



The magnificent New York skyline (Image: Getty Images)

'I took on the world's tallest building climb in NYC and it was terrifying but worth it'

Steve Graves visited New York and Boston, taking in the Old South Meeting House, the Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum and the floating USS Constitution Museum in the latter city

By Steve Graves

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What better place to start a short tour of New England and **New York** than Boston?

Walkable and wonderful. My base was the Godfrey Hotel which was ideally located in the central Downtown Crossing area – a pedestrianised zone full of shops as well as being the hub of the jewellery industry.

Strolling on the 2.5-mile Freedom Trail through **Boston** is a joy, with so many key attractions contained within a very short distance and historic buildings which tell the story of America's birth seemingly on every corner.

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Soak up the USA history by heading to the Old South Meeting House, the Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum and the floating USS Constitution Museum then on to the Bunker Hill Monument, the 221ft obelisk which marks a major battle from the American War of Independence in 1775.

For more strolling, the Boston Harborwalk features a boardwalk along a 47-mile route (nobody is suggesting you have to do it all!) which takes you past beaches, a busy working port, museums and restaurants.

It was an early start the following day to join an Urban AdvenTours cycle tour where we cycled through Boston's University Campus, Copley Square, the beautiful Back Bay area with its grand brownstone homes and the North End, the city's oldest neighbourhood.



Steve got to take in a game at the Barclays Center (Image: DAILY MIRROR)



Steve made it to near the top of the world (Image: DAILY MIRROR)

Our historic journey continued with lunch at the Union Oyster House, just outside Downtown, which has known only three owners since opening in 1826.

We ate in the very same booth as John F Kennedy regularly did (there's a plaque and sign to prove it).

A visit to this lovely, sports-mad city wouldn't be complete without a tour of the timeless baseball stadium Fenway Park, home to the fabled Boston Red Sox since 1912, which was a real highlight.

Rhode Island, the smallest state in the US, was one of the original 13 British colonies from which the nation was formed, so I was keen to find out a little more.

An hour by train from Boston took us to Westerly in Rhode Island's South County.

It is billed as the "undiscovered" area of the state and South County is a revelation with its beautiful coastline where the grand Ocean House hotel dominates, evoking the five-star glamour of the 1920s.

We chose the classic Weekapaug Inn, founded in 1899, overlooking the Quonochotaug Pond, a large coastal saltwater lagoon.

The next morning takes us from South County to the seaside city of Newport, via a ride on a Rail Explorer – a pedal-powered railroad vehicle which was huge fun.

Less energetic, but quintessentially Newport, is Breakers, the opulent former home of the Vanderbilt family whose grandeur hints at just how desirable Gilded Age families found this part of the world. It has 70 rooms and sits within 13 acres.



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He took in the magnificent Boston skyline (📷 Image: Manchester Evening News)

We channelled that famous dynasty with dinner in the grand Dining Room at the Vanderbilt hotel back in the city centre.

Leaving the quaint, wood-panelled Kingston station for New York City the next morning, I reflected on how Rhode Island feels both contemporary and timeless.

Once in the Big Apple, just over three hours away, we dropped our bags at the Moxy Lower East Side hotel on Bowery, and headed straight to an area institution – Katz’s Deli, for a pastrami Reuben sandwich.

Next it was on to a basketball game featuring the Brooklyn Nets versus the New York Knicks at the Barclays Center in Brooklyn.

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The atmosphere at this clash of the two boroughs was huge. Brooklyn ran out clear winners and the whole experience was a special way to spend a last night in New York, but not before taking in the **City Climb at Hudson Yards**.

We suited up in helmets and harnesses and took to the world’s highest outdoor building ascent.

More than 1,200ft above ground, we slowly climbed a 45-degree external staircase to a platform where we leaned out to look over Manhattan and the Hudson River.

The views were absolutely amazing, when I could bear to look, and the highly professional guides helped make the climb doable even for someone as averse to heights as me.

But I’d file the whole experience under “glad I did it”.



The Hudson River (📷 Image: Handout)

Relieved to be back on solid ground, I enjoyed a stroll along the High Line, a park which was conjured from the remains of a former railroad spur in a feat of urban engineering as wonderfully effective as it is deceptively simple.

This short burst of high-paced city life was a brilliant counterpoint to the more chilled and relaxed charms of Rhode Island.

Combining the two – with Boston offering a nod towards both – proved the perfect way to make the most of five nights on the East Coast.

Stay there: Rooms at The **Godfrey Hotel** in Boston start at around £172 a night room-only.

- Rooms at the **Weekapaug Inn** in Weekapaug, Rhode Island, start at around £370 a night room-only.
- Rooms at the **Brenton Hotel** in Newport, Rhode Island, start at around £205 a night room-only.
- Rooms at the **Moxy Lower East Side hotel** in New York City start at around £164 a night room-only.

Get there: **JetBlue** flies from Gatwick and Heathrow to New York City and Boston from £279 return in Core (economy); Mint (business) return from £1,699; Core/Mint combination from £1,069.

You can also get more information by heading to visittheusa.co.uk.

