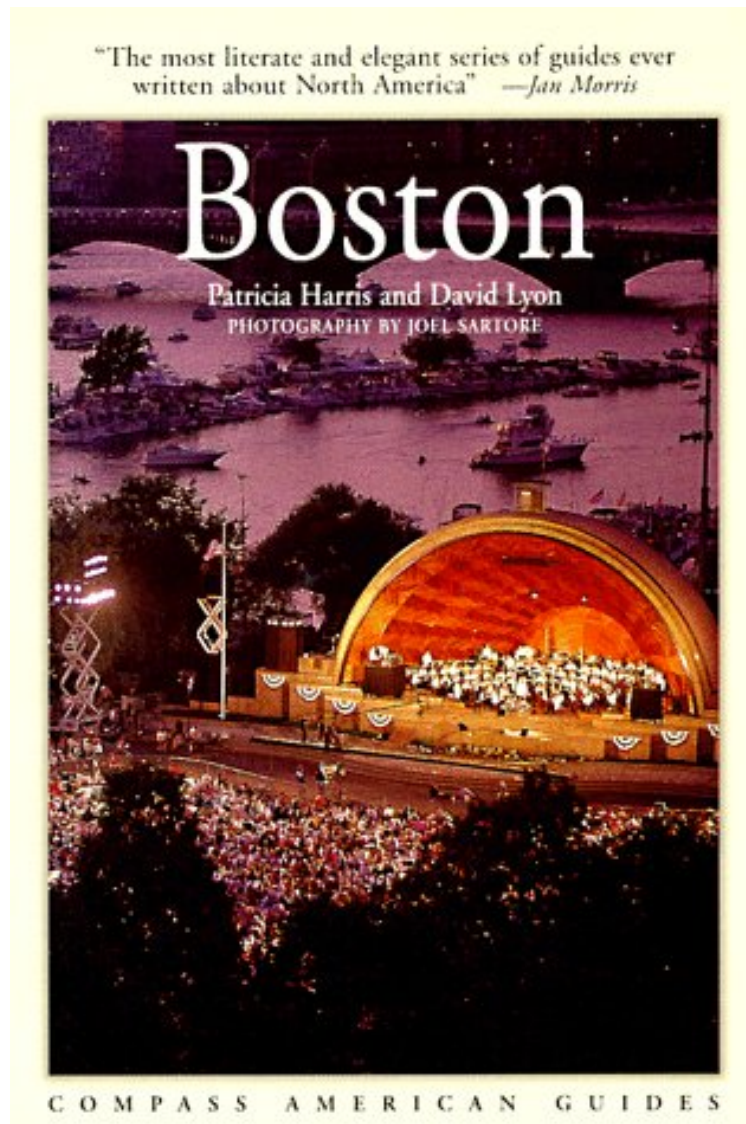


Compass American Guides : Boston

Patricia Harris

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Patricia Harris : Compass American Guides : Boston before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Compass American Guides : Boston:

Discover Boston with a CompassDay trips to Lexington Concord, Plymouth, and SalemGuide to the Freedom Trail with color mapMuseums, theaters, sports, and historic sites at the many local colleges and universitiesExtensive restaurant and hotel reviews, with color photosInsider info on the best new Irish bars, Italian bakeries, and music

clubs
Color photography by National Geographic's Joel Sartore
Literary extracts from Boston authors past and present
"Our whole past book reviewer experience says that no guide with photos this good should have writing this good. But it does." -- NY Daily News
"Good to read ahead of time, then take along so you don't miss anything." --San Diego Magazine

From the Inside Flap
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"Somehow the thought of another book about Boston is like the thought of another book about Shakespeare. What more is there to say? Nothing and everything."-- David McCord, *About Boston*, 1948
We understand poet and essayist McCord's quandary as he undertook his book in 1948, for we had to ask the same question. There are shelves of books about Boston. What could we add to the eloquent insights of historians Samuel Eliot Morison and Walter Muir Whitehill? Or, for that matter, to the charming personal appreciation of David McCord? In other words, why Boston? Why now? We're under no illusion of standing in the company of those distinguished writers. But, like all great cities, Boston is not fixed in time. Despite a long and usually proud history, it remains a work in progress. We count ourselves fortunate to live in the city (okay, across the river in Cambridge) during a particularly exhilarating point in its evolution. Boston is generous to the visitor, too, revealing its quirks and charms without apology, and we hope this book will serve you as a letter of introduction to the city as it stretches toward a new millennium. We have taken as our goal to furnish a fresh look at Boston that acknowledges and celebrates the past, discloses and elucidates the present, and sketches some of the city's dreams for its future. We're not talking pipe dreams here. Boston has constantly remade itself by reordering the very soil on which it stands, its street patterns, its architecture. Walk it, enjoy it. Look down on 17th-century streets and up to the glassy pinnacles of the newest skyscrapers. Wherever your gaze alights, you will see a city on the move: cleaning its harbor, making new green space, conjuring public plazas from windswept wastelands. It is even improving the now venerable Freedom Trail. Yes, the Freedom Trail remains a key to Boston. No other city has so many sites directly related to the American Revolution -- actual places where American colonists chose to be transfigured as American citizens. Like the Puritans a century and a half earlier, there was no going back. They would be free or die trying. Liberty was Boston's birthright and remains Boston's legacy. Much of Boston's story since the Revolution has been a tale of how the people of the city have gone on to exercise their hard-won freedom. Cities by their nature are democratic places. Their scale tends to level distinctions of class and wealth; moreover, they offer opportunity for industry and commerce. Boston is no different, which is one reason why it has been a magnet for talent and ambition almost from the beginning. But Boston's status as a center of learning and culture has also drawn the best and brightest from around North America and the rest of the world. Visitors often comment that Boston physically resembles European cities. Geography posed some of the same constraints on us that fortifications imposed on those Old World centers. And, like them, we grew dramatically during that expansive century of 1790-1890, applying the same concepts of architecture and urban design. But as European as the cityscape might appear, our people come from all over the globe. Our internationalism is incarnate in the origins and traditions of our residents; it pervades our art and culture; it finds expression in our colleges and universities, where knowledge holds little respect for boundaries on a map. So meet as many of us as you can. Taste our food and come to our festivals. Join us in our neighborhoods; unlike so many failed metropolises, Boston does not empty out at the end of the work day. See the Freedom Trail and the museums and the historic houses, but see the living city too. Whenever you come, keep in mind that Boston is alive and alert in all seasons. And we do have seasons. We take complaining about the weather as a right as inalienable as life, liberty -- and complaining about our sports teams, public transportation, and traffic. The truth is, the extremity of each season is moderated by our proximity to the ocean. In winter, snow drapes the shoulders of Edward Everett Hale's statue in the Public Garden; skaters grace the Frog Pond; and more than a few storm drains clog up and flood the streets. We shrug: That's what boots are for. In the summer we moan when the humidity rises and the temperature flirts with 90 degrees; then we head to the banks of the river or to our beautiful reclaimed waterfront, or we don Ray-Bans and settle in with a cold one at a Newbury Street cafe. We don't quibble much with spring and fall. The city bursts suddenly into bloom at the end of April and it seems there could be no better place on earth-until autumn brings brilliant foliage, a crisp slant of light, and a high blue bowl of sky. On those spectacular days, when the last beams of sunset illuminate the city on a hill that its founders planned, we are reminded of Charles Dickens's opinion, "Boston is what I would like the whole United States to be." And we are satisfied that more than a century later, Boston remains unique.