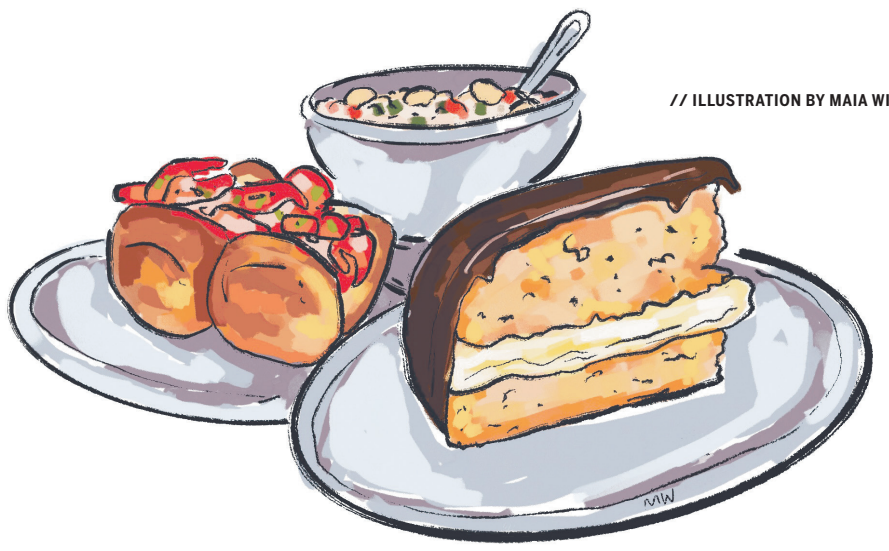
PERSONAL ESSAY

Pappy's Picks: The best bites in Boston



// ILLUSTRATION BY MAIA WILSON

// BY ANNA PAPAKIRK

This weekend, The Game between H*rvard and Yale will play out for the 142nd time. But if the last four years have taught us anything, victory on the field is a given. Something you may not be so sure of? Boston's food scene. But rest assured, if Yale loses — which we won't — victory can be achieved on the plate.

Boston boasts an impressive culinary history. In his book "The Culinarians: Lives and Careers from the First Age of American Fine Dining," author David Shields explains the city's dining traditions. Jean Baptiste Gilbert Payplat, otherwise known as "Julien," opened the Restorator on Leverett Street in Boston in 1793. Famous for his soups, such as land turtle soup and green turtle soup, Julien became a culinary legend in the city and inspired many imitators. He is credited as being the originator of the restaurant in the United States.

Given Boston's rich gastronomic heritage, it is only appropriate to spend some time this weekend exploring the city's vibrant restaurant scene. Whether you find yourself frolicking near Fenway for The Game, crashing at a friend's place in Cambridge, driving downtown or not knowing how you made it to the North End, here's a breakdown by neighborhood of the best spots to grab a bite.

Cambridge

I have a soft spot for places that exude an aura of "classic" as soon as I walk through the door. That old-school, retro feel reassures me I'll have a good meal but an even better time. Mr. Bartley's Burger Cottage is one of those places. This H*rvard Square institution has been dishing out burgers since 1960. While New Haven is home to the nation's oldest hamburger joint — Louis Lunch — it may have met its match. My go-to is the Jason Tatum burger with a side of fries, but the ChatGP-Cheese and Taylor Swiss burgers have caught my eye.

If the wait at Mr. Bartley's is too long, swing on over to Cardullo's Gourmet Shoppe — about a five-minute walk away — and indulge in one of their craft sandwiches. The Crimson, the Hearty H*rvard and the Hungry Rower sandwiches all sound delectable. Cardullo's is not just a deli but also a grocery store, so while waiting for your sandwich to be prepared, you can peruse the aisles and pick up some artisanal jams and chocolates for dessert.

North End

While there may not be a specific reason to venture to the North End this weekend — H*rvard is in Cambridge and The Game is in Fenway — I can happily provide numerous reasons to spend some time in this charming neighborhood.

Pauli's is the only excuse you need. Lobster rolls. Clam chowder. No further explanation needed. I visited Pauli's five years ago, and to this day, I still dream about the meal I ate.

I understand that some people don't rock with a lobster roll, which is why Monica's Mercato & Salumeria is a great alternative. It boasts an impressive selection of subs, and according to their website, "THE best Italian sub in Boston!"

No meal is complete without dessert, and no trip to the North End is complete without a visit to Mike's Pastry. I would be remiss if I didn't spotlight this landmark, which is celebrating its 80th anniversary this year. There are multiple locations, but you must check out the original in the North End. With an overwhelming amount of options, I "cannoli" recommend one thing: a cannoli. Securing one of these irresistible pastries takes precedence over securing a ticket to The Game.

Downtown

Before we make our way to Fenway, just go a little further south from the North End and make a quick stop at Faneuil Hall Marketplace. There are a plethora of dining options to explore, but for something that screams "Boston," it's probably worth checking out Boston Chowda and Wicked Lobsta.

Save room for dessert, because just a seven-minute walk away stands Omni Parker House, formerly the Parker House Hotel, where the Boston Cream Pie was invented.

Back Bay

While Back Bay isn't quite Fenway, it's close enough, and spending time here will allow you to avoid the Fenway frenzy that The Game is bound to bring to the neighborhood.

To escape the bitter cold and transport yourself to the warm Mediterranean, Eva on Newbury Street is a great option for lunch or dinner. Right down the street, you'll find Saltie Girl, a seafood lover's paradise.

If you're feeling particularly fancy, make a reservation at Contessa Ristorante Boston, which, according to its website, is "perched atop the Newbury Hotel like a crown jewel." I went there a few weeks ago and was truly blown away. The food is great, but the overall atmosphere and ambience steal the show. After a hectic weekend, I recommend coming here for Sunday brunch for a sense of serenity and suggest ordering the Macaroni with Wild Boar Ragu. And to cleanse the palette, the Nutella Fudge Cake or Crostate di Limone for dessert.

BONUS BITE

If you find yourself out late Friday or Saturday night, and up until the wee hours of the morning, El Jefe's Taqueria, open until 3 a.m., beckons you. From bowls to burritos, it's sure to satisfy that late-night hunger. They also have some of the best churros I've ever eaten.

Boston may not have apizza, but it'll do for a weekend!

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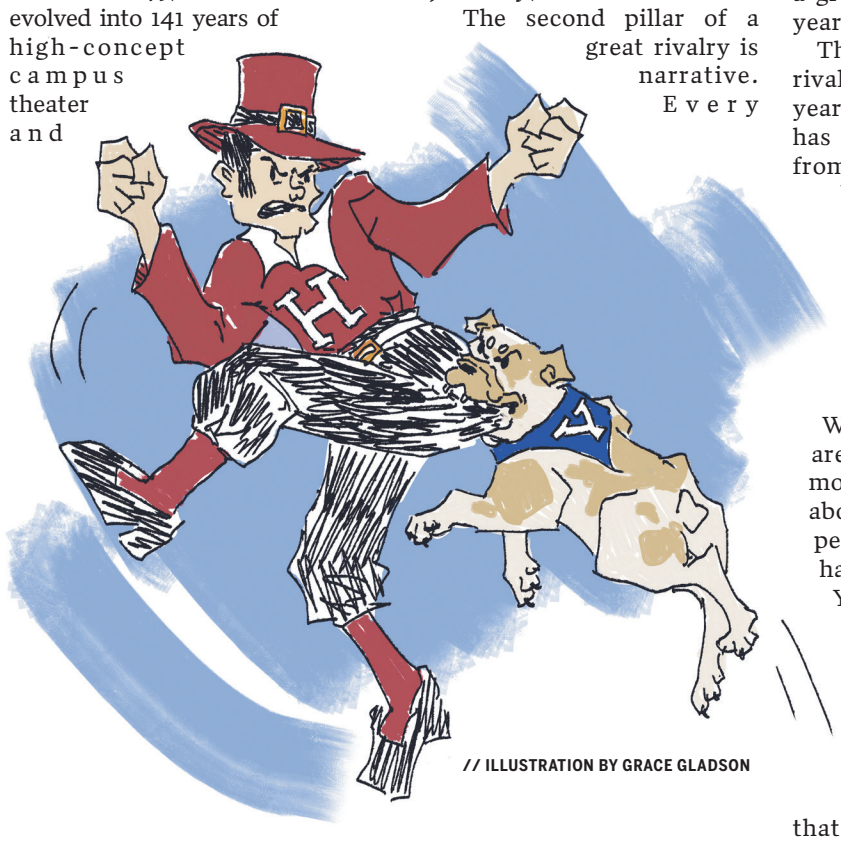
PERSONAL ESSAY

Why we hate H*rvard

// BY CLAUDIA LOIZAGA

The biggest day of the year is upon us. It is not Christmas; it is not Thanksgiving; it is not your birthday. It is the day preppy college students gather to experience the epic highs and lows of American football — aka mediocre FCS football. This year, Fenway Park will become the Colosseum of college football, and Yale students will experience the joy of paying for overpriced tickets to a game they won't really follow. Unless you won the ticket lottery, you lucky bastard. Not only are you $100 poorer (you won't be visiting Gheav until after winter break), you also get to witness the greatest rivalry in history: H*rvard v. Yale. It's a mixed bag.

So, what makes an iconic rivalry? H*rvard and Yale are clearly the blueprint. Since kicking off as a chaotic rugby-adjacent brawl in 1875, The Game has evolved into 141 years of high-concept campus theater and stolen mascots. More importantly, Yale leads the all-time series 72-61-8 — and is riding a four-game win streak — meaning H*rvard has spent a century and a half playing catch-up while soothing its ego with its endowment.



// ILLUSTRATION BY GRACE GLADSON

Underneath the face paint, a great rivalry rests on three pillars. For the first pillar, I'll defer to Freud because, after all, we are still at Yale. Freud coined the term "narcissism of small differences" to explain why groups that are almost identical hate each other. In other words, Yale hates H*rvard because we are practically the same, just in a smaller city and with different colors. Same obsession with prestige, same insufferable brunch conversations and coffee chats, same LinkedIn humble-brags, same wool sweaters. Even though, objectively, we do it better.

The second pillar of a great rivalry is narrative. Every feud needs a compelling storyline, and there are really only two plots that work. Plot A is a tug-of-war: two equally matched giants trade wins back and forth so nobody gets comfortable. Plot B is complete domination: one side is in control, but the punching bag occasionally swings back in a rare win that becomes a religious holiday. Guess which category H*rvard and Yale fall into? Let's just say crimson is a great color corrector for 141 years of bruises.

The third pillar of an iconic rivalry keeps it alive over the years: folklore. The Game has somewhat moved away from actual football and has become part of both colleges' cultures. Few at the tailgate will be able to name a starting linebacker from four years ago, and even fewer will care about third-quarter rushing yards. What keeps a rivalry relevant are the petty, unhinged moments that are spoken about years later. The pranks, petty chants and diss tracks have stoked the H*rvard-Yale fire to this day.

Enough about H*rvard and Yale — the world doesn't revolve around us, as much as we'd like to think it does. I'll give you case studies for other rivalries that have almost reached the echelon of these two colleges. One exists in international sports: Spanish football. As a Spanish writer, I couldn't miss the opportunity to highlight "El Clásico" of soccer: Real Madrid versus Barcelona. The rivalry runs deep — I've been asked whether I am a "Real" fan every time I say I am from Madrid — and it also boasts all three pillars. These Spanish soccer titans hold the same trophies and global clout, every game redefines the true winning team and nobody actually remembers random mid-season passes. Fans all remember Luís Figo defecting from Barça to Madrid in 2000 and having a severed pig's head thrown at him.

Moving away from sports, Kendrick Lamar and Drake are two huge, potentially problematic figures in contemporary rap. They've both spent the decade at the top of the hip-hop pyramid. But these two have more of an underdog complex on the charts: Drake has had untouchable streaming numbers, while Kendrick went more for the critics. Still, in this rivalry, box scores mean nothing. The true conflict comes from the back-to-back diss tracks that drop within minutes of one another — Kendrick turned "Not Like Us" into a Grammy-sweeping victory lap, and then Drake filed a defamation lawsuit.

Now, let's circle back to academia with the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race, another heated rivalry. Despite being twin institutions separated by only 66 miles of English countryside and sharing an obsession with reminding everyone how old they are, this rivalry has persisted across nearly 200 years. Thousands of races later, their all-time Boat Race tally goes down to the single digits. Watching people row in a straight line isn't exactly thrilling, so the sinking of boats and competitions over who looks better in a blazer do the heavy lifting in this rivalry.

All these rivalries are unified by pettiness — more specifically, a fraught, spiteful and cold-blooded competition of which no one remembers the start. And on Saturday, we will continue to celebrate our own. While many rivalries, including the ones above, require actual athletic stakes or deep civic hatred to survive, H*rvard-Yale runs on pure roleplay. For 48 hours, thousands of students who normally spend their Saturdays in investment club meetings or losing their minds in the library stacks chant about a bulldog and pretend a football game at Fenway Park is the Super Bowl. For God, for country and for Yale.

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WEEKEND RECOMMENDS:

STAYING LOYAL