

WORLD TEMPERATURES

at noon today. See Weather, page 2 for more

	Sun	26C	79F
dam	Rain	14C	57F
bs	Showers	31C	88F
es	Sun	20C	68F
a	Fair	23C	73F
	Showers	30C	86F
w	Cloudy	21C	70F
ork	Sun	32C	90F
	Cloudy	19C	66F
y	Showers	16C	61F

# Holiday

email [travel@people.co.uk](mailto:travel@people.co.uk)



CHEERS AND BEERS: Drop in for a pint at TV bar



TOP CLASS: Charli outside Harvard University

## Cities a real ASH

by **Charli Morgan**

**LITTLE did I know when I set off for a two-base holiday to Boston and Iceland, it would end on everyone's favourite volcano, Eyjafjallajökull.**

Most of Europe has been cursing its pesky ash cloud in the last month. But up close and personal, I was gobsmacked as it fired harmless red and orange lava 150metres into the night sky.

All that was to change when the volcano started erupting continually from April 14, just days after my visit.

But before it caused weeks of travel chaos, I took advantage of Icelandair's new Heathrow-Reykjavik-Boston service (£350 return) to visit two very contrasting cities.

After arriving in Boston on the east coast of the US, we checked into the Colonnade – a boutique hotel with fantastic city views.

For more great vistas, I headed to the Skywalk Observatory from where you can see the green expanses of Boston Common, the glittering

Charles River, the atriums of Faneuil Hall Marketplace and Harvard University.

A great way to explore all this on the ground is on a segway tour (£40 via Boston Gliders).

Segways are electric vehicles which whizz forward when you stand on tip-toes, jet backwards when you lean on your heels and brake when you balance in the centre.

My Segway simply shot back and forth at first since I was quivering like a stricken blanch-mange on my brief training session. But I soon got the hang of it and loved whizzing along the famous Freedom Trail, a two mile route covering 16 sites from the US Revolution.

We then headed to my favourite part of Boston – the red-brick streets of Little Italy for a fantastic food tour. We sampled refreshing limoncello at Boston's oldest Italian wine and spirit shop, V Cirace and Son, and tried cheese, meats and olive oil at beautiful delis.

But the best part was Maria's

Pastry Shop, where her cuddly sister gave us slices of gooey torrone, cream-filled lobster tails and crunchy, fried cannoli.

Clothing costing less than \$300 (£200) is not taxed in Boston, so it's well worth a girly fashion trip to Newbury Street.

If you're lucky, you may catch the twice-yearly Running Of The Brides when wives-to-be scramble to buy a big-day frock in a sale at Filene's Basement store.

Along with shopping, Bostonians love their food. Bond, a restaurant based at Langhams in the former Federal Reserve building, is worth seeing for its giant dollar bill decorations and cocktails such as Inflation and Equity.

But my favourite eaterie was Sensing, overlooking Battery Wharf and run by three-star Michelin chef Guy Martin. The duck foie gras and fried quail egg were exquisite.

It's rude not to pose outside the Cheers bar in Beacon Street, where

Iceland's culinary delights included horse and pickled puffin

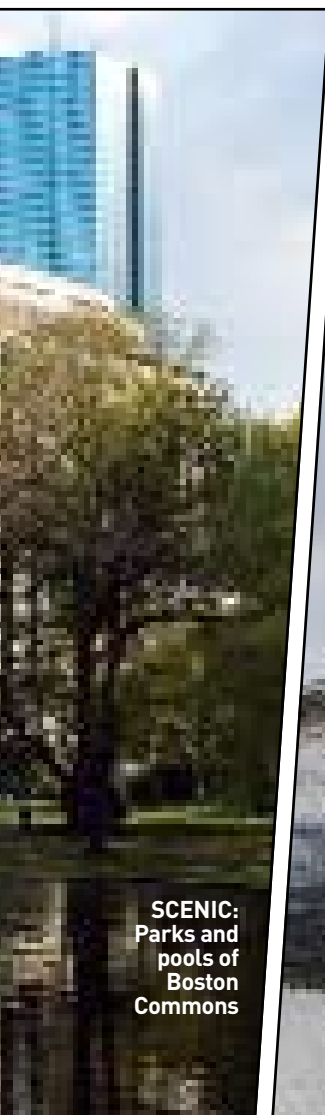


# hotspots

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**CHILL-OUT ZONE:** Blasted by winds at the Gulfoss



**SCENIC:** Parks and pools of Boston Commons



**NOT SO LAVALY:** Ice-capped slopes of Eyjafjallajökull



**POSH ICE:** Colourful houses in central Reykjavik

# OF CULTURES

“everyone knows your name” according to the song. But the show itself wasn’t filmed inside, which was dark and sweaty and reminded me of a tired British pub.

Culture vultures should head to Symphony Hall for a performance by the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

And sports fans shouldn’t miss seeing the hometown Red Sox baseball team at Fenway Park.

After a few days in Boston, nothing can prepare you for the culture shock of Iceland. No wonder NASA practised the first lunar landing here.

Our blonde tour guide was a dead ringer for wrestler Hulk Hogan – along with most of Iceland’s inhabitants, male or female.

And as our coach wobbled around in the 100mph winds, she explained how locals believe in elves and trolls.

Iceland has also seen a building boom in the last 10 years with Toytown-like buildings popping up over the vast expanses of volcanic rock.

Our coach arrived at the first part of the Golden Circle Tour, the thundering Gulfoss Waterfall.

Only a cotton-thin piece of rope holds you back from the waterfall, typifying Iceland’s mildly terrifying

approach to health and safety. We also visited the Great Geysir, where the earth farted eggy clouds of gas into the air. At our third stop, the Thingvellir National Park, we saw two tectonic plates dividing.

From there we returned to Reykjavik and the Einar Ben restaurant, where we were presented with a starter of thickly-sliced, red meat, sprinkled with stilton.

“Mmm, beef?” I inquired. “No, foal” corrected the waiter, as I swallowed my first mouthful of horse.

We later discovered that the many horses we had admired on our coach trip were bred for eating and not riding. Other culinary delights included pickled puffin – which tasted like a very strong herring – and Hákarl or “rotting shark”, which is prepared

**TRAVEL TIPS**

- ICELAND can be expensive (£1.20 buys you 400 krónur) so it's worth getting a Reykjavik city discount card.
- THE island's weather is also unpredictable so bring warm clothing and sensible shoes. As the locals say: "If you don't like the weather, wait fifteen minutes!"
- TO get the most out of Boston, get a Go Boston Card which gives you more than \$1400 of admissions to the top 70 attractions for just \$49.99 an adult (£30) a day.

by throwing the meat into a hole on a gravel beach for three months.

If you prefer more traditional food then the lamb shanks, beef bourguignon and ballotine of chicken are all excellent.

Reykjavik is also known as the Ibiza of the North for its nightlife, so we joined the locals for a traditional night out, which begins around midnight after they have avoided the expensive drinks and loaded up on booze at home.

We started off at Vegamot, tiny bar decorated with dolls’ head lights and black wallpaper. Then we started on the clubs. The best on our thorough crawl were Gorillaz star Damon Albarn’s Kaffibarinn, and NASA which plays disco, house and live music on its three floors.

For the next morning’s hangover, Iceland has the perfect antidote – a trip to the spa and pool of the Blue

Lagoon. Here you can plunge into boiling, turquoise waters, and swim through beautiful caves. You can even reach into the rocks and soften your mush with stinky, white volcano mud.

Speaking of volcanoes, our group melted the soles of their trainers standing just 800 metres from three active craters on Eyjafjallajökull.

Iceland is still safe to travel to and more and more tourists are now taking advantage of watching this unique piece of lava-addled history explode.

I narrowly avoided the first eruption.

But I fully intend to get straight back out there for my next eggy adventure – once I’ve coated my liver in Teflon and picked the last morsel of horse from my gnashers, of course.

**FACTFILE:** A return flight from Heathrow to Boston with Icelandair costs from £350. This includes the option of a stopover in Iceland at no additional airfare. Booking online only at [www.icelandair.co.uk](http://www.icelandair.co.uk).

To travel you will need an updated ESTA form for Boston, and an APIS form for Iceland from: [www.icelandair.co.uk/information/before-you-go/apids](http://www.icelandair.co.uk/information/before-you-go/apids) and [www.cbp.dhs.gov](http://www.cbp.dhs.gov)