

American cities that shine in the summer

From fine art on show in Boston to a reinvigorated New Orleans and fresh attractions in New York, Barbara Noe selects great cultural treats to enjoy in 2015

1 British art in Boston

On July 11, 2015, Boston's Museum of Fine Arts (mfa.org) begins a revolutionary exhibition of 20th-century British art. More than 50 paintings and drawings from the collection will be on display, ranging from an 1890s drawing of Brittany by Post-Impressionist Robert Bevan to a 1999 etching by Lucian Freud. While in town, don't miss exploring the city where the American Revolution began. Quintessential Americana awaits along cobbled lanes, where (nearly) 400-year-old buildings, steeped churches, and ancient markets tell the story of a fledgling nation. The pedestrian advocacy group Walk Boston (walkboston.org) offers itineraries and guided walks. Alternatively, if it's too hot, hop aboard a classic Liberty Fleet tall ship for a spin around Boston Harbor (libertyfleet.com).

For *Telegraph Travel's* pick of the best places to stay in Boston, go to telegraph.co.uk/boston

2 Lafayette's Hermione

In 1780, the Marquis de Lafayette set sail from France to help out George Washington in the fight for American independence. The general's frigate, the magnificent, blue-and-gold Hermione, has been painstakingly re-created and this summer is setting sail on the very same historic journey, with plans to stop in several cities along the Eastern Seaboard: Alexandria, Virginia, on June 15-17; New York City on July 2-4, and Boston on July 11-12. Each arrival will result in much pier-side fanfare, including cultural events, exhibitions, and

other festivities. After her final stop in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, Hermione returns to Rochefort, France, where she will be open to visitors.

For more information, see hermione2015.com

3 Seattle from above

Beautifully positioned between the sparkling sea and snow-capped mountains, the famously drizzly Emerald City remains relatively dry in summer, making it the perfect time to visit. On the Soar and Explore Seattle small group tour, you'll take in the city's best sights, including the famous Pike Place Market, historic Pioneer Square, and some of its more charming neighbourhoods. And then, you board a Kenmore Air seaplane for extraordinary views from above – soaring past the Space Needle and over the hills and islands that make this one of the world's most stunning cities.

EverGreen Escapes offers a range of small-group guided tours of Seattle and environs (001 866 203 7603; evergreensesapes.com).

4 Post-Katrina New Orleans

August 29 marks the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina's devastation of New Orleans, and what an amazing recovery it's been. This seductive, jasmine-scented city will always have the French Quarter, of course, with its filigreed balconies and crazy, neon-lit bars. But now new faubourgs are burgeoning – the Bywater District with its bohemian clubs and hipster Freret Street among them. The city's restaurants have doubled their

pre-Katrina number, and the music scene is as alive as in the days of Louis Armstrong and Jelly Roll Morton. Learn about the ongoing post-Katrina rebuilding efforts with Ninth Ward Rebirth Bike Tours. The inspiring, four-hour jaunt connects visitors with residents, restaurants, and businesses typically left off tourist itineraries.

Ninth Ward Rebirth Bike Tours (001 504 338 3603, ninthwardrebirthbiketours.com) runs tours for \$60 (£39) per person, including bike, basket, water and guide)

5 New horizons in New York city

You're obliged to take in the big draws, of course, from the Statue of Liberty to the Met. However, this year will also see the opening of two new attractions. The observation deck of the 104-story One World Trade (oneworldobservatory.com) is due to open in late spring: an elevator will whisk you to the top of the Western Hemisphere's tallest building in less than 60 seconds for spectacular views. And the new Whitney Museum (whitney.org), designed by architect Renzo Piano in the artsy Meatpacking District, opens on May 1, when it will present its inaugural installation: the largest ever exhibition of the museum's singular collection of 20th and 21st-century art. Big Apple Greeter (001 212 669 8159; bigapplegreeter.org) offers free personal tours of anything you want in NYC: pick a neighbourhood – Central Harlem or Tip of Manhattan – and see it through local's eyes.

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