

# A gourmand's joyride

Driving through some of the New England states offers endless opportunities to savour the kind of food and drinks that are served with illustrious histories and TV show bragging rights.

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Martin Kreuzer/AGE/Dimodia

Shucked oysters at Union Oyster House in Boston—reputedly the oldest restaurant in the US. The menu of this legendary restaurant includes local favourites such as their signature clam chowder and other fresh shellfish served with their “World Famous Cocktail Sauce”.



▲ **Left: The Zesty Lemon Lobster Roll, with lemon-pepper seasoning, which was shortlisted as the Best Sandwich in America from the New England region by Adam Richman at the The Galley Restaurant & Pub in Naples, Maine. Right: Lobster rolls with a side of onion rings or potato wedges, coated in a light batter and fried till crispy, is the quickest selling item on The Galley menu.**

If you were to see a standard hamburger at any fast food chain or a street cart you wouldn't imagine what the hamburger actually evolved from. This much-loved sandwich, which, in fact, was the actual root of 'fast food' in the very literal sense of the phrase, has its humble origins in the small city of New Haven in Connecticut. I discovered it during my week-long East Coast drive from Montreal to Harrisburg—the capital of Pennsylvania—which turned out to be quite the journey of 'the firsts' and 'the bests'.

#### Call of the crustaceans

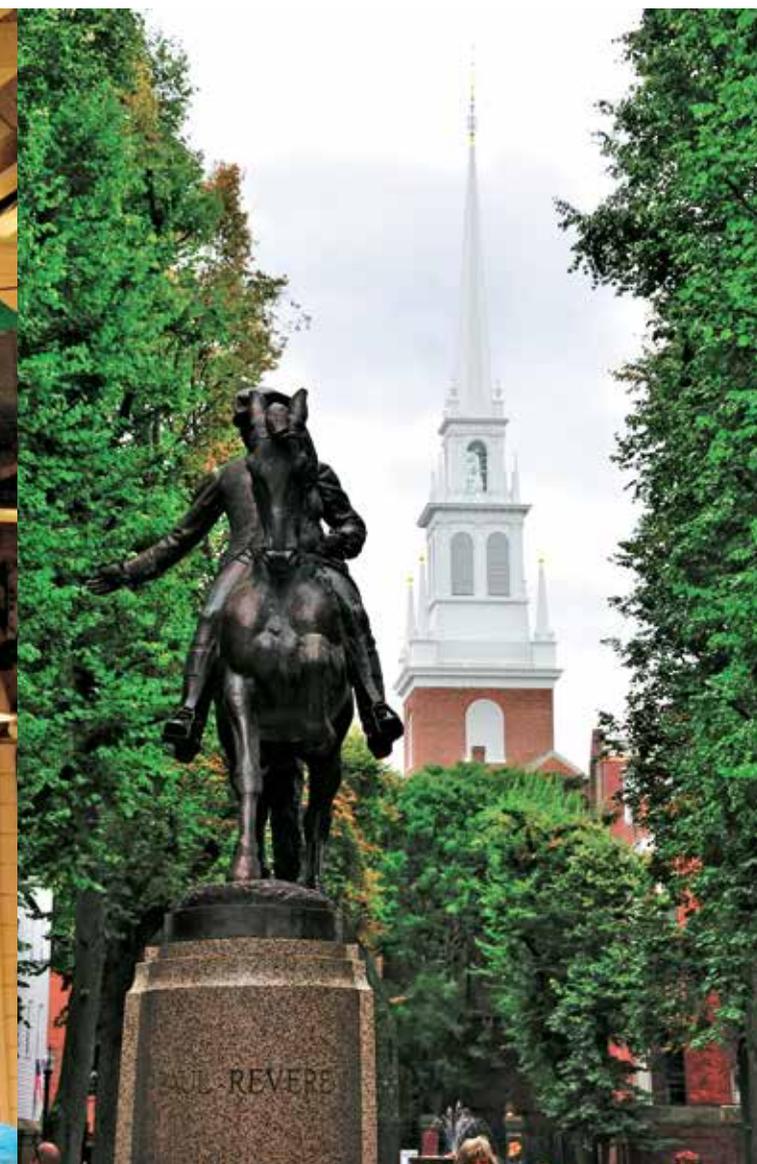
When we started off from Montreal, I had a brief idea of what the route would be and the map told me that I could chart a path across the US states of Vermont and New Hampshire and head into Boston which was my first halt. But a little detour would take me through Maine and its district of lakes which was supposed to be a much prettier drive. Since we weren't at all pressed for time we decided to take the leisurely route to Boston. It was during the drive that I

recalled watching an episode of the famous food reality show called *Man Vs Food* in which the host Adam Richman ventures out to find the 'Best Sandwich in America' and the sandwich that made it into the running from the New England region was the Zesty Lemon Lobster Roll from a restaurant called The Galley Restaurant & Pub in the little village of Naples, Maine. This roll eventually won the title of the Best Lobster Roll in the nation.

So a quick input into the GPS revealed that Naples was indeed in the general direction

of our travel and we could be there for lunch. Sitting on the banks of Long Lake and Brandy Pond, Naples is a very pretty village and the Galley Restaurant & Pub is hidden away behind an A2M Variety gas station and is quite easy to miss. If you worship seafood then the menu of this simple unassuming eating place is your holy book. I think the pages are laminated to prevent them from drool damage. Shrimp, scallops, scampi, mussels and clams all feature in the appetisers as well as mains and there is a whole section of various lobster rolls. Of course we did order

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the award-winning lobster roll and also sampled a fair bit of the menu in addition to that. Everything was smashingly delicious.

#### Boston by the bite

The seatbelts were stretched taut as we continued driving past pretty lakes till Portland and then along the Atlantic on the I-95 all the way to Boston.

The city of the tea party, Boston is steeped in the history of the American Revolution. And revolutionary hero Paul Revere's statue stands in front of the old North Church from whose belfry arch tower Paul Revere instructed his friend Robert Newman, the sexton, to hang 'One if by land, and two if by sea' lanterns to warn colonists about the British Army's movement before setting off for his famous midnight ride immortalised in Longfellow's *Paul Revere's Ride*.

That night in Boston we dined at another restaurant that has made it into record

▲ Clockwise from above: Paul Revere historic Midnight Ride has been immortalised in the Paul Revere Monument—one of the most photographed statues in Boston; At the Union Oyster House, while hanging at the bar is a must, make sure to also check out JFK's favourite booth, the Kennedy Booth in the upstairs dining room; The Quincy Market in Boston is a bustling hub of food stalls, restaurants, shops and entertainment acts.

books. The Union Oyster House, dating back to 1826, is not only the oldest restaurant in Boston but also the oldest restaurant in continuous service in the US. While they serve regular meals too, the best place to be is at the semi-circular Union Bar where the staff shucks oysters with an ease that comes from years of practice. There are sauces and other condiments to add flavour but according to me nothing can enhance the delicious taste of a freshly shucked oyster.

#### The Granddaddy of burgers

Even though we called it a day in Boston, determined to go easy on food the next day, I couldn't forgo stopping at Louis' Lunch at New Haven in Connecticut on our drive from Boston to New York. This is where the burger was born, from the very desire to have a quick bite or food on the go—what we today call fast food.

The story goes that proprietor Louis Lassen was just shutting his eating joint for the day when a customer rushed in and said he



▲ Above: At Louis' Lunch, they want you to taste the meat. So forget ketchup and mustard and relish the patty, grilled in the original vertical broilers that date back to 1898. Below: No need to look for a time-machine to see how the first hamburger sandwich ever made tasted; just head to Louis Lunch—the birthplace of the beloved sandwich. Use Louis' Lingo and order a 'cheese works' if you want onion, tomato and a cheese spread with your sandwich.

wanted something in a jiffy. Lassen threw in some trimmings of beef into the grinder, compressed the mince into a patty, grilled it and slapped the resulting patty in between two toasted slices of bread and sent the man on his way. And that is how the burger was born.

Stepping into Louis' Lunch today is like going back a century. The cast iron grills date back to the century before last; the burger still comprises a patty between two slices of bread. What has changed is that the meat is not hurriedly minced with spare trimmings—rather the patty is made of a proprietary blend of five meat varieties and grilled fresh for you. The only condiments allowed are cheese, onion and tomatoes; ketchup or mustard is an absolute no-no. The reason behind this is the fact that customers come here to taste the flavour of a lovingly hand-created burger, not



▲ At the Martin Guitar Museum, go on a fascinating trip down a memory lane that is paved with historical instruments, memorabilia and photographs.

mass-produced ketchup or mustard. If you like the intense, uncomplicated flavour of meat then you'll absolutely relish the taste of the original uncomplicated Louis' Lunch burger.

### The tippie to top it off

After a few days exploring the buzzy Big Apple we continued our road trip heading out of New York State and into Pennsylvania and stopped at a little town called Nazareth, which is the home of CF Martin & Co acoustic guitars. Even if you don't play a guitar but are simply fond of music, you should visit the Martin factory. It is here that, arguably, the world's best acoustic guitars are lovingly handmade. The free guided tour through the museum is a revelation into the science, patience, dedication and precision that goes into building a guitar. When we were on the tour, the definitive moment was watching the custom guitar that Eric Clapton had ordered being strung. There is also a museum that is filled with historic guitars including the first guitar to go to space and the guitars that The Beatles took to India, which they used to compose 42 songs.

We thought we were done with the stops but the GPS threw up a route passing temptingly close to Pottsville, an old mining town. This was also the town in which a young German immigrant from Württemberg called David G Yuengling arrived in the early part of the 19th century. He set up the



▲ Clockwise from above: On a tour of the factory floor, a guitar maker shows how a guitar is brought to life at CF Martin & Co; At the Visitors Center, don't pass on the chance to play some of the Limited Edition guitars; At America's oldest brewery—the Yuengling brewery.

Eagle Brewery in Pottsville which grew to become the D G Yuengling and Son brewery—America's oldest brewery. The tour through the brewery was informative and fascinating and the sampling of the product range at the end of the tour was like the creamy head on top of a refreshing pint of beer. The tour leader also pointed out the building opposite the brewery which was the Yuengling Dairy since the company had to resort to making ice cream to survive during the Prohibition. But within hours of the Prohibition being called off in 1933, a truck of beer left the

brewery for the White House to satiate a thirsty FDR.

Maybe it's their German roots, but the brewery makes remarkably good beer. If you like dark and caramel beers then you should try their Porter or Black & Tan.

When we finally arrived in Harrisburg I looked back upon this road trip and realised that what was supposed to be a simple drive from one city to another had turned out to be quite a jamboree of food, drink and history.



## Fact file

### Getting there

Jet Airways has daily flights to Newark from Mumbai and Delhi via Brussels. From Newark, a short journey westwards will bring you to Nazareth and then Pottsville. After that you can head northeast to New Haven, Boston, Portland and Naples.

### Accommodation

The New England region of the US is legendary for its charming inns and B&Bs. In Naples, you could try Augustus Bove House ([www.naplesmaine.com](http://www.naplesmaine.com)) or Center Lovell Inn ([www.centerlovelinn.com](http://www.centerlovelinn.com)) for some classy, countryside quaintness. Boston has no dearth of options to suit all budgets and preferences. Home of Yale University, New Haven is a big city also offering a plethora of options—from budget to big budget. Nazareth in PA actually doesn't have too many options. Your best bet is the self-explanatory Classic Victorian Bed and Breakfast ([www.classicvictorianestateinn.com](http://www.classicvictorianestateinn.com)). In Pottsville, the Victorian Partridge House Bed & Breakfast ([www.thepartridgehouse.com](http://www.thepartridgehouse.com)) is a recommended option.

### For more information:

Log on to [www.discoveramerica.com](http://www.discoveramerica.com). For establishment-specific information, log on to [www.thegalleyseafoodpub.com](http://www.thegalleyseafoodpub.com), [www.unionoysterhouse.com](http://www.unionoysterhouse.com), [www.louislunch.com](http://www.louislunch.com), [www.martinguitar.com](http://www.martinguitar.com) and [www.yuengling.com](http://www.yuengling.com).