

Understand New England

NEW ENGLAND TODAY 410

A regional transformation is being fueled by new industries, new immigrants and renewed interest in both city and country living.

HISTORY 412

The history of New England is the history of America: 400 years of political, philosophical, industrial and technological revolution.

NEW ENGLAND LITERATURE.....420

The region's rich literary tradition runs the gamut from ground-breaking philosophy to thought-provoking poetry to spine-tingling horror.

BACK TO SCHOOL424

Hundreds of colleges and universities provide New England with an annual influx of energy and an ever-active incubator for ideas.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES428

From rolling hills and craggy mountains to sun-dappled lakes and windswept sea coast, choose a setting for your next adventure.

New England Today

Recalling its revolutionary roots, New England continues to claim its place as one of the nation's most forward-looking and barrier-breaking regions. This is most evident in the political sphere, as controversial topics like same-sex marriage and universal healthcare are already old news here. A diverse economic base means that New England has fared well during the slow economy, as evidenced by the region's revitalized cities and increasing number of farms.

Best in Film

Good Will Hunting (1998) About a blue-collar boy from South Boston who becomes a math savant at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The Cider House Rules (2000) Won Michael Caine an Academy Award for his role as a doctor in an orphanage in rural Maine.

Mystic River (2006) The story of three friends who are thrown together in adulthood when one of their daughters is murdered in Boston.

Best in Print

Walden; Or, Life in the Woods (Henry David Thoreau, 1854) A story of the author's 26 months in a cabin on Walden Pond.

The Hungry Ocean (Linda Greenlaw, 1999) Greenlaw recounts her adventures as the captain of a swordfish boat near Mohegan Island.

Land's End (Michael Cunningham, 2002) Explores the artistic history and alternative lifestyle of Provincetown (which in Provincetown is not the alternative but the norm).

East Coast Liberals

New England is politically liberal. That said, a lasting strain of independent politics is evident in New England's northern states, sustained by fiscal conservatism, social libertarianism and a healthy suspicion of politics.

One of the most definitive features is the region's supportive political climate for social reformers, carrying on a legacy that includes 19th-century abolitionists, 20th-century suffragettes and 21st-century gay-rights advocates. The region has recently been at the forefront of countless 'progressive' issues, such as healthcare and marriage equality. The national healthcare legislation enacted in 2010 was modeled after a pre-existing system of universal healthcare in Massachusetts. All six New England states had legalized some form of same-sex union before it was legitimized at the federal level in 2013.

Cultural Diversity

New England is increasingly international. Irish, Italian and Portuguese communities have been well established in the urban areas since the 19th century. In more recent years, New England cities have continued to attract immigrants from non-European origins: you can hear Caribbean rhythms in Hartford and Springfield, smell Vietnamese and Cambodian cooking in Cambridge and Lowell, and see Brazilian flags waving in Somerville.

Much of the region is dependent on immigrant labor to keep the economy running. Unfortunately, immigrants continue to confront obstacles of adaptation, including language barriers, financial limitations and legal hazards. Many New Englanders anxiously await immigration reform at the federal level.

The challenges of multiculturalism were on full display in 2013, when two bombs exploded at the finish line of the Boston Marathon, killing three and injuring hundreds. Boston endured several days of confusion (includ-