

Planning Your Trip to Boston

Over the past few years, a mysterious combination of factors has turned Boston into a hot destination. It's like a math problem: a new convention center plus hundreds of new hotel rooms plus multiple pro-sports championships plus a weak dollar plus a huge college-age population plus widespread development equals scads of travelers. A visit requires as much or as little forethought as you want, taking into account one general rule: The later you plan, the more you'll pay.

This chapter addresses the practical issues that arrive after you select a destination. One topic you probably won't need to tackle is renting a car. If you need to venture beyond Boston and Cambridge, you'll find the national chains represented at and near the airport and at locations around both cities. They include **Alamo** (☎ 800/462-5266), **Avis** (☎ 800/331-1212), **Budget** (☎ 800/527-0700), **Dollar** (☎ 800/800-4000), **Enterprise** (☎ 800/261-7331), **Hertz** (☎ 800/645-3131), **National** (☎ 800/227-7368), and **Thrifty** (☎ 800/367-2277).

1 Visitor Information

The **Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau**, 2 Copley Place, Ste. 105, Boston, MA 02116-6501 (☎ **888/SEE-BOSTON** or 617/536-4100, 0171/431-3434 in the U.K.; www.bostonusa.com), offers a comprehensive visitor information kit (\$10) with a travel planner, guidebook, map, pamphlets, and coupons for shopping, dining, attractions, and nightlife discounts. A *Kids Love Boston* guide (\$5) and free smaller guides to specific seasons and special events are also available.

For information about Cambridge, contact the **Cambridge Office for Tourism**, 4 Brattle St., Ste. 208, Cambridge, MA 02138 (☎ **800/862-5678** or 617/441-2884; www.cambridge-usa.org).

The **Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism**, 10 Park Plaza, Ste. 4510, Boston, MA 02116 (☎ **800/227-MASS** or 617/973-8500; www.massvacation.com), distributes information about the

whole state. Its free *Getaway Guide* magazine includes information about attractions and lodgings, a map, and a calendar.

The **Boston National Historical Park Visitor Center**, 15 State St. (☎ 617/242-5642; www.nps.gov/bost; T: Blue or Orange Line to State St.), is across the street from the Old State House. National Park Service rangers staff the center and lead seasonal free tours of the Freedom Trail. The center is open daily from 9am to 5pm. The ranger-staffed center at the **Charlestown Navy Yard** (☎ 617/242-5601) keeps the same hours.

The **Freedom Trail**, a line of red paint or painted brick on or in the sidewalk, begins at the **Boston Common Information Center**, 148 Tremont St., on the Common. The center is open Monday through Saturday from 8:30am to 5pm, Sunday from 9am to 5pm. The **Prudential Information Center**, on the main level of the Prudential Center, 800 Boylston St., is open Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 6pm, Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 6pm. The Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau (see above) operates both centers.

Faneuil Hall Marketplace has a small information booth, between Quincy Market and the South Market Building. It's outdoors and staffed in the spring, summer, and fall Monday through Saturday from 10am to 6pm, Sunday from noon to 6pm.

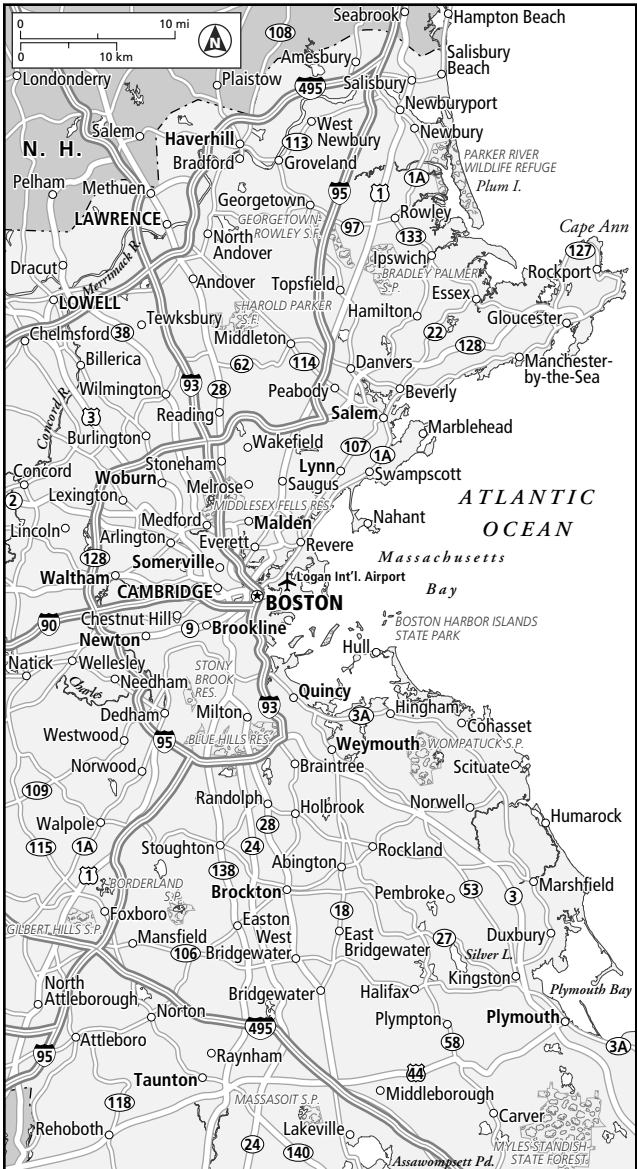
In Cambridge, an information kiosk (☎ 800/862-5678 or 617/497-1630) sits in the heart of **Harvard Square**, near the T entrance at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue, John F. Kennedy Street, and Brattle Street. It's open Monday through Saturday from 9am to 5pm, Sunday from 1 to 5pm.

2 When to Go

Boston attracts throngs of visitors year-round. Between April and November, the city sees hardly any slow times. Make reservations as early as possible if you plan to visit during traditionally busy periods.

The periods around college graduation (May and early June) and major citywide events (see "Boston Calendar of Events" below) are especially busy. Spring and fall are popular times for conventions. Families pour into the area in July and August, creating long lines at many attractions. Summer isn't the most expensive time to visit, though: Foliage season, from mid-September to early November, when many leaf-peepers stay in the Boston area or pass through on the way to other New England destinations, is a huge draw. December is less busy but still a convention time—look out for weekend bargains.

Boston & Surrounding Areas



Websites Worth Bookmarking

- **Boston.com** (www.boston.com): The comprehensive online home of the *Boston Globe*; also check out the affiliated website **Explore New England** (www.explorenewengland.com).
- **Citysearch** (<http://boston.citysearch.com>): Exhaustive listings, including restaurants and clubs, with professional and hit-or-miss amateur reviews.
- **National Park Service** (www.nps.gov): A terrific resource for visitors to Boston and its history-rich suburbs.
- **MBTA** (www.mbta.com): The go-to site for subway, trolley, bus, ferry, and commuter-rail schedules and route maps, plus fare and pass information and an interactive route planner.
- **Gridskipper** (www.gridskipper.com/travel/boston): Check the home page for general-interest coverage.
- **Boston-to-English Dictionary** (www.boston-online.com/glossary.html): Hilarious yet useful.

The “slow” season is January through March, when many hotels offer great deals, especially on weekends. However, this is when unpredictable weather plagues the Northeast (often affecting travel schedules) and when some suburban attractions close for the winter.

WEATHER

In New England’s famously changeable climate, dressing in layers is always a good idea. Spring and fall are the best bets for moderate temperatures, but spring (also known as mud season) is brief. It doesn’t usually settle in until early May, and snow sometimes falls in April. Summers are hot, especially in July and August, and can be uncomfortably humid. Fall is when you’re most likely to catch a comfortable run of dry, sunny days and cool nights. Winters are cold and usually snowy—bring a warm coat and sturdy boots.

BOSTON CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The **Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau** (☎ 888/SEE-BOSTON or 617/536-4100; www.bostonusa.com) operates a regularly updated hot line that describes ongoing and upcoming events. The **Mayor’s Office of Arts, Tourism & Special Events** (☎ 617/635-3911; www.cityofboston.gov/arts) can provide information about specific happenings. If you’re planning at the

last minute, the arts sections of the daily *Boston Globe* and *Boston Herald* are always packed with ideas.

For an exhaustive list of events beyond those listed here, check <http://events.frommers.com>, where you'll find a searchable, up-to-the-minute roster of what's happening in cities all over the world.

January

Martin Luther King, Jr., Birthday Celebration, various locations. Events include musical tributes, gospel concerts, museum displays and programs, readings, speeches, and panel discussions. Check special listings in the *Globe* for specifics. Third Monday in January.

Chinese New Year, Chinatown. The dragon parade (which draws a big crowd no matter how cold it is), fireworks, and raucous festivals are part of the celebration. Special programs take place at the **Children's Museum** (☎ 617/426-8855; www.bostonkids.org). For more details, visit www.chinatownmainstreet.org. Depending on the Chinese lunar calendar, the holiday falls between January 21 and February 19. In 2009, it's January 26; in 2010, February 14.

February

Black History Month, various locations. Programs include special museum exhibits, children's activities, concerts, films, lectures, discussions, readings, and tours of the Black Heritage Trail led by National Park Service rangers (☎ 617/742-5415; www.nps.gov/boaf). All month.

School Vacation Week, various locations. The slate of activities includes special exhibitions and programs, plays, concerts, and tours. Contact individual attractions for information on programs and extended hours. Third week of February.

March

New England Spring Flower Show, Bayside Expo Center, Dorchester. This annual harbinger of spring, presented by the **Massachusetts Horticultural Society** (☎ 617/933-4900; www.masshort.org), draws huge crowds starved for a glimpse of green. Plan to take public transit. Second or third week of March.

St. Patrick's Day Celebrations, various locations. Concerts, talks, special restaurant menus, and other offerings celebrate the heritage of one of the most Irish American cities. The parade, along Broadway in South Boston, is not a city-sponsored event; the private organization that runs it is free to bar any group it wants to from marching. That includes gays and, at least once in recent years, antiwar veterans. March 17; parade is on the closest Sunday.

April

Big Apple Circus (www.bigapplecircus.org), City Hall Plaza, Government Center. The New York-based “one-ring wonder” performs in a heated tent with all seating less than 50 feet from the ring. Proceeds support the Children’s Museum. Visit the museum box office or contact Ticketmaster (☎ 617/931-ARTS; www.ticketmaster.com). Late March to early May.

Red Sox Opening Day, Fenway Park. Even if your concierge is a magician, this is an extremely tough ticket. Check ahead (☎ 877/REDSOX-9; www.redsox.com) when tickets for the season go on sale in December. If you can’t get tickets to Opening Day, try to see the 10am game on **Patriots Day**, the third Monday in April. It begins so early to allow spectators to watch the Boston Marathon afterward. Early and mid-April.

Swan Boats Return to the Public Garden. Since their introduction in 1877, the Swan Boats (☎ 617/522-1966; www.swanboats.com) have been a symbol of Boston. Like real swans, they go away for the winter. Saturday before Patriots Day.

Patriots Day, North End, Lexington, and Concord. Festivities commemorate and reenact the events of April 18 and 19, 1775. Lanterns glow in the steeple of the **Old North Church** (☎ 617/523-6676; www.oldnorth.com). Participants dressed as Paul Revere and William Dawes ride from the **Paul Revere House** (☎ 617/523-2338; www.paulreverehouse.org) in the North End to Lexington and Concord to warn the Minutemen that “the regulars are out” (not that “the British are coming”—most colonists considered themselves British). Musket fire rings out on the Battle Green in Lexington and then at Concord’s North Bridge. For more info, contact the **Lexington Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center** (☎ 781/862-1450; www.lexingtonchamber.org) or the **Concord Chamber of Commerce** (☎ 978/369-3120; concordchamberofcommerce.org), or visit the website of the **Battle Road Committee** (www.battleroad.org). Third Monday of April.

Boston Marathon, Hopkinton, Massachusetts, to Boston. International stars and local amateurs join in the world’s oldest and most famous marathon (www.bostonmarathon.org). The first wave of competitors sets out at 9:25am. Cheering fans are welcome until the last weekend warriors stagger across the Boylston Street finish line in the late afternoon. Third Monday of the month.

Freedom Trail Week, various locations in Boston, Cambridge, Lexington, and Concord. This is another school vacation week, with plenty of crowds and diversions. Family-friendly events

include tours, concerts, talks, and other programs related to Patriots Day, the Freedom Trail, and the American Revolution. Third week of April.

Independent Film Festival of Boston, various locations. Features, shorts, and documentaries by international filmmakers make up the schedule for this increasingly buzz-worthy event. Check ahead (☎ 617/697-8511; www.iffboston.org) for the schedule. Late April.

May

Museum-Goers' Month, various locations. Contact individual museums or surf ahead for details and schedules of special exhibits, lectures, and events. See chapter 4. All month.

Street Performers Festival, Faneuil Hall Marketplace. Everyone but the pigeons gets into the act as musicians, magicians, jugglers, sword swallows, and artists strut their stuff. Late May.

June

Boston Pride March, Back Bay to Beacon Hill (☎ 617/262-9405; www.bostonpride.org). The largest gay pride parade in New England is the highlight of a weeklong celebration of diversity. The parade, on the second Sunday of the month, starts at Copley Square and ends on Boston Common. Early June.

Dragon Boat Festival, Charles River near Harvard Square, Cambridge (www.bostondragonboat.org). Teams of paddlers synchronized by a drummer propel boats with dragon heads and tails as they race 500m (1,640 ft.). The winners go to the national championships; the spectators go to a celebration of Chinese culture and food on the shore. Second or third Sunday of June.

Central Square World's Fair, Cambridge (☎ 617/868-3247; www.cambridgema.gov). This celebration of unity and diversity features the usual food, crafts, and kids' activities—and a twist that elevates the event far above the usual street festival: local and national rock, jazz, and blues musicians. Early or mid-June.

Cambridge River Festival (☎ 617/349-4380; www.cambridgeartscouncil.org), Memorial Drive from John F. Kennedy Street to Western Avenue. A salute to the arts, the festival incorporates live music, dancing, children's activities, crafts and art exhibits, and international food on the banks of the Charles. Mid-June.

July

Boston Harborfest, downtown, the waterfront, and the Harbor Islands. The city goes wild for the Fourth of July, with a gigantic weeklong celebration of Boston's maritime history. Boston Harborfest (☎ 617/227-1528; www.bostonharborfest.com) includes

concerts, children's activities, cruises, fireworks, the Boston Chowderfest, tours, talks, and USS *Constitution's* turnaround cruise. Beginning of the month.

Boston Pops Concert and Fireworks Display, Hatch Shell, on the Esplanade. Spectators start showing up at dawn (overnight camping is not permitted) to stake out a good spot on the lawn and spend all day waiting for the sky to get dark enough for fireworks. Others show up at the last minute—the Cambridge side of the river, near Kendall Square, and the Longfellow Bridge are good spots to watch the spectacular aerial show. The program includes the *1812 Overture*, with real cannon fire and church bells. For details, check the website (www.july4th.org). July 4.

August

Italian-American Feasts, North End. These weekend street fairs begin in July and end in late August with the two biggest: the Fisherman's Feast and the Feast of St. Anthony. The sublime (fresh seafood prepared while you wait, live music, dancing in the street) mingles with the ridiculous (carnival games, tacky T-shirts, fried-dough stands) to leave a lasting impression of fun and indigestion. Visit www.fishermansfeast.com or www.saintanthonysfeast.com for a preview. Weekends throughout August.

August Moon Festival, Chinatown. A celebration of the harvest and the coming of autumn, the festival includes dragon and lion dances during the parade through the crowded streets, and demonstrations of crafts and martial arts. It's also an excuse to stuff yourself with tasty mooncakes. For details, visit www.chinatownmainstreet.org. Mid-August.

September

Boston Film Festival (☎ 617/523-8388; www.bostonfilmfestival.org), various locations. Independent films continue on the festival circuit or make their premieres, sometimes following a lecture by an actor or filmmaker. Most screenings are open to the public without advance tickets. Mid-September.

October

Salem Haunted Happenings, various locations. Parades, parties, a special commuter-rail ride from Boston, fortunetelling, cruises, and tours lead up to a ceremony on Halloween. Contact **Destination Salem** (☎ 877/SALEM-MA) or check the website (www.hauntedhappenings.org) for specifics. All month.

An Evening with Champions, Bright Athletic Center, Allston. World-class ice skaters and promising local students stage three performances to benefit the Jimmy Fund, the children's fundraising

arm of the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. Sponsored by Harvard's **Eliot House** (☎ 617/493-8172; www.hcs.harvard.edu/~ewc). Early or mid-October (tickets on sale in Aug).

Oktoberfest, Harvard Square, Cambridge. This immense street fair is a magnet for college students, families, street performers, musicians, and crafts vendors. Sponsored by the Harvard Square Business Association (☎ 617/491-3434; www.harvardsquare.com). Second Sunday of October.

Head of the Charles Regatta, Boston and Cambridge. High school, college, and postcollegiate rowing teams and individuals—some 4,000 in all—make the 4-mile Head of the Charles (☎ 617/868-6200; www.hocr.org) a must-see for tens of thousands of fans along the banks of the Charles River. Late October.

December

The Nutcracker, Opera House, Boston. Boston Ballet's annual holiday extravaganza is one of the country's biggest and best. This is *the* traditional way to expose young Bostonians (and visitors) to culture, and the spectacular sets make it practically painless. Visit the website (www.bostonballet.org) for more info. For tickets, call **Tele-charge** (☎ 800/447-7400 or TTY 888/889-8587; www.telecharge.com) as soon as you plan your trip, ask whether your hotel offers a *Nutcracker* package, or cross your fingers and visit the box office when you arrive. Thanksgiving weekend through late December.

Boston Tea Party Reenactment, Old South Meeting House (☎ 617/482-6439; www.oldsouthmeetinghouse.org) and Tea Party Ship and Museum, Congress Street Bridge (☎ 617/338-1773; www.bostonteapartyship.com). Chafing under British rule, American colonists rose up on December 16, 1773, to strike a blow where it would cause real pain—in the pocketbook. A re-creation of the pre-party rally at the meetinghouse is a lively all-ages audience-participation event; call ahead to see whether the ship has reopened during your visit. Mid-December.

Black Nativity, Converse Hall, Tremont Temple Baptist Church, 88 Tremont St. (☎ 617/723-3486; www.blacknativity.org). Poet Langston Hughes wrote the “gospel opera,” and a cast of more than 100 brings it to life. Check ahead for 40th-anniversary events in 2009. Most weekends in December.

Christmas Revels, Sanders Theatre, Cambridge. This multicultural celebration of the winter solstice features the holiday customs of a different culture each year. Themes have included the Balkans, Victorian England, and Romany Gypsies. Be ready to

sing along. For information, contact the **Revels** (☎ 617/972-8300; www.revels.org); for tickets, call the **box office** (☎ 617/496-2222). Last 2 weeks of the month.

First Night, Back Bay and the waterfront. This is the original arts-oriented, no-alcohol, citywide New Year's Eve celebration. It begins in the afternoon and includes a parade, ice sculptures, art exhibitions, theatrical performances, and indoor and outdoor entertainment. Some events require tickets, but for most you just need a First Night button, available for \$15 or so at visitor centers and numerous stores. Fireworks light up the sky above Boston Common at 7pm and over Boston Harbor at midnight. For details, contact **First Night** (☎ 617/542-1399; www.firstnight.org) or check newspapers after you arrive. December 31.

3 Orientation

Boston bills itself as “America’s Walking City,” and walking is by far the easiest way to get around. Legend has it that the street pattern originated as a network of cow paths, but the layout owes more to 17th-century London and to Boston’s original shoreline. This section provides an overview of the city’s layout and neighborhoods.

CITY LAYOUT

When Puritan settlers established Boston in 1630, it was one-third the size it is now. Much of the city reflects the original layout, a haphazard plan that can disorient even longtime residents. Old Boston abounds with alleys, dead ends, one-way streets, streets that change names, and streets named after extinct geographical features. On the plus side, every “wrong” turn **downtown**, in the **North End**, or on **Beacon Hill** is a chance to see something interesting that you might otherwise have missed.

Nineteenth-century landfill projects transformed much of the city’s landscape, altering the shoreline and creating the **Back Bay**, where the streets proceed in orderly parallel lines. After you’ve spent some frustrating time in the older part of the city, that simple plan will seem ingenious.

FINDING AN ADDRESS

There’s no rhyme or reason to the street pattern, compass directions are virtually useless, and there aren’t enough street signs. The best way to find an address is to call ahead and ask for directions, including landmarks, or leave extra time for wandering around. If the directions involve a T stop, be sure to ask which exit to use—most stations have more than one.

THE NEIGHBORHOODS IN BRIEF

These are the areas visitors are most likely to frequent. When Bostonians say “**downtown**,” they usually mean the first six neighborhoods defined here; there’s no “**midtown**” or “**uptown**.” The numerous neighborhoods outside central Boston include the Fenway, South Boston, Dorchester, Roxbury, West Roxbury, and Jamaica Plain. With a couple of exceptions (noted here), Boston is generally safe, but you should still take the precautions you would in any large city, especially at night. **Note:** I include some compass points here to help you read your map, but that’s not how the locals will give you directions: They typically just point you on your way.

The Waterfront This narrow area runs along the Inner Harbor, on **Atlantic Avenue** and **Commercial Street** from the Charlestown bridge (on N. Washington St.) to South Station. Once filled with wharves and warehouses, today it abounds with luxury condos, marinas, restaurants, offices, and hotels. Also here are the New England Aquarium and embarkation points for harbor cruises and whale-watching expeditions.

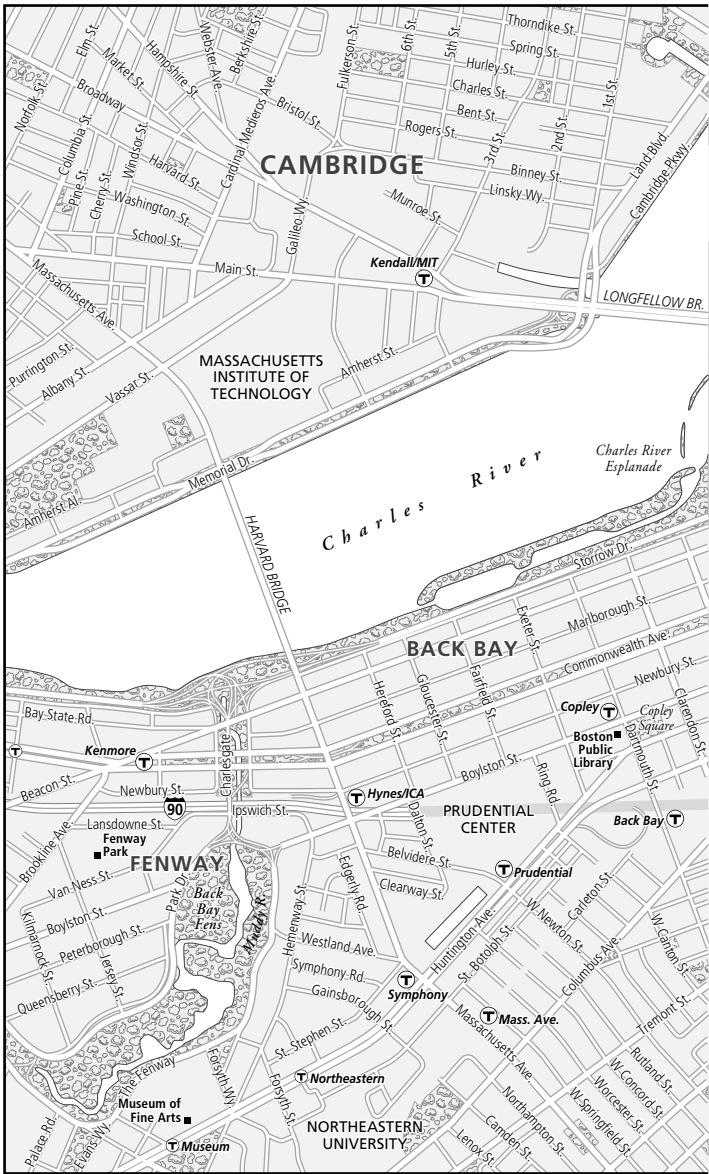
The North End Crossing the Rose Kennedy Greenway as you head east toward the Inner Harbor brings you to one of the city’s oldest neighborhoods. Home to waves of immigrants in the course of its history, it was predominantly Italian for most of the 20th century. It’s now less than half Italian American; many newcomers are young professionals who walk to work in the Financial District. Nevertheless, you’ll hear Italian spoken in the streets and find a wealth of Italian restaurants, *caff  s*, and shops. The main street is **Hanover Street**.

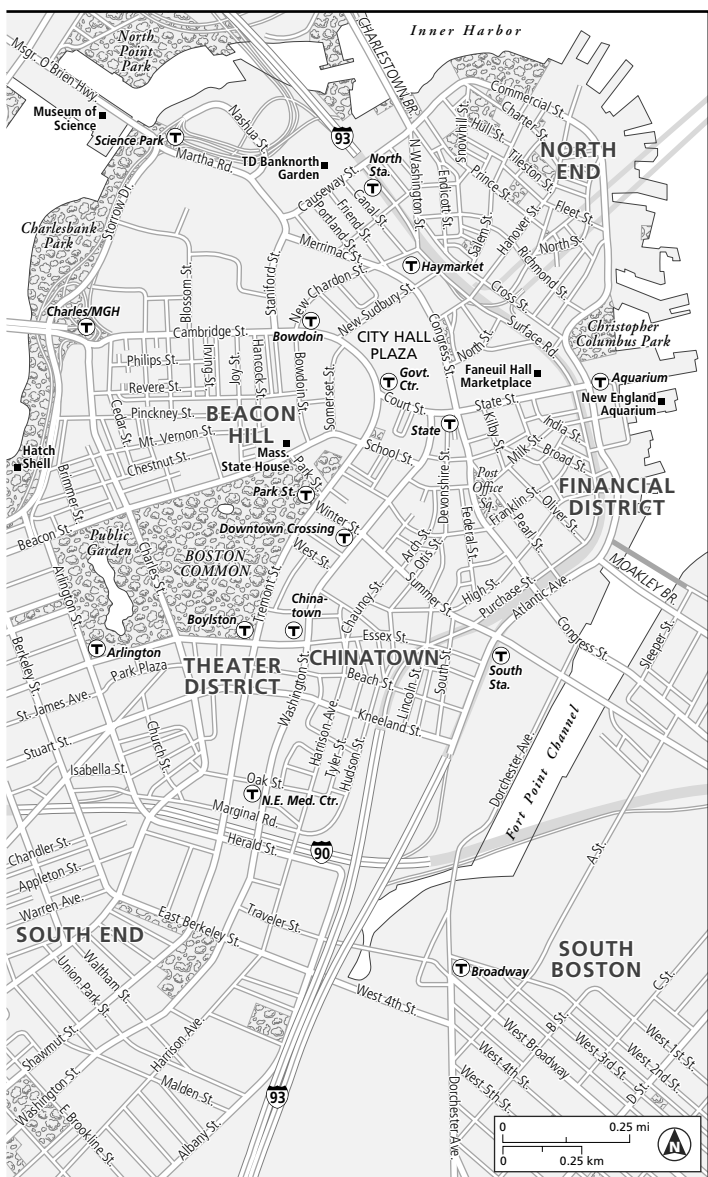
North Station Technically part of the North End but just as close to Beacon Hill, this area around **Causeway Street** is home to the **TD Banknorth Garden** (sports and performance arena), **North Station**, and many nightspots and restaurants. The neighborhood gets safer by the day, but wandering alone late at night (especially on the side streets away from the Garden) is not a good idea.

Faneuil Hall Marketplace Employees aside, Boston residents tend to be scarce at Faneuil Hall Marketplace (also called Quincy Market, after its central building). An irresistible draw for out-of-towners and suburbanites, this cluster of restored market buildings—bounded by the Waterfront, the North End, Government Center, and **State Street**—is the city’s most popular attraction. You’ll find restaurants, bars, a food court, specialty shops, and Faneuil Hall itself. **Haymarket**, off I-93 on **Blackstone Street**, is home to an open-air produce market on Fridays and Saturdays.

Government Center Love it or hate it, Government Center’s modern design breaks up Boston’s traditionally staid architecture.

Boston Neighborhoods





Flanked by Beacon Hill, Downtown Crossing, and Faneuil Hall Marketplace, it's home to state and federal offices, City Hall, and a major T stop. Government Center's major feature, the red-brick wasteland of City Hall Plaza, lies between **Congress** and **Cambridge streets**.

The Financial District Bounded loosely by Downtown Crossing, **Summer Street**, **Atlantic Avenue**, and **State Street**, the Financial District is the banking, insurance, and legal center of the city. Aside from some popular after-work spots, it's generally quiet at night.

Downtown Crossing The intersection that gives Downtown Crossing its name is at **Washington Street** where **Winter Street** becomes **Summer Street**. The Freedom Trail runs along one edge of this shopping and business district between Boston Common, Chinatown, the Financial District, and Government Center. Most of the neighborhood hops during the day and slows down in the evening.

Beacon Hill Narrow tree-lined streets, brick and cobblestone alleyways, and architectural showpieces, mostly in Federal style, make up this largely residential area in the shadow of the State House. Two of the loveliest and most exclusive spots in Boston are here: Mount Vernon Street and Louisburg Square (pronounced "Lewis-burg," and home to John and Teresa Heinz Kerry). Bounded by Government Center, Boston Common, the Back Bay, and the river, this is where you'll find Massachusetts General Hospital. **Charles Street**, which divides the Common from the Public Garden, is the main street of Beacon Hill. Other important thoroughfares are **Beacon Street**, on the north side of the Common, and **Cambridge Street**.

Charlestown One of the oldest areas of Boston is where you'll see the Bunker Hill Monument and USS *Constitution* ("Old Ironsides"). Yuppification has brought some diversity to what was once an almost entirely white residential neighborhood, but pockets remain that have earned their reputation for insularity.

South Boston Waterfront/Seaport District Across the Fort Point Channel from the Waterfront neighborhood, this area is home to the convention center, the World Trade Center, the Institute of Contemporary Art, three large hotels, the Fish Pier, a federal courthouse, Museum Wharf, one end of the Ted Williams Tunnel, and a lot of construction. A scattering of restaurants makes this area far more inviting than it was as recently as 2 years

ago, but it's still not quite a destination. **Seaport Boulevard** and **Northern Avenue** are the main drags.

Chinatown The fourth-largest Chinese community in the country is a small area jammed with Asian restaurants, groceries, and gift shops. Chinatown takes up the area between Downtown Crossing and the Mass. Pike extension. The main streets are **Washington Street**, **Kneeland Street**, and **Beach Street**. The tiny **Theater District** extends about 1½ blocks in each direction from the intersection of Tremont and Stuart streets; be careful there at night after the crowds thin out.

The South End Cross **Stuart Street** or **Huntington Avenue** heading south from the Back Bay, and you'll find yourself in a landmark district packed with Victorian row houses and little parks. The South End has a large gay community and some of the city's best restaurants. With the gentrification of the 1980s and 1990s, **Tremont Street** (particularly the end closest to downtown) gained a cachet that it hadn't known for almost a century. **Washington Street** and, to a lesser extent, **Harrison Avenue** are up-and-coming destinations for diners and shoppers. Long known for its ethnic, economic, and cultural diversity, the neighborhood is now thoroughly yuppified nearly all the way to Mass. Ave. **Note:** Don't confuse the South End with South Boston, a residential neighborhood on the other side of I-93.

The Back Bay Fashionable since its creation out of landfill more than a century ago, the Back Bay overflows with gorgeous architecture and chic shops. It lies between the Public Garden, the river, Kenmore Square, and either **Huntington Avenue** or **St. Botolph Street**, depending on who's describing it. Students dominate the area near **Mass. Ave.** but grow scarce as property values soar near the Public Garden. This is one of the best neighborhoods in Boston for aimless wandering. Major thoroughfares include **Boylston Street**, which starts at Boston Common and runs into the Fenway; largely residential **Beacon Street** and **Commonwealth Avenue** (Comm. Ave.); and boutique central, **Newbury Street**.

Huntington Avenue The honorary "Avenue of the Arts" (or, with a Boston accent, "Otts"), though not a formal neighborhood, is where you'll find the Christian Science Center, Symphony Hall (at the corner of Mass. Ave.), Northeastern University, and the Museum of Fine Arts. It begins at Copley Square and touches on the Back Bay, the Fenway, and the Longwood Medical Area before heading into the suburbs. Parts of Huntington can be a little risky, so if you're leaving the museum at night, stick to a cab or the Green Line, and try to travel in a group.

Kenmore Square The white-and-red CITGO sign that dominates the skyline above the intersection of **Comm. Ave.**, **Beacon Street**, and **Brookline Avenue** tells you that you're approaching Kenmore Square. Its shops, bars, restaurants, and clubs attract students from adjacent Boston University, and the Hotel Commonwealth and its high-end retail outlets lend a touch of class. The college-town atmosphere goes out the window when the Red Sox are in town and baseball fans pour into the area on the way to historic Fenway Park, 3 blocks away.

Cambridge Boston's neighbor across the Charles River is a separate city. The areas you're likely to visit lie along the MBTA Red Line. **Harvard Square** is a magnet for students, sightseers, and well-heeled shoppers. It's an easy walk along Mass. Ave. southeast to **Central Square**, a gentrifying area dotted with ethnic restaurants and clubs; a short walk away is boho **Inman Square**, a stronghold of independent businesses. North along shop-lined Mass. Ave. from Harvard Square is **Porter Square**, a mostly residential neighborhood with quirky retail outlets of the sort that once characterized Harvard Square. Around **Kendall Square** you'll find MIT and many technology-oriented businesses.

4 Getting There & Getting Around

GETTING THERE

BY PLANE

Most major U.S. carriers serve Boston's **Logan International Airport**, which the locals usually just call "Logan" (airport code BOS). They include **AirTran** (☎ 800/247-8726; www.airtranairways.com), **American** (☎ 800/433-7300; www.aa.com), **Continental** (☎ 800/523-3273; www.continental.com), **Delta** (☎ 800/221-1212; www.delta.com), **JetBlue** (☎ 800/538-2583; www.jetblue.com), **Midwest** (☎ 800/452-2022; www.midwestairlines.com), **Northwest** (☎ 800/225-2525; www.nwa.com), **United** (☎ 800/864-8331; www.united.com), **US Airways** (☎ 800/428-4322; www.usairways.com), and **Virgin America** (☎ 877/359-8474; www.virginamerica.com).

Southwest (☎ 800/435-9792; www.southwest.com) and several other national carriers also serve Manchester, NH, and Providence, RI. **Manchester-Boston Regional Airport** (☎ 603/624-6556; www.flymanchester.com; airport code MHT) is in southern New Hampshire, about 51 miles north of Boston. Free **Manchester Shuttle** van service connects the airport to Boston (the Sullivan Square Orange Line T stop) and suburban Woburn, Mass.; check the website for details. In addition, **Vermont Transit** (☎ 800/552-8737;

www.vermonttransit.com) runs buses to Boston's South Station and Logan Airport. **T. F. Green Airport** (☎ 888/268-7222; www.pvd.airport.com; airport code PVD) is in the Providence suburb of Warwick, Rhode Island, about 60 miles south of Boston. **Peter Pan Bonanza** (☎ 888/751-8800; www.peterpanbus.com) buses serve Boston.

Arriving from overseas

International visitors arriving by air, no matter what the port of entry, should cultivate patience and resignation before setting foot on U.S. soil. U.S. airports have considerably beefed up security clearances in the years since the terrorist attacks of September 11, and clearing Customs and Immigration can take as long as 2 hours.

With a few exceptions, the United States requires international travelers to carry a passport; most visitors must also have a visa. For an up-to-date, country-by-country listing of passport requirements around the world, go to the "International Travel" tab of the U.S. State Department site at <http://travel.state.gov>. International visitors to the U.S. can obtain a visa application at the same website. **Note:** Children are required to present a passport when entering the United States at airports. If you're traveling with your child but not your spouse, it's a good idea to carry a notarized letter from the spouse granting permission to travel and a copy of his or her passport (to allay suspicions of custody interference).

For up-to-date information about the U.S. State Department's **Visa Waiver Program**, which allows citizens of participating countries to enter the United States without a visa for stays of up to 90 days, consult www.travel.state.gov/visa. Canadian citizens may enter the United States without visas; they will need to show passports (if traveling by air) and proof of residence, however.

Citizens of all other countries must have (1) a valid passport that expires at least 6 months later than the scheduled end of their visit to the U.S., and (2) a tourist visa, which may be obtained without charge from any U.S. consulate.

For information about the Department of Homeland Security program called **US-VISIT**, which requires many international visitors to be photographed and fingerprinted on arrival, go to the Homeland Security website at www.dhs.gov and click "Travel Security & Procedures."

GETTING INTO TOWN FROM THE AIRPORT

Logan Airport (☎ 800/23-LOGAN; www.massport.com/logan) is in East Boston at the end of the Sumner, Callahan, and Ted Williams

tunnels, 3 miles across the harbor from downtown. For a preview and real-time flight arrival and departure information, visit the website.

The airport has four terminals—A, B, C, and E (there's no D)—each with ATMs, Internet kiosks, fax machines, and an information booth (near baggage claim). Wireless Internet access is available all over the airport for \$8 a day through **Logan WiFi** (☎ 617/561-9434; www.loganwifi.com). Terminals C and E have bank branches that handle currency exchange. Terminals A and C have children's play spaces.

The Massachusetts Port Authority, or **MassPort** (☎ 800/23-LOGAN; www.massport.com), coordinates airport transportation. The toll-free line provides information about getting to the city and to many nearby suburbs. It's available 24 hours a day and is staffed weekdays from 8am to 7pm.

The ride into town takes 10 to 45 minutes, depending on traffic, your destination, and the time of day. Except at off hours, such as early on weekend mornings, driving is the slowest way to get into central Boston. If you must travel during rush hours or on Sunday afternoon, allow plenty of extra time or plan to take the subway or water taxi (and pack accordingly).

You can get into town by bus, subway, cab, van, or boat. If you're taking the Silver Line bus or the subway, look for MBTA fare kiosks tucked into corners near the exits closest to the public transit pickup area in each terminal.

The Silver Line **bus** stops at each airport terminal and runs directly to South Station, where you can connect to the Red Line subway and the commuter rail to the southern suburbs. It takes about 20 minutes, not including waiting time, and costs just \$1.70 (with a pass or CharlieCard) or \$2 (with a CharlieTicket or cash)—a great deal if your final destination is near South Station or in Cambridge.

The **subway (the T)** takes just 10 minutes to reach downtown, but first you have to reach the subway. Free **shuttle buses** run from each terminal to the Airport station on the Blue Line of the T from 5:30am to 1am every day, year-round. The Blue Line stops at Aquarium, State Street, and Government Center, downtown points where you can exit or transfer to the other lines. The fare is \$1.70 (with a pass or CharlieCard) or \$2 (with a CharlieTicket or cash).

Just getting into a **cab** at the airport costs an appalling \$9.75 (\$7.50 in fees plus the initial \$2.25 fare). The total fare to downtown or the Back Bay usually runs \$20 to \$35, and may be as high as \$45 in bad traffic. Depending on traffic, the driver might use the Ted Williams

Tunnel for destinations outside downtown, such as the Back Bay. On a map, this doesn't look like the fastest route, but often it is.

The Logan Airport website (www.massport.com/logan) lists numerous companies that operate **shuttle-van service** to local hotels. One-way prices start at \$14 per person and are subject to fuel surcharges as gas prices fluctuate.

The trip to the downtown waterfront in a weather-protected **boat** takes about 7 minutes and costs \$10 one-way. Service is available from early morning through early evening, with reduced schedules on weekends; at press time, all four providers operate year-round. The free **no. 66** shuttle bus connects the airport terminals to the Logan ferry dock. Leaving the airport, ask the shuttle driver to radio ahead for water-taxi pickup; on the way back, call ahead for service.

Three on-call water-taxi services serve the downtown waterfront and other points around Boston Harbor: **City Water Taxi** (☎ 617/422-0392; www.citywatertaxi.com), **Rowes Wharf Water Transport** (☎ 617/406-8584; www.roweswharfwatertransport.com), and **Boston Harbor Water Taxi** (☎ 617/593-9168; www.bostonharborwatertaxi.com). The MBTA (☎ 800/392-6100 or 617/222-3200; www.mbta.com) contracts out scheduled ferry service to **Harbor Express**, which runs to Long Wharf, behind the Marriott Long Wharf hotel.

Some hotels have their own **shuttles** or **limousines**; ask about them when you make your reservation. To arrange private limo service, call ahead for a reservation, especially at busy times. Your hotel can recommend a company, or try **Boston Coach** (☎ 800/672-7676; www.bostoncoach.com), **Carey Limousine Boston** (☎ 800/336-4646 or 617/623-8700; www.carey.com), or **Commonwealth Limousine Service** (☎ 800/558-LIMO or 617/787-1110; www.commonwealthlimo.com).

Unless you need it right away, seriously consider waiting to pick up your **rental car** until you're starting a day trip or other excursion. You'll avoid airport fees, tunnel tolls, hotel parking charges, and, most important, Boston traffic.

BY CAR

Renting a car for a long trip will almost certainly be more expensive and less convenient than any other means of reaching Boston, and I can't recommend it. Parking is scarce and wildly expensive, gasoline gets pricier by the day, and the traffic is terrible. If you're thinking of driving to Boston only because you want to use the car to get around town, think again.

If you have to drive, try to book a hotel or a special package that offers free parking (see chapter 2). If you pay for parking, expect it to cost at least \$25 a day downtown, and build that into your budget.

I-90, also known as the Massachusetts Turnpike (“Mass. Pike” to the locals), is an east-west toll road that originates at Logan Airport and links up with the New York State Thruway. **I-93/U.S. 1** extends north to Canada. **I-93/Route 3**, the Southeast Expressway, connects Boston with the south, including Cape Cod. To avoid driving downtown, exit the Mass. Pike at Cambridge/Allston or at the Prudential Center in the Back Bay. **I-95** (Massachusetts Rte. 128) is a beltway about 11 miles from downtown that connects Boston to highways in Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New York to the south, and New Hampshire and Maine to the north.

The approach to Cambridge is **Storrow Drive** or **Memorial Drive**, which run along either side of the Charles River. Storrow Drive’s Harvard Square exit leads across the Anderson Bridge to John F. Kennedy Street and into the square. Memorial Drive intersects with Kennedy Street; turn away from the bridge to reach the square.

In an emergency, you can call the **State Police** on a cellphone by dialing ☎ ***911**. The **American Automobile Association (AAA; ☎ 800/AAA-HELP; www.aaa.com)** provides members with maps, itineraries, and other travel information, and arranges free towing if you break down. The Mass. Pike is a privately operated road that arranges its own towing. If you break down there, ask the AAA operator for advice.

Tip: When you reach your hotel, **leave your car in the garage** and walk or use public transportation. Use the car for day trips, and before you set out, ask at the front desk for a route that avoids construction (it’s everywhere).

BY TRAIN

Boston has three rail centers: **South Station**, 700 Atlantic Ave. (at Summer St.), near the Waterfront and the Financial District; **Back Bay Station**, 145 Dartmouth St. (btw. Huntington and Columbus aves.), across from the Copley Place mall; and **North Station**, on Causeway Street under the TD Banknorth Garden. **Amtrak** (☎ **800/USA-RAIL** or 617/482-3660; www.amtrak.com) serves all train stations, and each one is also a stop on the MBTA **subway** and **commuter rail**.

BY BUS

The main bus terminal, formally the **South Station Transportation Center**, is on Atlantic Avenue right next to the train station.

Consider long-distance bus travel a last resort except on the **New York** route, which is so desirable that competition is fierce and fares are low—they start at just \$1. **Greyhound** (☎ 800/231-2222 or 617/526-1800; www.greyhound.com), **Peter Pan** (☎ 800/343-9999; www.peterpanbus.com), **BoltBus** (no phone; www.boltbus.com), and **MegaBus** (☎ 877/GO2-MEGA; www.megabus.com) serve this route.

GETTING AROUND ON FOOT

If you can manage a fair amount of walking, this is the way to go. You can best appreciate Boston at street level, and walking the narrow, picturesque streets takes you past many gridlocked cars.

Even more than in a typical large city, be alert. Look both ways before crossing, even on one-way streets, where many bicyclists and some drivers blithely go against the flow. The “walk” cycle of many downtown traffic signals lasts only 7 seconds, and a small but significant part of the driving population considers red lights optional anyway. Keep a close eye on the kids, especially in crosswalks. And you’re all wearing comfortable shoes, right?

BY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

The **Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority**, or MBTA (☎ 800/392-6100 or 617/222-3200; www.mbta.com), is known as the “T,” and its logo is the letter in a circle. It runs subways, trolleys, buses, and ferries in and around Boston and many suburbs, as well as the commuter rail, which extends as far as Providence, Rhode Island. The automated fare-collection system is a bit involved, but getting the hang of it is easy, and T employees who staff every station can answer questions.

For information on services and discounts for seniors and travelers with disabilities, see p. 26.

BY SUBWAY & TROLLEY

Subways and trolleys take you around Boston faster than any other mode of transportation except walking. The oldest system in the country, the T dates to 1897, and recent and ongoing improvements have made it generally reliable. The trolleys on the ancient Green Line are the most unpredictable—leave extra time and carry cab fare if you’re on the way to a vital appointment, because you may need to bail out and jump into a taxi. The system is generally safe, but always watch out for pickpockets, especially during the holiday

Tips The T's Fare-Collection System

The T's automated fare-collection system offers two different reloadable passes that store prepaid fares: The **CharlieTicket** is heavy paper with a magnetic strip, and the **CharlieCard** is a plastic "smart card" with an embedded chip. The CharlieTicket goes into the front of the turnstile and pops out of the top, while the CharlieCard registers when you hold it in front of the rectangular reader on the front of the turnstile. Note that fares are lower if you pay with a CharlieCard than if you use a CharlieTicket. CharlieCards are not available from the self-service kiosks that stand at the entrance to each subway station and in each terminal at the airport. In addition to dispensing CharlieTickets, kiosks allow you to add value onto CharlieTickets and CharlieCards, using cash or a credit or debit card. To get a CharlieCard, ask a T employee, order one in advance, or visit a retail location (check the website for a list of convenience stores, newsstands, and other outlets). Consider ordering CharlieCards or CharlieTickets online before you leave home; at press time, shipping is free, and you won't have to buy one immediately upon arriving.

The MBTA's 1-day and 7-day **LinkPasses** (☎ 877/927-7277 or 617/222-4545; www.mbta.com) can be a great deal—but only if you use them enough. Passes cover unlimited travel on the subway and local buses, in commuter rail zone 1A, and on the Inner Harbor ferry. The cost is \$9 for 24 hours, which translates to an awful lot of riding before you start to save money. But the longer pass, which costs \$15 for 7 consecutive days, is a bargain. At press time, passes must be loaded onto CharlieTickets. Check ahead to see whether you can put yours on a CharlieCard; that should be possible after the commuter rail and water transportation fare-collection systems are converted. You can order passes—long-term visitors may find one of the numerous commuter passes a better deal than a visitor-oriented LinkPass—in advance over the phone or the Web (minimum six; at press time, shipping is free), or buy them when you arrive at any kiosk or retailer that sells CharlieTickets and CharlieCards.

shopping season. And remember, downtown stops are so close together that it's often faster to walk.

The subways are color-coded: the Red, Green, Blue, and Orange lines. The commuter rail to the suburbs is purple on system maps

and is sometimes called the Purple Line. The Silver Line is a fancy name for a bus line; the Waterfront branch runs from South Station to the airport via the South Boston waterfront, including the convention center and the World Trade Center. The fare on the subway and the Waterfront Silver Line is **\$1.70** if you use a CharlieCard (transfers to local buses are free), **\$2** with a CharlieTicket. Children under 12 ride free with a paying adult. Route and fare information and timetables are available through the website (www.mbt.com) and at centrally located stations.

Service begins at around 5:15am and ends around 12:30am.

BY BUS

The MBTA runs buses and “trackless trolleys” (buses with electric antennae) that provide service around town and to and around the suburbs. The local routes that you’ll most likely need are **no. 1**, along Mass. Ave. from Dudley Square in Roxbury through the Back Bay and Cambridge to Harvard Square; **no. 92** and **no. 93**, which connect Haymarket and Charlestown; and **no. 77**, along Mass. Ave. north of Harvard Square to Porter Square, North Cambridge, and Arlington. The Washington Street branch of the **Silver Line**, which runs from Temple Place, near Downtown Crossing, to the South End and Roxbury, is considered a bus line.

The fare on the local bus and Washington Street Silver Line is **\$1.25** with a CharlieCard (transferring to the subway costs 45¢), **\$1.50** with a CharlieTicket or cash. Children under 12 ride free with a paying adult. If you’re paying cash, exact change is required.

BY FERRY

The MBTA Inner Harbor ferry connects **Long Wharf** (near the New England Aquarium) with the **Charlestown Navy Yard**—it’s a good way to get back downtown from “Old Ironsides” and the Bunker Hill Monument. The fare is \$1.70, or show your LinkPass. Call ☎ **617/227-4321** for more information.

BY TAXI

Taxis are expensive and not always easy to find—seek out a cabstand or call a dispatcher. Always ask for a receipt in case you have a complaint or lose something and need to call the company.

Cabs usually queue up near hotels. There are also busy cabstands at Faneuil Hall Marketplace (on North St. and in front of 60 State St.), South Station, and Back Bay Station, and on either side of Mass. Ave. in Harvard Square, near the Harvard Coop bookstore and Au Bon Pain.

To call ahead for a cab, try the **Independent Taxi Operators Association**, or ITOA (☎ 617/426-8700; www.itoataxi.com); **Boston Cab** (☎ 617/536-5010 or 262-2227); **Town Taxi** (☎ 617/536-5000; www.towntaxiboston.com); **City Cab** (☎ 617/536-5100); or **Metro Cab** (☎ 617/782-5500; www.boston-cab.com). In Cambridge, call **Ambassador Brattle** (☎ 617/492-1100) or **Yellow Cab** (☎ 617/547-3000). Boston Cab will dispatch a wheelchair-accessible vehicle upon request; advance notice is recommended.

The fare structure: The first $\frac{1}{2}$ mile (when the flag drops) costs \$2.60, and each additional $\frac{1}{2}$ mile is 40¢. Wait time is extra, and the passenger pays all tolls, as well as a total of \$7.50 in fees, which includes the tunnel toll on trips leaving Logan Airport. Charging a flat rate is not allowed within the city; the police department publishes a list (available on the airport website, www.massport.com/logan) of flat rates for trips to the suburbs. If you want to report a problem or have lost something in a cab, call the police department's **Hackney Unit** (☎ 617/343-4475; www.cityofboston.gov/police; click "Taxi Issues" for the complaint form).

BY WATER TAXI

Three companies serve various stops around the waterfront, including the airport, in covered boats. They operate daily year-round, from 7am until at least 7pm (later in the summer). One-way fares start at \$10. Reservations are recommended but not required; you can call from the dock for pickup. The companies are **City Water Taxi** (☎ 617/422-0392; www.citywatertaxi.com), **Rowes Wharf Water Taxi** (☎ 617/406-8584; www.roweswharfwatertaxi.com), and **Boston Harbor Water Taxi** (☎ 617/593-9168; www.bostonharborwatertaxi.com).

BY CAR

If you plan to visit only Boston and Cambridge, there's absolutely no reason to have a car. With its pricey parking, narrow streets, and abundant construction, Boston in particular is a motorist's nightmare. If you arrive by car, park at the hotel and use the car for day trips. Drive to Cambridge only if you're feeling flush—you'll pay to park there, too. If you need to rent a car, see the introduction to chapter 1 for names and numbers of the national chains that operate in the area. At busy times, especially during foliage season, reserve well in advance. Watch out for the famously reckless local motorists: Drive carefully, stay off the phone, and buckle up.

5 Specialized Travel Resources

TRAVELERS WITH DISABILITIES

Boston, like all other U.S. cities, has taken the required steps to provide access for people with disabilities. Hotels must provide accessible rooms, and museums and street curbs have ramps for wheelchairs. Some smaller accommodations, including most B&Bs, have not been retrofitted. In older neighborhoods (notably Beacon Hill and the North End), you'll find many narrow streets, cobbled thoroughfares, and brick sidewalks that can make getting around difficult. In the construction areas that dot the entire metropolitan area, especially in downtown Boston, you may have to negotiate uneven road surfaces and pedestrian detours.

Newer stations on the Red, Blue, and Orange lines of the **subway** are wheelchair accessible; the transit authority is converting the Green Line (which uses trolleys). Contact the **Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority** (☎ 800/392-6100 or 617/222-3200; www.mbta.com) to see if the stations you need are accessible. All MBTA **buses** have lifts or kneelers; call ☎ 800/LIFT-BUS for more information. Some bus routes are wheelchair accessible at all times, but others may require a reservation as much as a day in advance. To learn more, contact the **Office for Transportation Access**, Back Bay Station, 145 Dartmouth St., Boston, MA 02116 (☎ 800/543-8287 or 617/222-5976, or TTY 617/222-5854).

One taxi company with wheelchair-accessible vehicles is **Boston Cab** (☎ 617/536-5010); advance notice is recommended. In addition, an **Airport Accessible Van** (☎ 617/561-1769) operates within Logan Airport.

An excellent resource is **VSA Arts Massachusetts**, 2 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02116 (☎ 617/350-7713, TTY 617/350-6836; www.vsamass.org). Its **Access Expressed** website has a searchable directory of cultural venues (www.accessexpressed.net; click "Directory").

For more on organizations that offer resources to disabled travelers, go to www.frommers.com.

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELERS

The capital of one of the two states where same-sex marriage is legal, Boston is overall a gay- and lesbian-friendly destination, with a live-and-let-live attitude that long ago replaced its legendary Puritanism.

Two free weeklies cover New England's GLBT community and feature extensive entertainment listings: **Bay Windows** (☎ 617/266-6670; www.baywindows.com) and the **New England Blade** (☎ 617/426-8246; www.newenglandblade.com). The alternative

weekly *Boston Phoenix* publishes cultural and nightlife listings (www.bostonphoenix.com).

An excellent guide to local gay- and lesbian-owned and -friendly businesses is the *Pink Pages* (www.pinkweb.com/boston.index.html). Other useful resources include the **Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Helpline** (☎ 888/340-4528 or 617/267-9001; www.fenwayhealth.org); the **Boston Alliance of Gay and Lesbian Youth** (☎ 617/227-4313; www.bagly.org); and the **Bisexual Resource Center** (☎ 617/424-9595; www.biresource.org).

For more gay and lesbian travel resources, visit www.frommers.com.

SENIOR TRAVEL

Mention that you're a senior when you make your travel reservations. Boston-area businesses offer many discounts to seniors with identification (a driver's license, passport, or other document that shows your date of birth). The cutoff age is usually 65, sometimes 62. Restaurants, museums, and movie theaters may offer special deals. Restaurants and theaters usually offer discounts only at off-peak times, but museums and other attractions offer reduced rates—usually the equivalent of the student price—at all times.

With a special photo ID, seniors can ride **MBTA** subways, buses, commuter rail, and Inner Harbor ferries for at least half off the regular fare. The Senior Pass is available in person only from 8:30am to 5pm weekdays at the Downtown Crossing station and at the Office for Transportation Access, Back Bay Station, 145 Dartmouth St. (☎ 617/222-5976 or TTY 617/222-5854; www.mbta.com; under "Riding the T," click "Accessible Services").

The Frommer's website (www.frommers.com) offers more information and resources on travel for seniors.

FAMILY TRAVEL

Boston is a top-notch family destination, with tons of activities that appeal to children and relatively few that don't. All hotels and most restaurants have extensive experience meeting kids' needs.

To locate particularly kid-friendly accommodations, restaurants, and attractions, refer to the "Kids" icon throughout this guide and to *Frommer's 500 Places to Take Your Kids Before They Grow Up* (Wiley, 2006). Also consult the boxes on "Family-Friendly Hotels" (p. 46) and "Family-Friendly Restaurants" (p. 82), and the section "Especially for Kids" (p. 119).

For a list of more family-friendly travel resources, turn to the experts at www.frommers.com.