

Fresh steps on the Freedom Trail

One nice point—among many—about Boston, is that its 400 years of history comes in a variety of shapes, sizes and activity levels. You can explore more than 40 museums in the Boston area, including the Historic New England, the JFK Library and Museum, Museum of African American History, Nichols House Museum, Old State House Museum, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Villa Shul, and the Waterworks Museum.

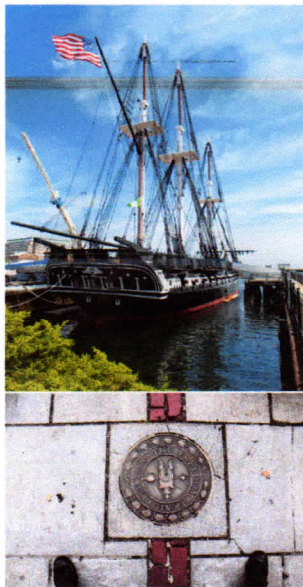
by Judy Colbert / Photos: iStockphoto.com

➔ However, history here goes beyond buildings that are called museums. If you like walking, public parks, boats, sports, interesting architecture, or something in the middle, you're almost sure to find it.

THE FREEDOM TRAIL

Perhaps the best-known history of Boston is along the 2.5-mile red-lined Freedom Trail, America's first historic walking tour. The 16 stops along the way include the site of the Boston Massacre, Paul Revere's house (the oldest in downtown Boston), the Benjamin Franklin Statue and Boston Latin School, and the Old North Church ("Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch of the Old North Church tower as a signal light—one if by land and two if by sea—and I on the opposite shore will be,..."). You can stay on the trail or detour to other attractions. You can walk it yourself or join a tour led by a costumed guide.

Between Beacon Hill and State Street in the Financial District is a trail called The Walk to the Sea. This one-mile stretch, encased in glass and steel is lined with skyscrapers, historical maps and stories relating how the area has changed over time, going from a small hilly peninsula to one of the country's most modern cities.

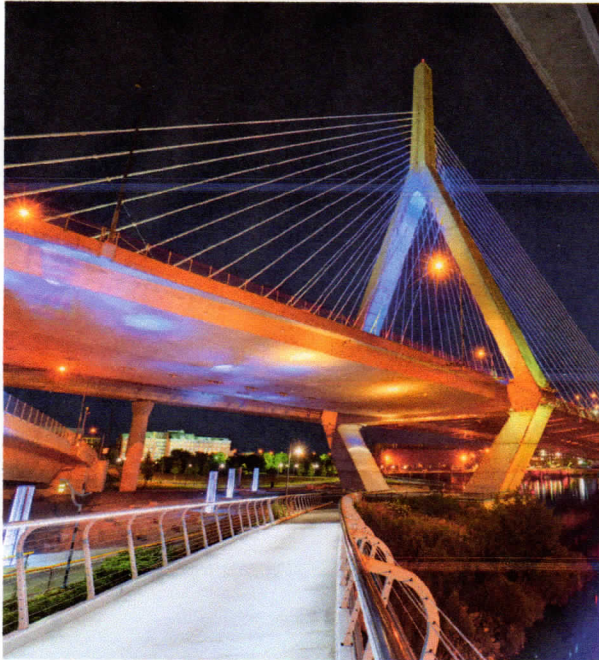


Another stop along the Freedom Trail is Faneuil Hall, one of the first Festival Marketplaces created by the Rouse Company. Built on the waterfront in 1742, but since then, landfill and city design have "moved" it inland. Home to shops and restaurants, about the only original piece, is the golden grasshopper with glass eyes weathervane on the rooftop. Constructed by Shem Drowne, he also made the copper swallowtail banner vane atop the Old North Church.

CHARLESTOWN

Bunker Hill Monument, in Charlestown, Boston's oldest neighborhood, is across from downtown Boston, north of the Charles River. The Great House, built for Governor John Winthrop in 1629, was destroyed by the British in the bombardment of Charlestown during the Battle of Bunker Hill in 1775. Fifty years later, the Marquis De Lafayette set the cornerstone for the monument. The 221-foot tall obelisk, built of granite, took more than 17 years to finish. If you have the stamina and want a spectacular view of the area, you may climb the 294 steps between 1-4:30 pm, when conditions permit. It's a nice activity after you've stopped by





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the museum. To follow the history of the Charlestown Navy Yard, from 1800 to the present, drop into the Visitor Center. From there you go see the USS *Constitution*, the oldest commissioned warship afloat in the world.

A WALK THROUGH HISTORY

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Connecting Cambridge and Boston is the striking Leonard P. Zakim/Bunker Hill Memorial Bridge that carries ten lanes of I-93. The cable-stayed bridge, one Boston's newest landmarks, has become an iconic image of the city. As amazing as it is to behold, it's even more arresting when it's lit at night. Zakim was a New England civil rights leader who built figurative bridges between communities through his work as head of the local Anti-Defamation League. Although the Bunker Hill part of the bridge signifies one end of it,

most locals call it the Zakim Bridge. Through family connections, Bruce Springsteen attended the bridge opening, playing a solo version of "Thunder Road."

PARK AND RECREATION

For another look at outdoor history, stop by the Boston Public Garden, the first public botanical garden in the country. Here you can enjoy a foot-pedal-powered Swan Boat ride (in season), the world's smallest suspension bridge, and colorful formal plantings. The Nancy Schon statue of Robert McCloskey's *Mak Way for Ducklings* is also in the park.

And, any sports fan, even if your sport isn't baseball, must stop by Fenway Park. Home of the Boston Red Sox since 1912, it's the oldest ballpark in Major League Baseball. Take a one-hour guided tour to learn about the history of the Sox, and see the Triangle, Pesky's Pole, and the Green Monster. (You can sit in the seats on top of the Monster). ♦



Judy Colbert is the author of *100 Things to Do in Baltimore Before You Die* and other travel guidebooks.



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Slow cooked lamb fillet, leeks, pickled onions, smoked celeriac purée, baked carrots, spinach and dill cream

Dessert by pastry chef Axel Þ.

SKYR FANTASIA

Skyr fromage, Skyr mousse, strawberry & lime gel, lime sponge cake

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