

Understand New England

NEW ENGLAND TODAY406

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

HISTORY408

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

NEW ENGLAND LITERATURE..... 416

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

UNIVERSITIES & COLLEGES420

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

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES424

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 forward-looking and barrier-breaking regions. This is most evident in the political sphere, as controversial topics like same-sex marriage and universal health care are already old news here. A diverse economic base means that New England has fared well in recent years, as evidenced by the region's revitalized cities and increasing number of farms.

Best on Film

Jaws (1975) This cult classic was filmed on Martha's Vineyard.

On Golden Pond (1981) Won three Oscars for star performances by Henry Fonda and Katharine Hepburn in a drama set on Lake Winnepesaukee.

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.

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.

A Prayer for Owen Meany (John Irving; 1989) A novel about two friends' magical childhood in rural New Hampshire.

The Perfect Storm (Sebastian Junger; 1997) The true account of a Gloucester fishing boat lost at sea.

Olive Kitteridge (Elizabeth Strout; 2008) A Pulitzer Prize-winning book of short stories that take place in Maine.

East Coast Liberals

New England has come a long way from the theocracy it once was. Nowadays, the region is politically liberal, though 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 health care and marriage equality. The national health-care legislation enacted in 2010 was modeled after a pre-existing system of universal health care in Massachusetts. All six New England states had legalized some form of same-sex union before it was legalized at the federal level in 2015.

In 2016 the socialist from Vermont, Senator Bernie Sanders, made a noteworthy bid to become US President, running on a platform of free higher education, income equality and the separation of wealth and politics. Meanwhile, his colleague from Massachusetts, Senator Elizabeth Warren, has assumed the role of Congressional gadfly to Wall St.

Cultural Diversity

New England is becoming increasingly international – at least in the southern states. 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. In