

BOSTON prices are up to 51 per cent lower than London if you take in the exchange rate and duty-free allowance. Here, with the help of the Post Office Travel Money's Christmas guide (postoffice.co.uk/shoppingguide2010) we show you the savings:

Item	London	Boston	%
Jet Pack	£50.00	£24.43	-51%
Buzz Lightyear			
Barbie Video Girl	£76.00	£40.49	-47%
Elizabeth Arden 8 hour cream 50ml	£23.00	£11.87	-48%
Ugg boots 'Classic Short'	£160.00	£92.01	-42%
Levi's 501 jeans	£65.00	£32.53	-50%
Abercrombie & Fitch Blue Mountain' shirt	£70.00	£39.43	-44%
Sims 3 for PC	£34.99	£27.92	-20%
iPod Nano 8GB	£129.00	£104.04	-19%
TOTAL	£607.99	£372.72	-39%

The duty free allowance for UK citizens travelling from the USA to the UK is £390 including allowances for perfume, alcohol and cigarettes.

Partly ABOUT SHOPPING

DISCOVER MAGIC BOSTON BARGAINS, JUST LIKE EMMA

HARRY Potter star Emma Watson may be worth £22 million but it doesn't stop her shopping for a bargain.

Emma, 20, recently hit the 170 shops at Wrentham Village Premium Outlets in Boston, Massachusetts, and her family and friends are in for Christmas treats. The actress, who plays Hermione, spent a small fortune in Kate Spade snapping up bags, purses and shoes.

Sales assistant Ashley said: "She was the loveliest person, an absolute sweetheart. She was buying presents and rang a friend to see what size shoes she wore."

Emma, who is a student at Brown University on the neighbouring state of Rhode Island was also spotted in Calvin Klein at the outlets—a massive hit with Brits because designer prices can be up to half what you'd pay on our high street.

About 12 million bargain-hunters descend on Wrentham Village every year like bees round a maple syrup pot—including loads of British visitors. Marketing director Susan Bladd said: "You Brits have shopping down to a science. People come here with empty wheelie suitcases and leave with them full."

The Americans were celebrating Thanksgiving last weekend when I arrived for a spree in Boston, one of the friendliest cities in the US. One way the Yanks like to let their hair down is to shop and shop—tempted by unbelievable sales at Gap, OshKosh B'gosh, Michael Kors, Guess and Karen Millen to name but a few. In typical American style, Wrentham Village makes everything so easy for you. You can take special buses from your hotel,

or it's a 35-minute drive south of Boston—the car parks are ginormous, even the centre's aisles are like two-car motorway lanes and there are lockers so you can store your bags. You can also recharge your batteries in restaurants such as Ruby Tuesday—order the cheesecake!

The icing on the cake is that American shop assistants are so sugary pleasant. My daughter Sophie and I were greeted countless times by: "Hi ladies, come on in—how you doing today? We have 50 per cent off everything in the store so just let me know if there's anything you need."

An extra credit card and suitcase would have been handy.

We had more bags than Emma Watson and it was pitch-black when we were eventually bundled into our taxi—thank goodness for Anthony's Livery Service.

POSH

Boston is fantastic for walking around, with shops for every taste and budget.

Gorgeous tree-lined Newbury Street is the equivalent of London's Kings Road or LA's Rodeo Drive—pretty posh.

Copley Place in the historic Back Bay is flash too, housing Tiffany & Co and Armani. We stayed at the perfectly-positioned Back Bay Hotel which used to be the police HQ on Stuart Street.

The basement bar is called Cuffs but you wouldn't mind being held prisoner here for a night or two. Rooms are comfortable and the food's good. Skipjack's seafood restaurant on nearby Clarendon Street is also great for dinner and the Colonnade Hotel.

The other side of town, there's the department store Macy's (that's where my Christmas watch came from) and Filene's Basement which is famous for cut-price designer labels.

In contrast, Charles Street—in upmarket leafy Beacon Hill, which still has old-style gas lamps—has quaint antique and art shops.

Probably not trendy enough for Emma Watson, but she could afford one of the apartments that cost millions of dollars—especially if she keeps saving cash by pottering around the Premium Outlets stores!



Witch guide to shops... with Emma



Retail magic... Trisha went wild

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NEWS OF THE WORLD

GETTING THERE

VIRGIN Atlantic flies from Heathrow to Boston with fares from £447 return. See www.virginatlantic.com or call 0844 2092 770. Flights and two nights at The Back Bay Hotel departing December 17 from £778pp. See www.majortravel.co.uk or call 020 7393 1070. For Wrentham Village Premium Outlets, see www.premiumoutlets.com/wrentham



Historic... the State House

Ralph gives the inside s-tour-y

TAKE a tour with guide Ralph Spinelli and you'll think you've lived in Boston all your life.

He knows all there is to know, talks fast and makes you laugh.

America's oldest city is the gateway to New England, and has managed to mix old brick and stone buildings, like Boston state building with gleaming skyscrapers. It's spacious with only 600,000 residents and Ralph

says: "It's the safest city in America. New Yorkers come here for the weekend just to escape."

He fills your head with facts and figures but also shows you:

● **The Freedom Trail:** the red line in the pavement takes you along a 2.5-mile route linking 16 sites that are icons in America's history and the struggle for independence from Great Britain.

● **Irish Pubs:** "Boston was, is

and always will be an Irish community," says Ralph.

● **The Kennedy connection:** Where John F Kennedy lived and the JFK museum.

There's also the library with six and a half million books, Café Pompei which only shuts between 4 and 6am, and lots more in brilliant Boston but I'll leave Ralph to tell you more. Email him at exciting.tours@verizon.net