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Raffles Just Opened Its First North American Hotel — and It's One of the Best Places I've Ever Stayed

The new Raffles Boston is finally here, and it's better than we could ever have imagined.

By [Liz Cantrell](#) | Updated on January 2, 2024



The terrace at Raffles Boston, with views of the Boston skyline. Photo:

Courtesy of Raffles Boston

The door was so discreet, I almost walked right past it. But then I noticed the doormen, and the traveler's palm on their uniforms, and the building's façade. I stepped inside the [Raffles Boston](#) and almost immediately, a porter gently took my luggage, and I was whisked into an elevator that took me directly to the 17th floor.

I stepped into the Sky Lobby and took in a three-story floating staircase. All around, floor-to-ceiling windows revealed the [Boston](#) skyline. I was ushered into the Writer's Lounge, a sleek living room space, to have a seat and a drink while a staff member checked me in and introduced me to my butler — a signature of Raffles properties.

Raffles Boston

- All rooms feature Raffles' signature butler service, an always-on-call staff member who can assist with anything you might need.
- The food and beverage program is top-notch. Long Bar has quickly become one of Boston's best spots for after-work drinks, and Amar serves exquisite Portuguese-inspired dishes.
- The atmosphere — the design is breathtaking and the guests are impossibly chic. When you're here, you feel like part of a secret club.

With a welcome like this, it's easy to feel like a celebrity at Raffles Boston — a gleaming, 35 story-tower that debuted in September 2023. The opening represents a big moment for the brand, as it makes its entrance into North America.



The ground floor lobby at Raffles Boston.

Courtesy of Raffles Boston

The original Raffles Singapore opened as a 10-room bungalow in 1887, right on the beach of the South China Sea. Ever since, it has been etched into travel lore and, for many, is an [once-in-a-lifetime stay](#). (It was also where, in 1915, the famous Singapore Sling cocktail was born.)

The property retains the brand's strong Asian design identity — with lush greenery, dark wood, and sophisticated gold and black touches — but Boston's history is also present.

Interiors firm [Stonehill Taylor](#) (known for the [TWA Hotel at JFK](#), [The Ned NoMad](#) in New York, and [The Eliza Jane](#) in New Orleans) took inspiration from Boston's "Emerald Necklace" (a seven-mile network of parks and waterways designed by Frederick Law Olmsted) by placing botanical touches throughout the property. The hotel's copper accents, which reference Paul Revere's copper plating company, are another historical nod.

Here's everything you need to know about the Raffles Boston.

The Rooms

The property has 147 rooms (including 29 suites) on the sixth to 14th floors, so city views are par for the course. My Grand Room had a lovely sitting area, and a marble bathroom with a double vanity and a deep soaking tub. I also appreciated the treats in the private bar — a "Boston sling" cranberry cocktail was waiting for me upon check-in.



A Signature one-bedroom suite at Raffles Boston.

Courtesy of Raffles Boston

The Raffles Presidential Suite (one of the largest in the city, at over 2,000 square feet) features a dining table with seating for 10, a separate kitchen, a full bar with counter seating, and a large living room with a baby grand piano.

Best of all? Every room comes with Raffles' signature butler service. My butler, Steve, walked me to my room after check-in and gave me a room introduction. Throughout my stay, he was just a text message away, helping me with dining reservations, dry cleaning service, and sending some mail —and, thoughtfully, before my departure, he left me a beautiful coffee table book with a handwritten note.

Food and Drink

Raffles Boston will eventually feature five dining concepts. During my November visit, only two restaurants — both helmed by chef George Mendes, who was behind the beloved Michelin-starred New York restaurant Aldea, which closed in 2020 — were open. And I did not eat anywhere else for the two days and nights I spent there. The spaces were that inviting, and the menus that delicious.

Right now, Long Bar & Terrace — which serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner — is *the* place to go in Boston for drinks and small plates. On the 17th floor, it has some of the best views in the city, and it was already packed when I walked in at 5:30 p.m. I ordered a Back Bay Manhattan, and spicy anchovy toast, served on grilled sourdough, with cultured butter and tomato conserva. (In the morning, I had a rolled omelette.)



A seating area at Amar, one of the restaurants at Raffles Boston.

Courtesy of Raffles Boston

The main restaurant, Amar, serves modern Portuguese cuisine, and the emphasis on seafood speaks to Boston's maritime past and cultural history — in the 19th century, many Portuguese immigrants came to southeast Massachusetts to work in the whaling and fishing industries, and the city still has a prominent Portuguese community. (Chef Mendes himself, who was raised in New England, is from a Portuguese family.)

I found the chef's five-course tasting menu at Amar indulgent and well-considered — each dish outdid the last. First, Japanese mackerel with pickled radish, cucumber, and Osetra caviar, followed by salt cod with crispy potato, onion, parsley, and white truffle. Up next was Maine lobster Açorda with lemon sorrel and a quail egg, before a duck breast with Portuguese spices, matsutake mushrooms, and burgundy black truffle. The meal finished off with a citrus flan with vanilla bean.

This winter at Raffles, Mendes will open a speakeasy called Blind Duck, as well as Café Pastel, a street-level patisserie. An Italian restaurant, La Padrona, by chef Jody Adams, will also debut in 2024.

Experiences and Amenities

The Guerlain spa — which opened in December and was designed by the Rockwell Group — features three treatment rooms with private hydrotherapy baths, showers and bathrooms, and a couples treatment room. A sauna, steam room, and ice showers are also available.

Guerlain products are used throughout, and one of the signature treatments is the "Boston energy" massage, intended to relieve stiffness, soreness, and sluggishness from city life with the use of Signature Guerlain Balm and Oil and hot stones.

The stunning 65-foot lap pool is beside floor-to-ceiling windows that overlook the city, and the fitness center also features exceptional views.



A premier king room at Raffles Boston.

Courtesy of Raffles Boston

Accessibility

Throughout the property are wide doorways and hallways, and spacious elevators for any wheelchair users. The hotel offers accessible rooms with mobility and hearing access across several room categories, including in a deluxe king room (which can also have two queens), premier king, grand king, and signature and premier suites. All are equipped with roll-in showers and tub grab bars. The pool and hot tub both also both have chair lifts.

Location

Raffles Boston is in the charming Back Bay neighborhood, close to the Boston Public Library and the Boston Public Garden, as well as high-end shopping on Newbury Street and in Copley Square.

Finding the Best Value

Rooms start at \$1,300 a night. Raffles is part of the Accor network; Accor loyalists can redeem points toward their stay. Raffles is also a member of the [American Express Fine Hotels + Resorts program](#), which entitles Amex platinum cardholders staying at Raffles to complimentary breakfast and hotel credits.