

# Destination: Burlington

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PHOTO BY ROBERT BOYD

Burlington is something of a paradox. Located at the industry-, commerce-, and traffic-heavy junction of the region's most important highways, Burlington over the years has become a local center for industry, rivaling Boston and Cambridge for the number of big companies calling it home—Oracle, Keurig, Raytheon, SAP, and BAE Systems, to name a few.

"We've been dubbed by some as the economic capital of 128," says town administrator John Petrin. There's a huge mall, vast shopping opportunities, great dining options, and hotels that cater to all of the industry that churns in and out of the town every day.

That's right, Burlington is a town, not a city. For all of its big-city amenities and businesses, Burlington is actually a relatively small town with about 25,000 residents. But that population surges to 150,000 during the day, thanks to employers like the Burlington Mall, Lahey Clinic, Oracle says Petrin.

"We're a city by day and a town by night," he says. "It's a unique town where we have so much of the commercial sector, and the operations are much larger than [they] would be normally in a town of this size."

Burlington is a shining success when it comes to separating its business section from its residential region, allowing the people who live there to feel as though they really do live in a small town, rather than a busy metropolis, while still having access to all that a city offers. Petrin credits town management with making that happen decades ago. "I think back to the '50s and '60s—town leadership at that time really had some foresight," he says. "They did some great zoning and business then."

Rick Parker, president of the Burlington Area Chamber of Commerce and Burlington resident, agrees.

## DETAILS

Date of settlement	1641
Date of incorporation	1799
Area	11.9 sq. miles
Population	24,498
ZIP code	01803
Median household income	\$86,052

“We have one part of the town that tends to be industrial...but we’ve done a great job of separating that from most of the residential [areas] in town.” he says. In fact, Burlington has become a hotspot not only for businesses but also for families.

“There are a lot of families that are moving to this area specifically based on the school system,” Parker says. It’s a place where innovation reigns—no surprise considering Burlington is home to some of the world’s most forward-thinking companies. Parker points to programs like the partnership with Apple that gives iPads to all of the students and teachers at Burlington High School to use throughout the school year.

“It speaks to a school system that really is on the cutting edge,” Parker says. He adds that there are also great after-school and sports programs, as well as a recreation department that’s incredibly active in coordinating activities, trips, and special events for children and adults alike. In addition to Burlington’s strong community, the industry on the other side of town makes it easy for residents to do business, shop, go out to eat, and have fun. “It’s a very attractive place to raise your kids because we have everything right here,” Parker says.

Having “everything right here” started when the Burlington Mall was built in the 1960s, according to Petrin. “That was the cornerstone to that whole area,” he says. Fast-forward 50 years and Burlington is continuing to see new businesses come in. A Wegmans is among the latest of Burlington’s new arrivals. The wildly popular grocery chain, which boasts restaurants, cooking classes, and other interesting offerings, in addition to aisles of fresh food, opened to tons of fanfare in October 2014 and is the anchor of 3rd Ave. Burlington—a new shopping, dining, and living destination.

“That is an enormously creative development,” says Jim Murphy, president of the Burlington Area Chamber of Commerce Charitable Foundation. 3rd Ave. Burlington will combine a shop-lined boulevard with dining options like The Bancroft, PAUL Bakery, and Tony C’s Sports Grille. Murphy adds that 180 apartments are slated to open in the spring of 2016. The development did suffer a major setback in April 2014 when a fire destroyed the newly built Kings Bowl America. But the bowling hotspot promised to rebuild, and the new location is slated to open in February.

“The whole area is really designed as a work, live, and play setting,” he says. “That’s a great opportunity for young folks to come in on a rental basis and work in the area. [It’s] adding a whole other level of great amenities and services to Burlington.”

These new developments are adding to the kind of business sector that Burlington already has: one that’s even more convenient and packed with things to do than a lot of larger cities. Murphy says business people can work along mall road can pop out at lunch, go shopping, hit the gym, and have dinner after work. Northeastern University and Bay Path College have campuses there. And unlike Boston or Cambridge, there’s no fee for parking.

“This integration gives it a tremendous value,” he says. “Burlington offers all the amenities of a major metropolitan city without all of the trouble.”

Among the other new businesses in Burlington is Tuscan Market/ Tuscan Kitchen, which came to Burlington in autumn 2014 after the success of its first location in Salem, New Hampshire.

“We chose Burlington because we felt its demographic of world-class companies and strong employment base really works well for a strong lunch business as well as a strong corporate event business,” says owner Joe Faro. “The Burlington location is very accessible to anyone on the 128 belt, making it a great dinner destination as well.”

He also adds that it was easy to work with the town of Burlington itself. “The town was very welcoming and helpful in working with us to make our vision of a Tuscan Kitchen in Burlington a reality,” he says.

The town’s welcoming and helpful nature is part of what attracts—and keeps—people living there. “There’s a lot of community sense about what occurs here,” says Petrin.

That extends between the community and the businesses, Parker agrees, pointing to things like the annual Taste of Burlington, which brings together dozens of local restaurants for a special evening of tastings. He also notes that many employees at businesses, and the businesses themselves, give a lot of time and funds to local causes and organizations.

“As a Burlington resident,” Parker says. “I’m proud to say that Burlington is home.”

# Must-Do List

Items for your  
Burlington Itinerary

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## The Bancroft

Adding a modern twist to the classic steak house, The Bancroft proves that meat and potatoes don’t have to be just meat and potatoes. 15 Third Ave., 781-221-2100, [the-bancroft.com](http://the-bancroft.com)

## Wegmans

The arrival of Wegmans was met with an excitement that was hard to believe for a grocery store. But devotees say, with everything from fabulous sushi to on-staff florists, it lives up to the hype. 53 Third Ave., 781-418-0700, [wegmans.com](http://wegmans.com)

## True North Coffee

In a town where chains reign, True North Coffee stands out as a locally owned, independent coffee house and a local favorite for high-quality specialty coffees and homemade baked goods made by on-site pastry chefs. 204 Cambridge St., 781-229-2330, [truenorthcoffeecafe.com](http://truenorthcoffeecafe.com)

## Burlington Landlocked Forest

Rick Parker, president of the Burlington Area Chamber of Commerce, calls the Burlington Landlocked Forest “the enchanted forest,” and with good reason: this 250-acre nature preserve features 13 miles of trails where residents hike, showshoe, bike, run, and more throughout the year. Entrance at 42 Turning Mill Rd., Lexington, [landlockedforest.com](http://landlockedforest.com)

## Café Escadrille

For more than 40 years, Café Escadrille has been a go-to spot for elegant dining, late-night eats, a great wine list, and beautiful special events. 26 Cambridge St., 781-273-1916, [cafeescadrille.com](http://cafeescadrille.com)

## Tuscan Market

The new Tuscan Kitchen restaurant and its sister specialty Italian market, Tuscan Market, are bringing to Rt. 128 a signature blend of authentic Italian cuisine and exquisite ambiance. 24 New England Executive Park, 781-229-0300, [tuscanbrands.com](http://tuscanbrands.com)

## Wayside Commons

This multi-store and restaurant shopping area boasts stores like L.L. Bean and Ethan Allen, and dining options that include The Capital Grille, Seasons 52, and Bonefish Grill. 6 Wayside Rd., [shopwayside.com](http://shopwayside.com)

## Bobby’s Burger Palace

Bobby Flay’s signature cuisine finds a casual home at Bobby’s Burger Palace where French fries, milkshakes, and burgers get the gourmet treatment. 75 Middlesex Tnpk., 781-425-3653, [bobbysburgerpalace.com](http://bobbysburgerpalace.com)

## Middlesex Commons

Convenient hometown spots like Market Basket combine with favorites like Nordstrom Rack and Old Navy at the Middlesex Commons retail area. 43 Middlesex Tnpk., [edens.com](http://edens.com)

## L'Andana

This elegant establishment brings classic flavors of Tuscany to Burlington with its house-made pastas, dishes like wood-grilled veal chops and filet mignon, and even a decadent brunch menu. 86 Cambridge St., 781-270-0100, [landanagrill.com](http://landanagrill.com)

## Blue Stove

Take a break from shopping at this casual-elegant tapas restaurant inside Nordstrom, that also boasts an ever-changing menu and great wine list. Burlington Mall, 75 Middlesex Tnpk. #535, 781-345-7800 (Nordstrom main number; ask to be transferred to Blue Stove)

## The Capital Grille

This favorite boasts dry-aged Porterhouse steaks and wine list “away from the urban jungle.” 10 Wayside Rd., 781-505-4130, [thecapitalgrille.com](http://thecapitalgrille.com)

## Burtons Grill

Locals love it for steaks, burgers, pasta, and cocktails. (Located at the Middlesex Commons shopping area) 43 Middlesex Tnpk., 781-221-2281, [burtonsg grill.com](http://burtonsg grill.com)

## Seasons 52

Boasting food that's as seasonal and healthy as it is delicious, they also have 52 wines by the glass and a fun and fresh piano bar. 6 Wayside Rd., 781-272-5552, [seasons52.com](http://seasons52.com)

## Besito Restaurant

The authentic flavors of Mexico come alive at Besito Restaurant, which emphasizes fresh and often organic ingredients, as well as giving back to local communities in Mexico. 75 Middlesex Tnpk., 781-272-9900, [besitomexican.com](http://besitomexican.com)

## Burlington Mall

The cornerstone and foundation of all of Burlington's industry and activity—and still a major draw for people from around the region—is the Burlington Mall. It's home to more than 185 shops including department stores like Nordstrom and Lord & Taylor, and high-end spots like Burberry, Coach, Kate Spade, and Michael Kors, as well as dining options like Legal Sea Foods and Appleseed Crepe & Bread. 75 Middlesex Tnpk., 781-272-8668, [simon.com](http://simon.com)