

# DESTINATION CONCORD AND LEXINGTON

## A Trip Back in Time to...Concord And Lexington

By the rude bridge that arched the flood  
Their flag to April's Breeze unfurled  
Here once the embattled farmers stood  
And fired the shot heard round the world  
R.W. Emerson

A trip to Concord is a must for all lovers of history. Prepare to step back in time and enjoy a tranquil day with little to no cost and gain insight to a cross-section of America's early days. The historical and literary significance of Concord may not appeal to some children; however, in an effort to make this day appeal to all members of the family the Historical Park has mentioned the following: kids can enjoy hiking and biking in the park along the Battle Road Trail. At the Hartwell Tavern, there are daily musket firing demonstrations. Kids can check out the wildlife in many areas of the park – frogs, salamanders, turtles, deer, ducks and geese. Also, obtain a Junior Ranger booklet at the Visitor Center. Complete the various activities in the booklet while investigating the park. When finished with the booklet, the ranger or other park staff at the Visitor Center will fill out the Junior Ranger certificate and present a special Junior Ranger badge! For an older child, to incorporate an educational experience and generate an interest in history, a trip that a child might enjoy more is a day in Salem. However, Mom and Dad will surely enjoy this serene day in Concord and Lexington. Concord is unique in three periods of history. Incorporated in 1635, Concord was the first Massachusetts settlement away from the ocean on a non-navigable river. On April 19, 1775, it was the scene of the first battle of the War of Independence. During the middle of the nineteenth century, a period aptly called "The Flowering of New England," Concord was home to some of the greatest minds in America. Through the years, the people of Concord have carefully preserved the historic and literary aspects of the town.

For first-time visitors, it is suggested that you start your journey at the **Minute Man National Historical Park Information Center**. Visitor Center is open daily from 9:00am-5:00pm. The grounds of Minute Man National Historical Park are open sunrise to sunset. Parking lot gate closes promptly at sunset. To gain perspective on the sequence of events leading to the start of the Revolution here in Concord, it is recommended that you enjoy the movie "The Road to Revolution," a free multimedia theater program, which provides an excellent introduction to the main park story. The program depicts Paul Revere's Ride and the battles at Lexington Green, North Bridge and along the Battle Road. The Visitor Center exhibits include a forty-foot mural that portrays the fighting between Colonists and British Regulars. Enjoy the many exhibits as well as guided walks, interpretive presentations and a musket display. Park Rangers are on duty here to answer any questions you may have. The free presentation is shown every half hour beginning at 9AM until 4:30PM. Restrooms are located at this facility. Pets are welcome on leashes in the park, but not in the buildings.

Within a short walking distance from the Visitor Center is the site of **Tabitha and Josiah Nelson's home**. Josiah Nelson was a Captain of the Minute Men and was known as the first injured of the Revolution due to a British soldier's slashing him on his head with a sword while inquiring at his home about other Minute Men. Josiah went on to warn the Minute Men of the British approaching. Just the outline of the home's foundation remains. There is a Park Ranger who gives a narrative walk along Nelson Road. This road remains closed to vehicles.

Leaving the Minute Man National Historical Park Visitor Center, turn right out the driveway and onto North Great Road (Route 2A). On your right, you will be passing **Paul Revere's capture site**. It is commemorated by a plaque in stone indicating the abrupt end of his midnight ride.

Next, turn right onto Virginia Road (following signs for Battle Road). Immediately on your right will be the **Captain William Smith House**. This restored 18<sup>th</sup> century house was the home of the captain of the Lincoln Minute Men. Parking is adequate for RV's and cars. If open a Park Ranger will greet you and answer any questions you may have. The William Smith House is one of the few homes that has had extensive restoration.

Further along Virginia Road on your right will be the site of the **Samuel Hartwell Farm**. What remains is the large chimney. Framework has been reproduced to indicate how homes were built around the fireplaces and chimneys of early American homes.

Continue on to the **Hartwell Tavern** (an historic 18<sup>th</sup> century home and tavern). There are a number of programs offered here, such as "Muster the Minute Men!" which is a Ranger-led activity and musket firing demonstration: Join a costumed park ranger and learn about the Massachusetts militia and minute men at the start of the American Revolution. Participate in a militia muster where you will be challenged to master REAL battle formations from 1775. The program includes a musket firing demonstration. 20 minutes – FREE; Wednesday - Sunday 10:15 AM 1:15, 3:15 and 4:15 PM but times may change, please inquire at Visitor Center if this is of particular interest to you. Please note: flintlock muskets do not function well in the rain. If you are visiting on a rainy day, please inquire at Minute Man Visitor Center (781) 674-1920 whether or not the program will be taking place. For a Ranger-led battle site exploration, gather at Hartwell Tavern and walk down the Battle Road Trail to the site of one of the sharpest engagements of the day where colonial militiamen caught the British soldiers in a deadly crossfire (Wednesday-Sunday 2:15pm, but please check schedule at the Visitor Center for times as they are subject to change). Program topics change daily and are shown at various times, so check at the Visitors Center and the Hartwell Tavern for the daily topic. This is a stop that should not be missed! Parking is available across the street and down the side lane for both cars and RV's. This portion of the Battle Road retains much of its former appearance similar to what travelers would have experienced back in 1775. Continue following Virginia Road to its end. Hartwell Tavern is closed from October to May.

Leaving Virginia Road, turn right onto North Great Road (Route 2A) and at the blinking yellow light turn right onto Lexington Road (following Battle Road signs). Following Lexington Road, history will begin to change its flavor and you will soon encounter Concord's early literary legacy. On the right will be the **The Wayside**, home to three families of authors: the Alcott's, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Margaret Sidney. As The Wayside is part of the Minute Man National Historical Park, a Ranger will be your tour guide. Tours are available from late May thru October. Here you will join your Ranger for a guided tour of the home of Nathaniel Hawthorne, Bronson and Louisa May Alcott and Margaret Sidney. The Wayside was the only residence Nathaniel Hawthorne owned during his lifetime. There is an admission fee here (credit cards only) and one should be prepared for a steep flight of stairs. Restrooms are available. Next door is the **Orchard House** (see photo), the Alcott family home, where Louisa May Alcott wrote "Little Women" in 1868. Parking is abundantly available on your left just past the Wayside.



A few short steps away is the Orchard House, the residence of the most widely known of the Alcott's: Louisa May. Here (the setting for her best-known work, Little Women) she wrote novels, short stories and essays. The home is open year-round on the following schedule:

April 1 to October 31: Monday to Friday 10:00 - 4:30pm, Saturday 10-4:30pm and Sunday 11:00 - 4:30pm

There is a fee for the 30-minute tour. Restrooms are available and a gift shop offers many literary treasures.

Continuing on your literary journey, turn left onto Lexington Road from the parking lot and your next stop may be at the Concord Antiquarian Society, or as it is known, the **Concord Museum**, on your left. The Museum is a series of period rooms and galleries arranged in sequence from 1680 to 1890. Included in the collection is the only remaining Paul Revere's "one if by land, and two if by sea" lantern, artifacts from the American Revolution, including powder horns, muskets, cannonballs and fifes, the world's largest collection of Thoreau possessions, including furnishings from his cabin at Walden Pond and the contents of Ralph Waldo Emerson's study where he wrote his influential essays. The museum is open April thru December: Monday to Saturday 9:00-5:00pm and Sundays from 12:00pm to 5:00pm (the museum does open at 9am on Sundays in June, July and August). There is a fee to enjoy the museum. Parking is available in the lot next to the Museum and on the road in front of the Museum. All parking is free. As always, good idea to check hours prior to your visit in the event they have changed.

Just next door is **Emerson House**. This was home to Ralph Waldo Emerson from 1835 until his death in 1882. He built this house and planted the pines you see circling it. During Emerson's European tour, Thoreau lived in the house. Emerson was a strong influence in drawing other writers to Concord as well as a long succession of visitors to his doorstep. The rooms are much as they were in Emerson's day. It houses a collection of many of his books, personal effects and furniture. There are 30-minute tours of the home, grounds and gardens. Open late-April – October on Thursdays, Friday, and Saturdays from 10:00-4:30pm and Sundays 1-4:30pm. There is a fee and parking is limited. Check hours before visiting as they may have changed.

Continue along Lexington Road and you will come upon **Concord Square**, the hub of the center of Concord. Directly across the square is the Colonial Inn, built in 1716 and used as a storehouse during the revolution. For delicious food in a beautiful historic setting, visit the acclaimed **Concord's Colonial Inn**.

Follow through the square to your right onto Bedford Street and pass Concord's first schoolhouse on your way to **Sleepy Hollow Cemetery**, a beautiful planned cemetery with ridges and natural bowls framing a wide variety of stones and memorials. "Author's Ridge" is home of the graves of Henry David Thoreau, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Louisa May Alcott, and Ralph Waldo Emerson, among other notables. Also visit the Civil War memorial sculpted by Daniel Chester French. Open year round, daylight hours.

Return to Monument Street and turn right. Approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile on your left will be the **Old Manse**. Continue a few more yards and on your right will be a large parking lot for cars and RV's. This is the parking area for the North Bridge Visitor Center and the North Bridge where the "shot heard 'round the world" was fired. It is a convenient walk across the street and to your left to the Old Manse. This was the home of Concord's early ministers, and later home to Nathaniel Hawthorne and his bride, Sophia Peabody. Open year round with tours (fee) daily (closed Tuesdays) from 11am-5pm 978.369.3909. The last tour begins by 4:30pm each day.

Leaving the Old Manse, walk to your left, over the bridge and up the hill, and you will enter the **North Bridge Visitor Center**. The North Bridge is the site of the first battle of the American Revolution. The historic garden is especially attractive late May-early June. The Visitor Center is open through October with hours from 9:30-5:00pm. There is an 8-minute video program, "Treason or Liberty" about the fight at the North Bridge on April 19, 1775 offered in the Visitor Center, along with various dioramas, artifacts, and costumed mannequins. Also available is park information, restrooms and a bookstore. The Ranger Program "Some Were For Making A Stand"

runs daily at 11:30, 2:30, 3:30 and 4:30. Meet at the benches by the North Bridge (rain location, North Bridge Visitor Center). Join a ranger for a 20-minute program and reflect on the significance of the events of April 19, 1775 and legacy of the American Revolution. There is a parking lot closer to the visitor's center at 174 Liberty Street, for those who wish to be closer to the North Bridge Parking lot.

Upon researching and visiting the Lexington and Concord area, we were made aware of a service that is now available. Though we did not have a chance to experience it ourselves, we would like to introduce you to the **Liberty Ride**, recommended by the Park Rangers at the Minute Man National Historical Visitor Center. It is a guided sightseeing tour with convenient stops at all historic sites and attractions and is available from April thru October.

### **Liberty Ride: A Unique Tour of Lexington & Concord**

Visit the birthplaces of American liberty and 19th century literature! Ride along the historic Battle Road while your costumed guide recounts the exciting events of April 19, 1775 and the literary legacy that defined American identity and culture.

Your 90-minute trip leaves Lexington Visitors Center, 1875 Massachusetts Avenue at 10:00am, 11:30am, 1:00pm and 2:30pm.

- Stops at Concord and Lexington's historic sites and attractions.
- Easy on/off stops close to local attractions, hotels, shopping, and dining.
- Air conditioning
- Free re-boarding
- April and May – tours run Saturday and Sunday only; Memorial Day – last Sunday in October tours run daily

Liberty Ride tickets may be purchased on line in advance at [tourlexington.us](http://tourlexington.us) or at the following location:

- Lexington Visitors Center, 1875 Massachusetts Avenue, Lexington 781-862-1450 (as of 12/20 website directed guests to purchase tickets at temporary Lexington Visitors Center, 1605 Massachusetts Ave, Cary Memorial Building in Lexington)

For further information on the Liberty Ride, please call 781-698-4586 or check out their website at <http://www.tourlexington.us/libertyride.html>.

### **Helpful Information**

Minute Man National Historical Park Visitor Center: 978-369-6993

North Bridge Visitor Center: 978-369-6993, 174 Liberty St. Concord MA 01742

### **Other Points of Interest in the Area:**

- Lexington Battle Green - <http://www.tourlexington.us/historic.html>
- Walden Pond State Reservation - <https://www.mass.gov/locations/walden-pond-state-reservation>
- The Butterfly Place, Westford, MA - <https://butterflyplace-ma.com/>
- deCordova Museum & Sculpture Park - <http://www.decordova.org/>

### **Recommended Dining, based on suggestions made to us by helpful volunteers at the Visitor Center:**

**Concord's Colonial Inn** at 48 Monument Square in Concord 978-369-9200 or 800-370-9200 ... whether you are looking for an elegant setting for a special occasion, a casual atmosphere for a relaxed meal, or a

friendly pub where you can get a drink and a snack, the restaurants at Concord's Colonial Inn will serve you well. <http://www.concordscolonialinn.com/>

**Helen's Restaurant** at 17 Main Street in Concord 978-369-9885 a casual sandwich shop which offers breakfast, lunch and dinner.

**80 Thoreau** at 80 Thoreau Street in Concord 978-318-0008 A progressive fine-dining restaurant in historic Concord offering New England cuisine and genuine hospitality in a convivial setting.  
<http://www.80thoreau.com/>

**Main Streets Market & Café** at 42 Main St. Concord 978-369-9948. A family friendly restaurant that offers something for everyone. <http://www.mainstreetsmarketandcafe.com/>

For those who need a little **shopping** fix to make their day, the downtown Concord area is wonderful. The streets are lined with quaint shops offering everything from homemade candy to books, old and new; art galleries, antique shops, clothing boutiques, fine jewelry shops, florists, garden shops, home furnishings, toys, numismatics (coin collecting), shoes and so much more. **Street parking is metered so be careful!**