

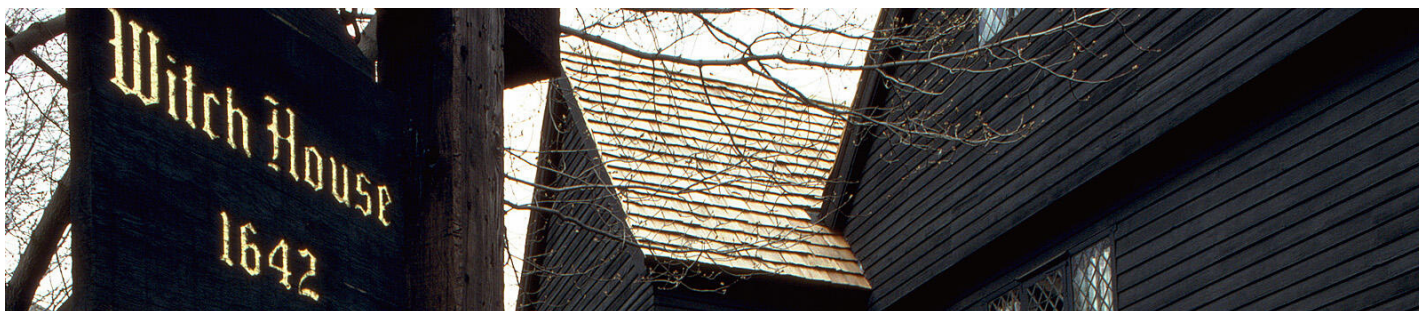


# COUNTDOWN TO SALEM

PLAN YOUR TRIP TO  
HISTORIC SALEM, MA

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## HELLO THERE

So you're planning a trip to Salem. How exciting!! There is truly no place like it and I hope this workbook helps you organize yourself. Before we begin, I want to just point out that there is no right or wrong way to do Salem. Just visiting the witch city and enjoying yourself is doing it right. There are no absolutes. The goal of this workbook is just to help you get the logistics sorted so you can have the best trip possible.

Be sure to follow along with me online as you plan and keep an eye on my blog for events, travel tips and more. I can be found on Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest @thingstodoinsalem and on Twitter @witchcityguide. Feel free to tag me in your pictures, I love seeing what your trip was like. Now...let's get started!



# One: Where are you staying?

The first thing I suggest that you do is book your hotel. This goes extra, double, triple for visits in the fall. Most people secure their hotel room for fall visits six to twelve months in advance, so be sure to get that settled first.

## Looking to stay in Salem?

Head over to my website and hit “Accommodations” in the navigation bar to see what your options are. Salem is home to many hotels, bed and breakfasts and Airbnb locations.

## Discounts and savings

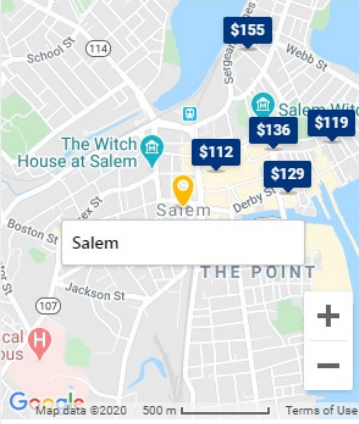
Things to do in Salem is an affiliate of many travel websites such as Travelocity, Tripadvisor, Booking.com, VRBO and more. As such, they often send me discount codes, sales and other info to pass along to you guys. One of the best ways to keep tabs on this is via the search tool on my website from Booking.com. It updates in real time with discounts and sales on accommodations in Salem.

BOOK YOUR TRIP TO SALEM

Salem, MA, USA

Mon, Mar 2 Tue, Mar 3

Search



THE SALEM

THE POINT

Booking.com





# *One: Where are you staying?*

## **What if you're trying to book an October hotel room late in the game?**

First check the search tool in the sidebar that I just mentioned. If you are looking the day of your trip and see a room shown in there, grab it. That means there is a room open.

Second, call the hotel directly. If you have a certain hotel in mind that you'd like to stay in, give them a ring. They might have cancellations they're trying to fill that happened same day. You might also ask if they have a wait list or call list while you have them on the phone, just in case they're keeping a log.

Next, take a good look at the hotel's social media accounts and websites. This last Haunted Happenings season I saw many hotels post on Facebook that they had a last minute cancellation. Follow the hotels you're checking out on Facebook, Instagram and hop onto their newsletter list if they have one. You never know when a room might pop up.



The background of the image is a photograph of a red brick building. It features three windows with white frames and dark shutters. The middle window has a small light on inside. The text is overlaid on a dark, semi-transparent banner that spans the width of the image.

# *One: Where are you staying?*

Now that you've hit social media, I'd suggest setting up alerts online. If you have a certain site you like to book travel through, see if they have an option to send you notifications when rooms open up. Having that pop into your email in real time might help you land a hotel.

If you do see a room become available and you want it – book right then. The opening might go quickly so don't delay.

Last, be flexible with your travel dates, if possible. You're way more likely to find an opening during the week than a weekend in October. Being open minded can help a lot if you're really trying to squeeze a visit in.





# WHERE ARE YOU STAYING?

Fill in the blanks below with your information.

Hotel name, phone number & address:

Booking info/reservation numbers:



# TWO: IF YOU'RE BRINGING THE CAR

Parking in Salem can be challenging. The best option is parking at your hotel if you can. Check with the place you're staying to see if they have a parking lot. You can also find a run down of this information on my website by searching "which hotels in Salem, MA having parking?" in the search box in the side bar.

Does your hotel have parking?

\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

If no, what are the two closest lots or garages you could use?

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# *Three: If you're not bringing the car*

A common logistics question I get a lot on social media is getting into Salem from the airport, from Boston, from along the North Shore, etc.

The first option I would consider is the train. There is a station located right in Salem, only a short walk from all of the action. If you go to the MBTA website ([www.mbta.com/stops/Salem](http://www.mbta.com/stops/Salem)) you can find information on tickets, schedule, etc.

Second, I'd look into ride share apps like Uber or Lyft. Check rates ahead of time to see what the fees are - it might be easier to hop into a ride share and head right into Salem on your own schedule instead of working around the train's schedule.

Last, if you're coming from the Boston area during operating season you could take the ferry. You can read all about that here: [www.salemferry.com](http://www.salemferry.com)

To read more details on any of the above options, head over to my website and click "Travel" in the navigation.



# Four: Attractions

Salem is home to many awesome attractions, restaurants, shops, etc. Many of the things to do around Salem (especially seasonal ones) offer the option to purchase tickets ahead of time, which is great. If you're coming from a serious distance or during peak season I would strongly suggest buying tickets ahead of time for anything that you can. It would be a shame to miss something you had your hopes set on. Use the lines below to list out the top things on your "must see" list and go through the check boxes buying tickets ahead for anything that you can.

Attraction:

Tickets: \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Attraction:

Tickets: \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Attraction:

Tickets: \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Attraction:

Tickets: \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Attraction:

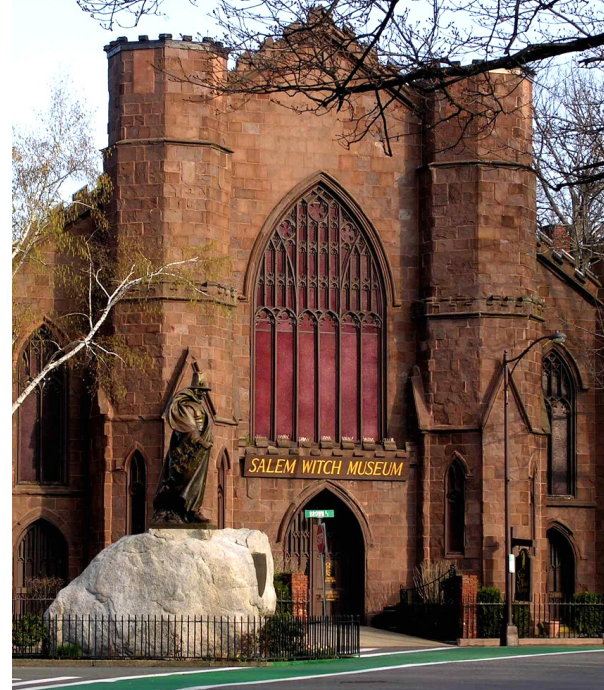
Tickets: \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Attraction:

Tickets: \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Attraction:

Tickets: \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No



This map of downtown Salem, Massachusetts, provides a comprehensive view of the city's urban landscape. Key features include:

- Streets:** A grid system with major thoroughfares like Washington Street, Essex Street, and Federal Street. Waterfront streets such as Derby Street and Congress Street are also visible.
- Landmarks and Museums:** Notable locations include the Peabody Essex Museum, Essex Institute, Salem Maritime National Historic Site, and the Salem Witch Museum.
- Green Spaces:** The Salem Common is a prominent green area in the center of the map.
- Waterfront:** The harbor area is shown with various piers, docks, and waterfront buildings.
- Points of Interest:** Numerous smaller locations are marked, including the John Ward House, Hawthorne Hotel, and various restaurants and bars.

The map uses a color-coded system to distinguish between different types of areas: green for parks and common spaces, blue for water bodies, and various shades of gray and tan for urban areas and streets. Icons and labels are used to identify specific buildings and points of interest.



Now group those attractions together by proximity by writing them down in the squares below. This will help you make sure you don't miss anything or spend time wandering back and forth if you're on a time crunch.

A large, empty square box with a double-line border. The corners are rounded, and the box is intended for writing down attraction names grouped by proximity.A large, empty square box with a double-line border. The corners are rounded, and the box is intended for writing down attraction names grouped by proximity.A large, empty square box with a double-line border. The corners are rounded, and the box is intended for writing down attraction names grouped by proximity.A large, empty square box with a double-line border. The corners are rounded, and the box is intended for writing down attraction names grouped by proximity.



# FIVE: TIME FRAMES FOR TICKETS

This question is probably in the top ten most asked! How far in advance should things be booked for your Salem, MA vacation? The following is a little run down of my opinions on the matter.

## Hotel & Accommodations

If you're visiting during the fall or around Halloween your hotel should be booked first and ASAP. Rooms fill up fast, sometimes up to a year in advance so don't delay on this one if you want to stay in Salem. Other times of the year you are likely okay booking within a few months of your trip.

If you're coming into Salem (not in the fall) for a certain festival or event you might want to allow for a little wiggle room and book a tiny bit earlier, just in case.

## Tickets for Halloween/Haunted Happenings events

Tickets for October events can go quickly depending on what they are, so I suggest purchasing as soon as you can. An example of an October event you might want to get tickets for quickly is the Hawthorne Hotel's Halloween ball.

## Smaller scale Halloween events

In addition to the larger scale Halloween events, there are smaller ones all over the city. Tickets for these ones, in my opinion, can be waited on a tiny bit. I still wouldn't wait until the very end but I'd secure your hotel and bigger ticket events first.



# FIVE: TIME FRAMES FOR TICKETS

## Salem, MA weddings

Just like a wedding in any other location, I'd secure your vendors and venue at least a year out. This will allow time for you to plan logistics, have money for deposits, etc.

Be sure to head over to my other website, [SalemMAWedding.com](http://SalemMAWedding.com) for tons of info regarding getting married in the witch city.

## Non Halloween events other times of the year

These tickets are easier to wait on than Halloween ones. I still wouldn't wait until the last second if you have the option to secure it ahead of time but you have way more wiggle room when it's not the fall.





# Six: What should you bring?

You're likely going to be on your feet for long stretches and that backpack or purse that is super full is probably going to be bothersome after a while. I'd stick to the basics and remove items that you aren't going to need. What are some other things you may want to have on you?

## A camera

This one should be pretty obvious. Salem is gorgeous and there are many landmarks and historic locations that are just begging to be captured. A cell phone camera will do just fine but you're definitely going to want to take pictures.

## Cash

There are still a small number of businesses in Salem that are cash only. There are others that ask a minimum purchase amount before you can use a credit card as well, so having a little bit of cash is a good idea. This also comes in handy for tipping Salem's buskers!

## A loose itinerary or plan

This will just make things easier and eliminate walking in circles. This is particularly important when visiting in October when crowds and lines are at their peak.

## Layers

New England weather is known for being unpredictable. There have been Halloween seasons in Salem where I didn't even need a coat and others where I was bundled up from head to toe. Dress in and bring layers!



# Six: What should you bring?

## Comfortable shoes

I can't stress this one enough. Salem is a walking city and the bricks and stones under your feet have been there for a really, really long time. They are uneven, spaced at different heights and have gaps in between in some places. You're going to be on your feet a lot on variable terrain so sneakers are a good idea. Uncomfortable shoes, heels and the like are a poor choice.



SALEM WITCH MUSEUM

Salem  
Witch  
Museum  
1692



# SEVEN : SALEM WITH THE KIDS

Are you coming into Salem with the family? Questions regarding kid friendly activities are high up on the list of common ones I receive which is why I wanted to include some info on that here. Salem has many kid and family friendly options available, the following are just a few ideas for you.

## Hop onto the Salem Trolley

The Trolley is a great way to sight see with kids for a few reasons. First, you don't have to walk or push a stroller. Second, you can use it as transportation throughout the day. Your ticket is good all day, allowing you to hop on and off at their flag stops. Finally, you can see multiple landmarks through the hour long tour in a very effective way, leaving time for other activities you might want to include in your day.

## Candlepin bowling at Flatbread Pizza Co.

Stop in for some delicious pizza for lunch and knock down some pins with the kiddos. Bowling is a great way to allow them to burn up some energy.

## Catch a showing of Cry Innocent: The People vs. Bridget Bishop

Now, this one requires some discretion on your part as the parent. Cry Innocent is a mock 1600's witch trial where you as an audience member are part of the jury, deciding the fate of Bridget Bishop. This attraction would be best suited for older children (not toddlers) as it could be potentially a little scary due to the content. It also lasts about 45 minutes so smaller children might have trouble sitting still. Also please keep in mind that Cry Innocent doesn't run the entire year, it is seasonal, so check their website for schedules and tickets.

## Swing by Wynott's Wands

This is one of my favorite places to peek into as I walk by. Are the kids into Harry Potter?? Well, Wynott's Wands is a remake of the wand store from the books. Believe me when I say they nailed it. Absolutely worth checking out with the family.



# SEVEN : SALEM WITH THE KIDS

Take some pictures at Witch Pix

Dress up like witches and wizards and have your picture taken with Witch Pix. They offer different backgrounds, props, costumes, etc. for everyone. Take some fun pictures to remember your trip into the witch city!

Visit the New England Pirate Museum

Are the kids into Jack Sparrow? Love everything pirates? Swing by the Pirate Museum to learn and relive adventures of Captains Kidd and Blackbeard.

Play some games at Bit Bar

Now yes, this is a bar, so keep that in mind. However, it's also an arcade and restaurant and accompanied minors are welcome before 8PM. After that, it's 21+. So depending on how old the kiddos are exactly, this could be fun. If they're super young though, you might want to skip this one.

Get your sugar fix at Ye Olde Pepper Companie

Swing by to get your hands on their famous gibralters and blackjacks. They also have tons of other sweets to pick from and their set up is super cute.

Tour the Friendship

Walk the Wharf in Salem, check out the Friendship and check with the Maritime NPS about coming aboard to learn about Salem's maritime history.

Wander the Salem Wax Museum

This is an open style gallery featuring key figures and situations in Salem's history. It also leads into an interactive area where you can learn knot tying and do some gravestone rubbings on recreated headstones from the old burying point cemetery.



## EIGHT: WHAT IF IT RAINS?

It's New England...the weather pretty much does whatever it likes, as I have mentioned. So what if you're in Salem and the clouds are rolling in? I have a few indoor options for you right here. Some of the options are the same as the "with kids" list you just read...that's because I wanted to include some family friendly ideas here, too.

### The Peabody Essex Museum

The PEM is great, weather problems or not. They have multiple exhibits at once which are always very well done. I strongly recommend stopping in if you have to stay indoors for a bit.

### Sip coffee at Jaho

This one is simple, but always relaxing in my opinion. Grab a comfy chair in the window and watch it come down. Jaho offers everything from regular coffee and tea to sandwiches, snacks and creative caffeinated mixtures of their own. Bring a book or your laptop and chill a bit. Maybe the weather will pass while you read.

### The House of the Seven Gables

The Gables is a great rainy day option because you are (for the most part) inside the main home. You get to wander, see some amazing history and brave the staircase if you are okay with enclosed spaces. However, when going from house to house once the main tour is done you might get a little bit wet. You also miss out on sitting in their GORGEOUS gardens outside and taking in the view of the water. Lastly, I think their gift shop is lovely but I'll let you make the call on this one yourself.



## EIGHT: WHAT IF IT RAINS?

### Cinema Salem

Wander into the Witch City Mall and catch a movie at Cinema Salem! Once you're done I'd definitely suggest a stop into Jodi Bee Bakes for some delicious treats and coffee.

### Cry Innocent: The People Versus Bridget Bishop

If you're in Salem while Cry Innocent is showing I would absolutely suggest checking it out. It's a reenactment of a 1600's witch trial where you're able to interact with the cast and decide as a jury member what you think should happen. Tickets are available in multiple locations around town.

### Bit Bar

Play retro video games, grab a bite to eat and have some drinks while you wait out the rain! Bit Bar also hosts events, so be sure to check out their website for trivia and more.

### Visit one of Salem's breweries or distillery

Salem is home to Notch Brewing, Far From the Tree Cider and Deacon Giles Distillery. They are each awesome in their own way, hold events and are well loved in the witch city. Pro tip: The Salem Spirits Trolley will bring you around for some of the city's spirits on the go! Check out their website for tour info and tickets if they're operating while you're visiting.

### Go bowling

Flatbread Salem has four candlepin bowling lanes that are just waiting to be enjoyed. Have some pizza and a drink while you knock some pins down!



## EIGHT: WHAT IF IT RAINS?

Stop into a New Age shop for a read

Salem is home to many psychics and tarot readers, so if you're only waiting a bit for the storm to blow over consider getting your cards read. I know this one might not be for everyone, but there are plenty of folks who like the idea of a glimpse into the future. Be sure you feel comfortable with the shop and individual you have selected as you may not vibe with everyone.



# Nine: It's just a bunch of Hocus Pocus

Pretty much anyone interested in coming to Salem will quickly discover that many areas of Salem were used in the filming of the movie Hocus Pocus. It tends to be a major draw, so I figured a quick list here of the Salem locations was appropriate.

- The Old Town Hall
- 4 Ocean Ave. Salem, MA (please note this is a private residence!)
- The Ropes Mansion
- Pioneer Village
- The Salem Common
- Phillips Elementary School on the Salem Common

If you want more info on any of these locations, just search “Hocus Pocus filming locations” in the search tool in the sidebar of my website and you can find an entire post dedicated to it.





# TEN: 5 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SALEM, MA

There is so much to know and learn about our beloved witch city. What are a few things you should know before visiting?

First up is an obvious one and something I have said many times – if you're visiting in the fall, there are going to be crowds. Salem brings in tons of tourists annually, the majority of them coming during October. Be aware that there will be lots of people, potential lines for attractions and restaurants, road closures and more. Be aware of your surroundings as you travel in and around the witch city during the fall.

Everyone associates Salem with the witch trials of course, however Salem has an extensive history relating to the sea, trade, spices, the National Guard, historic figures and more. There are many areas in the witch city that relate to this and are accessible to tourists. So my next item is to please be respectful of the history. Salem is home to historic buildings, landmarks and burial grounds so please watch your step, when in doubt: don't touch and be mindful of the city. We need to keep it in tact for all to enjoy.

On your visit to Salem, you might be looking for something a little spooky to do, and believe me you're in good company. Many tourists come into the city for its creepy vibes. However, know that no place in Salem has been **confirmed** to be haunted or is advertised as confirmed haunted. There is speculation and certain places you will hear tourists and locals alike talk about, however nothing is 100%. Some of those "talked about" areas include: The Hawthorne Hotel, Turner's Seafood at Lyceum Hall, Wicked Good Books, Bunghole package store, Bit Bar and The Merchant. Just know that it would be questionable for someone to try to sell you on a place or attraction being 100% confirmed haunted.



# TEN: 5 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SALEM, MA

Speaking of “vibes” and all things witchy, Salem is home to many New Age shops, or shops that cater to practitioners of Wicca, Witchcraft or Pagan based paths. Don’t let that throw you, it’s entirely normal and there are many people in Salem who practice those faiths openly. It’s not uncommon to see individuals walking around with jewelry that reflect this or dressed in a certain way for their faith. Don’t be surprised and don’t hesitate to ask a shop owner a question regarding something they offer in their store. Most are more than happy to answer genuine questions and willing to help spread knowledge.

Last is the fact that Salem is home to a thriving art community. Outside of the spooky vibes and presentation, Salem hosts an arts festival, an ice sculpture festival, is home to the Peabody Essex Museum, Creative North Shore and more. Many streets are decorated with art thanks to the Punto Urban Art Museum project so be sure to have your camera handy to snap pictures of the gorgeous street art. It’s not all jump scares and witches here in Salem, the city has so much more to offer than just that.



## VISITING IN OCT. 2021

Oh god. I have a feeling that this fall is going to be insane, you guys. If you haven't already booked your hotel, you're probably not going to be able to stay right in Salem. I'd suggest heading over to my website and clicking the "accommodations" link in the navigation. That page will give you options around Salem that may have vacancies.

When you visit this fall, you're going to want to do a few things. First, book anything and everything that you can ahead of time. There are likely going to be crazy crowds due to the cancellations from last year and the fact that Halloween falls on a weekend.

Next, bring your patience and understanding as always. The fall is busy any year but I feel like this fall is going to be another level. Be patient with your servers, store employees and more. They are doing the best they can.

Third, be sure to keep an eye on local travel restrictions and mandates. Hopefully we are all in the clear by then but make sure you're up to date on what will be expected of you during your visit to our city.

Finally, please note that we do not know exactly which events will be happening this fall just yet. Some are approved and in the works, others are still TBD. Keep an eye on my website and social media, the calendar on my website, the city of Salem's websites, The Salem Chamber of Commerce, Haunted Happenings and Creative North Shore for information as it becomes available.



# THANK YOU SO MUCH!

I hope you found all of this information helpful and I hope you have an amazing trip into Salem. I am honored that you turned to me as a resource and I am happy to help.

Feel free to tag me in your pictures on social media to show me what you did (I love that!) and most importantly, have fun!!

With so much love,  
Alyse

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**Twitter @witchcityguide**