



Great Hall in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Secret Free Admission to Boston Museums

Lots of visitors lament the high cost of museum entry fees. Or worse yet, don't even go. Well, here's the answer to high prices: **FREE!** What could be better than that? But in order to get those free entries, you have to know the little secrets and tricks of back-scene Boston.

The mother of all museums in Boston is the **Museum of Fine Arts (MFA)**, where you could literally spend days perusing. Just make sure you include the Egyptian Collection, one of the finest in the world. Admission is by voluntary contribution after 4 PM on Wednesdays. Since the museum is open until 9:45 PM, that gives you plenty of time to sample what the museum has to offer. 465 Huntington Avenue on the "E" Branch of the T Green Line. The closest hotels are the *Midtown Hotel* and *The Colonnade*, both towards Copley Square on Huntington Avenue.

One of the quirkiest museums you'll ever see is the **Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum**, which was built using Isabella's collected architectural artifacts to house her own personal art collection. Free on your birthday and all the time if your name is "Isabella". 280 The Fenway, essentially "behind" the MFA. You can walk here from the *Commonwealth Hotel* in Kenmore Square or the *Best Western Children's Inn* on Longwood Avenue.

The Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) is Boston's newest museum. The building itself is quite interesting and the views of the Waterfront are spectacular. FREE for all from 5 to 9 pm every Thursday for Target Free Thursday Nights and FREE for families (up to 2 adults accompanied by children 12 and under) on the last Saturday of each month with the exception of December. On the new South Boston Waterfront at 100 Northern Avenue, almost across the street from *The Seaport Hotel*.

The Harvard Museum in Cambridge offers free admission to Massachusetts residents on Saturdays from 10 AM to Noon. 485 Broadway in Cambridge. Also, **The Harvard Museum of Natural History** is free for Massachusetts residents every Sunday morning (year-round) from 9:00 am to noon and on Wednesdays from 3:00 to 5:00 pm (September through May). 26 Oxford Street, Cambridge, just past Harvard Yard.

- Alan Maltzman of BostonCityWalks.com