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# 'TIS THE *Boston* SEASON

EAT, DRINK, AND BE MERRY ON A HOLIDAY GETAWAY TO THE BIG CITY.

BY SUSAN DEWEY

There is something about the holidays that brings out the child in all of us, making us wish for that seasonal sparkle. Cape Cod is full of seasonal events galore—but there is something special about a festive getaway in Boston.

Last year, we savored Boston's holiday season—taking in the Boston Ballet's *Nutcracker*, dining at a few restaurants, and getting pampered during several nights stay at the Colonnade Hotel.

Conveniently located at 120 Huntington Avenue, we loved our room at **THE COLONNADE**, a sophisticated European-style hotel that has all the amenities needed for a getaway. The beds here are float-on soft, the décor handsome, the staff attentive—and the cuisine at the hotel's restaurant Brasserie Jo is four-star excellent.

The first night we had a memorable dinner at **BRASSERIE JO**, starting with Le Grand Jo, a melange of seafood delights. Followed by excellent salad choices and main courses to die for (the Coq au Vin here is terrific!), Brasserie Jo is a must-stop for first-rate Boston cuisine.

The next day, we got a helping of holiday cheer at the **NUTCRACKER**, held at the Boston Opera House with stunning choreography, talented students of Boston Ballet School, and memorable musical favorites. This year is the final season of Boston Ballet's current *Nutcracker*. These magnificent sets and costumes will be retired after 20 years on stage. If you can, take in this Boston holiday treasure one last time.

At **KINGSTON STATION** at 25 Kingston Street—steps from the Boston Opera House—those enjoying *The Nutcracker* this season can enjoy a special Nutcracker Tea. Kids and grown-ups can indulge in homemade ice creams like peppermint stick, gingerbread, eggnog, and hot chocolate along with a do-it-yourself sundae bar. On our getaway weekend we enjoyed a delicious brunch at Kingston Station on Sunday: eggs benedict on a fresh croissant, and ultra-light and tasty blueberry pancakes.

After a day spent exploring the **MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS'** superb new American galleries, we decided to take the T to Cambridge for dinner at **THE RUSSELL HOUSE TAVERN** on JFK Street.

We settled into the comfortable lounge area around Russell House's handsome pub-style bar and ordered some hand-crafted cocktails and steaming hot Tavern Pizzas. Russell House also has an excellent entrée menu with classic New England dishes.

Speaking of New England, for a first-rate taste of the seafood our coastal world is famous for be sure to dine at **ISLAND CREEK OYSTER BAR**. This is a hip spot at 500 Commonwealth Avenue—we loved the décor, all oyster-colored cool grays, beige tones, and blues with walls decorated with millions of netted shells. The oysters here are salt-spray fresh, culled from several sources from Cuttyhunk to Maine. If you love simply superb seafood, don't miss the ICOB.

We enjoyed a terrific night's sleep at The Colonnade (find out about the hotel's creative Frosty Friday's package—if it's 20 degrees outside at 5 p.m., guests pay \$20 for a Friday night stay with a reduced rate for Saturday night!) and woke up ready for a day of last-minute shopping on Newbury Street.

Hungry after our shopping, we headed over to **ANNA'S TAQUERIA** at 242 Cambridge Street, where we dove into some superb hot burritos prepared right in front of us with fresh tasty ingredients. There's a reason Anna's is popular with diners of all ages in six Boston-area locations.

Having savored fine cuisine with origins from several countries, we decided to finish our getaway with flair with a dinner at **LALA ROKH** on Beacon Hill. Well-known in Boston for creative Persian cuisine, a dinner at Lala Rokh is a pleasure for all the senses. We braved a frigid winter night on Beacon Hill, and were warmed by the sight of LaLa Rokh's bright windows. We settled into a cozy table and were quickly taken on a culinary tour through Persian cuisine. Soon we were savoring delicious dishes for the first time in our lives—Ash, a nourishing soup, tender beef in Chelo Kabobs, fine lamb in Bogha Pollo—dining at Lala Rokh is like taking a journey to a new and fascinating world.

The next morning, rested and full of holiday cheer, we headed back over the bridge. Give yourself a gift this season—make a quick holiday trip to Boston! 🍷