

Back Bay Capital City Walk in Boston, Massachusetts

10km & 5km routes

EVENT ID: Y1090

OPEN: January 1 to December 31

TRAIL DESCRIPTION: Boston, known as “America’s Walking City,” is steeped in history and tradition. The trails follow downtown city streets and walkways, exploring a plethora of historic sites, monuments, museums, and landmarks.

The 10km and 5km Back Bay (BB) walks focus on the charming Beacon Hill residential district; the center mall of Commonwealth

Avenue, considered one of the world’s greatest streets because of its architecture and statues; the sidewalk cafés of Newbury Street; Copley Square; the John Hancock Observatory; the Public Garden with its famous Swan Boats and “Make Way for Ducklings” sculpture; the reflecting pool of the Christian Science Center; and “Cheers” pub. The routes also pass the finish line of the Boston Marathon. A portion of the walk is inside elegant Copley Place and the Prudential Center, where Tiffany’s, Neiman Marcus, and Saks Fifth Avenue set the tone.

10km Back Bay route continues past Symphony Hall, the Museum of Fine Arts, and the Muddy River.

TRAIL RATING: Both walk routes have an AVA rating of 1A, suitable for strollers and wheelchairs.

AVA SPECIAL PROGRAMS:

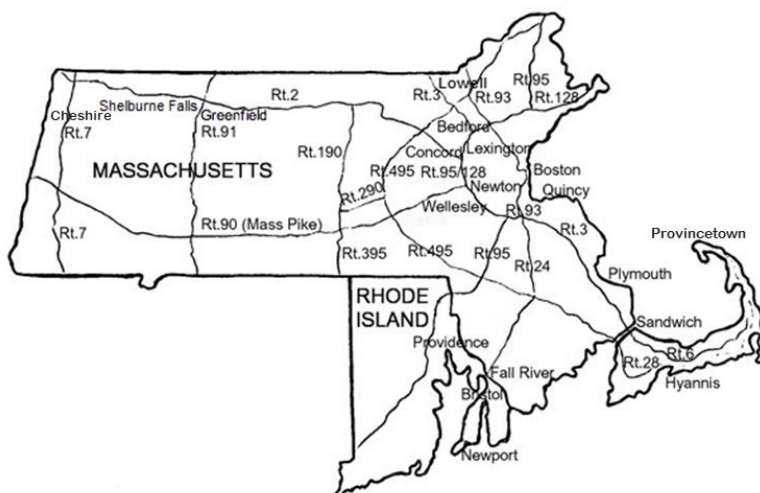
- State Capital: Massachusetts
- Step to the Beat
- Town Halls/City Halls
- Walking the USA A – Z: B for Boston
- Walking with America’s Veterans (State House steps and many others)
- Washington-Rochambeau National Historic Trail

REGISTRATION: IVV Credit is available with online registration only (<https://my.ava.org>). All walkers must pay the nominal participant fee through OSB, whether getting IVV Credit or not.

AWARD: The award is a fully embroidered patch featuring the iconic Old State House, built in 1713, and the newer, gold-domed State House, built in 1798. **To purchase an award, please send a SASE with check payable to Walk ’n Mass Volkssport Club for \$4.00 to Bonnie Neggers at 118 Harvard Ave, West Medford, MA 02155**

START ADDRESS: The walk routes begin from **Boston National Historical Park Visitor Center, 1 Faneuil Hall Square, First Floor, Boston, MA 02109**. See their website for open dates/hours:

www.nps.gov/bost/index.htm.



PARKING: in Boston is expensive and challenging. Public transportation is recommended. If you do drive, public parking is available at the Government Center Garage at the junction of Merrimac, Congress, and New Sudbury streets (2 blocks north of the Visitor Center); the Dock Square Garage (about 2 blocks east); and the Post Office Square underground garage (about 2 blocks south). Rates may be lower on weekends.

RESTROOMS: If the Visitor Center and Faneuil Hall are closed, public restrooms may be found in Quincy Market. Other public restroom options along the route may be limited.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS:

From the North: Take I-93 South to Exit 17A (Government Center). Bear RIGHT at the end of ramp onto Clinton St. (Government Center Parking Garage on right.) Either walking or driving, continue on Clinton Street to the end. LEFT onto North Street. **LEFT on Congress Street. Visitor Center on the left at 1 Faneuil Hall Square.

From the South: Take I-93 North to Exit 17 (Government Center). ***LEFT on North Street to the end. Follow from ** above.

From the West: Follow I-90 (Mass Pike) to I-93 North. I-93 North to Exit 17 (Government Center). Follow from *** above under “From the South” directions.

PUBLIC TRANSIT DIRECTIONS:

Boston has an excellent subway system with several stations near the start (Haymarket on the Orange & Green Lines, Park Street on the Green Line, Government Center on the Green & Blue Lines, and State Street on the Orange & Blue Lines). For information: www.mbta.com

From the West (I-95/Rt. 128): Take Exit 38 (Grove St.). Follow signs for Riverside (Green Line). All day parking is \$6.00. For fare information, see www.mbta.com Hotel Indigo is adjacent to the station.

From the North: Park at Wonderland Station (Blue Line) on Rt. 1A in Revere.

From the South: Park at Quincy Adams Station (Red Line) at I-93 and Rt. 3 in Quincy. Change to Orange Line at Downtown Crossing.

From the Northwest: Park at Alewife Station (Red Line) at the junction of Rts. 2 and 16 in Cambridge. Change to Orange Line at Downtown Crossing.

By Commuter Rail from the Suburbs: From North Station, take the Green Line to Haymarket or Park Street. For South Station terminus routes, get off at Back Bay Station & take Orange Line to Haymarket or State Street.

REMEMBER: you must log back into the Online Start Box at <https://my.ava.org> to finish online registration procedure after completing this event. Any checkpoints noted in the walk directions are for your own amusement/education and are not validated in OSB.

In case of Emergency Dial 911

Contact Carol Giesecke with questions at carolclay101@gmail.com or 302-399-6334. Or you may contact Bonnie Neggars at narcavage@verizon.net or 781-483-6115.

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Thanks for attending our walk! If you are interested in other nearby AVA events, you may want to consider the Freedom Trail route which explores Boston's early history, or other events in Massachusetts or Rhode Island, please see our website: <https://walknmass.org>



Back Bay 5 / 10 kilometer Volkswalk in Boston, Massachusetts (Capital Walk)

Jan 1 - Dec 31 (Y-1090)



Checkpoints are for your own amusement/education and are not validated in AVA's OSB.

- 1. Begin at the National Historical Park Visitor Center on the Congress Street side of Faneuil Hall (towards City Hall).**
- 2. CROSS Congress Street, turn LEFT going up Congress Street for one block to State Street. You will be across the street from the Old State House.** *The Old State House, built in 1713, replaced a wooden one (ca. 1658) as a public meeting place for both government and merchants. In the years preceding the American Revolution, disputes between the Crown's governors + revenue agents and the elected representatives + civic leaders of the colony lead to many key meetings and actions here by both sides. On 18 July 1776 the Declaration of Independence was read to the people from the balcony. This building also served as the State House until 1798. Look across State Street and slight left for the circle of cobblestones on the traffic island. The circle commemorates the "Boston Massacre". In 1770, British troops opened fire into a threatening mob, killing or mortally wounding five. John Adams (later "our" 2nd president) courageously and successfully defended the soldiers against murder charges in court*
- 3. RIGHT on State Street for a short distance and then turn RIGHT again proceeding down the brick plaza (Washington Mall).** *Straight ahead is City Hall, the result of a 1962 design competition won by three Columbia University professors.*
- 4. LEFT as you reach City Hall Plaza and walk up the steps (wheelchairs can avoid the steps), staying to the right of the subway entrance (on left).** *The building on the left is the Sears Crescent (ca. 1816). Its steaming tea kettle was made in 1873 for the Oriental Tea Comp.*
- 5. RIGHT as you reach Cambridge Street, continuing past the John F. Kennedy Federal Building.** *The plaza replaced a jumble of narrow streets and decaying buildings known as Old Scolley Square. Among the historical sites once here were the home of Dr. Joseph Warren, where in 1775 the orders were issued for the midnight ride of Paul Revere; the Concert Hall, enjoyed by such notables as George Washington and John Hancock; and the building where in 1875 Alexander Graham Bell first succeeded in transmitting a human voice via wire. The JFK Building was designed by Walter Gropius*
- 6. CROSS Sudbury and New Chardon streets to Staniford Street and turn LEFT to cross Cambridge Street to Temple Street.** *Before crossing Cambridge St. you will notice, on the opposite corner, the Old West Church built in 1806. (This happens to be the polling place where John F. Kennedy voted in the 1960 presidential election.)*
- 7. Go up Temple Street to its end at Derne Street and turn RIGHT (sign may be missing).**
- 8. Walk past Suffolk University (on the right) and the rear of the State House Annex (on the left).**
- 9. CROSS Hancock Street continuing straight ahead on what is now Myrtle Street (sign may be missing).**
- 10. LEFT at the first intersection onto Joy Street, proceed up Joy Street ½ a block to Pinckney Street.**
- 11. RIGHT onto Pinckney Street.** *Pickney St. was home to many literary notables, including Henry David Thoreau at #4 (for a time); Louisa May Alcott at #20 (for three years); Nathaniel Hawthorne, who roomed at #54 (for a while); and John P. Marquand at #57 (author of "The Late George Apley"). Even Charles Dickens visited friends at #84.*
- 12. Take the first LEFT onto the uphill side of Louisburg Square.** *Boston's first settler, Reverend William Blackstone, picked the Louisburg Square area for his home in 1630. His solitary cottage was soon replaced by an*

"ever-famous social citadel". For example singer Jenny Lind was married at #20 in 1852; Louisa May Alcott leased #10 for two years in 1885; and poets rooming at the Mt. Vernon Street end of the square have included John Greenleaf Whittier (1882) and Robert Frost (1938). It has been the home of Boston's social elite for many years.

- 13. Walk the length of the square, CROSS Mt. Vernon Street and continue straight on Willow Street.**
- 14. After ½ a block on Willow Street, RIGHT on Acorn Street and walk to its end.** *This charming cobblestone byway was once the home of Beacon Hill servants, coachmen and tradesmen.*
- 15. LEFT onto West Cedar Street to Chestnut St.**
- 16. CROSS and RIGHT on Chestnut Street to Charles Street.**
- 17. LEFT on Charles Street to traffic light at Beacon Street (Starbucks Coffee is on the corner).** *This is the corner where Officer Clancy held up traffic to let Mrs. Mallard and her eight ducklings cross to the Public Garden in Robert McCloskey's classic "Make Way for Ducklings." We'll see them on our return.*
- 18. RIGHT to cross Charles Street and follow Beacon Street to Arlington Street.** *The Bull and Finch Pub in the basement of the Hampshire House (#84, on the right) was the model for the TV sitcom "Cheers."*
- 19. LEFT to cross Beacon Street to the traffic island, then to the right side of Arlington Street to follow it.**
- 20. After CROSSING Marlborough Street, RIGHT onto path through the grassy center mall of Commonwealth Avenue.** *The intersecting streets are named for British dukes and earls in alphabetical order, from Arlington to Gloucester. Commonwealth Avenue has been called "one of the great streets in the world" by historian David McCullough, in part because the statues that line this center park are "so indicative of our civilization". You will pass statues of Abigail Adams, Patrick Andrew Collins, William Lloyd Garrison, John Glover, Alexander Hamilton, Samuel Eliot*

Morison (note the shells below), Domingo Sarmiento, Phyllis Wheatly and the memorial to 9 firemen who died in a hotel fire across the street.

- 21. Walk splits for 5K and 10K routes**
 - a. 5K walkers will follow the mall to Clarendon Street and turn LEFT following it to Newbury Street. Then LEFT following Newbury Street to its end at Arlington Street. Now skip to STEP # 53 below.**
 - b. 10K walkers will continue along the mall for several blocks to Hereford Street.**
- 22. LEFT onto Hereford Street.** *Look up at the architectural detail on the buildings ahead of you on both sides of Hereford St. at the intersection.*
- 23. CROSS Commonwealth Avenue then turn RIGHT to cross Hereford Street and continue down the left side of Commonwealth Avenue.**
- 24. Continue on Commonwealth Avenue, crossing Massachusetts Avenue to Charlesgate East.**
- 25. LEFT on Charlesgate East, up the ramp to go over the Massachusetts Turnpike.** *If you look to the right while on the bridge you can see part of Fenway Park, home of the Boston Red Sox.*
- 26. At the first crosswalk after the bridge, turn RIGHT (busy intersection, be careful) to cross Boylston Street.**
- 27. Once across Boylston Street turn RIGHT and then a QUICK LEFT down onto the path into the Back Bay Fens.** *This is part of Frederick Law Olmsted's 1870 "Emerald Necklace" of linked parks and parkways, which has inspired similar planning in other major U.S. cities.*
- 28. Follow the path straight into the Fenway Victory Gardens, started during World War II, to Park Drive.** *If you enjoy gardens, feel free to wander off the main path but return to the main path, following it to the end at the sidewalk on Park Drive.*

29. **Continue on Park Drive (keeping the fens to your left) across a roadway and past a walkway (both on left).** *The walkway leads to an impressive War Memorial. Stop if you'd like, just come back to the trail at the same place.*
30. **Take the next pathway toward the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA), the classic marble columned building in the distance. After a few yards down the pathway on the left is the entrance to a rose garden. Another interesting detour. Roses have been seen in bloom here from May to the middle of September!**
- a. **CHECKPOINT # 1: WHOSE NAME IS IN THE TITLE OF THE ROSE GARDEN?**
31. **Return to the path, turn LEFT to continue in the direction of the MFA (the path bears to the left to cross a small footbridge over the Muddy River).** *The MFA contains nearly 200 galleries of Asiatic, Egyptian, European and American paintings and sculpture is open 10 AM to 4:45 PM Tuesday-Sunday. Admission is charged.*
32. **Once across the footbridge turn LEFT to follow a natural surface trail (bears gently to the right) to the sidewalk.**
33. **BEAR LEFT onto the sidewalk, following The Fenway (keep road on right, fens on left) past sections of Northeastern University to the traffic light at Westland Avenue.**
34. **RIGHT to cross The Fenway onto Westland Avenue.**
35. **CROSS Hemenway Street following Westland Avenue to its end at Massachusetts Avenue.** *Symphony Hall, home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, is on your right before you cross Massachusetts Avenue and Horticultural Hall is on the right after you cross. The Christian Science Church and Publishing House is on your left after you cross Massachusetts Avenue.*
36. **CAREFULLY CROSS Westland and Massachusetts Avenues continuing straight.** *The Publishing House contains The Mapparium, a hollow globe replica of the Earth in which a glass bridge allows visitors to see the map from within. Open Monday thru Saturday, admission charged.*
37. **At the end of Horticultural Hall is a long reflecting pool (depending on the season at the far end is a large fountain). Continue straight (keeping the pool on the right) to the fountain end of the pool.**
38. **At the end of the reflecting pool, BEAR LEFT to the crosswalk.**
39. **CROSS Belvidere Street and turn RIGHT to the Prudential Centre entrance (on left) near the intersection. (For those in wheelchairs, go to the intersection and turn LEFT onto Huntington Avenue to the entrance just past Dick's Last Resort.)**
40. **Once inside go up the escalator or stairs, continuing straight ahead through the Huntington Arcade to Center Court.**
41. **RIGHT into the Back Bay Arcade going past Ann Taylor which will be on your right.**
42. **CROSS the enclosed footbridge over Huntington Avenue and enter Copley Place. Go up the escalator into the shopping galleries (passing Tiffany & Co. on the left).**
43. **Ahead you'll pass a cascade of water (restrooms on the right) and turn LEFT at Nieman-Marcus.**
44. **Go down the escalator to a second enclosed footbridge, cross it and go into the next building.**
45. **Upon entering turn RIGHT then LEFT passing Turner Fisheries to the escalator. Take the escalator down and exit the building via the revolving door.**
46. **BEAR ½ RIGHT to the corner to carefully cross Dartmouth Street.**
47. **Once across Dartmouth Street immediately turn LEFT and CROSS St. James Avenue to Copley Square.** *You're surrounded by some of the country's finest architectural achievements. To your left is Boston Public Library, designed in 1888 by McKim, Mead, and White (murals inside are considered to be among the world's best). To the right is Trinity Church, designed in 1877 by Henry Hobson Richardson. Behind you is the Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel (ca. 1912) and beyond*

that is I.M. Pei's John Hancock tower. Its observatory at 740 feet is the highest vantage point in Boston. The view extends to New Hampshire's mountains.

48. **RIGHT to walk toward Trinity Church. LEFT in front of the church and walk toward the Tortoise and Hare sculpture.** *These bronze statues by Nancy Schon mark the 100th running of the Boston Marathon in 1996. The sculpture was placed in the Square, near the finish of the race, with the help of its sponsor, the Boston Athletic Association.*
49. **RIGHT at the Tortoise and Hare and exit the square onto Boylston Street.** *The statue of Phillips Brooks (on the side of Trinity Church) is by the famous American sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens.*
50. **Continue down Boylston Street, across Clarendon Street to Berkeley Street.**
51. **LEFT to cross Boylston Street onto Berkeley Street for one block to Newbury Street.** *Note the building on the left at 234 Berkeley St. It was built in 1861 for the collection of the Boston Society of Natural History (predecessor of the Museum of Science) on a portion of newly filled in Back Bay that was a State gift to education.*
52. **CROSS and turn RIGHT onto Newbury Street following it to its end at Arlington Street.**
53. **If you are doing the 5K walk, pick up the directions here.**
 - a. **At the traffic light, cross Arlington Street and enter the Public Gardens. BEAR LEFT towards and behind the equestrian statue of George Washington (cast by Thomas Ball in 1869).**
54. **At the path intersection turn RIGHT to cross the footbridge over the pond.** *Watch for the pedal powered Swan Boats in season. These have been run by the Paget family since 1877 and are in operation daily after 10 AM from April 19 to late September. Fee charged.*
55. **At the end of the bridge take the first LEFT, go down the steps and make an immediate RIGHT.**
56. **Continue beside the pond (on your left) watching for a path to BEAR RIGHT leading away from the pond toward the corner of Beacon and Charles Streets.** *You'll know you're on the right path when you pass the "Make way for Ducklings" statues (on right, hinted at in STEP # 17).*
57. **CROSS Charles Street and continue up Beacon Street along Boston Common (on your right, behind the fence).**
58. **At the second crosswalk up Beacon Street, turn LEFT to cross it and immediately turn RIGHT to continue up Beacon Street (now on the left side).** *Among the numerous renowned former residents of this stretch are patriots John Hancock and James Otis, Senators Henry Cabot Lodge and Harrison Gray Otis, artist John Singleton Copley, the affluent Harvard student Aga Khan, merchant Eban Jordan and Ralph Waldo Emerson.*
59. **Go past the State House (on left, with gold dome), cross Bowdoin Street and proceed to Somerset Street.** *The Massachusetts State House was designed by Charles Bulfinch in 1795. Sam Adams and Paul Revere helped to lay its cornerstone. Oliver Wendell Holmes once referred to its 36 kt. Gold dome as "the hub of the solar system." It is open to the public weekdays from 9 AM to 5 PM, with free-guided tours from 10 AM to 4 PM The Boston Athenaeum, the renaissance structure at 10½ Beacon Street, started in 1807 as a private library and reading room (houses most of George Washington's library).*
60. **LEFT onto Somerset Street going about 100 yards.**
61. **RIGHT to cross Somerset onto an incline down into Pemberton Square. LEFT into the square (Suffolk County Courthouse is on the left) then BEAR RIGHT to the stairs at # 3 Center Plaza.** *Elihu Yale was born in this area in 1649. Much of the money he made trading in East India he gave to a new college being built in New Haven, Connecticut. (NOTE - the site of John Harvard's home is on the Freedom Trail event.)*

- 62. Take the stairs down (there is an elevator inside # 3 Center Plaza for those needing one) to Tremont Street.**
- 63. CROSS Tremont Street continuing straight down Court Street towards the Old State House.** *The Corinthian columned building at #26, presently headquarters of the Boston School Committee, stands on the site where legendary pirate Captain Kidd was jailed in 1698. Daniel Webster had his law office at # 46 (from 1839 to 1852). Court Street becomes*

State Street at Washington Street (just before the Old State House).

- 64. At the far end of the Old State House turn LEFT and CROSS State Street onto Congress Street.**
- 65. Go down Congress Street to the crosswalk in front of Faneuil Hall. Turn RIGHT, CAREFULLY CROSS Congress Street, straight back to the Boston National Historic Park Visitor Center.**

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The Walk 'n Mass Volkssport Club hopes you enjoyed this trail in historic Boston. You may also like our Freedom Trail walk which explores much of Boston's colonial era history. Our thanks to the rangers at the Boston National Historical Park Visitor Center and you for making this volkswalk possible. Thank you for coming and have a safe journey home!

Emergency: 911

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