



Boston

Boston is the capital city of Massachusetts in the United States. The city is the largest city in New England and the 22nd most populous city in the United States. It is one of the oldest cities in the United States, founded on the Shawmut Peninsula in 1630 by Puritan settlers from England.

Boston was the scene of several key events of the American Revolution, such as the Boston Massacre, the Boston Tea Party, the Battle of Bunker Hill, and the Siege of Boston. Upon U.S. independence from Great Britain, it continued to be an important port and manufacturing hub as well as a center for education and culture. Its rich history attracts many tourists, with Faneuil Hall alone drawing more than 20 million visitors per year. Boston's many firsts include the United States' first public school, first subway system, and first public park.



The Boston area's many colleges and universities make it an international center of higher education. The city has one of the highest costs of living in the United States as it has undergone gentrification.

Boston Massacre

It was events in Boston that led to the revolution. In the 1760s England passed laws that imposed taxes on the colonists and limited their rights. Bostonians strongly objected. Riots in 1768 led to the occupation of Boston by British soldiers. From there, problems grew. In 1770, an angry crowd threw snowballs (evidently filled with stones and ice) at some soldiers. The soldiers then fired into the crowd, killing five men; this event became known as the Boston Massacre.



Boston Tea Party



In 1773, to protest a new tax, Bostonians, dressed as Indians, threw 400 crates of British tea into the Boston Harbor. In response to the Boston Tea Party, Britain closed the harbor. This response was a severe one, since Boston depended on trade.

Boston's Freedom Trail

Visitors to Boston can see landmarks of the revolution by walking the Freedom Trail:

- Boston Common
- Old South Meeting House
- Old State House
- Faneuil Hall
- Paul Revere House
- Old North Church
- Bunker Hill



The Freedom Trail begins in the Boston Common. Today a public park, the Common was in the past a cow pasture, a public execution site, and a drilling field for soldiers. When the British occupied Boston in 1768, their troops camped on the Common. The British set off for Lexington and the first battle of the war, leaving the Common by boat. (Today this wouldn't be possible; the area was long ago filled in to make more land.)

In times leading up to the Revolution, the Old South Meeting House was a church and, as its name suggests, an important meeting place for the people of Boston. Here leaders such as Samuel Adams and James Otis gave speeches that stirred up the colonists' emotions. Only hours before the Boston Tea Party, thousands met to discuss the tea tax. Later, British general "Gentleman Johnny" Burgoyne, as a deliberate insult, tore up the church benches and used the Meeting House to exercise horses.

The Old State House was the building from which the British had ruled Massachusetts. On July 18, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was read from its balcony. The statues of a lion and a unicorn, symbols of the British government, were then thrown down into the streets. The streets outside the State House were also the scene of the Boston Massacre, in 1770.



Faneuil Hall, sometimes called "the Cradle of Liberty," functioned as both a market (downstairs) and a meeting place (upstairs). The British took over Faneuil Hall and used it



Faneuil Hall

as a weapons storehouse and a theater. British officers were watching *The Blockade of Boston*, a comedy written by General Burgoyne himself, when someone cried out, "The rebels! The rebels! They're attacking Charlestown Neck!" The officers roared with laughter — until they realized the play had been interrupted by a scene from real life!

Paul Revere was a well-known silversmith and a hero of the revolution. The Freedom Trail continues to a neighborhood known as North Boston, where visitors can see Paul Revere's House. This house is the oldest in Boston. In the garden there is a large church bell made by Revere. Nearby there is a statue in honor of Revere's famous ride to Lexington.

The colonists knew the British planned to attack Lexington. But they did not know when or how the British would attack. Paul Revere said that when the British left Boston he would carry the word to Lexington. He asked another Bostonian to hang either one or two lanterns from the high steeple of Old North Church. One lantern would mean the British had left by land, two that they had left by sea. As he galloped to Lexington, Revere saw the two lights.



Battle of Bunker Hill

The last stop on the Freedom Trail is Bunker Hill. Colonists defended Bunker Hill against a much stronger British force. The colonists were defeated, but at a huge cost to the British. Bunker Hill convinced other colonists to fight. For the colonists, it was a victory in defeat.

*Source of the text: Spotlight on the USA (Randee Falk)
Source of the images: various sites found with the help of Google*