyhanes of Turkey, the menu is a large selection of small plates (meze) that are designed to be shared alongside food-friendly cocktails, craft beers or a glass of wine.
- [Toscano](#) – Harvard Square, next to A.R.T. Italian and a long time favorite. They also have one on Beacon, but this is better.

Boston (pricier options):

- [Contessa at The Newbury](#) – Beautiful and pricey rooftop restaurant overlooking the Boston Garden. Must have reservations. Put your name on the waitlist. Many people

book 30 days in advance and then cancel and if you are lucky and flexible you can get a reservation the same day.

- [SVR](#) – Upscale, yet very reasonably-priced neighborhood joint. South End Italian hot spot and well worth the reputation it has.
- [Nautilus Pier 4](#) – Seaport. Asian fusion, small plate sharing. Also, on the water and has outdoor seating when the weather is nice.
- [Woodhill Pier 4](#) – Seaport. Farm-to-table. Make sure to get a seat with a view of the harbor if you go.
- [Bistro du Midi](#) – Back Bay-Boston. Not as good as what you will find in France, but still worth it.
- [Toro](#) – South End-Boston. Around for more than 20 years, this is a buzzy, Barcelona-style tapas bar in Boston's South End that's evolved into a full-blown global phenomenon, ideal for getting in your pintxos fix.
- [O Ya](#) – South Station area. Definitely a great restaurant, but super expensive. Instead of choosing their fixed tasting menus, you can opt for a al carte and have dinner for a more reasonable yet still expensive price.

Seafood:

Most restaurants, except Vegan/Vegetarian only restaurants will serve seafood in Boston/Cambridge. Here are a few worth noting:

- [Select Oyster Bar](#): Mediterranean-inflected, whose chef Michael Serpa, garnered international fame during his time at Neptune Oyster.
- [Neptune Oyster](#): Be prepared to wait in line as this place does not take reservations.
- [Row 34 in Seaport](#): They also have another restaurant in Kendall Square across from the Marriot and next to Kendall Square Red Line T stop. Rolls out one of the most coveted lobster rolls in town, pulling bi-valves from a nearby oyster farm that belongs to one of the restaurant's owners.
- [Barking Crab](#) in Seaport: Feels like a Cape Cod fish shack in the middle of town. Very casual and always fun.
- [B&G Oysters](#): Place to be for seafood in the South End.
- [Belle Isle Seafood](#): Winthrop, Massachusetts, about a 20-minute walk from the Orient Heights stop on the Blue Line — or an unknown drive time from downtown Boston. Along with their lobster rolls, the hefty portions of fried clams are worth the trek depending on where you're coming from. Take in the beautiful view of the harbor, watch planes come in and out of Logan. **Belle Isle is cash only.**
- [Legal Seafood](#): The restaurant was sold to a larger restaurant group and truthfully the quality is not as good as it was in past, but it is convenient to MIT. But Row 34 is now there so a better alternative.

- [Yankee Lobster Seafood shack](#). Seaport. This no-frills seafood shack is an area institution, not to mention a must-visit whenever you're checking out a summer concert at the neighboring concert pavilion.

If you are willing to venture further north and want to indulge in fried food you can head to Cape Ann. A couple of famous ones are:

- [Woodmans of Essex](#)
- [Clam Box of Ipswich](#)

Vegan/Vegetarian only:

Many restaurants have a vegan or vegetarian option, especially ethnic restaurants, but here is an article that mentions the best of only vegetarian: <https://www.bostonmagazine.com/restaurants/best-vegetarian-restaurants-in-boston/>