

# All for one and one for all at Boston Hostel

Camaraderie key at 480-room establishment



ROCHELLE LASH  
CHECKING IN

Sharing is the ethos at one of the newest, most attractive lodgings in Boston.

Hostelling International has opened a 480-room establishment ideal for anyone who wants to bed down in a clean, safe, eco-conscious environment with a lot of extras: camaraderie, progressive functional design, communal activities and an international vibe. And all at amazing prices.

The Boston Hostel has three sleeping arrangements. Dorms have either four or eight bunks, and each dorm has its own bathroom in the hallway, so you are sharing with your roommates. Dorms are available in configurations for male, female and coed clientele. The hostel also has 20 private rooms, suitable for up to three people; each has an ensuite bathroom with a tiny sink and a shower. In the private spaces, there is the bonus of a flat-screen television with DirecTV service.

Dorm guests have their own so-called Custom Bed Oasis — that's the bunk bed — with a good reading light, multiple electrical outlets, an individual locker and a safe for valuables. The ironing boards are handy if you have been backpacking and now have an appointment to meet the parents or the boss.

Linens and towels are supplied; for hygienic reasons, the hostel requests that you don't use your own sleeping bag, which might have been in one too many public places.

The hostel is brimming with energy on all fronts. Travellers from as many as 70 countries come through the lobby. Young and old, they can be seen draped over leather sofas, deep in conversation or madly texting.

The industrial design gives the place a high-tech feeling throughout, with white-painted brick walls, stairways of steel and oak, and exposed pipes. The cafe-



PHOTOS: BEN GEBBO/BOSTON HOSTEL

The new Boston Hostel is all about sharing — both dorm rooms and experiences.

teria tables are topped with recycled aluminum sheeting or reclaimed wooden planks, and each corridor has its own bright colour scheme.

The hostel is in a vibrant neighbourhood between Chinatown and the theatre district, a few blocks from Boston Common and Copley Square.

It has been a major hit — no surprise, given the substantial student power of this New England intellectual hub. The Boston Hostel is across the street from the medical centre of Tufts University and across the Charles River from Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, which are in Cambridge.

“But we don't only have students,” said John Yonce, Hostelling International's director of northeast oper-

ations for the U.S. “Many of our guests come for academic life — students, teachers, researchers and visiting lecturers — but the rest are travellers of all ages.

“The only criteria are that they are at least 18 years old if they are travelling alone, or that they are accompanied by their parents, and that they have a valid passport from any country.”

The Boston Hostel encourages its guests to meet and mingle. It supplies board games, a pool table, a TV lounge, a library, a communal kitchen, a pay-per-use computer room and a self-serve laundry. There are social evenings devoted to trivia, comedy, games or movies.

And the hostel wants its guests to experience the community. Local Bostonians volunteer to guide group out-

ings, which are free or at a reduced cost. They might include bowling; a walk along the historic Freedom Trail; a TGIF pub crawl (for ages 21 and over); a trolley tour of major Boston sights; boat tours along the Charles River; and visits to Fenway Park, the beloved home of the Boston Red Sox. There are tours of Harvard on April 19, May 3 and May 10.

We've saved money on lodging, but we don't want to break the bank on food. The Boston Hostel has your best interests at heart here. A cafeteria-style continental breakfast of pastries and yogurt is included in your stay, and tea and coffee are available all day. The hostel offers cookies at the front desk and a free meal every Wednesday.

For those who like DIY cooking, the district has sev-



The industrial-design dormitory rooms at the Boston Hostel have private lockers and four electrical outlets per bed.

## IF YOU GO

Boston Hostel/Hostelling International Boston, 19 Stuart St., Boston, Mass., 888-464-4872, 617-536-9455, bostonhostel.org.

**Prices fluctuate:** dormitory bunk beds, \$29.99-\$59.99 U.S. per person, per night; private rooms, \$99.99-\$199.99 per night for up to three people, all incl. continental breakfast, free Wi-Fi, activities, all-day coffee corner, Internet, indoor bike storage, TV room, game area,

library, and access to kitchen and laundry room. Extras: Internet kiosks, some guided activities.

**Hostelling International USA:** 888-464-4872, hiusa.org; **Hostelling International Canada:** 800-663-5777, hihostels.ca.

**Boston tourism:** 617-536-4100, bostonusa.com; Massachusetts tourism: 800-227-MASS/6277, massvacation.com.

non-toxic or recycled paint, wood, brick and steel.

Getting around town in green style is easy, too. The T (Boston's subway, short for Transit) has many stops within blocks. And Boston has launched Hubway, a bike-sharing program with more than 130 stations throughout the city, including a recent expansion to Cambridge, Brookline and Somerville. The first 30 minutes are free.

Hostelling International has about 4,000 hostels in 80 countries. The Boston Hostel is one of around 60 establishments of Hostelling International USA. Hostelling International Canada has roughly the same number, including the Montreal Hostel on Mackay St.

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## VERMONT

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