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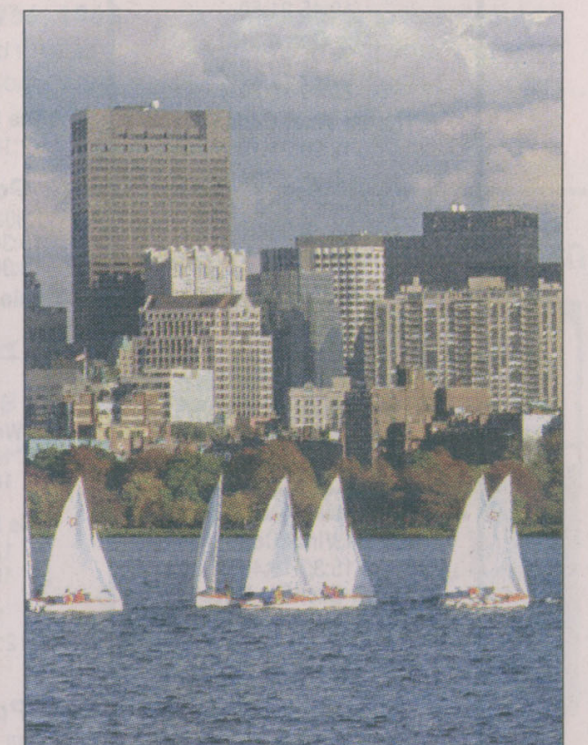
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# TRAVEL

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The Mapparium (left) shows visitors how the world used to be. Quincy Market's roof (bottom) is another step back in time, and the harbour offers a more modern view (below). PHOTOS: JACK SNYDER/JUDITH RITTER



Visitors to the American city can help celebrate its vital historic role in shaping the nation or gaze on paintings by the Grand Masters from the balcony of a Venetian palazzo, writes Judith Ritter

## PERFECT 10

### Boston

#### 1 View from the "Pru"

For a 360-degree view of the city, take a lift to the 50th floor of the building locals call "the Pru", the Prudential Tower. The skywalk is enclosed by glass walls from which visitors can see Boston's oldest neighbourhoods such as the North End, the city's first immigrant area, and Beacon Hill, known for its beautiful brick houses and famous residents such as the Kennedys. On a clear day the dizzying observatory offers sweeping views of mountains and the sea ([www.prudentialcenter.com](http://www.prudentialcenter.com)).

#### 2 The Freedom Trail

The Freedom Trail ([www.thefreedomtrail.org](http://www.thefreedomtrail.org)) is an easy-to-follow 4km route through narrow cobbled streets and alleys and a great way to learn about American history. A red line leads to historical sites and curiosities such as the Old Granary Burial Ground, where three signatories to the Declaration of Independence are buried.

#### 3 The Parker House

The Parker House opened its doors in 1855, making it the oldest hotel in the

US. From the beginning, local literati – such as writers Nathaniel Hawthorne and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow – hung out in the bar. The Parker House was a home from home for actresses Sarah Bernhardt and Judy Garland, and for presidents from Franklin D. Roosevelt to John F. Kennedy. A young Ho Chi Minh even worked in the kitchen. The hotel was recently restored and its dark wood lobby and ornate brass doors are worth a peek. Don't forget to drop into the dining room and try the Boston cream pie ([www.parkerhouseboston.com](http://www.parkerhouseboston.com)).

#### 4 The North End

You won't go hungry in America's oldest residential and business neighbourhood, the North End.



Gatano Martignetti owns Salumeria Italiana in the city's North End

Animated local historian and Italian food maven Michele Torpor will lead you through the cobbled streets of the country's most authentic Italian district. Tiny shops selling pastries, cured meats, Italian cheeses and dark aromatic coffees line the streets. At the family-owned Salumeria Italiana, a traditional delicatessen, dried Calabrian hot peppers hang from the ceiling; at Maria's Pastries, warm with the smell of freshly baked treats, Maria loves to hear how much you like her paper-thin pastry sfogliatelle, rarely tasted outside Naples ([www.northendtours.com](http://www.northendtours.com)).

#### 5 The Mapparium

The 70-year-old Mapparium, a giant stained-glass sphere, is almost 10 metres in diameter and is made of 608 curved panes, with bronze lines representing longitude and latitude. Visitors can cross the interior of the globe on a clear glass footbridge and see the map of the world from inside out. Based on a Rand McNally map, the globe is charmingly out of date, with countries such as Siam and Tanganyika still represented ([www.marybakereddylibrary.org](http://www.marybakereddylibrary.org)).

#### 6 The Gardner

A favourite among Bostonians' odd little establishments is the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum ([www.gardnermuseum.org](http://www.gardnermuseum.org)).

Housed in a replica of a 15th-century Venetian palazzo, it holds the private collection of one of the city's most eccentric and outrageous socialites, Isabella Stewart Gardner. Her home was a salon for artists, poets and musicians, and she amassed European and American paintings by the likes of friends John Singer Sargent and James Whistler, as well as Rembrandt, Raphael and Titian. Gardner's other passion was baseball and the Boston Red Sox. In 1912 she caused a scandal by wearing a headband that said "Oh, you Red Sox!" to an orchestral performance.

#### 7 Quincy Market

This market, the city's main food supplier for more than a century, was built in Greek revival style, its Doric columns hewn in 1825 from the solid granite at the edge of Boston Harbour. The interior is now an arcade of snack, craft and souvenir shops, but the building is architecturally unchanged. Stand in the centre of the rotunda and look up at the main dome and it's easy to imagine you've stepped back in time ([www.faneuilhallmarketplace.com](http://www.faneuilhallmarketplace.com)).

#### 8 Nightlife

Boston may not be a late-night city such as Hong Kong or New York, but it, too, has its clubbers' hangouts. The Foundation Lounge

([www.thefoundationlounge.com](http://www.thefoundationlounge.com)) opened recently and celebrities spotted include New England Patriots' quarter-back Tom Brady and the ice hockey team, the Bruins. A popular DJ, 40 types of tequila and a red-hot reputation mean queues at the door, so go early. The chic, grown-up Bristol Lounge ([www.fourseasons.com](http://www.fourseasons.com)) attracts a clientele of older Bostonians who like to hear each other speak over a cognac or martini.

#### 9 The Charles River

A 10-minute walk from downtown, the Charles River is one of Boston's favourite urban recreation areas. The Boston Pops play outdoors on the banks in summer; university rowing teams train on the river; and locals and visitors rent small sailing boats. It also offers the oldest public sailing programme in the US ([www.community-boating.org](http://www.community-boating.org)).

#### 10 Boston Harbour

The first English settlers arrived in the harbour in the early 17th century, and in 1773, in what became known as the Boston Tea Party, angry citizens protested against British Crown taxes by throwing crates of tea into the water. Today, the harbour and surrounding islands swarm with sailing boats, families enjoying picnics and tour parties ([www.bostonislands.com](http://www.bostonislands.com) and [www.bostonyachtcharters.com](http://www.bostonyachtcharters.com)).