

## Ode to Olmsted: The Full Emerald Necklace From Boston Common to Franklin Park

### *Essentials*

Distance: 10.2 miles (7.5 without loop around Franklin Park)

Starting Point: Boston Common

Terrain: Flat

Lighting: Some Pathway sections not well lit

Bathrooms: Boston Common, Jamaica Pond, Arboretum, Franklin Park

Water: Boston Common, Jamaica Pond, Arboretum, Franklin Park

Interesting Sites: The entire Emerald Necklace is an interesting site!

### **Overview**

Boston's Emerald Necklace consists of a 1,100-acre chain of nine parks linked by parkways and waterways. This linear system of parks and parkways was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted to connect the Boston Common, which dates from the colonial period, and the 1837 Public Garden along the Muddy River and Leverett, Willow, Ward's and Jamaica ponds through the Arnold Arboretum to what was originally referred to as “the great country park” – Franklin Park.

This is an approximately 7-mile route (10 miles if the circuit around Franklin Park is added), one way, starting at Boston Common and ending at Franklin Park. The run is nearly seamless along lovely off-road trails, although there are a few “connector” sections: between the end of the Commonwealth Ave. Mall and the Fens; Jamaica Pond and the Arnold Arboretum; and between the Arboretum and Franklin Park. Note that this particular run focuses on the main Emerald Necklace route and the connectors. For additional mileage and to really enjoy some of the gems of the Necklace, please see other runs in this book, referenced in the table below.

Clearly, a “there and back” along the Emerald Necklace, at 14+ miles, is beyond the typical distance of the average recreational runner. There are several options to do parts of this run and return via the “T”. The accompanying table has mileage for specific sections, recommendations for “T” returns, and references to other sections in the book for additional description of and runs within Necklace destinations. To do the entire Emerald Necklace one way, to Franklin Park, take the “T” back from the Forest Hills Orange or Green Line Station to Back Bay, Downtown Crossing, or Copley Sq.

START: State House, at top of Boston Common, Beacon St. and Park St.

- 0.0 Take diagonal path, down Common heading southwest, to light and intersection with Charles St. and the Public Garden.
- 0.34 CROSS the Public Garden, to Washington statue at Arlington St.  
CROSS Arlington St., onto Commonwealth Ave. Mall.
- 1.46 CROSS Massachusetts Ave. and continue on the south side of Commonwealth Ave., to Charlesgate West and the complex interchange that crosses over the Mass. Pike.

- LEFT on Charlesgate West, crossing over the Pike. Cross busy Boylston St. to the Fens path, heading outbound.
- 1.88 ENTER onto Fens path, at a “Back Bay Fens” sign, running counterclockwise, with  
Boylston St. on the right and the Victory Garden on the left.  
STAY ON PATH as Boylston St. branches to right. On left, WWII, Korean, and Vietnam war memorials and Kelleher Rose Garden. Park Drive should now be on the left, after Agassiz Rd.
- 2.13 After Agassiz Rd., stay on path, with Park Drive on the left. After 0.2m, see Roberto Clemente ballfield is in the left. There’s also a ¼ mile dirt track.  
BEAR RIGHT at the intersection of Park Dr. and the Fenway, doing a quick loop around the oval, keeping Park Drive on the right. Just after Peterborough St., at the intersection of Park Dr., the Fenway, and Brookline Ave., CONTINUE on path with Park Dr. on the right, to a complex intersection with Brookline Ave., Riverway, Fenway.  
CROSS Park Dr., to the beginning of the Riverway path at a small brick building, opposite Landmark Center (REI, Staples).
- 2.9 WEST on path. (Bike Route sign almost immediately upon entering path)
- 3.25 CONTINUE on path. Longwood “T station on right.  
CROSS Netherlands Rd. (hard to see sign), then Brookline Ave. *Note: The path can be a little hard to track, but stick with it.*  
STRAIGHT on River Rd., getting off path briefly. Signage is poor here.  
CROSS the major intersection of Rt.9/Huntington Ave/Brookline Ave., getting back onto path. See Olmsted Park sign.
- 4.0 FOLLOW Riverway Path, 0.8m, paralleling Pond Ave., with Leverett Pond on left, to intersection with Perkins St. (crossing light).
- 4.8 CROSS this intersection onto the Jamaica Pond path. The run along the pond path is delightful, with lots of walkers and runners. Run the path counterclockwise around Jamaica Pond, paralleling Perkins St. and then Francis Parkman Dr.
- 5.4 EXIT pond path at intersection of Pond St., Francis Parkman Dr., and Rt. 203/Arborway.  
PROCEED ALONG the south side of RT. 203 East, staying on Rt. 203 at the small rotary, to a gate and entrance to the Arboretum
- 5.9 ENTER Arboretum at Arborway Gate. Pass Visitor Ctr. on the right, and proceed along Meadow Rd. (no sign) for about 0.5m.
- 6.4 LEFT at “T”, to the Forest Hills gate.  
RIGHT onto Forest Hills Rd.  
MERGE onto Rt. 203. GO OVER OVERPASS to a rotary.
- 7.2 At rotary, FOLLOW Forest Hills Dr. into Franklin Park. The first section is busier.  
At another small rotary, FOLLOW the main road (map says “Circuit Road” but there is no sign). Soon you will see an opportunity to get off the road onto a pathway next to and paralleling the road, with the golf course on your right.  
CONTINUE on Circuit Rd, to the intersection with golf course parking lot.  
TURN RIGHT AND RUN THROUGH the parking lot to the other end, passing

the club house on your right. At end of parking lot, at a stone marker, continue on the main path (now no vehicles), for the back half of the loop, with the golf course still on your right. Follow back to Forest Hills Drive (no sign, hospital on your left).

EXIT Franklin Park, to a small rotary.

9.7 WEST on Rt. 203, on the south side, to Washington St.

10.1 LEFT on Washington St. (Java Joe's is a good café/bakery). Follow to Forest Hills T Station

10.26 END, at T Station.

RETURN downtown, on Orange Line or Green Line.

*NOTE: If you want to have a shorter run and still cover nearly the entire Necklace, eliminate the loop around Franklin Park. This would save a little over 2 miles.*

<b>Segment</b>	<b>Segment Distance</b>	<b>Total Distance</b>
Boston Common to Comm. Ave. Mall	0.5	0.5
Commonwealth Ave. Mall to Fens Path Entrance	1.3	1.8
Fens Path to Riverway Path Entrance	1.0	2.9
Riverway Path Entrance to Jamaica Pond	1.9	4.8
Jamaica Pond to Arboretum	1.1	5.9
Arboretum to Franklin Park (rotary)	1.3	7.2
Franklin Park (rotary) into park and Circuit	3.0	10.2

## Riverway Path and Jamaica Pond Loop

### *Essentials*

Distance: 5.45 miles

Starting Point: Park Drive, opposite Fenway "T" station.

Terrain: Flat

Lighting: Would not recommend for night-time running

Bathrooms: Jamaica Pond boat house

Water: Fountain in front of Jamaica Pond boat house

Interesting Sites: Historic Jamaica Pond, Jamaicaway/Riverway paths

Public Transportation: Fenway T Station; Brookline Village

Parking: Meters, lots

Additional Spurs: Track at Downes Field; Fenway Loop, 2.7m, p.\*\*; Arnold Arboretum, p.\*\*

### **Overview**

This is one of the loveliest and greenest runs in this book. It is also almost entirely off-road, and incorporates Olmsted Park and the 1.4 mile loop around historic Jamaica Pond. The path along the Riverway is lovely, crossing over and passing by older stone bridges, passing Leverett Pond and then Willows Pond. In parts there are separate paths for walkers and bikers. There are a couple of confusing sections where the path is not completely seamless, so please read the directions carefully. A good detour is a wonderful track at Downes Field near Jamaica Pond. Good additional spurs are the 2.1 mile Fenway loop (p.\*\*\*) and Arnold Arboretum (p.\*\*).

START: Park Ave., small brick building across street from Landmark Shopping Center (Best Buy, REI) and Fenway "T" Station.

- 0.0 WEST on path, at small brick building at Park Ave. and the Riverway/Fenway intersection. Bike Route sign just ahead.
- 0.4 CONTINUE on path. Longwood "T" station on right.  
CROSS Netherlands Rd. (hard to see sign), then Brookline Ave. *Note: The path can be a little hard to track, but stick with it.*
- 1.0 STRAIGHT on River Rd., getting off path briefly. Signage is poor here.  
CROSS the major intersection of Rt.9/Huntington Ave/Brookline Ave., getting back onto path. See Olmsted Park sign.  
FOLLOW Riverway Path, 0.8m, paralleling Pond Ave., with Leverett Pond on left, to intersection with Perkins St. (crossing light).
- 1.9 CROSS this intersection onto the Jamaica Pond path. The run along the pond path is delightful, with lots of walkers and runners. Run the path counterclockwise 1.45m around Jamaica Pond to the Perkins St. light where you started.
- 3.3 RIGHT (heading south) on Perkins St., 0.2m, to the opposite side of the Riverway path, along the Jamaicaway.
- 3.5 LEFT on path along the Jamaicaway. Pass Willows Pond, Willows Pond Road, a ball field, and eventually Leverett Pond on left. The path will return you to the major intersection of Rt. 9/Huntington Ave./Brookline Ave.

- 4.3 CROSS intersection, onto River Rd. (Brookline Ice Company on left.  
FOLLOW path back, repeating the first part of the run.
- 5.45 END at Park Ave. and Riverway/Fenway.