

## Hotel Commonwealth

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### Hotel Commonwealth Review ★★★★

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500 Commonwealth Ave, Boston, Massachusetts



#### Families will love:

- The Hotel for Kids Package
- Steps from Fenway Park and Newbury Street
- Oversized rooms

#### Family Amenities

- Cribs
- DVD Player
- Kids'/Theme Meals
- Laundry Service
- Pool

#### Best for:

- Kids (7-9)
- Tweens (10-12)
- Teens (13+)

### Overview

Occupying nearly half of Boston's Kenmore Square is the luxury Hotel Commonwealth, a hotel property that opened in 2003 just steps from famed Fenway Park and Newbury Street. I wasn't sure the hotel welcomed families, but after hearing about its "Hotel for Kids Package," I decided to book a room during a stay to visit friends. The kids "oohed" and "aahed" their way through the oversized lobby filled with seating areas that meant to invite lounging but instead became an instant playground to my tots. No matter, the hotel staff was all smiles.

But it was the kids who were all smiles after being treated like royalty with the kids' package. Upon entering our oversized room, twin plush teddy bears, outfitted in red Hotel Commonwealth t-shirts, rested beside two bags of goodies. Inside, sunglasses, blow up baseball bat and baseball (perfect for in-room entertainment without fear of destruction), a Curious George book (smartly, each child got a different title), flashlight for reading after the lights go out, and LL Bean red fleece, leather-footed slippers sized just for them. As the kids rifled through their bags, a knock at the door announced room service. Cookies and tall glasses of milk arrived to ensure story time would be complete. (We visited in March, but please call the hotel to find out if they are extending this package and making it a regular feature... I think they should!)

An extra perk for mom and dad who drive in? Overnight parking is complimentary with the package.

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## Family Activities: ★

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The Hotel for Kids package is really the hotel's *piece de la resistance* for families. DVD players and a list of family-friendly titles in which to choose, such as "Wizard of Oz," "Shrek" and "Ice Age," are delivered at no charge with just a phone call to concierge. Board games like Checkers, Monopoly and Scrabble, are also available.

However, the hotel is near some of Boston's best attractions, such as Fenway Park. Whether your children are Red Sox fans or not, a visit to the legendary park, one of the oldest in America, is a must. Just steps away from the Hotel Commonwealth, a stroll down Lansdowne Street on game day is filled with the scents of hot dog and sausage vendors. Children under two do not require tickets.

Also just a quick T (subway) ride away is the Museum of Fine Art (MFA). On my list as one of the country's best art museums, some of most world-renowned pieces are on display here, including works by John Singer Sargent and Monet. Children's activities are offered, such as Family Art Cart on Sundays at 4 p.m., where children 4 and older can participate in fun (and educational) activities with their parents in various galleries.

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## Family Dining: ★★★★★

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### Eastern Standard

The only hotel full-service restaurant is located on the street level and is considered one of Boston's hippest restaurants. Eastern Standard American Brasserie-style restaurant is also open for breakfast and lunch, and provides room service. The restaurant combines traditional New England fare with twists on nostalgic comfort foods like Mac and Cheese made with Gruyere and confit pork belly. A children's menu is offered 11:30 a.m. to 11:30 pm. With chicken fingers,

mac and cheese, pasta and butter, grilled cheese and ice cream. Eastern Standard is Kenmore Square's only al fresco dining, but it's popular to sit outside, which is why reservations are not accepted for outdoor seating.

### The Foundation Lounge

For date night, the hotel offers a hip lounge, perfect for pre- or apres-dinner drinks and snacks. The menu is made up of champagne, martinis, sake and Zensai Japanese appetizers in plush and comfortable seating. Live or recorded music is offered nightly.

### Petit Robert Bistro

468 Commonwealth Avenue, 617-374-0699

This casual bistro is a great family spot. Located in a subterranean spot with al fresco dining, the classic menu includes a hard-to-choose-from pastry bar.

### Sonsie

327 Newbury Street, 617-351-2500

A stylish Newbury Street restaurant just a couple of blocks from the hotel provide Loggia-style seating for perfect people watching. The fusion menu features kid-friendly fare like burgers and sandwiches.

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## Hotel Commonwealth Rooms: ★★★★★

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Nearly 150 luxury -- and oversized -- rooms are available. Choose from 350-square-foot Kenmore rooms, 470-square-foot Fenway rooms facing the ballpark, or 515-square-foot Commonwealth rooms lining Commonwealth Avenue. A 1,500-square-foot Presidential Suite is also available, featuring an 18-person parlor/dining room, should you require such space. A new baseball-themed suite opened in 2010, for those diehard Sox fans.

Frette linens, down comforters and pillows, custom-design furniture, leather-topped European writing desks and marble bathrooms all scream "upscale." Rooms feature flat-screen televisions, free Internet, an iPod player and DVD player. Staying in a suite, I was surprised the DVD was attached to the TV at the foot of the bed and not the TV in the sitting area; it meant the kids had to lay in bed to watch a video instead of gathering on the couch.

Our suite with king-sized bed and sleeper sofa had a thick, upholstry-style curtain separating the sleeping areas, meaning parents don't have to sit in the dark when kids go to sleep. Two flat-screen TVs also allow for mom and dad to catch the news at breakfast while kids watch the Disney Channel. Rooms are oversized with plenty of room for the kids to run around.

Cribs or roll-away beds available. One perk I liked was the hotel's security included elevators that only worked with keys, so only hotel guests can get into the hallways. Rooms come with standard mini bar, refrigerator and bottled water and snacks, but scattered about at kid-level, I had to chase the little ones around and explain what could and could not be touched.

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## Hotel Commonwealth Planning & Tips

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### Getting There

Logan International Airport can be reached by every major U.S. carrier and is located along the subway line, known as "the T." Hotel Commonwealth is also located next to a subway stop, so cabs and subway rides as well as comfortable walking shoes for hoofing it are all you need in Boston. However, should you decide to drive, the Hotel Commonwealth offers a parking garage at a daily fee with in/out service allowed and valet parking.

### All About the Extras

An on-site fitness center with indoor swimming pool is open 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Room service is offered 24 hours a day, including a children's menu.

Written by Lissa Harnish Poirot