

SHOPPING

top picks

- Berk's (p145)
- Bird by Bird (p146)
- Filene's Basement (p136)
- French Dressing (p134)
- Globe Corner Bookstore (p144)
- New Balance Factory Store (p146)
- Salmagundi (p142)
- Salumeria Italiana (p131)
- Tayrona (p144)
- Twentieth Century Ltd (p132)

SHOPPING

This town is known for its intellect and its arts, so you can bet it's good for bookstores, art galleries and music shops. But these days, the streets of Boston, Brookline and Cambridge are also sprinkled with offbeat and independent boutiques – many carrying the latest styles from New York, but many carrying up-and-coming local designers. Besides to-die-for duds, indie shops hawk handmade jewelry, exotic household decorations and arty, quirky gifts. These are the kinds of places that are fun to browse, even if you don't intend to buy!

Except on rare occasions, these unique and fashionable shops will not thrill bargain-hunters. But the Boston institution Filene's Basement (p136) will. Thrifty shoppers will find more than enough factory outlets and second-hand shops to test their pay-off-the-credit-card resolve.

SHOPPING AREAS

If you intend to engage in a little shop therapy you have several options. Back Bay is the traditional 'shopping and lunch' destination, its streets lined with boutiques and galleries. But both the South End and the North End are emerging as shopping destinations, as creative entrepreneurs open shops and galleries alongside the restaurants that these neighborhoods are better known for.

Others may prefer the hustle and bustle of Downtown Crossing, where large department stores and smaller practical retail outlets cater to everyday Bostonians.

Beacon Hill is the traditional spot for antiquing, although Charles St is also home to cutesy boutiques, fancy galleries and neighborhood shops. In Cambridge, Harvard Sq has always been famous for its used bookstores and second-hand record shops.

OPENING HOURS

Stores are generally open Monday through Saturday from 9am or 10am until 6pm or 7pm, unless otherwise noted. Most are also open on Sunday from noon to 5pm.

WEST END & NORTH END

Every visitor to Boston goes to the North End to savor the flavors of Italian cooking. But as a local community directory points out: 'Where do you think the chefs get their food from?' These old streets are filled with specialty markets selling imported food products, wine, spices, fresh produce, meats and seafood (see the North End Nosh walking tour, p126). The constant flow of foot traffic

has started to attract funky boutiques and galleries, too. There's not much in the way of shopping in the West End, so mosey across North End Park to spend your money.

ART-MOSPHERE GALLERY

Map pp62–3

Art Gallery

☎ 617-720-4278; www.artmosphereinternational.com; 281/2 Prince St; 📍 Haymarket

Wander away from Hanover St to discover a new perspective on the North End. This gallery specializes in local artists and their depictions of Boston landmarks. Photos, prints and paintings of your favorite North End eateries make a great souvenir!

NORTH END GALLERY

Map pp62–3

Art Gallery

☎ 617-742-6611; www.northendgallery.com; 354

Hanover St; 📍 Haymarket

Whether you are in the market for original artwork, limited edition prints or unique postcards, there is no shortage of

top picks

SHOPPING STRIPS

- **Newbury St (p137)** This is the best place in Boston for window shopping and gallery hopping.
- **Charles St (p132)** Once lined with antique shops, Charles St now also offers a few preppy boutiques for the Beacon Hill shopper.
- **Harvard Sq (p143)** Despite attempted takeovers by chain stores, Harvard Sq is still packed with bookstores and coffee shops.
- **SoWa (p140)** The strip South of Washington in the South End is Boston's up-and-coming art district, with plenty of edgy, international boutiques.