

Forays on foot from BCEC

The Boston Convention & Exhibition Center [BCEC] symbolizes the city's redevelopment of a former industrial area. The BCEC, a new Boston landmark designed by architects Rafael Vinoly/HNTB, opened in 2004. The area around it, originally a 1,000-acre salt marsh, was filled incrementally for use by marine-related industries and railroads. With those now gone, the South Boston Seaport District is becoming a cultural, tourist and residential neighborhood. Its development gained force with the opening of the Big Dig roadways, which provide new vehicular access.

Near the BCEC are many "only-in-Boston" sights – some immediately visible, some hard to find. Within easy reach are three museums, the Boston Tea Party site, the Big Dig, historic engineering bridge artifacts, the harborfront, a fishing fleet, Boston's old wool trade buildings, contemporary architectural landmarks, and many restaurants. A bit farther are downtown's Colonial and Revolutionary attractions.

Choosing the best walk for you

Walk out the Convention Center's Summer Street door. Standing under the huge overhead canopy you can see these notable sights: the **Waterfront and Boston Harbor** straight ahead, the **downtown skyscrapers** to the left [beyond the ultramodern highway ventilation tower sitting at an angle to Summer Street], and the **Big Dig highway** [2004] right in front of the Center.

For harborside walks, go straight ahead and take **1** to the waterfront [where walks **2** **3** start]. For downtown walks, turn left and take **4** to the Fort Point Channel [where walks **5** **6** **7** start]. **1** [15 min] and **4** [25 min] are brief strolls.



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2 | Convention Center: Forays on Foot

1 Boston Harbor Walks

15 min./ .6 mile round trip

Leave the Convention Center, cross Summer St. and follow the viaduct to the Seaport World Trade Center straight ahead. Just before the harbor, look for the clock on your left, turn L and descend diagonal stairway.

What to look for: A spectacular urban walk on the viaduct that keeps the harbor and downtown always in view. The viaduct will be the front door for new development in the area: offices, restaurants and a shopping mall are planned. The midway point is the Silver Line **T** station. Near the left end of the viaduct is a whimsical dragon sculpture that leads diagonally down to Seaport Boulevard, where **2** **3** start.

2 Working Waterfront

50 min./ 2.0 mile round trip

Follow **1**, then cross Seaport Blvd. and walk around Commonwealth Pier. At Seaport Blvd. turn L to Fish Pier. Walk to Bank of America Pavilion [Seaport Blvd. becomes Northern Ave.] and to the brewery, L after traffic circle. Return via Northern Ave. and D St.

What to look for: A walk for seaside ambience — an active working port, with piers, drydocks, fisheries, cruise ships, ferryboats and yachts. Commonwealth Pier flies flags of all nations above docks, offices and convention facilities. Cruise ships and tugboats are tied to bollards on this pier. The Fish Pier contains fish docking and auction facilities. The Bank of America [BOA] Pavilion's graceful white tent is a summer venue for world-class musicians and is dramatically lit every night of the year. The Harpoon Brewery is fittingly named for a fishing port.

- Commonwealth Pier [1914]
- Cruise ship dock – L side of Commonwealth Pier
- Ferry dock – beyond cruise ships
- Luna Tugboat – East Coast's last wooden tug [R side of pier]
- Fish Pier [1914] – with Boston's oldest fishing fleet
- Exchange Bldg. – was fish auction house [end of Pier]
- BOA Pavilion – seats 5,000
- Harpoon Brewery – 306 Northern Ave. [beer tastings Tu – Sat. @ 4:00 pm]

3 Waterside/Museums

35 min./ 1.6 mile round trip

Follow **1** then cross Seaport Blvd. and turn L along the harbor. Turn R at the new Institute of Contemporary Art [ICA]. Go to the harbor side of the ICA building, and turn L connecting to the Harborwalk which circles back to Seaport Blvd. Cross Congress St. into the Fort Point Channel District. Turn L at Summer St. to return.

What to look for: Historic and cultural landmarks shine in this saltwater harbor/downtown route—the Institute of Contemporary Art, the Children's Museum, the Fire Museum, and an outdoor museum of bridges [four different types span the Channel]. The Fort Point Channel District's concentration of 100-year-old yellow brick buildings is unique in Boston. The spectacular new ICA museum and the federal courthouse architecture are some of Boston's best.

- ICA – Institute of Contemporary Art [2006] – first Boston art museum built in 100 years
- John Moakley Federal Courthouse [2001] – a 9-story sloping glass wall faces the harbor. Free tours
- Courthouse garden & pier – striking views of downtown Boston and the waterfront
- Northern Ave. Bridge [1908] – pivoting swing bridge, now for pedestrians only
- Evelyn Moakley Bridge [1996] – fixed modern span
- Congress St. Bridge [1930] – counterweights balance pivoting bascule lift bridge
- Summer St. Bridge [1899] – rare retractable drawback bridge on rails
- Children's Museum – with colorful roadside stand/milk bottle, and a new building addition
- Boston Tea Party Site [1773] – across the Channel, facing the Children's Museum
- Boston Sparks & Fire Museum – 344 Congress St., built on collections of Boston Pops conductor Arthur Fiedler [Th – Sat. seasonally]
- Fort Point Channel District [1895] – 80+ wool import/export buildings, now artists' studios, lofts and offices
- Fort Point Arts Community Gallery – 300 Summer St.



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4 Downtown Walks

25 min./ 1.0 mile round trip

From the Convention Center, turn L onto Summer St. to the bridge over the Channel. Return the same way.

What to look for: With the downtown skyline as a constant backdrop, Summer St. bridges the Big Dig highway to enter the Fort Point Channel District. Here, 100-year-old yellow brick buildings built for the wool trade now house offices and artists' lofts. The Fort Point Channel was once a busy water route between the Harbor and the industrial South Bay area to the west. At the Channel **5** **6** **7** start. Just beyond the Channel is the South Station transportation center.

5 Boston Common/Filene's Basement

70 min./ 2.8 mile round trip

Follow **4** to the end of Summer St. Bridge, then continue on Summer St. to Washington St. For Boston Common continue one more block [Winter Street] to Tremont St. For State House take Park St. Return the same way.

A short walk brings you to the retail heart of Boston – Downtown Crossing. You'll cross the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway atop the Big Dig tunnels. Walk along Summer St. which burned in 1872 and was rebuilt with wider streets and sidewalks. Boston's only pedestrian shopping zone at Summer and Washington Streets includes the original [and best] Filene's Basement. One block farther [after Summer St. becomes Winter St.] is historic Boston Common and a view of the Massachusetts State House.

- South Station – once the busiest rail station in the US, with an iconic eagle above the façade
- Dewey Square – outdoor seasonal farmers' market
- Rose Kennedy Greenway – under construction
- Mansard roof buildings – built after Great Fire of 1872
- Filene's Basement – Summer & Washington Sts.
- Winter St. – narrow, as it escaped the 1872 fire
- Site of Sam Adams House – 56 Winter Street
- Boston Common [1630]
- Park St. Subway Station – the nation's first [1893]
- Park St. Church [1809]
- Granary Burial Grounds – Hancock, Revere, Sam Adams and Mother Goose buried here
- Mass. State House [1797] by architect Charles Bulfinch

6 Art Deco/Leventhal Park

50 min./ 2.2 mile round trip

Follow **4** to Fort Point Channel. Cross the Summer St. Bridge, turn R along the Channel, and turn L on Congress St. to Franklin St. Return the same way.

What to look for: Three of the city's best Art Deco towers surround Norman Leventhal Park, a good spot for viewing these buildings with a foreground of full-grown trees, a fountain, a grassy mall, and space for noontime summer concerts. Look for the bronze duck/squirrel Humane Society monument nearby.

- Telephone Company Bldg. [1947] – 185 Franklin St. with 160' lobby mural of 197 life-sized "Telephone Men and Women at Work" [1951]
- United Shoe Machinery Bldg. [1929] – corner of Franklin & Federal Sts. with peaked copper roof & 1st-floor bronze panels depicting busy workers
- McCormack Federal Bldg. [1933] – 5 Post Office Sq. with copper grilles on its 1st floor windows and stylized carved eagles high on the façade
- Battery March Bldg. [1928] – corner of Franklin & Battery March St., has 30 different colors of brick from reddish brown to yellow, emphasizing its height

7 Razor Blade/Channel

50 min./ 2.0 mile round trip

Follow **4** along Summer St., just before the bridge over the Fort Point Channel [253 Summer St.]. Turn L down stairway to Channel walkway. Follow the water to Rolling Lift Bridge Park. Return the same way.

What to look for: A narrow linear waterside park leads to the Gillette Company and the world's largest razor blade factory. The walkway [opened in 2005 as part of the Big Dig] leads along the Fort Point Channel to new towers and remodeled warehouses. The Gillette razor factory faces the Channel, as it has for 102 years. A new park commemorates the former massive railroad bridges over the Channel.

- Main Boston post office – facing Channel
- Channel walk – built above Big Dig tunnels
- Gillette World Shaving Headquarters since 1904, the "Z" building [1963] produces 12,000,000 razors/day
- Rolling Lift Bridge Park – remnant of Scherzer bascule railroad bridge [1896-9], the largest of its type in US