

Nelson's Best of Boston

Winter 2016 Edition (© Aaron Nelson)
Compiled for the 44th Annual Meeting of INS

This Week in Beantown

A sampling of events in larger venues!

See more at www.boston-discovery-guide.com
Citi Performing Arts Center www.citicenter.org
Other events: www.Bostix.org

Bruce Springsteen TD Garden 2/4/16 8PM
Boston Symphony Orchestra: Andris Nelsons conducts Shostakovich on 2/4 and 2/5
American Repertory Theater: Mark Rylance. Nice Fish
Berklee Performance Center www.berkleebpc.com/ Week of Feb 3: Jamie Cullum
Boston Opera House: Pippin
Charles Playhouse: Blue Man Group
Huntington Theater: Disgraced 2/2- 2/6 264 Huntington Avenue
Shubert Theater: Love Letters, Ali McGraw and Ryan O'Neal- 2/2-2/7
Wang Center: Juan Luis Guera. Wang Center, 2/6
Royal Boston: Ryan Bingham - Royale Boston - February 2
House of Blues: Mike Stud - Feb 4
Mighty Mystic - Paradise Rock Club - Feb 6 -

Sports At the Boston Garden
Maple Leafs v Bruins 2/2/16 7PM
Pistons v Celtics 2/3/16 7:30
Sabres v Bruins 2/6/16 7PM
Kings v Celtics 2/7/16

Local Strolling

Freedom Trail www.thefreedomtrail.org *The ultimate Revolutionary War stroll through history. From Boston Common to the Bunker Hill Monument, it's a bit of a schlep. You don't have to do the whole thing. But a great way to see the city. Just follow the red brick road....if you can see it under the snow.*

Boston Common and Gardens *Adjacent public parks where people gather in summer to picnic and take rides on the swan boats. During winter months get up early and put on your skates (Frog Pond is on the Common).*

Boston Harbor Walk www.bostonharborwalk.com/ *The segment from the North End to Rowe's Wharf is a beautiful walk pending weather. You will amble along all manner of wharf (I'm pretty sure this phrase has never been uttered or written before) and end up sipping a hot chocolate and watching the Celtics at the Boston Harbor Hotel.*

Beacon Hill www.beaconhillonline.com *Boston Brahmin-ville. Bust an ankle on ancient cobblestone streets. Plus dozens of antique shops and unique cafes lining Charles Street, the thoroughfare dividing the "flat part of the hill" from "the hill part of the hill" - you'll see what I mean when you're there. Here's a hint - Do not go to Cheers - it's dopey - Do slide into a booth at The Sevens, order a Guinness, and throw some "dahts."*

Newbury Street www.newbury-st.com Unabashed couture consumerism. Shop 'til you drop among the Beautiful People. If you can think of a major European style house, we got it right here in Bahston. Pick up a purse at Marc Jacobs for \$2400, sunglasses at Chanel for \$650, and a pair of socks at Louis Boston for \$275. Grab an espresso al fresco at Croma and you are ready for your close-up.

Faneuil Hall/Quincy Market www.faneuilhallmarketplace.com The original Boston Market Place circa 1742. Somehow manages to succeed despite being hugely touristy and franchise-y. I think it's because of all the bars and the authentic buildings... mainly the bars. In the old days (1970s), The Black Rose had a special tip jar to fund "humanitarian aid for our IRA brethren." Fun place for a nighttime pub crawl - edgy carnival atmosphere fueled by Sam Adams and subtly hostile street entertainers. You will be targeted if you wear shorts with white sneakers and white socks. Fun fact - yours truly played in the outdoor rock concert series launching the newly reconstructed venue in the summer of 1976... or was it 1975?

Charles River Esplanade www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/metroboston/charlesR.htm If you're a runner itching for a warm-up for next year's Marathon, run the bridges. There are lots of them spanning the Charles from Watertown to the Science Museum. There's a website (www.angio.net/personal/run/river.htm) that gives you mileages for each and every bridge combination. You can bundle up and walk the river on the Cambridge side, which affords a fine view of Beacon Hill and the city skyline.

Harvard Square (Cambridge) www.harvardsquare.com/ Epicenter of the People's Republic of Cambridge. Well, at least it used to be. But despite Starbucks, and Bertucci's there are still a zillion great little places to shop and dine. Not to mention the beckoning ivy covered walls of Harvard Yard. Great sandwiches at Darwin's on Mt. Auburn Street. Really great.

Back Bay Beginning at Copley Square, pay a visit to the Boston Public Library, largest municipal public library in the United States with breathtaking murals of Johnathan Singleton Copley. Take a shortcut through the Copley Place Mall, and hold on to your wallet for dear life as you pass Jimmy Choo. End up at the Christian Science Center Plaza, home to the tremendous mother church and world headquarters of Christian Scientists.

Local Tours

Boston by Foot www.bostonbyfoot.org/tours

- Boston by Little Feet (Freedom Trail)
- Victorian Back Bay Walking Tour
- Heart of the Freedom Trail
- Beacon Hill
- North End
- Literary Landmarks

Duck Tours www.bostonducktours

Boston Duck Tours is a great way to start off your visit to Boston. People love this—especially if you have kids on board. The tour gives you a great overview of the city, shows you many unique neighborhoods and and you even take a dip into the Charles River. (not all sites might be seen due to weather, traffic conditions and altered tours)

Fenway Park www.boston.redsox.mlb.com/bos/ballpark/tour.jsp

Tour the shrine. Home of the 2004, 2007, and 2008 World Series Champion Boston Red Sox. See Yawkey Way, The Green Monster, and the fabled manual scoreboard.

MK Sam Adams Beer Tour www.samueladams.com/boston-brewery/brewery-tours

Close to Doyles in Jamaica Plain- a classic Irish pub with (allegedly) the best burgers in town. On the tour you will learn all about Samuel Adams, the brewer and the patriot. See the brewing process first hand then try the specialty malts and smell the aromas of whole leaf noble hops.

The Boston Movie Tour www.boston-discovery-guide.com/boston-movie-tours.html#bus

The 3-hour Boston TV & Movie Sites Tour, a local Boston actor - will deliver a fun combination of

entertainment and sightseeing as you visit 30-40 Boston sites featured in films and shows. There are overhead video screens where you'll get to see clips of the movies and TV shows.

Museums

Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) www.mfa.org/ Great permanent collections with an excellent slate of scheduled exhibitions. The cafés and restaurants are decent but a bit pricey. Open late on Thursday and Friday. Special Exhibit is Gustav Klimt's Adam and Eve

Isabelle Stewart Gardner Museum www.minutemanbikeway.org Three floors of galleries surrounding a gorgeous inner courtyard. Site of the largest art theft in US history (1990). Pick up a cool \$5 Million if you can solve the heist. Open late on Thursday.

Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) www.icaboston.org/ Newest addition to the Boston arts scene, located in the developing Seaport district. Great looking building housing unique collection of unusual pieces and installations. Wolfgang Puck café. Open late on Thursday and Friday. Special Exhibit, When the stars begin to fall: Imagination and the American South

Museum of Science www.mos.org/ Great stuff for kids and adults. Immense. Houses the Hayden Planetarium. Laser rock shows, and an IMAX Theater.

New England Aquarium www.neaq.org/ The seals are awesome. If you're too lazy to visit in person, check out the giant ocean tank over the internet via live webcam and wonder how all the cute fishies coexist with huge killer sharks.

JFK Library www.jfklibrary.org See JFK's rocking chair, and a huge building full of presidential memorabilia, set amidst a panoramic view of Dorchester Bay and the South Boston coastline. Now has the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate, dedicated to educating the public about the important role of the Senate in our government, encouraging participatory democracy, invigorating civil discourse, and inspiring the next generation of citizens and leaders to engage in the civic life of their communities.

MIT Museum www.mit.edu/museum So this is what those geeks across the river do in their spare time. Very cool exhibits with lasers, holograms, kinetic sculptures, robots, and far-out scientific gizmos.

Boston Children's Museum www.bostonchildrensmuseum.org Here's one strictly for the kids. Hands-on fun and "educational" all at the same time

USS Constitution www.ussconstitution.navy.mil Old Ironsides - our nation's oldest commissioned warship. You will not believe that 450 sailors slept in those tiny hanging hammocks. After taking the tour, ably led by current US Navy sailors, stroll around the Charlestown Navy Yard and check out the chic condominiums, not to mention the MGH/Harvard/MIT Martinos Center for Biomedical Imaging. This is where fMRI was invented. www.nmr.mgh.harvard.edu

Decordova Museum and Sculpture Park (Lincoln MA) www.decordova.org/ An out-of-town gem, a few minutes away from Walden Pond (www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/walden). Beautiful outdoor sculpture park and indoor rotating exhibits.

Harvard University Museums

Warren Anatomical Museum Harvard Medical School (Anyone want to see Phineas Gage's skull?)

Harvard Art Museum www.harvardartmuseums.org. Located in Harvard Square the newly renovated Harvard Art Museum integrates collections from three previously independent museums

- [Busch-Reisinger Museum](#) (arts of Central and Northern Europe)
- [Fogg Art Museum](#) (Western art, Middle Ages-present: Italian early Renaissance, British pre-Raphaelite, 19th cent French)
- [Sackler Museum](#) (ancient, Islamic, Asian, and later Indian art)

Some other places of note

Longfellow house www.nps.gov/long *Very cool shutters, chimneys, and clapboards. Amazing to think how much writing this guy got done with all of the maintenance his house must have required.*

Louisa May Alcott www.louisamayalcott.org *For all you diehard Little Women fanatics out there.*

Thoreau's Walden Pond www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/walden/ *He was into breaking the law (civil disobedience), isolation, and living in the woods. Reaching for my DSM-IV and thumbing through the Axis II disorders.....Seriously, take a trot around the Pond and keep an eye out for a ring of keys I lost there in 1985. If you find them, you can drive away in the rusting 1974 Toyota Corolla I left in the parking lot 23 years ago.*

The Ten Best Movies filmed in Boston

If you want to get into a Boston frame-of-mind before your visit, check out...

1. **The Departed** (Leonardo DiCaprio, Matt Damon, Jack Nicholson, Alec Baldwin, Mark Wahlberg, Martin Sheen)
2. **Mystic River** (Sean Penn, Tim Robbins, Kevin Bacon)
3. **Good Will Hunting** (Matt Damon, Ben Affleck, and Robin Williams)
4. **The Verdict** (Paul Newman, Charlotte Rampling, and Jack Warden)
5. **A Civil Action** (John Travolta and Robert DuVall)
6. **Fever Pitch** (Jimmy Fallon and Drew Barrymore)
7. **21** (Kate Bosworth and Kevin Spacey)
8. **Gone Baby Gone** (Casey Affleck, Michelle Monaghan, Morgan Freeman, Ed Harris)
9. **Black Mass**
10. **Spotlight**

Restaurants

Back Bay

Davios www.davios.com/

Great Italian and you could run into Tom Brady and Giselle Bundchen

Abe and Louie's www.abeandlouies.com/

A consistent contender for the title of best steakhouse in Boston

Grill 23 and Bar www.grill23.com/

The upscale and grand interior is only outdone by the melt-in-your-mouth filet

Eastern Standard www.easternstandardboston.com

Great casual place for dinner & drinks in Kenmore Square - just down the street from Fenway Park

The Capital Grille www.thecapitalgrille.com/Locations/Boston

Kind of corporate feel but the steaks are superb

Legal Seafoods www.legalseafoods.com/ (multiple locations)

Continues to excel despite transition to franchise. The dysfunctional family back story is Boston legend.

L'Espalier www.lespalier.com/

One of the more refined and romantic restaurants in Boston. Jacket recommended.

Ostra

Fanstastic seafood in a very elegant dining space. Chic, contemporary décor. Reservations a must. Tres cher.

North End

Mamma Marias www.mammamaria.com/

Tucked away in a beautiful townhouse, it's a tasty northern Italian hideaway from the droves of tourists on Hanover Street.

Pizzeria Regina - The Original (11½ Thatcher Street, North End) - *Light and crunchy crust, plump tomatoes, gooey cheese...it's amore!* www.polcaris.com/Regina/history.htm

Café Vittoria www.vittoriacaffe.com/

Have a cannoli and a cappuccino with some of "our friends"

Café Pompei

An equally good option for an after dinner espresso and pastry. By the way, just because you see a blinged out, 2008 Escalade double parked on Hanover Street does NOT mean that YOU can double park on Hanover Street. Know what I mean?

Neptune Oyster

Stand in line (for hours) OR put your name in and go for espresso/prosecco/walk around the historic sites in the North End. This is THE TRENDIEST AND BEST oyster bar in the city, Legendary lobster roll, superb JohnnyCake..worth the wait.

Prezza www.prezza.com/

My personal favorite. Bring your wallet and enjoy.

Assagio www.assaggioboston.com/

Dine a few doors down from #98, the former home of the North End "Social Club," where the Feds wiretapped Gennaro "Jerry" Angiulo in the early 1980s, heralding the demise of the New England mob.

Bacco www.bacconorthend.com/

The veal Florentine is like-a you Momma made

Lucca www.luccaboston.com/

Great place on Hanover Street - heart of the North End.

South End

Banyan Bar and Refuge: *A buttoned-down brasserie. Fabulous combination of Chinese, Japanese, Thai and Eastern Russian elements.*

The Beehive: *New American sophisticated twists on a medley of comfort foods.*

Mistral: *Mediterranean fare.Fashionable bar scene while the gourmands appreciate the tuna tartare.*

Myers and Chang: *My favorite restaurant in the South End. The highly revered culinary skills of Joanne Chang culminate in Asian fusion delights served on small plates. Drinks are also amazing. Not too expensive but tight quarters. Reservations recommended.*

Tremont 647: www.tremont647.com

Have a couple great martinis and you won't mind the close quarters

Union Bar and Grille www.unionrestaurant.com/home/

Beacon Hill

Lala Rokh www.lalarokh.com/
The best Persian food in the Colonies

75 Chestnut www.75chestnut.com/
Great neighborhood bar to have a bite and watch the game

The Paramount www.paramountboston.com/pages/home.html
Upscale cafeteria. Great for breakfast

Chinatown

New Jumbo Seafood www.newjumboseafoodrestaurant.com
See the fish swimming around in the tank as you enter? Eat it 20 minutes later. Have a craving for Yu Hsiang Scallop at 1:00 AM?

Chau Chow City
Fabulous dim sum brunch, try the calamari. Open until 4AM.

China Pearl www.chinapearlrestaurant.com/
Perennial contender for Best of Boston

Waterfront/Seaport

Sel de la Terre www.seldelaterre.com
Great French bistro around the corner from the Aquarium. Crusty bread

Barking Crab www.barkingcrab.com/
Max casual. Outdoor, picnic tables right alongside the channel. Fresh seafood.

Babbo. 11 Fan Pier Blvd, Italian well priced venue featuring delicious pizza and pasta clocking in under \$15 Good stop after the ICA.

Row 34. *Best seafood destination in this part of town. Hard to get a reservation.*

No-Name Restaurant *On the Boston Fish Pier - where all the boats unload. From George's Bank to your tummy in no time flat. Cheap and FRESH. The Seafood Chowder is a meal in itself.*

Legal Test Kitchen www.ltkbarandkitchen.com/site/
Wanna' be a guinea pig for one of the premiere seafood purveyors in New England? Here's your chance. This place is SUPPOSED to be experimental. Marvel at the latest in food service technology. Eventually, an avatar will custom prepare the perfect meal for you, based on an instantaneous analysis of your breath and body composition. In the mean time, don't complain if the waiter steers you toward something that sounds weird. Just go with the flow and keep thinking about the contribution you're making for gastronomical science.

Morton's Steakhouse www.mortons.com/
If you insist on going against the seafood grain, get a steak here.

Cambridge

Café Sushi
Reasonably priced maki and tuna...delicate and imaginative.

Guilia
Italian pasta odyssey in Porter Square. Definitely worth the cab ride...if only for the pistachio gellato. Far better fare than most North End restaurants.

Rialto www.rialto-restaurant.com

Italian swankitude in Harvard Square? Yes! In the Charles Hotel. Continue the swankfest at the jazzy Regattabar, a few steps away.

Harvest www.harvestcambridge.com/

A Harvard Square institution. Cool, relaxing, and elegant. The food is expensive but very good. Dine al fresco weather permitting. It's transcendent.

Oleana www.oleanarestaurant.com

Award winning venue for major foodies. Voted one of the best alfresco dining experiences in town.

Coffee, Tea, and Dessert

Mike's Pastry (North End) www.mikespastry.com/

Possibly the best cannoli west of the Mediterranean.

Flour bakery + café (South End and Waterfront) www.flourbakery.com/

The hazelnut-almond dacquoise should be illegal

Trident Booksellers (Back Bay) www.tridentbookscafe.com/

Crème Brulee and The Paris Review

Finale (multiple locations) www.finaledeserts.com/

Outrageous sweets

Tealuxe (multiple locations) www.tealuxe.com/

Nightclubs and Bars

Kenmore/Fenway/Lansdowne Street

Foundation Lounge www.thefoundationlounge.com/

Sophisticated and upscale.. You get the vibe

Game On www.gameonboston.com/

A favorite haunt for Sox players. It's literally built into Fenway Park - so what would you expect? Jonathon Papelbon may have debuted his signature dance here after one too many Harpoon IPAs.

Cask N' Flagon www.casknflagon.com/

Steps from Fenway Park, the outdoor patio is a landing zone for Manny Ramirez home runs over the Green Monster in left field.

Tequila Rain www.tequilarainboston.com/

Spring Break 52 weeks a year. This one was recommended by Erin and Aly, 20-something Neuropsych techs. I know nothing.

Quincy Market/Faneuil Hall/Waterfront

Ned Devine's Irish Pub www.neddevinesboston.com/neddevines/

Somehow they managed to combine the words "upscale" and "Irish pub" in one sentence. Accurately.

Hard Rock Café www.hardrock.com

Newly re-opened

Bell in Hand Tavern www.bellinhand.com/

Karaoke and fistfights. The entertainment is nonstop.

The Black Rose www.irishconnection.com/index.php?id=41

Authentic Irish food, traditional Irish music, and non-stop Irish attitude.

South End

The Beehive www.beehiveboston.com/

Live jazz and a casually hip atmosphere

Pho Republique www.phorepublique.net/

The décor would make Walt Disney proud. Gigantic brass gongs, weathered floorboards and incredible coconut martinis.

Back Bay

Vox Populi www.voxboston.com/

The people speak. The people eat. The people imbibe.

Lir WDNNSW (We don't need no steenking website!)

A classic Irish pub with plenty of local brews on tap. The space is tight and it can get LOUD

Saint www.saintniterly.com/

An interesting space. Now I know what a "Bed-Pod" is.

Gypsy Bar www.gypsybarboston.com/

Frequented by celebs and trendsetters; a place to see and be seen

Cuffs at Jury's Hotel http://bostonhotels.jurysdoyle.com/jurys_boston/RESTAURANTBAR

Located in the former Boston Police Headquarters. Find Whitey Bulger's initials carved into one of the tables and win a "Get out of jail forever" card.

Beacon Hill

Harvard Gardens www.harvardgardens.com/

BB and N? Nobles? Phillips Andover? A haven for prep school grads of all ages. Try the vodka infused pineapple martini.

Alibi www.alibiboston.com/

Located in the Liberty Hotel, this jail turned swanky bar maintains much of its original architecture. Some say that you can see the ghosts of inmates past reflected in your wine glass...

The Sevens WDNNSW

A Beacon Hill Institution. Very few touristas. Slide into a booth and order a Black and Tan.

Bin 26 Enoteca www.bin26.com/

The walls are papered in wine labels at this cozy connoisseur's hangout.

21st Amendment www.21stboston.com

Prohibition bites the dust. Half of Boston becomes unemployed. Raise a glass, brothers and sisters.

Financial District

Revolution Rock Bar www.revolutionrockbar.com/

Boston's sexiest rock bar? I live in Newton so I'll take your word for it.

Radius www.radiusrestaurant.com

Upscale

Blu www.blurestaurant.com/

In the LA Sports Club. Eat healthy and drink martinis - all at the same time. Then hit the gym for a cardio burn class. Shower. Repeat.

Leather District/Chinatown/Theater District

Felt www.feltclubboston.com/

Billiards and beautiful people.

The Estate www.theestateboston.com/home.htm

Join the hottest people in the city as we sweat. Kind of says it all.

Cambridge/Somerville

Regattabar www.regattabarjazz.com

Upscale jazz venue in Harvard Square

Ryles www.rylesjazz.com

*Funkier jazz joint, in Inman Square. Pat Metheny used to strum here before he became a guitar G*d.*

Club Passim www.clubpassim.org/

As Club 47, epicenter of the 1960s hootenanny scene in Cambridge. Joan Baez played here when she was 17! Now that's folk cred!

The Middle East www.mideastclub.com/

Belly dancing on Tuesdays, Hip-hop on Thursdays, retro punk on Saturdays. If only people in the real Middle East could be so accommodating of diversity.

Further Afield: Excursions in the New England (for those looking to spend additional time vacationing and touring in the region)

New Hampshire and the White Mountains Thanks to the absence of a state sales tax, it's where we all go to buy our booze. Which leads to world-class traffic jams around Super Bowl weekend. They also sell lots of fireworks and reasonably priced guns. And thanks to the absence of a state income tax, it's where the woodsy ones among us go to retire. New Hampshire-ites refer to Massachusetts as TAX-achusetts. NH does have great skiing in the White Mountains (Bretton Woods, Loon, Wildcat, Attitash, Waterville Valley), cool license plates ("Live Free or Die"), and Hart's Location www.hartslocation.com - first town to report voter results in the US Presidential election.

Vermont and the Green Mountains Greenest state in the nation. Just driving up Route 100 will suck the stress right out of you. You will ooooh and ahhhh for hours. The Ben and Jerry's tour (www.benjerry.com/) isn't what it used to be. But you can still get a free scoop of Cherry Garcia, and the countryside is positively bucolic. Situated on Lake Champlain, Burlington is home to the University of Vermont. Many UVM grads some how can't make it out of town after graduation - it's just too pristine, outdoorsy, and mellow. Vermont skiing is tops in New England - Stowe, Killington, Jay Peak, Sugarbush, and Okemo are the best.

