



Boston's allure

Students will have a lively time in Boston because the city is a student-centred city. Indeed, Boston's academic reputation is one of the major attractions for international students, says JANE VERNON SMITH.

Occupying a small peninsular on the USA's eastern seaboard, Boston enjoys an enviable location close to both sea and mountains. It is also a magnet for international students. With one of the highest concentrations of colleges and universities in the world, and home to world-renowned academic institutions, Harvard and The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), "People from all over the world dream of coming to study here," says Laurie Thompson of Boston's English Language Center.

Easily accessible from Europe, with London and other major European cities just six hours away, "the city has traditionally attracted its international student population from Western Europe, but now the Asian population is on the up-swing," reports Dilermando Silva, President of Access to Language Studies. The number of international students studying in Massachusetts is currently at least 20,000, according to Silva, and Boston has the highest concentration of international students of any city in America. "It is an interna-

tional community in every sense of the word," he says.

Many language students have the ultimate aim of pursuing an academic degree, while others are happy just to soak up the city's atmosphere – assisted perhaps by a tour of Harvard University or the MIT campus, which are both located just the other side of the Charles River at Cambridge.

Over and above its reputation as a leading international centre for learning, there are numerous other reasons for Boston's popularity. Blessed with both character and history, "[It] offers all of the attractions of a large city – convenient public transportation, cosmopolitan environment, vibrant culture, art and music scene, and everything else you expect [from] a world-class city. Yet," says

Thompson, "Boston is not enormous and overwhelming. It has lovely parks throughout the city, the Charles River with community access sailing, and of course, the Atlantic Ocean right down town."

According to Alan Broomhead of OISE Boston Intensive School of English, "Students enjoy

the fact that Boston is sizeable, yet walkable, manageable." And one of the city's great pluses is its excellent public transport system. As Guido Schillig of the Anglo-Continental Education Group points out, there are few cities in the USA where you can rely on public transport. Fortunately, the "T" (as Boston's underground system is known) and its bus systems are easy to use, affordable and extensive.

At Boston University's Center for English Language & Orientation Programs (Celop), Marketing & Admissions Manager, Lara Gordon, adds, "One of the great things about Boston is our proximity to so many other great destinations, New York City, Montreal, the mountains of New Hampshire and Vermont, Cape Cod and other beaches."

If it's history they're looking for, students have no need to travel very far. Boston has a rich history that is all around. One of the best ways to appreciate this is to walk the four-kilometre "Freedom Trail". Marked by a painted red line along the pavements, the trail takes visitors on a tour of the city's main historic sites, including the site of the Boston massacre, Bunker Hill and the USS Constitution, the US navy's oldest commissioned ship. The city also has plenty of museums to while away any rainy days, with



Boston Red Sox, Fenway Park

Fenway Park has been the home of the popular Red Sox baseball team since 1912. Located in the Fenway area, the stadium can accommodate 33,871 fans

PHOTOGRAPH: BOSTON CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

Boston harbour and downtown seen from the river (main picture)

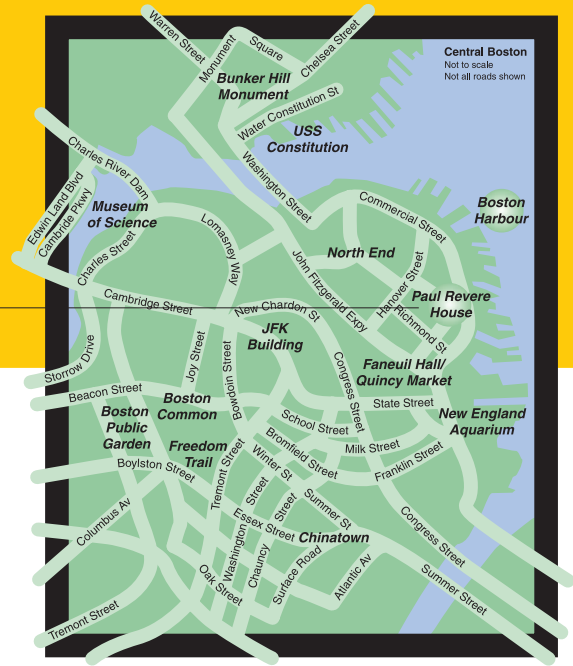
the John F Kennedy Museum, the Museum of Science and the Harvard Art Museums among the most popular. For those who are curious about the daily life of the early settlers, there are recreated settlements close at hand, at Plymouth Plantation and Sturbridge Village. Meanwhile, Salem – site of the famous 17th century witch trials – is a major attraction that is only about half an hour away.

Boston also caters lavishly for those who enjoy the outdoors, and as Alison

MacAdams of Approach International Student Center points out, there are beaches, hiking trails and nature walks just a few miles outside the city. Cape Cod, with its kilometre after kilometre of beaches, is a top attraction in the summer months. Marisa Krall at the Boston Academy of English says students also enjoy a trip to Singing Beach, “a beach of exquisite beauty just north of Boston”.



Paul Revere statue
Situated on the Freedom Trail, this statue celebrates Paul Revere, who in 1775 rode to warn countryside inhabitants that British soldiers were coming. He is also immortalised in a poem



Winter visitors, meanwhile, can enjoy both skiing and ice-skating. These are very popular according to Thompson, “especially for students coming from countries that don’t experience winter,” and MacAdams reports that students have greatly enjoyed going skiing at Wachusett Mountain this winter. “We have scheduled more trips than

Agent viewpoint

"Our students choose Boston because it has a very good reputation as a lively, culturally interesting, very European and safe city. Boston is [a good size for getting around] and has an [efficient] public transport system. Swiss students like to dive into city life, they like to discover the real Boston. I can imagine that our students attend a Red Sox game, spend their money at Newbury Street and, of course, take a trip to Cape Cod."

Michael Eck, STA Travel, Switzerland

"Boston is a more European city than others in the USA and is easier to reach with direct flights. Very famous for its many universities and colleges, it is excellent for students who hope to continue their studies at an American university. There are great places to go shopping, and the school [we use] is one block from Newbury Street and its wonderful boutiques. In the summer, students like to go to the park, which is right on the corner, and get ice cream and walk around and feed the ducks. In the winter, the pond is used for ice-skating."

Serge Sauv , Oxford Viaggi, Italy

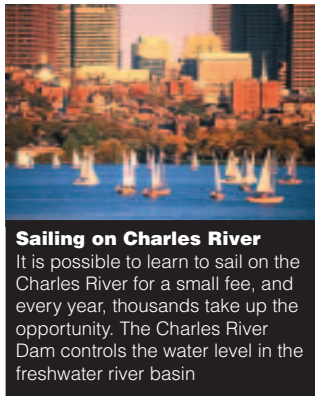
"Boston is considered to be, from the perspective of Korea and many other countries, the leading educational center of the USA, and, perhaps, the world. Boston is nearly unrivalled in terms of the quality and scope of educational opportunities available. Korean students seek to avail themselves of the many diverse experiences available, from sightseeing in the historic centres to museums, restaurants and shopping. Our students also spend their spare time with the new friends they meet here and, especially for the girls, shopping."

YK Lee, YK Consulting Group, USA

originally intended," she says, "because students like it so much."

Boston offers plenty of alternative choices for relaxing after a hard day's work or play. "[Students] like to sample together the city's many ethnic restaurants," says Krall, adding, "Korean, Malaysian, Vietnamese, Brazilian and Mexican eateries have all been enjoyed in recent months." According to Thompson, "There are a lot of night-clubs and live music venues... with the dense

population of colleges. So ELC students can easily go out and socialise with American college students." Moreover, says Gordon, "Boston offers a constantly changing selection of art exhibitions, theatre and other performances, which our students really take advantage of."



Sailing on Charles River

It is possible to learn to sail on the Charles River for a small fee, and every year, thousands take up the opportunity. The Charles River Dam controls the water level in the freshwater river basin

Meanwhile, for spectator sports, top of the bill in Boston is baseball.

"We cannot begin to get enough Red Sox baseball tickets," says Thompson. "We sell out every seat, every game."

Shopping is another regular attraction, and students can take a leisurely stroll along upmarket Newbury Street, taking in its 19th-century architecture at the same time as its many designer shops. Alternatively, they can visit one of the large shopping malls, like the Prudential and Copley, or go to historic Faneuil Hall Marketplace, where they will be entertained by jugglers, magicians and musicians as they shop.

Not only is there plenty to do, but, Lauren Davis at the Boston School of Modern languages says Boston is noted as being "clean, friendly and safe". "Boston's reputation speaks for itself," adds Schillig. "I have not met a person who has disliked the city." □