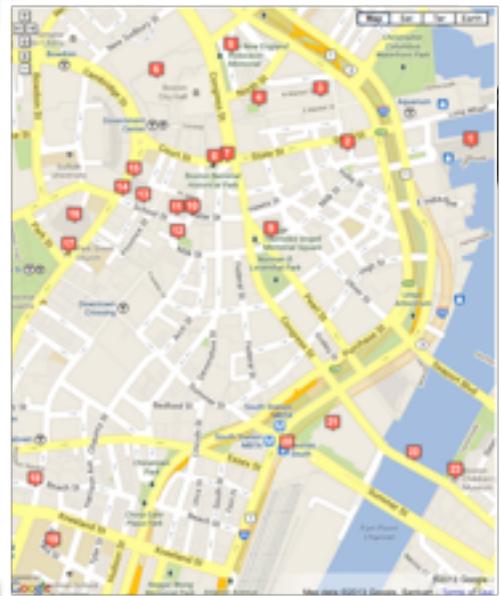


# Downtown Boston



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## WELCOME TO DOWNTOWN BOSTON!

*Downtown Boston encompasses 34 blocks between Boylston, Court, Congress and Tremont Streets. Within this revitalized area are the Financial and Theater Districts as well as the waterfront, Government Center, Chinatown and the Downtown Crossing shopping district. Although relatively small, the Theater District is well known for previewing many shows that are headed to Broadway. The Boston waterfront is home to the New England Aquarium that features a 200,000-gallon Caribbean coral tank. Government Center, formerly known as Scollay Square, was once a station on the Underground Railroad. It now serves as the anchor for city, state and federal offices. Boston's Chinatown welcomes guests through the traditional multi-tiered paifang gate located on Beach Street. Established in the 1880s, the community now reflects Chinese, Vietnamese and Japanese influences.*

*Downtown Boston is the backdrop of Faneuil Hall, Quincy Market and numerous other landmarks, such as the Old State House and the site of the Boston Massacre. The former Scollay Square subway station was honored in the Kingston Trio classic "Charlie on the M.T.A." A portion of the Rose Kennedy Greenway, a linear park with plazas and gardens, winds its way through portions of Chinatown and the Financial District. Visitors can explore large department stores interspersed with quaint boutiques, restaurants and live entertainment venues. Historic landmarks include the Old South Meeting House and the Filene's Department Store Building. Filene's Basement was a discount offshoot of the parent organization that sponsored the annual, one-day sale of wedding dresses that became known as the "Running of the Brides." During the holidays, Filene and their competitor Jordan Marsh sponsored a tree lighting and decorative window display known as the Enchanted Village. These events are now located in the City Hall Plaza.*

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## 1. New England Aquarium

Located on Boston's historic waterfront, the New England Aquarium welcomes more than 1.3 million visitors each year. Guests can



view more than 20,000 aquatic animals from 600 species in a variety of

colorful, interactive and educational exhibits. The facility has recently undergone a complete renovation. The aquarium's premiere attraction, the Great Ocean Tank, has a new glass railing and theater-quality lighting that enables visitors to observe sea creatures that are resting on the bottom of the 26-foot-deep tank.

Holding more than 200,000 gallons, the tank simulates a Caribbean coral reef habitat. Tropical species that inhabit the enclosure include blacknose sharks, midnight parrotfish, barracuda, moray eels and Myrtle, a beloved green sea turtle. The seven-tank Yawkey Coral Reef Center enables guests to observe garden eels, long-spined sea urchins, pipefish, flying gurnard and other intriguing animals.

Other exhibits include adaptations of the Amazon rainforest, the Gulf of Maine and a Pacific Ocean reef. The Amazon Rainforest exhibit is designed to mimic one of the most bio-diverse environments on earth. The gallery includes poison dart frogs, piranhas, electric eels and anacondas as well as hundreds of live plant species. Covering half of the third floor, the 8,000-gallon Gulf of Maine Exhibit provides an insight into the undersea world located off the New

England coast that stretches from Cape Cod to Canada. Animals on display include giant sea stars, crabs, halibut, cod and lobsters. The Pacific reef exhibit explores this diverse, complex tropical habitat. Guests can view several species of shark, blue-striped cleaner fish and the palette surgeonfish, which was the inspiration for Dory in "Finding Nemo."

The four-floor aquarium houses numerous smaller exhibits that feature a variety of species, including aquatic birds and marine creatures that live in the shallow water and tidal pools just offshore. Specialty exhibits include the touch tank and African Penguin exhibit as well as the harbor seals, which live in their own outdoor display. The Marine Mammal Center is home to Northern fur seals and California sea lions. Guests can view these marine mammals and participate in their daily training regimens.

The aquarium sponsors classes and programs as well as whale and dolphin watching cruises. The aquarium complex has a 12,000-watt IMAX Theater where guests can see films that share the stories of animals that are too large, dangerous or rare to keep in the aquarium. The screen is the largest in the New England region. Situated on the Central Wharf, the 75,000-square foot New England Aquarium is a public facility that also hosts private events.

## 2. Custom House Tower

The federal government built a new customs house in 1849. Designed by Ammi Burnham Young, the neoclassical structure features architectural details such as a Doric portico and a Roman dome that is

capped by a skylight that allows natural light to enter the rotunda. Each of the 36 fluted Doric columns was carved from a single piece of granite



and weighs more than forty tons. Because the custom house sits on reclaimed land, it is supported by 3,000 wooden piles that had to be driven through fill material to reach bedrock. At one time,

the water of Boston Harbor reached the eastern side of the building. This facilitated inspecting the cargo of ships docked at the Long Wharf and collecting customs duties.

As the shipping industry grew, more space was required in the custom house. The architectural firm of Peabody and Stearns were commissioned to add an Italian Renaissance style tower. This brought the building's height to 496 feet, making it the tallest structure in the city and Boston's first skyscraper. At the time, Boston had a height restriction of 125 feet, but the custom house was exempt because it was federally owned building. It remained the tallest structure in the city until the completion of the Prudential Tower in 1964. The Custom House Tower is reminiscent of the MetLife Building in New York. The tower has pyramidal top, sculpted eagles on the corners of the cornice and Ionic columns decorating the upper floors. The tower contains a 22-foot wide, four-sided clock. Until it was repaired, the undersized motor failed to operate the clock properly for much of the 20th century. The Great Seal of the United States was painted on the interior of the lobby dome in 1960.

In the 1986, the federal government moved out of the Custom House Tower. It stood empty for 14 years until its conversion into luxury timeshare apartments. In addition to creating 87 one-bedroom suites, the owners refurbished the 26th floor observation deck, which can be accessed with the hotel's permission. The landscaped plaza ties the building into the surrounding area that includes Faneuil Hall and Quincy Market. Public spaces within the building include the rotunda-level maritime museum and an exhibit room that displays pieces of art from the Peabody Museum on a rotating basis.

### 3. Quincy Market

The success of Faneuil Hall encouraged the City of Boston to construct a second marketplace for local vendors. Situated along the water's edge on land reclaimed from the harbor, Quincy Market was the first major public works of its kind that the city pursued after becoming incorporated. The building was named in honor of the mayor Josiah Quincy, who completed the project in 1825 without incurring debt or imposing a tax. Boston laid out six additional streets on the newly created land and pushed the City Dock farther out into deeper water. The project proved that the city was capable of planning and coordinating a large-scale urban development.



Designed by Alexander Parris, the 535-foot-long, two-story building was constructed from New England granite. Other architectural highlights include the red brick interior, an exterior accentuated by triangular

pediments, Doric columns and a centrally located copper-clad dome. There are eight equally spaced chimneys and colonnaded ends that resemble Greek temples, which were designed to make a favorable impression on people approaching from the statehouse or by sea. Quincy Market was the first time that architects incorporated glass, granite and heavy timber on a large scale. The building had a wide variety of retail establishments, including shops that sell dairy products, bread and other foodstuffs. Archaeological evidence suggests that butcher shops slaughtered animals and prepared fresh cuts of meat on the site.

The dilapidated building was facing demolition when it was redeveloped into its current festival marketplace design in the mid-1970s. Now forming part of the Faneuil Hall Marketplace, Quincy Market is one of the most popular destinations in the city for residents and tourists. Traditional retailers occupy the second floor and basement. The seating area for the main food court is located under the central dome. The award-winning market has shops, a small grocery and a variety of eateries that serve organic food and various ethnic cuisines, including Chinese, Indian, Japanese and Tex-Mex. Along the outer wall are vendors who sell souvenirs, gifts and local merchandise. The buildings located to the sides of the original Quincy Market are known as North and South Markets, which also house an assortment of eateries and shops. The marketplace is conveniently located on 4 South Market Street near transit stations on Congress and State Streets.

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