

BOSTON

KRIS FRIESWICK
EXPLORES THE SECRET
PLACES THAT QUIETLY
DEFINE THE ESSENCE
OF BOSTON

Summer is the loveliest time of year in Boston. The weather turns inviting. The students depart. The leaves burst into fullness along the Esplanade, and the flowers begin their annual riot in the Public Garden and Back Bay Fens. You can literally watch Bostonians relax and start to smile again. We offer directions to strangers. Outdoor cafés fill up, even when the evening temperatures would advise against it. We laugh more easily, and our patience with our fellow man returns (to an extent). You can feel the entire community rejoice.

And so it is with some trepidation that we watch as the influx of summer visitors arrives. They are seeking the same magical experiences in Boston that we take for granted. Drawn by our succession of celebrations – the North End’s weekly feasts, the Fourth of July’s Harborfest and Boston Pops concert, the Scooper Bowl Ice Cream festival, the Chowderfest competition – summer visitors add significantly more bodies to a city that has already outgrown its socks.

Or maybe it just feels that way. Bostonians are notoriously insular and clannish – all those new faces throw us for a loop. That’s why each summer we find ourselves seeking out the city’s more meditative spots. We retreat to our private version of the city, a version where we can





SWAN LAKE
For 130 years the elegant and signature Swan Boats have been plying the waters of Boston Public Garden.

FALLING IN LOVE WITH ...

bask in the beauty of the season without having to wait in line to do it. We have an obsession with finding a place where everyone else isn't. This may be one of the reasons Bostonians have a reputation as unfriendly. We're actually very friendly, but only when we're relaxed. We don't deal well with stress, crowds or mayhem. If we did, we'd be New Yorkers. I should clarify that living in New York, as I now do, does not make one a New Yorker, any more than living in Boston makes one a Bostonian. Each title must be earned. After 30 years in Boston, I can tell you that being a Bostonian is about finding and gaining entry to the city's hiding places, where you can experience something quintessentially Bostonian on your own terms. There are plenty of them to go around once you know where to look.

My favorite hiding place is the Boston Athenaeum. It's not really a secret, but it feels that way when you enter. Perched on Beacon Hill, diagonally across from the golden-domed State House, the Athenaeum is one of the oldest private libraries in the country, founded in 1807. Walking through its red leather doors is like walking into history itself. Its peace is complete – cellphones are verboten and silence rules. Its renowned collection of rare books, reference material and Americana has made the Athenaeum a haven for writers, scholars and other thinkers. The library's portraiture and marble busts of Boston's founding fathers and benefactors remind you at every turn where, and who, you are. The periodical reading room and first-floor art gallery, which features revolving exhibits, are open to visiting nonmembers. When the sun streams in through the leaded, floor-to-ceiling windows in the main gallery, which looks out over the Granary Burial Ground, final resting place of Paul Revere, Samuel Adams and John Hancock, it's not hard to believe that ghosts dwell here, inspiring each new generation.

Not far from the Athenaeum, in stately Copley Square, is a peaceful open-air



BOSTON PUBLIC

From top: Hitting the books at Harvard University, the oldest institution for higher learning in the U.S.; fresh herbs sold from a stand in the Farmers Market, Copley Square; the gold-domed Massachusetts State House, built in 1798.



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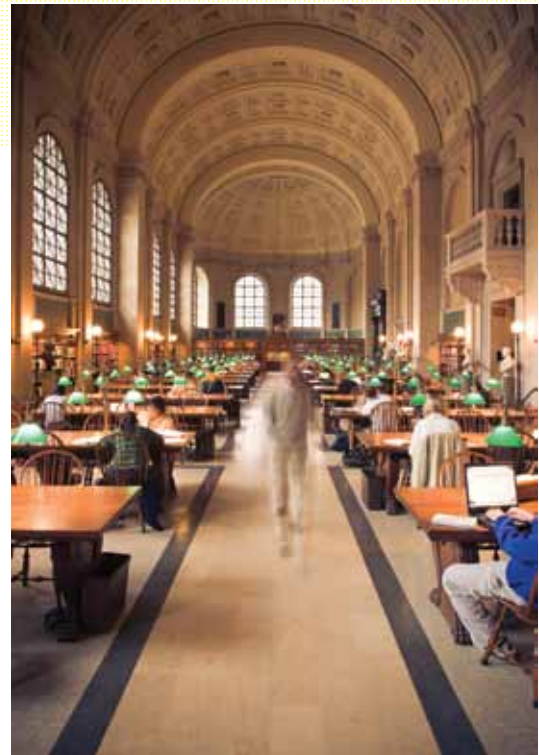
FALLING IN LOVE WITH ...

courtyard to which meditative Bostonians are drawn on sunny days. It's hidden away behind the walls of the McKim Building of the Boston Public Library. The courtyard is modeled on an Italianate palazzo and has an arcaded gallery along three of its four walls. I get there when the library opens, grab a coffee and a muffin at the MapRoom café and settle into one of the chairs scattered underneath the gallery. When you hear the water trickling from the cast bronze statue fountain in the reflecting pool in the center of the courtyard, it's hard to believe there's an entire bustling city on the other side of the lovely walls.

Frederick Law Olmsted, the 19th-century landscape architect, understood well the Bostonian need for tranquility. Between 1878 and 1896, he designed and oversaw construction of the Emerald Necklace, a seamless ribbon of parks encircling the city, as a quiet refuge for city residents. The Public Garden, Back Bay Fens and Franklin Park are the Necklace's prize gems and usually a beehive of camera-wielding visitors. But just down an easy-to-miss sidewalk off Park Drive is the Riverway, a lightly used portion of the Necklace. The Riverway offers a rare patch of city forest along a slow-moving section of the Muddy River as it heads to Jamaica Pond. It could almost convince you that you're in the country, if it weren't for the Green Line trolleys chugging past on the tracks on the hill above you. The Canada geese here generally outnumber the visitors. It's a narrow slice of heaven.

The desire to carve out one's own place in this city has yielded one of our most passionate pursuits: the private garden. These mini-arboretums can be found tucked away in courtyards and alleyways behind Boston's famous brownstones and are a testament not only to the Bostonian green thumb, especially impressive in our all-too-short growing season, but also to our ingenuity — some of these gardens are no bigger than a parking spot. Most are private and will never be seen by anyone but their owners and friends. But every

THE SEARCH
FOR A SPECIAL,
PERSONAL
EXPERIENCE
IN BOSTON
LEADS,
INEVITABLY,
TO THE WATER.



MASS APPEAL

From top: The Reading Room in the McKim Building of the Boston Public Library; a sunny scene in Boston Common, which dates back to 1634; Jamaica Pond, the first to be included in Boston's "Emerald Necklace" of parks.



FROM TOP: CARL TREMBLAY; TIM KLEIN/GALLERY STOCK; CARL TREMBLAY

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INDIE SPIRIT

Clockwise from top left: The statue of Benjamin Franklin on Boston's Freedom Trail; an Independence Day fireworks celebration over Boston Harbor; wisteria climbs the façade of a house on Beacon Hill.

summer throughout historical neighborhoods, the city's garden clubs offer tours of these magnificent hidden spaces. Gaining entrance to one makes you feel as if you have stepped out of the city and into a lush, perfect oasis of gentility.

The search for a special, personal experience in Boston leads, inevitably, to the water, either the Charles River, which defines the city's northern border, the marshy Neponset, which defines our southern edge, or the ocean, our eastern limit. Aboard a kayak or canoe, you can barely hear the city as you paddle down the Charles, just barely keeping pace with the ducks as you pass underneath the bridges that cross the river to Cambridge. If you paddle the Charles upstream to Newton, where the river offers abundant locations to haul out, you might find yourself the only human in sight within a patch of lovely riverfront forest. Sailing on the river or on Boston Harbor is a little trickier – the winds are squirrely and changeable – but if you have the experience, you can be part of an activity that, more than any other, made the city what it is today. You also will be part of an iconic image; sailboats tacking in the sun against the backdrop of the Boston skyline.

Water is and always has been the heart-beat of our community. We are drawn to the water when we want to feel apart from the city, but connected to it on a deeper, more elemental level. When you get that feeling, even if you only feel it once, then you can call yourself a Bostonian.



To take a photographic tour of Boston or to discover stylish pieces perfect for summer travel, visit RITZCARLTON.COM/MAGAZINE



A PERFECT DAY IN BOSTON

Start the day off with a cup of Boston's finest coffee and fresh pastries at **The Thinking Cup Coffee Shop** on the Boston Common, America's oldest public park.

Cross the street and begin your journey along the **Boston Freedom Trail**, with red bricks leading you to more than a dozen historical sites. These include the home of Paul Revere and Faneuil Hall, the "Cradle of Liberty," where important protests took place in the 1700s.

Afterward, stroll through **Faneuil Hall Marketplace** and enjoy a cup of clam chowder at **Union Oyster House**, America's oldest restaurant.

Try one of Boston's famous **Duck Tours**, where your "conductor" will narrate as you cruise by some of Boston's most famous landmarks – from the golden-domed State House and Bunker Hill to Copley Square, fashionable Newbury Street and more. Then hold on as your DUCK splashes right into the Charles River for a breathtaking view of the Boston and Cambridge skylines.

Once back at The Ritz-Carlton, Boston Common, relax by the elevated fireplace with a handcrafted cocktail in the **Avery Bar**, then wrap up your day with chef Andrew Yeo's Grilled Oysters and the Fisherman's Pot at **Artisan Bistro**.

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CONCIERGE
THE RITZ-CARLTON BOSTON COMMON