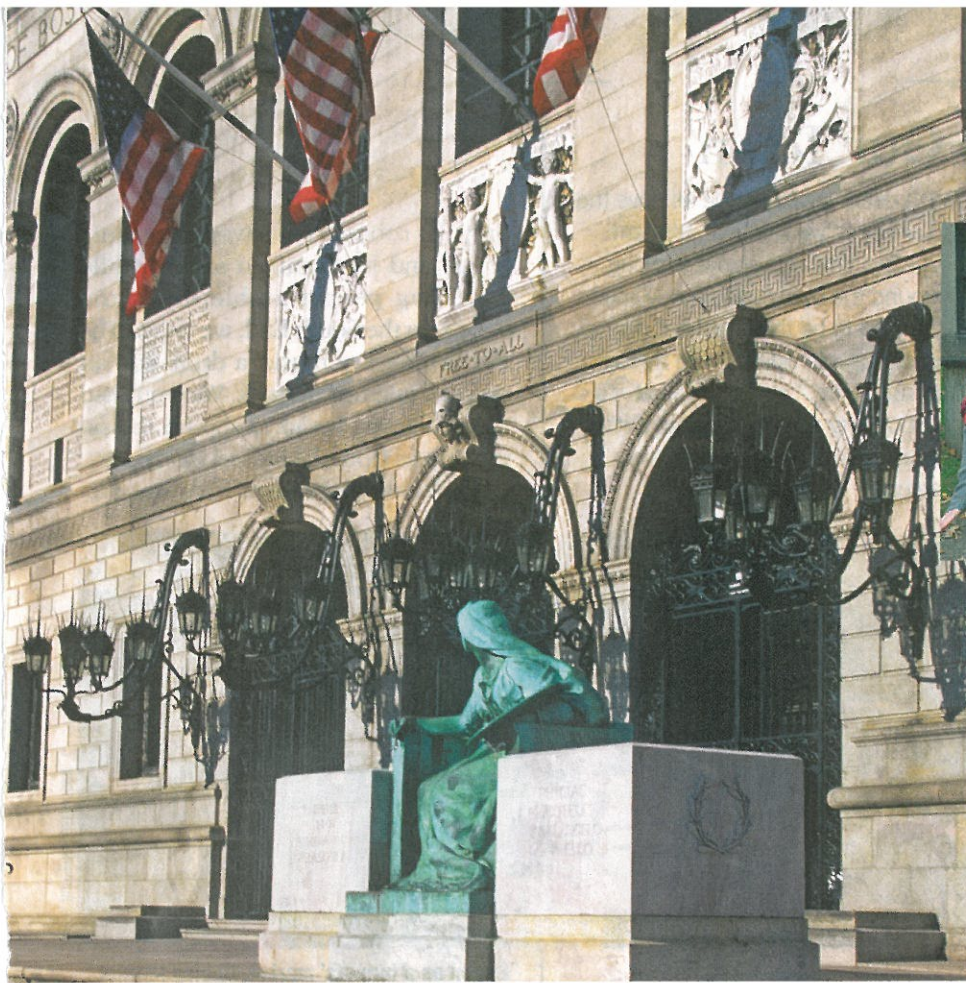
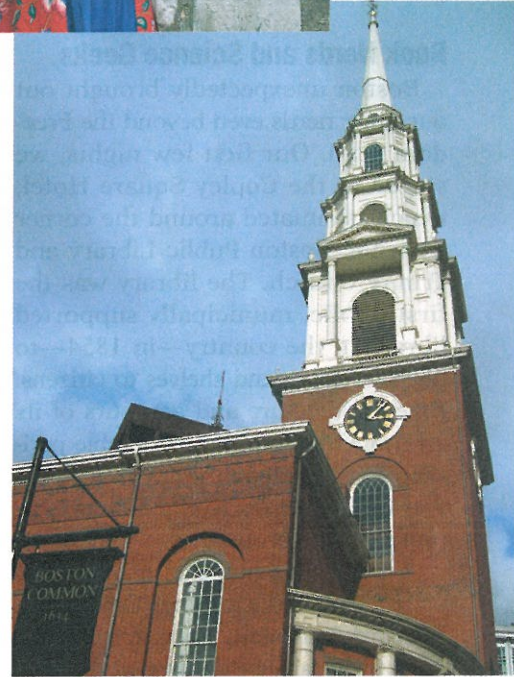


BY LAINEY
R. SEYLER



LAINEY R. SEYLER

DAVE G. HOUSER/HOUSESTOCK



IN THE CITY: Boston

My friend Liz talked me into the tour. On our trip to Boston, I was dialing in on the city's hip offerings revolving around food, trendy neighborhoods, shopping and culture: a brewery tour at Harpoon, the Sunday market in South Washington (aka SoWa Sundays), a stop at the Institute of Contemporary Art. Hearing a lecture about our nation's Founding Fathers, I confess, did not make my original list. However, bolstered by Liz's enthusiasm, we joined the next interpretive walk on the Freedom Trail, a decision we did not regret.

History Speaks

Our guided tour started on the edge of the Boston Common at the visitor center. Our costumed and in-character interpreter (she played a patriotic Scottish immigrant) loaded us with tidbits about fanatical Puri-

Bela L. Pratt's Art is one of two bronze sculptures flanking the Copley Square entrance to the Boston Public Library (above). Freedom Trail tours are highlighted by guides (inset) and historic architecture found in sites such as the Park Street Church (above right).

tans and Paul Revere's actually quite minor role in the American Revolution and disproportionately major role in Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's popular poem, all giving color to Boston's and our country's early days.

We followed a red line in the sidewalk that wended its way from the common, past the state capitol and historic churches. School-age history lessons came back to me vaguely as our tour group visited the Park Street Church and Granary Burying Ground. Fittingly, the church, founded in 1809, was the site of many a revolution. Preachers spoke to audiences from an elevated outdoor pulpit, dubbed Brimstone Corner, drawing some of the first crowds for movements on prison reform, women's suffrage and abolition.

Around the corner from the church, the Granary Burying Ground is the final resting place of John Hancock, Revere, Samuel Adams and approximately 5,000 others. Our interpreter provided hilarious insight into the private successes and failures of prominent historical figures whose influence is far-reaching. Liz and I walked along with our jaws open across the same steps that were taken

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250 years ago to ensure life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness were eventually extended to all.

The guided tour ends at Faneuil Hall near City Hall, but walkers can continue on the two-plus-mile trail, along with a free complementary booklet, all the way to the Old North Church, across the Charles River to the *USS Constitution* and finally, to Bunker Hill.

Book Nerds and Science Geeks

Boston unexpectedly brought out our inner nerds even beyond the Freedom Trail. Our first few nights, we stayed at the Copley Square Hotel, which is situated around the corner from the Boston Public Library and Trinity Church. The library was the first public, municipally supported library in the country—in 1854—to open its doors and shelves to citizens. Free architecture and art tours of its 1895-built structure are available periodically throughout the day, though Liz and I were content to wander the halls pretending to be studious.

A visit to one noteworthy library inspired us to take another detour—to Harvard University. Though we didn't go in its library, we did stop at the yard and some bookstores, finally grabbing a bite at a local pub.

We had the foresight to plan a visit to the Museum of Science Boston, which at the time was hosting "Harry Potter: The Exhibition," an elaborate display of props, costumes and set pieces from the films. But the museum offers diversion year-round with permanent exhibits that get visitors involved in subject matter they may not have realized was scientific.

The Bread Trail

One thing we didn't neglect to do in Bean Town was eat. Visiting the Northeast, we were determined to find some seafood, and we found it in abundance at the Union Oyster House.

The restaurant, which opened in 1826, is the oldest in Boston and the longest continually serving restaurant

Our Town

Boston locals, above all, love the city's "walkability." Student Chelsea Williams enjoys strolling around the outdoor Quincy Market. "It used to be the merchant district, where people would come through to sell goods," she said. "Now it's a shopping center. It's great if it's a nice day and you want to walk around."

only 12 rooms. We savored creamy soups and fresh mixed salads while watching people amble down the streets. In the South End, we visited The Beehive for live music, a drink and an order of steamed mussels. We requested more crunchy bread to sop up the savory juices from the mussel marinade.

Exploring Chinatown from our sec-

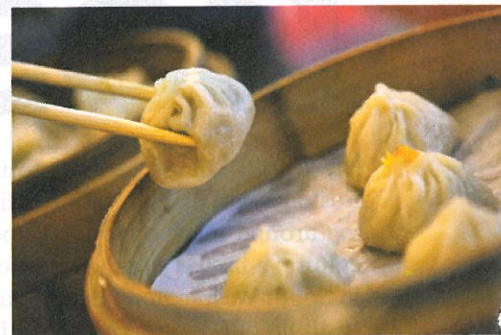


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A favorite among Boston's many students, according to Krista Firkins, is Boloco, which stands for Boston Local Co., a citywide chain that sells burritos and smoothies—all made with locally sourced ingredients.

Eli Barnes, server and manager at The Beehive, regularly hosts guests via the Web site couchsurfing.com. "I always take visitors to the Boston Public Library. It's such a hidden gem because tourists don't think 'Let's go to the library.'"

Begun as a farmers' market, Quincy Market has grown to become an indoor/outdoor mall, complete with restaurants offering a variety of local flavors.



in the U.S. As a stop on the regular tourist circuit, the restaurant is always busy but well-worth the wait. There's chowder, oysters Rockefeller and on the half shell, steamed mussels, and an extensive crustacean and fish menu. (We went straight for the steamed lobster.)

After strolling the swanky and historic Beacon Hill neighborhood, we sat down to lunch at the Beacon Hill Bistro, very much a neighborhood joint. The bistro's adjoining hotel is small, with

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ond outpost at The Langham, Boston, we made a stop for authentic dim sum in a noisy restaurant where most people spoke Chinese. We worked off our meals in the meantime walking from museum to park to brewery to historic neighborhood, barely scratching the surface on what Boston has hidden under its skyscrapers.

For more information, call (888) 733-2678 or visit www.bostonusa.com. For trip-planning assistance, contact your AAA Travel agent or visit AAA.com/travel.

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