



Salem, Massachusetts is a “Wicked” historic and runner friendly city. Founded in 1626, by Roger Conant who arrived with the first settlers, Salem has been attracting people from all around the world. My parents were one of those people who arrived from Mexico and decided that Salem was a good city with a “small town” feeling to it and decided to settle down in Salem over 50 years ago.

Besides the fact Salem is known for its witchcraft trails of 1692, the beautiful coastal city has much to offer to its residents and neighboring communities. It has historic houses, cobblestone streets, beautiful harbors and great restaurants just to showcase some of its finer points.

But the one thing I remember about growing up in Salem is “the Common” – this beautiful park in the middle of this historic city. This is where my “running roots” come from. As a middle schooler, I learned early on, running two loops around the Salem Common is considered a mile. Hence, I used to run my loops in “the Common”, since it was close to home, and my parents felt it was safe there. Then as I got older, I ran throughout the City, down to the Salem Willows – by the harbor, and down its picturesque streets.

To me Salem was and still is a runner friendly city in so many ways. Running by the waterfront, I have always admired the view and forget about my troubles. If I wanted something more challenging, then I would run up in the Salem “Witchcraft Heights” neighborhoods where I would encounter some “killer rolling” hills that would prep me for upcoming races. The streets are safe, diverse, and appealing to any runner.

The Wicked Running Club, along with other organizations in the city, have created races for all types of runners and distances; from the annual January 1st Frosty Four Race, to the Cross Country 5k Old Salem Green Race, to the summer WRC Wicked Kidz Race and to the Annual Wild Turkey Race, among others -- there’s a race for every type of runner. Whether you are a beginning runner or a seasoned one, you can be sure to find something challenging in a Salem Race.

For me, no matter what “running route” or race I choose now that I am part of the Wicked Running Club of Salem, I know that I owe my original “running roots” to this

great city. These are the reasons why I think RRCA should pick Salem, Massachusetts as a runner friendly community.

**Alison Phelan,
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