

## Massachusetts

Hello! My name is Heather MacDonald and I am an intern in the Economic/Political section at the U.S. Embassy in Vienna. Today I want to tell you about my home state of Massachusetts.

If you've ever wanted to visit a U.S. state filled with both history and culture, than you should look no further than Massachusetts. Known for its significant colonial history, progressive politics, and European flair, Massachusetts is not only well-known throughout the United States, but also the world.

Like many of our states, the name "Massachusetts" comes from the name of a local Native American tribe. The Algonquian Indians, responsible for naming our beautiful state, were also the first Native Americans to meet the Pilgrims when they landed in Plymouth, Massachusetts. The Pilgrims were some of the first settlers to travel to the United States and made the long voyage across the Atlantic in 1620 on the ship *The Mayflower*. With the help of the Native Americans, the Pilgrims were able to adapt to their new surroundings and celebrated their first harvest together, which later became known as the first Thanksgiving, a holiday still celebrated today.

Massachusetts continued to play an important role in history in the context of the Revolutionary War. Paul Revere, a native of Massachusetts, is well known for his "Midnight Ride" that warned the local colonists of the impending British arrival. The first battle of the Revolutionary War also took place in Lexington, Massachusetts on April 18, 1775, where approximately 70 colonial soldiers, also known as minutemen, gathered on the village green to meet the advancing British troops. The first shot fired on that historic day is referred to today as "the shot heard around the world."

Massachusetts is the 7<sup>th</sup> smallest state in the United States and is located on the East Coast in the region known as New England. The other states in New England are Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and Rhode Island. Massachusetts is nicknamed "The Bay State" because of several large bays in the state which distinctly shape its coast. Massachusetts also has a peninsula that uniquely resembles a human arm, called Cape Code. The Cape is a popular summer tourist destination and is well-known for its beautiful beaches and delicious sea food. Located off the coast of Massachusetts are the islands of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. These islands have been the vacation destination for many U.S. presidents, including John F. Kennedy and Barack Obama.

Central Massachusetts has many rolling, rocky hills and Western Massachusetts is home to much of our farm land, with the Berkshire Mountains forming its most western border. Massachusetts is particularly beautiful in the fall, when the trees in the region transform into beautiful shades of red, yellow, and orange.

Not surprisingly, much of the activity in Massachusetts takes place in the city of Boston. Boston was first incorporated as a town in 1630, and is one of America's oldest cities. The country's first public park, subway system, public library, U.S. mail route, police department, and baseball stadium can all be found in Boston. The city is home to over 617,000 residents and some of the oldest higher education institutions in the country. Both Harvard University and M.I.T. are in Boston.

Boston was recently crowned as America's most successful sports city. The fans in the city would definitely agree. Whether you're watching the New England Patriots play football, the Celtics on the basketball court, the Boston Bruins score the winning goal on the ice, or a player on the Red Sox hit a grand slam over the Green Monster in Fenway Park, you're always guaranteed a good time at any Boston sports event.

Much of Boston's economy is fueled by the over 350,000 college students who flock to the city to attend school at one of the many institutions of higher education. Tourism, financial services and technology companies also make up a large portion of the economy. Boston is also a leading startup city, attracting entrepreneurs from all around the world, especially in the high-tech industry.

The best way to visit the historical and cultural sites of the city is to take a walk on the Freedom Trail. The Freedom Trail is a 2.5 mile, red-lined route that leads you to 16 historically significant sites in Boston. The trail starts in the city's oldest park, the Boston Common, and ends at the famous ship, the USS Constitution, in Charlestown. Following the red brick path, you can see many of the city's important buildings, including the Old South Meeting House, the Old State House, and the Paul Revere House.

There are a lot of famous people from Massachusetts. Four American presidents were born here: John Adams, John Quincy Adams, John F. Kennedy, and George H.W. Bush. Other famous people include Clara Barton, the founder of the American Red Cross, Emily Dickinson, a famous American poet, and Matt Damon, an actor well known for his Boston accent.

This brings me to the end of my brief overview of Massachusetts. There is much more to see and discover, so I encourage you to make a trip to explore it yourself!