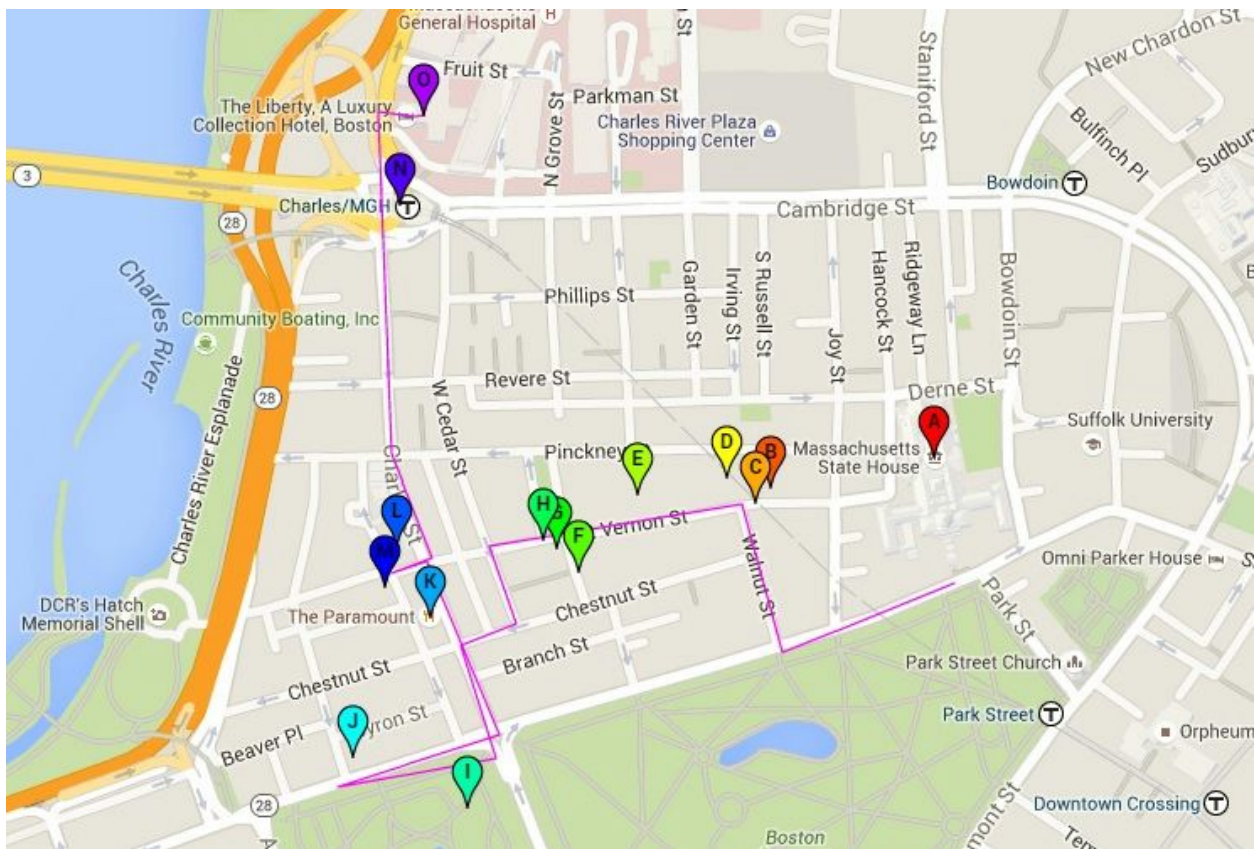
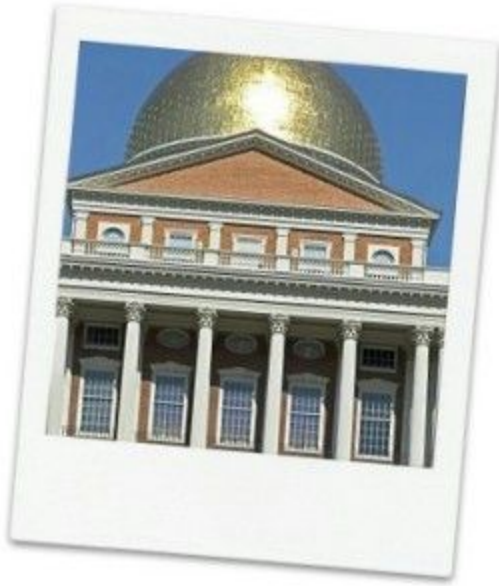


Boston's Beacon Hill is and always has been Boston's most exclusive neighborhood where politicians, poets and philanthropist among others have made their home. It is a neighborhood that many tourist fail to explore as it can be a bit intimidating without a guide but this self-guided tour should make navigation of that neighborhood easy. Here is the link to the [map](#). Be sure to take a look at our guided [Beacon Hill Crime Tour](#) as well as our full list of [self guided Boston walking tours](#). You can also view this tour as a PDF to save to your smartphone.

Click here to view [larger interactive map](#).



TIP: save more money in Boston with a [tourist discount pass](#).



START: Start your tour at the Massachusetts State House (A) at 24

Beacon Street. The “new” State House was opened in 1798 on land that was once owned by the great patriot John Hancock. It is the oldest continually running state house in the United States and the seat of government for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The building was designed by Charles Bulfinch who designed much of the architecture you will see in the Beacon Hill Neighborhood. Notice the gold dome (23 karat) which is 30 feet high and 50 around. It was

gilded in 1876 on our nation’s 100th birthday. The Massachusetts State House offers free tours during the hours that it is open. Enter through the Gen. Joe Hooker (yes that is his name) Entrance for a [free tour](#) of the inside of the State House.



Face the gold dome and walk left down Beacon St, to Walnut St. (about two blocks down Beacon St.). Take a right up Walnut St. and you are entering the Historic Beacon Hill Neighborhood. All the lamp posts that you see are lit by gas. Just like they have always been. Notice the window boxes with their arrangement of flowers. This is a very distinct part of the neighborhood. Also if you look down at the door-stoops you will sometimes see little metal bar-like contraptions which are called boot

scrapers. These were useful in the 1800 and early 1900s as the main mode of

transportation were horses. One could scrape the horses (let's call it exhaust) off their shoes before entering their homes. Just as practical today as in the past.



At the top of Walnut St. you will come to Mt. Vernon St. Look right and you will notice The Nichols House Museum (B) (55 Mt. Vernon St). This structure is a great example of the Federalist style of Architecture that was a trademark design of Charles Bulfinch. It was built by Jonathon Mason (1804) and welcomes visitors and provides a look into the life of Beacon Hill Residents in the 19th and 20th centuries. Admission \$10.

Facing the Nichols House Museum (B), walk left down Mt. Vernon St. As you travel down Mt. Vernon St. notice **57 Mt. Vernon St. (C)** as it was the former residence of Daniel Webster (not the dictionary guy). Daniel Webster was US Senator representing Massachusetts as well as a three time Secretary of State under three different presidents (Harrison, Tyler and Fillmore). Also a great lawyer and was a character in the Mark Twain story “The devil and Daniel Webster.”

At **65 Mt. Vernon St. (D)** just above the archway you will notice an engraved CABOT where Henry Cabot Lodge once lived. Henry Cabot Lodge, a republican senator from Massachusetts, was the first unofficial Senate Majority leader and best known for his foreign policy disagreement over the Treaty of Versailles with President Wilson.



Continue down Mt. Vernon St. and look over at 85 Mt. Vernon St. (E) you will see the Harrison Gray Otis House, built in 1802 by Charles Bulfinch, it is the last remaining freestanding house on the Hill (everything else is condos). It

is a classic Charles Bulfinch design. Harrison Gray Otis was the third mayor of Boston, a US Congressman as well as a US Senator and member of the Federalist Party. He was also one of the richest men in Boston at the time and has another house in Boston built by Charles Bulfinch at 141 Cambridge Street that is a museum open to the public.

Continue down Mt. Vernon St. to Willow St. and Mt. Vernon St. The poet and Pulitzer Prize winner Sylvia Plath lived at **9 Willow St. (F)** in 1958. She was married to the English poet Ted Hughes, had 2 children, but suffered from depression and committed suicide at age 30. If you stand at the corner of Willow St. and **Mt. Vernon St. at 88 Mt. Vernon St. (G)**. Notice the plaque at 88 Mt. Vernon St. where the Poet Robert Frost lived from 1938 to 1941. Robert Frost died 2 weeks before Sylvia Plath aged 88. He was an accomplished Pulitzer Prize winner and Congressional Gold medal holder and was asked at age 86 to read a poem at J.F. Kennedy's Inauguration.



Standing in front of 88 Mt. Vernon St. is a great view of not only Boston most exclusive section but one of the most expensive places to live in the country. This street is called **Louisburg Square (H)**. It is a block of condos split in half with a private park running through the center of it. The writer Louise May-Alcott, best known for her 1868 novel *Little Women*, once resided there. At the end of the Square where you see the American Flag, is one of US Secretary of State John Kerry current residences.

Follow Mt. Vernon St. down to West Cedar St. Take a left onto Mt. Vernon St. As you travel down Mt. Vernon Street notice the beautiful window boxes and you

will be at your next stop you as well as Boston's most photographed street, **Acorn St.** The view from the bottom looking up is the better view. The street is made up of river stones from the Charles River and is a wonderful street for posing for the perfect photo.



Follow West Cedar St. and take a right down Chestnut St. (Did you notice yet that many of the streets of Beacon Hill are named for trees?), and you will be on Charles St. the shopping district for the Hill residents. This street is a quaint street dotted with antique shops, restaurants and boutiques. Take a left on Charles St. and follow to end (about a block) and you are back on Beacon St. Take a right on Beacon St. Take a short detour and cross Beacon St. and enter the **Public Garden**, you will come to a statue of recognizing the children's story **Make**

Way For Ducklings (I) where a row of baby ducks are following their mom. You can sit on the ducks and take a photo if you like.



Exit the Public Garden back through the gates and you will be back on Beacon St. Cross back to the corner of Charles St. and Beacon St. follow Beacon St. to 84 Beacon St. where you will come to the **Bull & Finch Pub (Charles Bullfinch) known all over as Cheers (J)**, where everyone knows your name. This pub founded in 1969, and made the exterior is recognized around the country as the opening shot in the TV show Cheers. Grab yourself a drink and/or a famous "Norm Burger."

After you exit Cheers, take a left on Beacon St. back to Charles St. Stroll down Charles St. and check out the many shops and cafés. Notice the **Paramount at 44 Charles St. (K)** a good place for breakfast or lunch. Look up at the residences on top of the restaurant, the second floor apartment was where the last victim (Mary Sullivan) of the notorious Boston Strangler was found dead on Jan. 4, 1964.



Follow Charles St. to 70 Charles St. to the **Charles St. Meeting House (L)** (1804), designed by Asher Benjamin who also designed many famous structures in Boston including the African Meeting House (1806) at 46 Joy St. and also helped with the planning of Quincy Market (1826).

The Charles St. Meeting House was a major player in Boston's Abolitionist movement and saw speakers like William Lloyd Garrison, Fredrick Douglass, Sojourner Truth and Charles Sumner to name just a few.

At the Charles St. Meeting House (on the corner of Charles St. and Mt. Auburn St.) Take a quick trip down Mt. Vernon St. to 130 Mt. Vernon St. and you will see the **Sunflower House (M)**. Built in the 1840s, it stands out as it is a Queen Anne style house among the Federalist Style of Architecture. This home was the former home of artist Frank Hill Smith as well as the artist Gertude Beals. Notice the sunflower above the second floor window where it gets its name. This 3,200 sf. house was listed in the market for \$4.6 million.





Back on Charles St., continue your stroll to the end of Charles St. and you will see the **Charles/MGH Subway Station (N)**. Cross under the Station to the other side you will be outside the **former Charles Street Jail (O) (1851)** and the jail for 139 was the jail for Suffolk County were some of the inmates include former Boston Mayor James Michael Curly, Malcolm X and Sacco and Vanzetti to name just a few.

The jail was forced to close in 1973 by a federal court order and was finally shut-down in 1990.

The building, designed by Gridley James Fox Bryant in 1851, was built with a 90 foot octagonal rotunda with jail wings stretching out in a cross which allowed segregation of prisoners by class of crime. It was designed according to a 1790s humanitarian plan for prison reform known as the Auburn Plan. The Auburn Plan among other reforms called for a designated areas for prisoners to work and exercise along with individual cells. It is now a luxury hotel with plush lounges. There are two lounges and a restaurant inside with jail themes. The lounges, are named The Clink and Alibi's and the Italian restaurant is called Scampo's. Alibi's is the former drunk tank and guest can enjoy a beverage behind steel bars view mug shots of celebrities like Frank Sinatra, Mickey Rourke and Lindsay Lohan to name just a few.

END: Once you exit the Liberty Hotel, you can jump on the Subway (Redline Stop Charles MGH) on stop back to The Boston Common or walk back down Charles St. to Beacon St. and the Boston Common (about a 15 minute walk).

Distance: 1.3 miles (1.-1.5 hours)