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MASSACHUSETTS Long after Lexington

Visit this quintessential New England town for its fascinating history, eclectic food scene and lush outdoor spaces. Words: Rachel Ng



IMAGE: SHUTTERSTOCK

Strolling through Lexington's historic downtown is like taking a journey through time, where the elegance of 18th and 19th-century architecture is interwoven with the vibrant culture of art galleries and the cozy allure of quaint cafes. Each April, when the town marks Patriots' Day, visitors are likely to encounter costumed guides leading red-coated reenactors down the main thoroughfare. Dubbed the 'Birthplace of American Liberty', this patriotic town just 14 miles north west of Boston was the site of the famous 'shot heard round the world', the opening shot of the Battle of Lexington, fired on 19 April 1775, which kickstarted the American War of Independence. This former farming community sees art, culture and history collide in an idyllic setting. Here's what to see, where to eat and when to go.

WHAT TO DO

Visit Lexington Battle Green and trace the footsteps of the Lexington Minute Men — members of the local militia who fought against the British Regulars at the town common in the Battle of Lexington in 1775. This national historic landmark is a public park featuring several memorials honouring the first casualties of the American War of Independence. Those interested in a more in-depth exploration can join a Battle Green Tour or the Liberty Ride Trolley Tour at the Visitors Center, both led by costumed guides. Alternatively, sign up for a Charter Tour, with stops at the 970-acre Minute Man National Historical Park and *Little Women* author Louisa May Alcott's Orchard House.

Lexington's historic downtown is lined with red-brick buildings where visitors will find antique and gift shops, bookstores, restaurants and cafes. In pleasant weather, cycle the 10-mile Minuteman Commuter Bikeway, an abandoned railway line converted into a multi-use paved trail in 1998. Be sure to stop by Wilson Farm, a family-owned farm since 1844 with a shop selling freshly picked berries, pies, cakes, cheeses and locally made snacks.

WHERE TO EAT

Lexington is home to the largest Asian population in Massachusetts and the town has an array of restaurants specialising in Thai, Chinese, Japanese and Indian cuisines.

Start your morning at Nouvé Bakery, which offers French pastries with an Asian twist — try a miso escargot pastry or honey toast made with Japanese milk bread. Then, head to the cosy Royal India Bistro, where an affordable lunch menu features spicy lamb vindaloo and creamy chicken korma. For dinner, dig into drunken noodles or pad thai at Love at First Bite Thai Kitchen and Bar and,

for a sweet finish, head to Abbott's Frozen Custard for milkshakes and floats made with velvety custards, or Rancatore's Ice Cream & Yogurt for a rich hot fudge sundae.

WHERE TO STAY

For accommodation that pays tribute to Lexington's historic heritage, try The Inn at Hastings Park. The property is made up of three restored 19th-century buildings and is full of classic Americana charm, with eclectic handprinted wallpaper, high-quality linens and chic furniture. The inn's owner, Trisha Pérez Kennealy, trained at the Le Cordon Bleu culinary school in London and guests can take cooking classes or participate in a monthly supper club.

Fans of a more modern look should try Aloft Lexington, a family-friendly hotel with spacious rooms and a heated indoor pool located a short drive from Lexington Battle Green and Minute Man National Park. Nearby, Element Lexington is another contemporary option with an indoor saltwater pool and complimentary bike rental.

WHEN TO GO

Lexington celebrates Patriots' Day every April with a weekend of revelry that includes parades, reenactments, tours of historic sites and performances. In April 2025, as the town marks the 250th anniversary of the Battles of Lexington and Concord, festivities will expand to include new art installations and events reflecting on what the historic battles mean to Americans today.

In summer, the multi-day Fourth of July Carnival offers rides, games, fair food and fireworks, while in September, visitors can enjoy Porchfest, a grassroots community music festival that sees local artists perform on front porches. Cycling enthusiasts should visit in September or October, as the weather is cool and the leaves resplendent in changing shades of yellow, orange and red.

Left: Lexington Common, said to be the site of the shots that started the American War of Independence

PLAN YOUR TRIP

Several airlines offer direct flights from the UK to Boston Logan International Airport. Visitors can take the subway and the bus from Boston to Lexington. Car rental is also available and Lexington is a 30-minute drive north west from the airport. For more information, visit tourlexington.us

LEXINGTON
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