

Mass Transit

Adam Maresca (ft. Nick Mitchell)

Answer: **YERBA MATE**

The trip itinerary shown is indeed taken entirely via subway, but all the colors of lines shown, as well as their intersections, overlaps, and distances in stops, match no single city's system. Start by realizing that the trip begins and ends in Boston, as the flavor refers to Wonderland and Oak Grove. (As an originally-unintended but delightful third meaning, the title points to the great state of Massachusetts, too!)

Follow the stops as given until reaching Kenmore station (taking the "Y" in Boylston) before reaching a transfer (at one of the black-dot stations) to a blue line that does not exist. One can also work backwards from Oak Grove, taking Wellington's "E" and reach an impossible lime-colored transfer at Broadway, again on a black dot.

However, there is a blue line one can take from Kenmore station... in Cleveland. Similarly, the NYC Broadway station is on a lime-green line. All the points of discontinuity in the trip occur at black-dot stations, which all share a name with another station in a different US city's subway. The following is the full trip, with letter extraction stations given in italics:

- Boston: Wonderland, Gov't Center, *Boylston*, Kenmore
- Cleveland: Kenmore, *Lee*, Ashby
- Atlanta: Ashby, Five Points, *Arts Center*, Medical Center
- DC: Medical Center, *Bethesda*, Union Station
- LA: Union Station, *Mariachi Plaza*, Indiana
- Chicago: Indiana, Roosevelt, *Monroe*, Bryn Mawr
- Philadelphia: Bryn Mawr, *Haverford*, 69th Street, 15th Street, City Hall
- NYC: City Hall, *Atlantic Avenue*, 9th Street, 4th Avenue, Broadway
- Boston: Broadway, Downtown Crossing, *Wellington*, Oak Grove

Taking the "medal" color as extracting the first, second or third letter of the corresponding station's name and reading in itinerary order yields the final answer, **YERBA MATE**.

Author's Notes

Adam: This puzzle started as confined to NYC/Boston/Chicago/LA before expanding to all metro systems in the world... and then being thankfully reined back in to a selection of US cities. Oh yeah, and "Mass Transit" was primarily meant as a teleportation joke. Get it?

Nick: Shortly before the hunt started, we discovered that a section of the Gold Line in Los Angeles had been closed for reconfiguration after the puzzle was written. But we hoped this minor real-life anomaly would not overly hinder fantasy-world solvers who had already learned to teleport between different cities.