

**CHINATOWN PROFILE  
CENSUS 2000**

**(POPULATION, HOUSING, AND EMPLOYMENT DATA)**

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## **CHINATOWN DEMOGRAPHIC AND HOUSING PROFILE, 2000**

### **Location and Size**

The boundaries used for Chinatown in this profile are the same as the two Census Tracts 702 and 704 which comprises about 137 acres of land area or only two tenths of a square mile. This area covers approximately from Boylston and Beech Street on the north to East Berkeley Street on the south and from Charles Street South and Tremont Street on the west to Albany Street on the east.

Chinatown is adjacent to Downtown Boston, bordered by the Boston Common and Downtown Crossing on the north to the South End on the south, and then from Park Square and Bay Village on the west to the Southeast Expressway on the east. It includes most of the Theater District, some of Emerson College, and most of the Tufts/New England Medical Center.

These two Census tracts have a population of 6,015 with 4,169 Asians. If you include about ten blocks north of these two Census tracts in Census tract 701 there are about another 1,000 Asians. But because the study is limited to Census Tract boundaries and because Census tract 701 includes the Midtown, Waterfront and Devonshire areas, with many more non-Asians, it is not included in this study of Chinatown.

### **History**

The Chinatown Area is located on what was the southernmost part of the original Shawmut Peninsula with Washington Street being the neck connecting to the mainland. The Chinatown-South Cove area was created by filling the tidal flats in either side of the neck to create two residential neighborhoods with the Bay Village neighborhood on the west and the area that is now Chinatown on the east. In the 1840s, the area's original residents began to move out of the city, making way for newcomers who were mainly Irish, Italian, Jewish, and Syrian immigrants who converted the single-family homes to multiple unit tenements. In the mid- 19<sup>th</sup> Century the leather and garment industries located on the eastside of Washington Street near what are now Chinatown and the Leather District. The elevated Orange Line was built along Washington Street in 1899 causing some depressed land values and attracting more garment manufacturers. The 1880s saw the first Chinese immigrants who were mostly temporary residents with little need to assimilate into the mainstream of society. This largely isolated community of Chinese existed through the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century as more of Chinatown became of commercial use in addition to the residential neighborhood. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century many of the theaters of the Theater District were built on the fringes of Chinatown to the west. The Southeast Expressway was built in the 1950s taking some of Chinatown's buildings. The New York Streets district was razed in the 1950s and the Castle Square development was built. Part of Chinatown was in the South Cove Urban Renewal Plan, started in 1965. In the 1960s and 1970s Tufts/New England Medical Center expanded, the adult entertainment district was created and the Theater District saw some renovation. The garment district declined and was almost gone by the mid-1990s. From the 1960s through 2000 most of the new housing that was built was high-rise structures, many being subsidized and assisted housing. In the 1990s some more new housing was built, Emerson College began to acquire some properties and make some dormitories near the Tremont Street and Boylston Streets intersection, and many of the businesses in the Adult Entertainment District was closed due to encroaching development. As the Central Artery project nears completion development on the eastern fringe of Chinatown will take place following 2004.

## **Population**

The two census tracts straddling the Massachusetts Turnpike had a total of 6,015 people in the year 2000. The population density of this area, at 44 persons per acre, is double the citywide average of 20 persons per acre.

### ***Population and Density***

	Chinatown	Boston
Population	6,015	589,141
Square Acreage	136.82	30,108
Square Mileage	0.21	47.04
Population per square acre	44	19.6
Population per square mile	28,136	12,523

Of the total population there were 4,169 Asians in 2000, comprising 69% of the total population. The next largest groups were: white (17%), black (7%), and Hispanic (5%).

### ***Population***

	Chinatown	Boston
Total	6,015	589,141
White	17%	49%
Black	7%	24%
Asian	69%	7%
Hispanic	5%	14%
Amer. Indian	0%	0%
Other Race	0%	1%
Two Races or more	1%	3%

## **Income**

Household income in Chinatown is low in comparison with incomes for many other neighborhoods and below the citywide median.

### ***Income***

	Chinatown	Boston
Median household income	\$ 14,829	\$ 39,629
Pct. Less than \$20,000	61%	29%
Pct. \$20,000 to \$49,999	27%	32%
Pct. \$50,000 to \$99,999	8%	27%
Pct. \$100,000 or more	4%	13%

### ***Poverty Rates***

	Chinatown	Boston
Overall	37%	20%
Under 5 years	62%	25%
5 Years	27%	28%
6 to 11	39%	27%
12 to 17	37%	25%
18 to 64	28%	18%
65 to 74	50%	17%
75+	61%	19%

## **Age and Family Status**

Chinatown has somewhat fewer children and a much larger presence of the elderly than is evident citywide.

### ***Age***

	Chinatown	Boston
Median	35.1	31.1
Percent below 18	17%	20%
Percent aged 19-65	62%	70%
Percent 65 and over	21%	10%

There were 2,052 households in Chinatown in 2000 with 4,998 persons for a 2.44 person per household size, slightly greater than the 2.31 for Boston. A total of 1,015 persons lived in group-quarters, mainly Emerson College students in the Piano Row block and not really part of the Chinatown community. The area has about the same ratio of one- to two-person households as citywide at 35%/65% versus 37%/63%. The Chinatown area has a little greater presence of families (related persons living together) at 59% than the citywide share, at 48%. Also, Chinatown has more married families and fewer single-parent families with kids than for the City in total.

**Household Structure**

	Chinatown	Boston
Avg. Household Size	2.44	2.31
Family Households	59%	48%
Percent 1-Person	35%	37%
Percent 2+ Person	65%	63%

**Education**

Educational attainment of adults in Chinatown is considerably below the city's level

**Educational Attainment**

	Chinatown	Boston
Less than High School	60%	20%
High School Diploma only	21%	24%
Some College or More	19%	56%

**Language, the Foreign Born, and Mobility**

As for most non-English speaking cultures the Chinese youth in Chinatown tend to have better English language capabilities than the middle-aged or the elderly because they are brought up in the American culture with television, schooling, peers and other influences affecting their language. The elderly have very poor English speaking capabilities.

**Language and Ability**

		Chinatown	Boston
Ages 5-17	Speak English only	23%	58%
	Speak Asian language	67%	6%
	Speaks English very well or well	81%	87%
	Speaks English not well or not at all	19%	14%
	Speak Other language	10%	35%
	Speaks English very well or well	75%	91%
	Speaks English not well or not at all	25%	9%
Ages 18-64	Speak English only	39%	67%
	Speak Asian language	55%	6%
	Speaks English very well or well	40%	66%
	Speaks English not well or not at all	60%	34%
	Speak Other language	7%	27%
	Speaks English very well or well	81%	77%
	Speaks English not well or not at all	19%	23%
Ages 65+	Speak English only	20%	73%
	Speak Asian language	80%	5%
	Speaks English very well or well	11%	19%
	Speaks English not well or not at all	89%	81%

Ages 65+	Speak Other language	0%	22%
	Speaks English very well or well	0%	52%
	Speaks English not well or not at all	100%	48%
All Ages Combined		Chinatown	Boston
	Speak English only	32%	67%
	Speak Asian language	62%	6%
	Speaks English very well or well	38%	65%
	Speaks English not well or not at all	62%	35%
	Speak Other language	5%	27%
	Speaks English very well or well	78%	78%
	Speaks English not well or not at all	22%	22%

In Chinatown, 56% of the population was foreign born compared with 26% citywide. However, a greater share of the foreign-born Chinatown residents have become naturalized American citizens than is the case citywide

#### Place of Birth and Citizenship

		Chinatown	Boston
Native		44%	74%
	Born in Massachusetts	26%	47%
	Born in Other State	16%	24%
	Northeast	54%	50%
	Midwest	6%	14%
	South	30%	28%
	West	11%	1%
	Born in U.S. territory	2%	3%
Foreign Born		56%	26%
	Naturalized citizen	52%	37%
	Not a citizen	48%	63%

There is slightly less mobility of the Chinatown households than is apparent citywide. In this area 62% of the population (aged five and over) lived in the same house (or housing unit) in 1995 as 2000, while the Citywide percentage was 48%. This lesser mobility is unusual because the fact renters move more often than homeowners do. Maybe there is more attachment to the neighborhood and less mobility in subsidized housing.

#### Residence in 1995

	Chinatown	Boston
Same Housing Unit	62%	48%
Different Housing Unit	38%	52%

## Industries and Occupations of Residents

The unemployment rate for the Chinatown Area in 2000 was about 11% compared to about 7% citywide. Unemployment for men at 13% was more severe than that for women at 9%

	Chinatown	Boston
Unemployment rate	11%	7%

The industry profile for working residents in the Chinatown area reveal that work in the industries of food service, education, accommodation, manufacturing, and retail trade are much more prevalent than city wide. Conversely industries less prevalent for workers in Chinatown are transportation and utilities, finance/insurance/real estate/leasing, and professional/scientific/management/administrative activities.

### *Industries of the Workforce*

	Chinatown			Boston		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Agriculture, fishing, mining	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Construction	5%	0%	2%	7%	1%	4%
Manufacturing	11%	24%	12%	8%	4%	6%
Wholesale trade	1%	3%	2%	2%	1%	2%
Retail trade	11%	10%	10%	9%	8%	9%
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	3%	1%	2%	6%	2%	4%
Information	3%	4%	3%	5%	4%	4%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, and Leasing	4%	6%	5%	10%	11%	10%
Professional, Scientific, Management, and Admin.	8%	9%	9%	16%	14%	15%
Education	8%	11%	9%	9%	13%	11%
Health care and social services	2%	19%	11%	8%	23%	16%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%
Accommodation and Food	40%	13%	27%	8%	6%	7%
Other Services	2%	6%	4%	4%	5%	5%
Government	1%	3%	2%	6%	5%	5%

Data for occupations of the employed in the Chinatown Area reveal that about one-quarter of all workers are in the food preparation and serving fields reflecting the large role that restaurants play in this district. Another grouping of occupational fields that are more prevalent among Chinatown Area workers is the office and administrative support and sales occupations – these also have about one-quarter of all workers. A third occupational field that is notable in size is production work, which still reflects the presence of garment manufacturing workers.

***Occupations of the Workforce***

	Chinatown			Boston		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Management, Business and Finance	4%	7%	5%	17%	16%	16%
Professional and Related	12%	17%	14%	25%	29%	27%
Food Services	38%	10%	24%	7%	5%	6%
Other Services	7%	17%	12%	10%	13%	12%
Sales and Office	20%	33%	26%	20%	31%	26%
Farming, Fishing and Forestry	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Construction, Extraction and Maintenance	8%	1%	5%	9%	1%	5%
Production	7%	13%	10%	5%	4%	4%
Transportation and material moving	4%	1%	3%	7%	1%	4%

**Place of Work, Journey-to-Work, and Vehicles**

Data about place of work of Chinatown Area residents show that as a whole workers here are more likely to work within the City than outside but the difference with the citywide data is not very large (74% versus 66%). There still is a small but significant share (9% versus 4% Citywide) of Chinatown Area workers that work outside the metropolitan area reflecting, possibly, the travel by van for food service workers to more distant locations to find work.

***Workplace***

	Chinatown	Boston
Outside Massachusetts	4%	1%
Other Massachusetts	6%	10%
Metro Boston	16%	23%
In Boston	74%	66%

A significant difference exists in the mode of journey-to-work among Chinatown Area residents than for the City as a whole representing the urban nature of this area. More Chinatown residents walk to work or take the subway than drive alone. Of those who drive to work, carpools are more prevalent.

***Transportation to Work***

	Chinatown	Boston
Car, alone	12%	42%
Carpool	15%	9%
Public Transportation	27%	32%
Walked	39%	13%
Worked at home	3%	2%
Other	4%	2%

The availability of vehicles show that in Chinatown about 71% of all households have no vehicle, 26% have one vehicle, and 3% have more than one vehicle available – comparable numbers for all of Boston are 40%, 48% and 12%. There were 709 vehicles in the Chinatown Area in 2000, a ratio of about 11 cars per 100 people – Citywide the number is about 38 cars per 100 people.

	Chinatown	Boston
Vehicles	709	220,445
Vehicles Per 100 Residents	11	38

### General Housing Overview

Most of the housing stock in the Chinatown area is contained in either older, small apartment buildings (2 to 6 family buildings) or else in large newly-built, mid-rise residential towers. Some of the housing in the older, small buildings have been converted to commercial uses (stores or restaurants) or to storage and warehousing uses on the upper floors in the commercial districts. Most of the larger housing developments (Castle Square) or buildings (Mass Pike Towers, Quincy Towers, or Tai Tung Village) built in the 1960s or 1970s are subsidized housing. Some of the newer developments such as Waterford Place and Oak Terrace built in the 1980s or 1990s have a mixture of subsidized and market-rate units. Many of Chinatown’s housing units are of small size (one or two bedrooms) with very few larger apartments (three or more bedrooms). Also, the vast majority of Chinatown is rental housing with only a very small share owner-occupied.

### Housing Units, Vacancy and Tenure

There were 2,091 housing units in the Chinatown Area in the year 2000. The vacancy rate in Chinatown was only 2% in 2000 (39 units) versus 5% Citywide in 2000 (12,407 units). The percentage of owner-occupied units was 2% in the Chinatown Area (45 units) in 2000 compared with 32% Citywide. The renter-occupancy percentage was 98% in Chinatown versus 68% citywide

#### Housing Vacancy

	Chinatown	Boston
Occupied	98%	95%
Vacant	2%	5%

#### Housing Tenure

	Chinatown	Boston
Owner Occupied	2%	32%
Renter Occupied	98%	68%

Average Household Size	2.44	2.31
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### Units Per Structure, Bedrooms Per Unit, and Age of Structure

Housing in Chinatown is primarily in large buildings of 50 or more units per structure (50%). Chinatown housing units are very small – 71% of all units are either one-bedroom units or studios compared with 36% Citywide. Very few Chinatown units are larger – 10% of all units versus 32% Citywide. Chinatown housing is newer than housing citywide – only 31% of all Chinatown housing was built before 1960 compared with 72% Citywide – this is because of the construction of some large newer buildings in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

**Housing Units Per Structure**

	Chinatown	Boston
1, detached	1%	12%
1, attached	5%	5%
2	2%	15%
3 or 4	21%	25%
5 to 9	4%	12%
10 to 19	5%	9%
20 to 49	10%	9%
50 or more	50%	12%

**Rooms Per House and Median Rooms**

	Chinatown	Boston
1 room	30%	7%
2 rooms	31%	12%
3 rooms	21%	18%
4 rooms	10%	18%
5 rooms	5%	19%
6 rooms	3%	12%
7 rooms	0%	6%
8 rooms	0%	3%
9 or more rooms	0%	5%
Median	2.2	4.2

**Bedrooms Per Housing Unit**

	Chinatown	Boston
No bedroom	32%	8%
1 bedroom	39%	28%
2 bedrooms	19%	32%
3 bedrooms	7%	21%
4 bedrooms	3%	7%
5 or more bedrooms	0%	4%

**Year Housing Unit was Built**

	Chinatown	Boston
1980 or newer	18%	8%
1960 to 1979	50%	18%
Prior to 1960	31%	72%
Median	1968	before 1940

**Overcrowding**

Chinatown Area housing units have a considerably greater number of persons per room than citywide data show – in Chinatown 34% of all housing units have more than one person per room while for Boston, as a whole, the percentage is only 7%. The fact that many of the units in Chinatown are small and household size is larger than average in Chinatown makes overcrowding more evident here.

### **Overcrowding**

	Chinatown	Boston
.50 or less occupants per room	24%	59%
.51 to 1.00 occupants per room	42%	34%
more than 1.00 occupants per room	34%	7%

### **Transportation**

Its downtown location means that Chinatown is well served by the MBTA mass transit system, particularly by the Orange Line subway. Kneeland Street and Harrison Avenues are the main thoroughfares. The Central Artery project is going on right next to Chinatown and will provide excellent transportation do and from the district.

### **Open Space and Community Facilities**

Chinatown has three parks: Gateway Park (.13 acres), Norton Park (.99 acres), and Statler Park (.25 acres). Lincoln Square is at the juncture of Columbus, Eliot, and Broadway. The Chinatown/South Cove YMCA and the Quincy School are community facilities located in Chinatown.

### **Commercial Uses**

Non-residential uses developed on the edges of Chinatown following construction of South Station and, in 1899 of the Washington Street elevated subway line. Many tenements were razed to make way for the expansion of the garment industry. After World War II, Chinese restaurants and specialty shops began to occupy the ground floors of residential buildings and a tourist industry began to evolve. Today, the remainder of what had been a much larger textile industry still exists in Chinatown. However, now most of the commercial activity is visitor-related and generated by the area's many Asian restaurants, food stores and gift shops. Chinatown serves as a commercial and cultural center for the Chinese and other Asian populations throughout the Boston metropolitan area. Chinatown is surrounded by the encroaching Financial District, Downtown Crossing, Tufts/New England Medical Center, and the Theater District.

### **Institutions**

Tufts Medical School and the School of Nutrition are located in Chinatown as is Tufts/New England Medical Center. The State Transportation Building is located at the Western edge of the District.

### **Arts and Culture**

Boston's Theater District is located in the western section of Chinatown with the Wang Theater, the Shubert, the Wilbur, and the Emerson/Majestic being the largest facilities. Several comedy clubs and smaller playhouses are located near this area as are the new Loew's movie theaters at Millennium Place.

# Chinatown Census Data Profile Boundaries

