



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



**Marblehead
Rail-Trail**
Massachusetts



Marblehead Rail-Trail

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The Marblehead Rail-Trail appears on maps as a Y resting on its side, connecting Marblehead and Salem in the north and the city limits of Swampscott in the west. The 3.35-mile trail knits together a coastal area that's steeped in Colonial history, from The Spirit of '76 painting hanging in a Marblehead museum to the infamous Salem witch trials of the 1690s.

The Marblehead Rail Trail is also part of the [Border to Boston Trail](#), a developing trail network that will stretch 70 miles between the MA-NH state line and Boston. The Border to Boston Trail is itself a part of the East Coast Greenway, a connected network of trails that will stretch from Maine to Florida when complete.

The rail-trail follows a short spur of the historical Eastern

Railroad, which launched service from Boston to Salem in 1838 and eventually served the coastline from Boston to Portland, Maine. The Marblehead spur opened in 1839 to connect that fishing village to Salem on the main line, followed by another branch linking Marblehead to the Swampscott depot. The rival Boston & Maine Railroad bought the Eastern Railroad in 1890 and operated the Marblehead branch until 1959. In the 1970s the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) acquired the main line, where it runs commuter trains.

The junction at the old station site in downtown Marblehead is a central starting point with plenty of parking. It's only a few blocks from the town's historical waterfront, where fishing and whaling ships docked alongside privateers during the American Revolution. Reflecting the spirit of those times, the distinctive Abbot Hall museum on Washington Street displays The Spirit of '76, a painting depicting a fife and drum corps marching across a battlefield.

Follow the sandy path across from Round House Road for 0.25 mile to a utility yard, and take the right fork toward Salem. The sandy trail enters the 10-acre Hawthorn Pond Conservation Area, where you'll find marshes, ponds, and nature trails. Crossing West Shore Drive, you enter the 34-acre Wyman Woods Conservation Area to find more wetlands and hardwood forests alongside Salem Harbor. Trail users can hike down a sandy footpath to the water's edge or view the scenic harbor from a bridge.

The trail comes to an end at MA 114/Lafayette Street, where it connects to the [Salem Bike Path](#) (also known as the Mayor Anthony Salvo Bike Path). If continuing along the 1.8-mile paved bike path, use caution when crossing busy MA 114/Lafayette Street. Heading west before curving north, the Salem Bike Path passes Salem State University and parallels an active rail corridor until it ends at Mill Street. The MBTA Salem Station, Salem Old Town Hall, the harbor, and museums related to the witch trials are all close by.



Marblehead Rail-Trail

Massachusetts

States: Massachusetts

Counties: Essex

Length: 3.35miles

Trail end points: Lafayette St, near
Marblehead/Salem town line (Salem); Bessom
St & Round House Rd (Marblehead) to
Swampscott Rail Trail at Seaview Ave
(Swampscott)

Trail surfaces: Asphalt, Dirt, Gravel, Sand

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Bike, Horseback

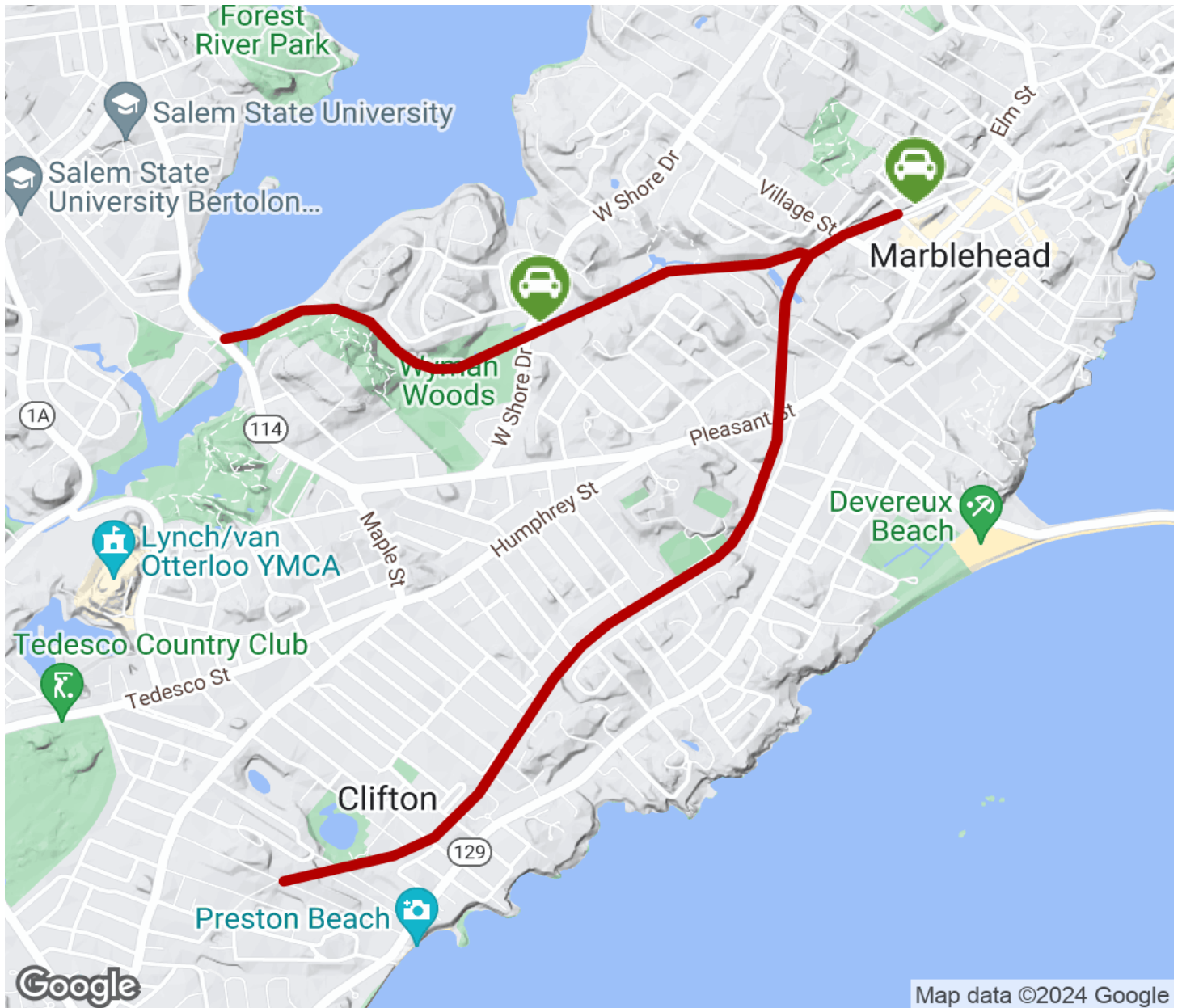
Parking & Trail Access

Parking is available at the northeast endpoint on either side of Round House Road in Marblehead.



Marblehead Rail-Trail

Massachusetts



Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



TrailLink
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

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