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More Revolutionary Than Bean Town: The Historic Sites You Should Visit Just Outside Boston

8 mins ago • by Sandy Bornstein • 4 min read



Written by [Sandy Bornstein](#)

Boston is a city saturated with layers of history. It was first settled by Puritans in 1630 and it's one of the oldest cities in America. But the role it played in the American Revolution is what really draws history buffs to Boston. The city was home to founding fathers (and cousins) John and Samuel Adams, as well as the site of the Boston Massacre, the Boston Tea Party, and the Battle of Bunker Hill.

Most visitors can fulfill their quests to learn more about Boston's colonial life by trekking along the informative Freedom Trail, a two-and-a-half mile route from the Boston Commons Visitor Center to Bunker Hill with 16 historically significant sites marked along the way. But to see and explore what are probably *the most* important sites of the Revolutionary War, where its first shots were fired, you'll need to leave Boston...and head to the nearby towns of Lexington and Concord.

But Before You Leave Boston, Don't Forget to Visit...

Old North Church



While walking along the Freedom Trail, a stop at the [Old North Church](#) is essential. This is where the lanterns were displayed in the church steeple to warn the colonists that the British troops would be heading to Lexington and Concord by boat. The British soldiers were planning to search for hidden weapons and ammunition in Concord.

Nowadays, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem sets the stage for most American's understanding of Paul Revere's role in this event. It's a shame that Longfellow's literary style created a few historical inaccuracies to further his agenda that one person could change the course of history. A visit to this church will point out that Paul Revere was a patriot spy who organized the men who did the signaling and was only one of several riders who spread the news of the impending march to Concord.

Union Oyster House



Image via Sandra Bornstein

Even though this restaurant didn't open its doors until 1826, the [Union Oyster House](#) is a fantastic place to eat before heading to Lexington and Concord. We recommend trying the SCROD — special catch right off the dock. Locals tell us that the fish is usually cod or haddock. Nearby is a small alley called Marshall Street with a few National Historic Landmarks and the controversial outdoor [New England Holocaust Memorial](#) is just steps away from the restaurant's entrance.

Lexington and Concord



Paul Revere and the other riders fulfilled their mission. The people living in the Lexington and Concord area knew in advance that hundreds of British troops were on their way. The militia and the Minutemen were ready to fight even though Revere never actually shouted, "the British are coming."

Traveling to the [Lexington Common National Historic Site](#), visitors can walk through the small park setting called Lexington Green and view a handful of monuments. This is where the first shots of the Revolutionary War occurred. Historians are still unsure which side fired first. Eight colonists died here and another ten were wounded. After this confrontation, 700 British soldiers continued their march toward Concord.

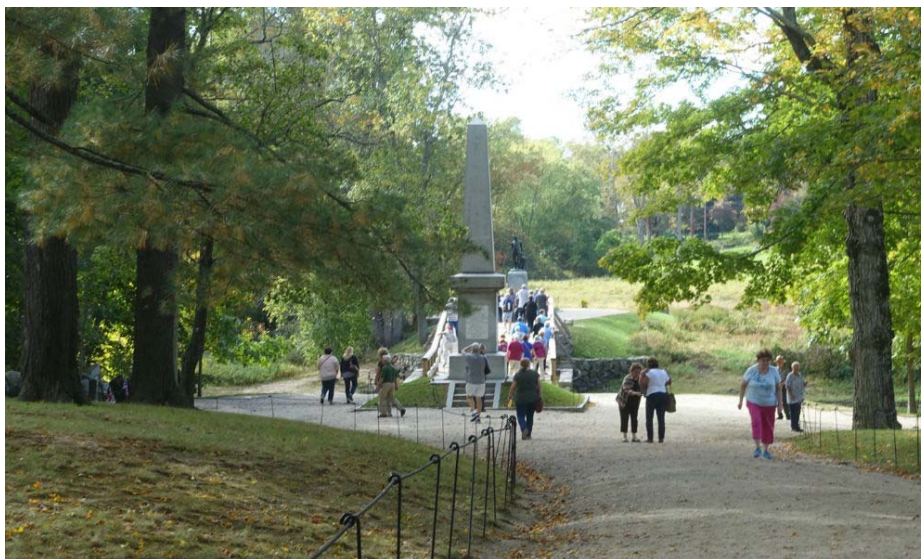


Image via Sandra Bornstein

Free tours are offered daily from Memorial Day until the end of October. Adjacent to the quiet park are 18th-century homes and a tavern as well as the Minute Man Visitor Center where *The Road to Revolution* is shown in season every half hour.

On the road to Concord, 11 "witness" homes take travelers back to an earlier time. The Community Preservation Act protects their integrity. Some of these homes are open to the public.



Image via Sandra Bornstein

At the **Minute Man National Historical Park**, visitors traverse on a tree-lined path that leads to the North Bridge. On April 19, 1775, Minutemen and the militia of Concord and neighboring towns gathered on the hill across the river from the British troops. The British fired upon the colonists. Major John Buttrick of Concord gave the command, "Fire, fellow soldiers, for God's sake fire!" It was the first time that a British soldier was killed. As the British retreated back to Boston, they met heavy resistance all along Battle Road.



Image via Sandra Bornstein

The park's North Bridge Visitor Center has additional information and shows an educational video on demand. Energetic travelers can also walk the five-mile Battle Road Trail from Meriam's Corner in Concord to Fiske Hill in Lexington.

