

Boston

The east coast city of Boston is both guardian of the USA's historical past and a modern vibrant city, where language travel students feel at home straight away, says JACKIE WINSPEAR.

Beachfront wooden saltbox houses are one element of Boston, and they give way to a busy suburbia and downtown skyscrapers that stand adjacent to government buildings built by the city's forefathers. This is the mixed appeal of Boston which international students come to experience. "People from around the world are drawn to Boston for its charm, its academic institutions and its economy. It is one of the most culturally diverse locations on the planet," says Ted Coine, Director of KC Academy.

Boston's excellent academic reputation is, for international students, often top of their priorities. Peggy Gundal, Director of the Thoreau Language Institute for English, says, "[Boston is] a small, warm, safe city and a centre for education in our country – there are 65 universities and colleges in the greater Boston area." She adds, "In the city, approximately 70 per cent of the population is college-educated and there are more PhDs per capita than in any other [American] city."

The most famous schools in the city are Boston University and Northeastern University. Although Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) are often thought of as Boston institu-

tions, they are situated across the Charles River, in neighbouring Cambridge. For students, the distinction is negligible, as public transportation via buses and the subway means that the bustling centre of Cambridge is only minutes away. Kevin

Clark, Associate Director of the English Language Centre at Northeastern University, sums up, "Massachusetts, and especially Boston, is known as the education centre of the United States. I don't think any student considers studying in the USA without thinking of Boston."

The city is known as a "walking" city – it takes under an hour to walk from one end to the other – and public transportation is

excellent. The famous Charles River runs through Boston and is lined by the Esplanade, one of the "emerald necklaces" of parks and gardens that stretch across the city. This area is a major draw for students, who come to the river in all seasons to enjoy

outdoor activities and festivals. Laurie Thompson, Vice President of the English Language Centre, cites the Community Sailing Club as being of particular interest to students who enjoy rowing and boat rides. The Esplanade is also a good location for running, walking, biking or relaxing with friends. "Boston has a pub-



Bunker Hill Monument

The Bunker Hill Monument stands on the site of the first major battle of the American Revolution, which took place in 1775. Today, it is part of the Freedom Trail, a walking experience of colonial Boston



Faneuil Hall/Quincy Market

Faneuil Hall (pronounced "fan-yul") has been a marketplace and meeting hall since 1742. Quincy Market, which is held here, is known for its food stalls selling delicacies from around the world

Agent viewpoint

"One of the [reasons] for [going to Boston] is because it is a city full of universities and young people. There is a lot of action! It is regarded as a place where the language has been preserved. Students think that Boston English is better than [elsewhere] in the USA. They find it a beautiful city, safe and attractive."
Ana del Carril, Welcome Abroad Agency, Argentina

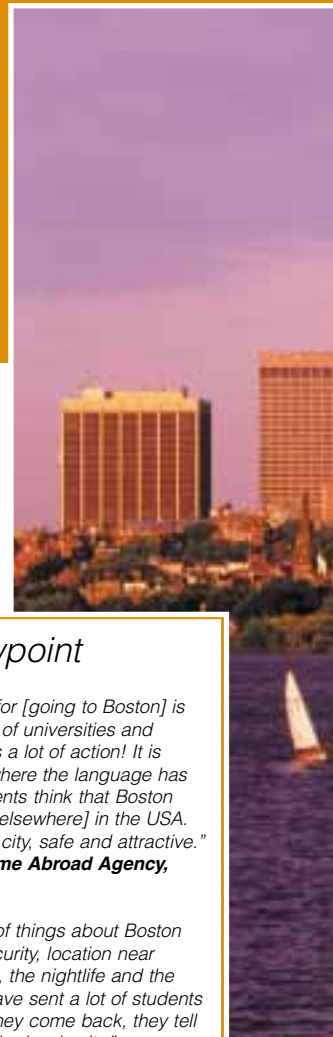
"I think there are a lot of things about Boston that students like – security, location near Canada and New York, the nightlife and the student lifestyle. We have sent a lot of students to Boston, and when they come back, they tell their friends all about the lovely city."
Girsom Bom, Connection Line, Brazil

"I asked [my students] what attracts international students to Boston and they responded: it is on the east coast; there are many universities, so students have a university life; it is a beautiful city; Boston is a place where you can feel the roots of the USA; and they like the cultural life, the crowd, the noise, the vibe!!"
Anne Karaivanov, Negocia, France

lic gardener, so [we] have amazing [garden] shows throughout the year," adds Thompson.

Students also enjoy Boston's history, and there are many opportunities for them to walk the cobbled streets of the old city and sample life as it might have been lived several hundred years ago. The Freedom Trail is a red-brick path which takes walkers on a one-and-a-half-mile journey from the State House to the Old North Church in Boston's famous North End Italian sector. The trail includes the house of Paul Revere, who is said to have played a key role in the War of American Independence; the Bunker Hill Monument; and the famous ship, the USS Constitution.

Other famous landmarks include Faneuil Hall/Quincy Market, an area of small shops, cafés and a comedy club; the grand build-





ings of Beacon Hill; Copley Plaza; and Fenway Park, one of America's last remaining old-style baseball stadiums, which is home to the Boston Red Sox baseball team. Groups of international students are always to be found on Huntington Avenue, known as "The Avenue of the Arts" because of the number of museums along the way.

The John F Kennedy Museum is a wonderful attraction for students, and the interest in America's famous president goes further, says Gundal. "JFK's birthplace in Brookline, which few people go to, is always very popular with students," she recounts.

Boston's various neighbourhoods are also exciting for students, partly because of their colourful links to immigration over the centuries. "Boston is very multicultural, so students often seek out reminders of their home countries here," says Clark. "There is a fantastic Chinatown [neighbourhood], where many of our Asian students go. And they

The skyline of Boston seen from the Charles River (above)

can also find reminders of home at the old Porter Exchange Building, which is full of Asian food and markets."

Thompson at the English

Language Centre reports that the Allston neighbourhood is popular with students, and adds, "It's not glamorous, but it has a rich nightlife. We learn about new clubs [there] from our students." Sophia's club on

Boylston Street is one of the most popular student haunts in the city, as is The Roxy on

Tremont Street. The North End is also alive with students at night, who are attracted to the small cafés, restaurants and bars.

In the daytime, students are often keen to shop, and Boston has many stores to help them part with their money. Clark says, "When students think of shopping in Boston, they

usually think of Newbury Street or Copley Plaza. There are, however, many [cheaper] and more interesting shopping areas. Harvard Square is popular with the entire college crowd, and Cambridge offers many multicultural neighbourhoods where you can find great deals on the non-touristy stuff."

Boston's famous Filene's Basement in Downtown Crossing is also a bargain hunting ground. "Students always remember their first trip to Filene's," jokes Thompson.

During the year, there are also many festivals and events happening in Boston, including Saints' Days, food festivals, the famous Boston Marathon and the Head of the Charles Regatta. "Every week, it seems there are several events going on at once," says Coine. "In this city, there is never a dull moment."



Boston Harbour
Best known for being the site of the "Boston Tea Party", when, in 1773, over 5,000 colonists gathered to protest about the tax on tea by dumping shiploads of tea into the water