



SALEM



The Merchant

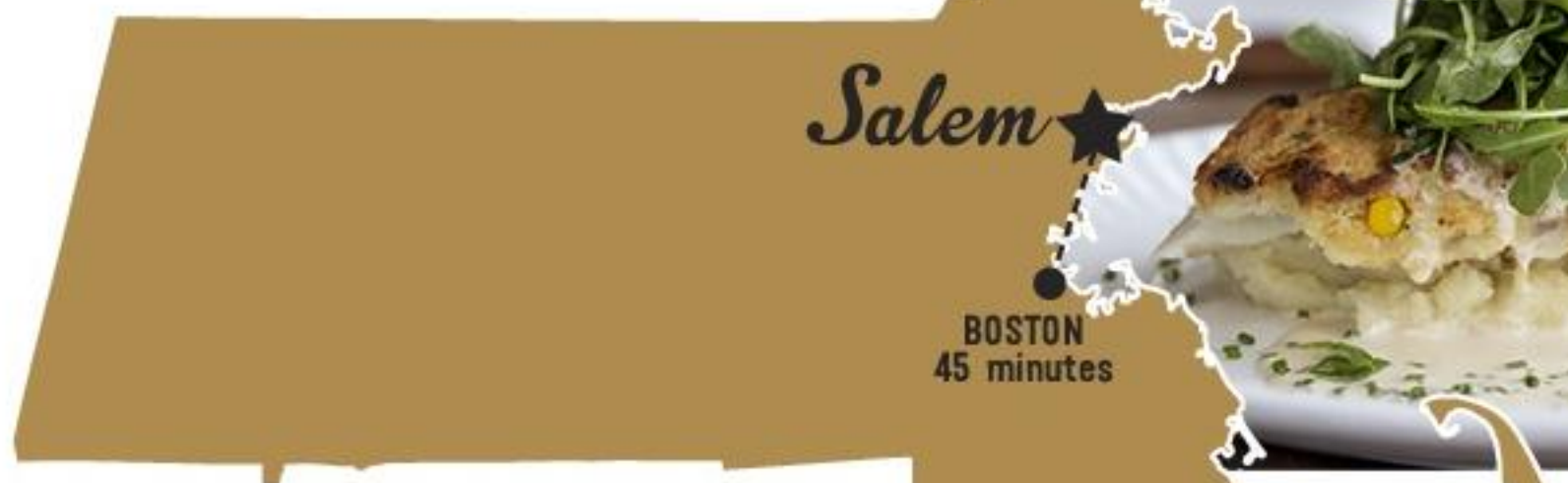


Sea Level Oyster Bar

No other place conjures up the Halloween spirit like this historic New England town.

It's fairly common

to see people dressed in pointy hats and black cloaks haunting the streets of Salem, MA—even when it's not Halloween. Home to the infamous 1692 witch trials, the town has become a year-round destination for self-proclaimed witches and those who are fascinated by them. In October, about 500,000 people come to Salem to celebrate Halloween. Ghost tours, costume parties and séances are the main draws, but there are so many other reasons to visit, including the picturesque North Shore coastline, a thriving restaurant scene and, of course, apple cider doughnuts.



Salem Haunted Happenings

EAT

Sea Level Oyster Bar, on Pickering Wharf overlooking the harbor, has the best views in town. Grab a table on the deck for oysters, seafood pie, freshly caught fish or hot butter-drenched lobster rolls. The restaurant's indoor-outdoor bar is a local after-work favorite. sealeveloysterbar.com

ALSO: Try the gastropub **Mercy Tavern** for New England-style comfort food (burgers with bacon jam, Boston baked beans) and live blues (mercysalem.com), and **Coffee Time Bake Shop** for apple cider doughnuts and cream-filled bismarcks (coffeetimebakeshop.net).

DO

You can't visit Salem in October without participating in at least one Halloween event. The Saturday before the holiday is typically the town's busiest day, but all month long you'll encounter costume parades, street fairs, ghost-story readings and haunted houses as part of the **Salem Haunted Happenings** festival. hauntedhappenings.org

ALSO: Check out the horror and sci-fi art exhibit at the **Peabody Essex Museum** (pem.org), America's oldest continuously operating museum (founded in 1799), and pay a visit to **Ye Olde Pepper Candy Companie** for lemon and peppermint Gibralters, considered the country's first commercial candy (oldepeppercandy.com).

STAY

When George Washington visited Salem in 1789, he stayed at **The Merchant**—and you can, too. The recently renovated boutique hotel has 11 rooms (including a suite), each with a wood-burning fireplace. From \$349; themerchantsalem.com

ALSO: Consider **The Hotel Salem**, which opened in September in a former clothing store (from \$289; thehotelsalem.com), or **The Salem Inn**, a set of three neighboring historic houses converted to bed-and-breakfasts (from \$234; salemminma.com).