Los Angeles Travel Guide

Discover Los Angeles: The City of Angels

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Things to do in Los Angeles

Landmarks & Monuments

Los Angeles boasts iconic landmarks that define American pop culture and architectural excellence. From the world-famous Hollywood Sign to historic theaters and observatories, these monuments represent the dreams and achievements that make LA legendary.



Must See

Hollywood Sign

2-3 hours including hike No Booking Needed

Map

The **most recognizable landmark in Los Angeles**, this 45-foot-tall sign perched on Mount Lee has symbolized the entertainment industry since 1923. While you can't touch the sign itself, numerous hiking trails offer spectacular views and photo opportunities. The best viewpoints include Griffith Observatory, Lake Hollywood Park, and the Griffith Park trails. *Arrive early morning for the best light and fewer crowds.* The hike to the closest viewpoint takes about 3 hours round trip with moderate difficulty.



Must See

Griffith Observatory

2-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

This **Art Deco masterpiece** offers breathtaking views of Los Angeles and the Hollywood Sign, along with fascinating astronomical exhibits and planetarium shows. The observatory has appeared in countless films including 'Rebel Without a Cause' and 'La La Land'. *Admission to the building and grounds is free*, though planetarium shows require tickets. Visit during sunset for spectacular views of the city transitioning from day to night. The Zeiss telescope is available for public viewing on clear nights.



Must See

Santa Monica Pier

2-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

This **historic oceanfront pier** features Pacific Park amusement park with its iconic solar-powered Ferris wheel, an aquarium, restaurants, and street performers. Built in 1909, it's the symbolic end of Route 66. The pier offers stunning ocean views, carnival games, and a nostalgic atmosphere. *Best visited during sunset* when the Ferris wheel lights up and the ocean reflects golden hues. Free admission to the pier; rides and attractions have individual prices.



Top Pick

TCL Chinese Theatre

1 hour No Booking Needed

Map

Originally Grauman's Chinese Theatre, this **iconic movie palace** has hosted countless Hollywood premieres since 1927. The forecourt features handprints, footprints, and signatures of over 200 film legends in concrete. The ornate Chinese-inspired architecture makes it one of the most photographed buildings in Hollywood. *You can tour the interior* or watch a movie in this historic venue. The IMAX theater offers a modern viewing experience in a classic setting.



Top Pick

Walt Disney Concert Hall

1-2 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Designed by architect Frank Gehry, this **architectural marvel** features stunning stainless steel curves that have become a landmark of downtown LA. Home to the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the hall offers world-class acoustics and regular performances. *Free self-guided audio tours* are available, allowing visitors to explore the unique architecture and design elements. The outdoor spaces and gardens are open to the public. Photography of the exterior is highly recommended during golden hour.

Tips for Landmarks & Monuments

- **Photography:** Golden hour (sunrise/sunset) provides the best lighting for landmark photos
- **Crowds:** Visit popular landmarks on weekday mornings to avoid crowds
- **Parking:** Use public transportation when possible; parking near major landmarks can be expensive and limited
- **Hollywood Walk of Fame:** While viewing is free, be aware of aggressive street performers asking for tips

Museums & Galleries

Los Angeles houses world-renowned museums spanning art, history, science, and entertainment. From the comprehensive Getty Center to specialized collections celebrating film and automotive design, these institutions offer cultural enrichment for all interests and ages.



Must See

The Getty Center

3-4 hours No Booking Needed

Map

This **architectural and cultural masterpiece** sits atop the Santa Monica Mountains with panoramic city and ocean views. The collection includes European paintings, sculptures, and decorative arts, plus contemporary photography. The Richard Meier-designed buildings and stunning gardens are attractions themselves. *Admission is free* (Parking is $25, or $15 after 3 p.m. (and $10 after 6 p.m.); it is free on Saturdays after 6 p.m.). The garden terraces and outdoor sculptures provide Instagram-worthy backdrops. Plan at least half a day to fully appreciate the art, architecture, and grounds.



Must See

Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA)

3-4 hours No Booking Needed

Map

The **largest art museum in the western United States**, LACMA features over 150,000 works spanning history and geography. The iconic 'Urban Light' installation of 202 restored street lamps is one of LA's most photographed artworks. Collections include American, Latin American, Asian, and Islamic art. Special exhibitions rotate throughout the year. *Free admission* for LA County residents after 3 PM on weekdays. The museum campus also features the La Brea Tar Pits across the street.



Top Pick Book Ahead

The Broad

2-3 hours Book Ahead

Map

This **contemporary art museum** houses over 2,000 works from the Broad collection, featuring prominent postwar and contemporary artists like Jeff Koons, Jean-Michel Basquiat, and Yayoi Kusama. The 'Infinity Mirror Rooms' are must-see immersive experiences. The striking honeycomb-like exterior makes the building itself a work of art. *General admission is free* but advance reservations are recommended, especially for the Infinity Rooms. Located in downtown LA's vibrant arts district.



Top Pick

Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County

3-4 hours No Booking Needed

Map

One of the **largest natural history museums in the western United States**, featuring dinosaur fossils, gems and minerals, California history, and biodiversity exhibits. The Dinosaur Hall showcases over 300 fossils including complete T-Rex and Triceratops skeletons. The adjacent Exposition Park also includes the California Science Center. *Great for families and science enthusiasts.* The Nature Gardens outside feature native California plants and wildlife. Special exhibitions and butterfly pavilion (seasonal) require separate tickets.



Top Pick Book Ahead

Academy Museum of Motion Pictures

2-3 hours Book Ahead

Map

The **world's premier museum dedicated to film**, opened in 2021, celebrating the art and science of movies. Exhibits include Oscar history, special effects, costume design, and rotating exhibitions on filmmakers and genres. The spherical David Geffen Theater is an architectural marvel. Interactive displays let visitors explore filmmaking techniques. *Essential for movie lovers*. The rooftop terrace offers stunning Hollywood Hills views. Advance tickets recommended for weekend visits.



Top Pick Book Ahead

Getty Villa

2-3 hours Book Ahead

Map

Modeled after an ancient Roman villa, this **museum and educational center** displays Greek, Roman, and Etruscan antiquities from the Getty collection. The stunning gardens, fountains, and architecture transport visitors to ancient times. Located in Pacific Palisades overlooking the Pacific Ocean. *Free admission* but advance timed tickets are required (Parking is $25, or $15 after 3 p.m. (and $10 after 6 p.m.); it is free on Saturdays after 6 p.m.). The peaceful setting makes it ideal for a contemplative cultural experience away from city crowds.



Notable

Petersen Automotive Museum

2-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

This **automotive museum** showcases over 300 vehicles across three floors, celebrating car culture and history. Exhibits include classic cars, hot rods, motorcycles, and vehicles from film and television. The Vault Tour (additional fee) provides access to 250+ rare vehicles in the basement collection. *Perfect for car enthusiasts and families*. The rooftop exhibit features rotating displays. Interactive exhibits explore car design, engineering, and cultural impact.

Tips for Museums & Galleries

- **Free Days:** Many museums offer free admission days for residents; check individual websites
- **Combo Visits:** Plan to visit multiple museums in the same area (e.g., LACMA and La Brea Tar Pits, or Exposition Park museums)
- **Advance Booking:** Reserve tickets online for popular museums like The Broad and Getty Villa to guarantee entry
- **Photography:** Most museums allow photography without flash; check specific gallery rules
- **Dining:** Museum cafes often offer quality food and are open to non-ticket holders

Beaches & Coastal Areas

Los Angeles' 75 miles of Pacific coastline offer diverse beach experiences, from the famous Venice Beach boardwalk to upscale Malibu shores. Each beach has its own character, whether you seek surfing, sunbathing, people-watching, or coastal dining.



Must See

Venice Beach

2-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

The **most eclectic beach in LA**, famous for its bohemian spirit, street performers, muscle beach gym, skate park, and the vibrant Ocean Front Walk boardwalk. Artists, vendors, fortune tellers, and musicians create a carnival-like atmosphere. The Venice Canals nearby offer a peaceful contrast with their European-inspired waterways. *Best experienced on weekend afternoons* when the boardwalk is most lively. Free to visit; bring cash for vendors. Watch your belongings in crowded areas.



Must See

Santa Monica Beach

3-4 hours No Booking Needed

Map

A **classic California beach** with wide sandy shores, the famous pier, excellent swimming conditions, and a paved bike path connecting to other beaches. The Third Street Promenade nearby offers shopping and dining. *Ideal for families* with clean facilities, lifeguards, and gentle waves. Bike rentals available along the beach path. Parking can be challenging; arrive early or use public transportation. The sunset views from the pier are spectacular.



Top Pick

Malibu Beaches

Half day to full day No Booking Needed

Map

The **upscale beach destination** stretching 21 miles along Pacific Coast Highway, featuring multiple beaches including Zuma, Surfrider, El Matador, and Point Dume. Surfrider Beach is world-famous among surfers. El Matador offers dramatic rock formations and sea caves perfect for photography. *Less crowded than city beaches* with natural beauty and celebrity homes. Some beaches require descending stairs or cliffs. Bring your own food and drinks as amenities are limited at some locations.



Notable

Manhattan Beach

2-4 hours No Booking Needed

Map

An **upscale beach community** known for excellent volleyball courts, surfing, and the Manhattan Beach Pier. The downtown village offers boutique shopping and quality dining. Clean, well-maintained beach with a more refined atmosphere than Venice. *Popular with locals and families*. The Strand bike path runs along the beach. Parking is easier than at Venice or Santa Monica. Great spot for watching beach volleyball tournaments in summer.

Tips for Beaches & Coastal Areas

- **June Gloom:** Expect overcast mornings in late spring/early summer; skies usually clear by afternoon
- **Water Temperature:** Pacific Ocean is cold year-round (60-70°F); wetsuits recommended for extended swimming
- **Parking:** Beach parking fills up early on weekends; arrive before 10 AM or use ride-share/bike
- **Safety:** Swim near lifeguard stations; be aware of riptides and cold water
- **Beach Fires:** Allowed at designated fire pits (first-come, first-served); bring your own firewood

Parks & Gardens

Home to world-famous theme parks and entertainment venues, Los Angeles offers thrilling experiences for all ages. From behind-the-scenes studio tours to adrenaline-pumping roller coasters, these attractions showcase LA's position as the entertainment capital.



Must See Book Ahead

Universal Studios Hollywood

Full day (8-10 hours) Book Ahead

Map

A **working film studio and theme park** offering behind-the-scenes looks at movie magic plus thrilling rides. The Studio Tour takes you through real filming locations including the Psycho house and Jaws. Attractions include Harry Potter's Wizarding World, Jurassic World, and Transformers rides. *Plan a full day* to experience everything. Express Pass available to skip lines (additional cost). Download the Universal app for wait times and show schedules. Arrive at opening for shortest lines.



Must See Book Ahead

Disneyland Resort (Anaheim)

Full day to multiple days Book Ahead

Map

While technically in Anaheim (45 minutes from LA), **Disneyland is essential** for many LA visitors. Walt Disney's original theme park features classic attractions, character meet-and-greets, and California Adventure next door. Eight themed lands offer something for all ages. *Multi-day tickets offer best value*. Genie+ service available for ride reservations (additional fee). Stay at a Disney hotel for early park entry. Book dining reservations 60 days in advance for popular restaurants.



Must See

Griffith Park

2-6 hours depending on activities No Booking Needed

Map

One of the **largest urban parks in North America**, covering over 4,300 acres with hiking trails, picnic areas, the Greek Theatre, Los Angeles Zoo, and Griffith Observatory. Multiple trails lead to the Hollywood Sign viewpoints. The park offers horseback riding, golf, and the vintage Travel Town Railroad Museum. *Perfect for outdoor enthusiasts*. Trails range from easy to challenging. Bring water and sun protection. Best visited in early morning or late afternoon to avoid heat. Free to enter; some attractions have admission fees.



Must See Book Ahead

The Huntington Library, Art Museum & Botanical Gardens

3-5 hours Book Ahead

Map

A **world-class cultural institution** in San Marino featuring rare books (including a Gutenberg Bible), European and American art, and 120 acres of themed gardens. The Chinese Garden, Japanese Garden, and Desert Garden are stunning. The art collection includes Gainsborough's 'Blue Boy'. *Plan at least half a day* to explore the extensive grounds. Advance tickets required; free admission for children under 11. The Rose Garden is spectacular in spring. Excellent café with garden views. Located about 30 minutes from downtown LA.



Top Pick Book Ahead

Warner Bros. Studio Tour Hollywood

3 hours Book Ahead

Map

An **intimate studio tour** taking you through working soundstages, backlots, and prop departments. See sets from Friends, The Big Bang Theory, and Batman films. Unlike Universal, this is a more authentic studio experience with smaller groups. Visit the DC Universe exhibit and Central Perk café. *Great for film and TV enthusiasts*. Tours run about 3 hours and must be booked in advance. No children under 5 allowed. Located in Burbank, about 20 minutes from Hollywood.



Top Pick

Runyon Canyon Park

1.5-2.5 hours No Booking Needed

Map

A **160-acre park** in the Hollywood Hills offering hiking trails with panoramic city views. Popular with locals for exercise, dog walking (off-leash areas available), and potential celebrity sightings. The main trail to the summit is moderately challenging with rewarding 360-degree views. *Best visited at sunrise or sunset* for cooler temperatures and beautiful light. Free admission and parking. Can get very crowded, especially weekends. Bring water; limited shade on trails. Access from Fuller Avenue or Mulholland Drive.



Notable

Six Flags Magic Mountain

Full day (8-10 hours) Book Ahead

Map

The **thrill ride capital** featuring 20 roller coasters, more than any other park worldwide. Adrenaline junkies love intense rides like Twisted Colossus, X2, and Full Throttle. Also offers family-friendly attractions and a water park (Hurricane Harbor) next door. Located in Valencia, about 35 miles north of LA. *Best for teenagers and coaster enthusiasts*. Visit on weekdays for shorter waits. Flash Pass available to reduce wait times (additional cost).



Notable

Descanso Gardens

2-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

A **150-acre botanical garden** in La Cañada Flintridge featuring one of the world's largest camellia collections, rose gardens, California native plant garden, and Japanese garden. Oak forest trails wind through the property. *Spectacular during camellia season* (winter/early spring). Peaceful atmosphere perfect for leisurely walks and photography. Tram tours available for those who prefer not to walk. The Maple restaurant offers farm-to-table dining. Less crowded than Huntington, making it ideal for a tranquil escape.



Optional

South Coast Botanic Garden

2-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

An **87-acre garden** built on a former landfill, showcasing gardens from around the world including Mediterranean, Australian, and Japanese landscapes. Over 2,000 plant species on display. The transformation story itself is remarkable. *Peaceful and less touristy* than other botanical gardens. Located on the Palos Verdes Peninsula near the coast. Great for photography and nature walks. Host to weddings and events. The Garden-to-Glass Café offers light refreshments. More budget-friendly than Huntington with lower admission prices.

Tips for Parks & Gardens

- **Save Money:** Buy tickets online in advance for discounts; avoid buying at the gate
- **Skip Lines:** Arrive at park opening for shortest waits on popular attractions
- **Comfort:** Wear comfortable shoes and bring sunscreen; theme parks involve extensive walking
- **Food:** Most parks allow you to bring snacks and sealed water bottles; check policies
- **Apps:** Download park apps for real-time wait times, show schedules, and mobile food ordering

- **Hiking Safety:** Bring plenty of water, wear sunscreen and hat; trails can be exposed with little shade
- **Wildlife:** Be aware of rattlesnakes, coyotes, and mountain lions; stay on marked trails
- **Best Times:** Visit parks early morning or late afternoon to avoid peak heat and crowds
- **Parking:** Arrive early at popular parks like Runyon Canyon; parking fills up quickly on weekends
- **Seasonal Visits:** Botanical gardens are beautiful year-round but peak during spring bloom season

Neighborhoods & Districts

Los Angeles is a sprawling collection of distinct neighborhoods, each with unique character, culture, and attractions. From the glitz of Beverly Hills to the artistic energy of the Arts District, exploring different areas reveals the city's diversity.



Must See

Hollywood

2-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

The **entertainment capital's epicenter**, home to the Walk of Fame, TCL Chinese Theatre, Dolby Theatre (Oscar ceremonies), and countless entertainment landmarks. Hollywood Boulevard bustles with tourists, street performers, and souvenir shops. *Hollywood & Highland complex* offers shopping and dining with Sign views. Visit the Hollywood Museum in the historic Max Factor Building. While touristy, it's an essential LA experience. **Evening visits** offer better lighting and atmosphere. Be cautious with aggressive street performers requesting tips.



Top Pick

Beverly Hills & Rodeo Drive

2-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

The **epitome of luxury and glamour**, Beverly Hills features upscale shopping on Rodeo Drive, celebrity homes, and manicured streets. Window shop at flagship stores of Gucci, Chanel, and Louis Vuitton. The Beverly Hills sign and City Hall are popular photo spots. *Free to walk around* and people-watch. Take a self-guided tour of celebrity homes (maps available). Visit the adjacent Beverly Gardens Park. Best experienced on a leisurely weekday stroll. Parking in public lots off Rodeo Drive.



Top Pick

Downtown LA Arts District

2-4 hours No Booking Needed

Map

The **city's creative hub** featuring galleries, street art, converted warehouses, artisan coffee shops, and trendy restaurants. Vibrant murals and graffiti art cover buildings throughout. Visit during the monthly Art Walk. Hauser & Wirth gallery showcases contemporary art. The area has transformed into a foodie destination with spots like Bestia and Zinc Café. *Great for Instagram-worthy photos*. Safe during the day; exercise caution at night. Easily combined with Little Tokyo and The Broad museum visits.



Top Pick

Rodeo Drive

1-2 hours No Booking Needed

Map

The **world-famous luxury shopping street** in Beverly Hills featuring flagship stores of Chanel, Gucci, Prada, Louis Vuitton, and other prestigious brands. Even window shopping is an experience among the palm-lined streets and elegant architecture. *Free to walk and people-watch*. The Via Rodeo shopping complex adds a European plaza atmosphere. Best visited on weekdays for a more relaxed experience. Valet parking available at most stores. Photography encouraged outside stores. Combine with lunch at a nearby Beverly Hills restaurant.



Top Pick

The Grove & Original Farmers Market

2-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

An **outdoor shopping and entertainment complex** adjacent to the historic Farmers Market (since 1934). The Grove features upscale retail, restaurants, and a movie theater with a charming trolley and dancing fountain. The Farmers Market offers diverse food stalls, fresh produce, and casual eateries. *Popular with both tourists and locals*. Great for combining shopping with lunch at the market. Free admission; validate parking with purchases. The holiday season features elaborate decorations and snow shows. Adjacent to CBS Television City.



Notable

West Hollywood (WeHo)

3-4 hours No Booking Needed

Map

The **LGBTQ+ cultural center** and nightlife hub of LA, WeHo features the famous Sunset Strip, trendy boutiques on Melrose Avenue, and vibrant restaurant scene. Historic music venues like The Roxy and Whisky a Go Go line Sunset Boulevard. *Rainbow crosswalks* mark the heart of the LGBTQ+ community. World-class nightclubs and rooftop bars. Design District offers high-end furniture showrooms. LA Pride celebration takes place here each June. Excellent people-watching and dining along Santa Monica Boulevard.



Notable

Silver Lake & Echo Park

2-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Hip, artistic neighborhoods known for independent coffee shops, vintage boutiques, and a bohemian atmosphere. Echo Park Lake features pedal boats and views of downtown. The Silver Lake Reservoir has a popular walking path. Sunset Junction area offers eclectic shopping and dining. *Popular with locals and creatives*. Great vintage shopping and vinyl record stores. More authentic LA experience away from tourist crowds. Visit the historic Music Box Steps from Laurel and Hardy films.



Notable

Little Tokyo

2-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

The **historic Japanese-American cultural district** in downtown LA featuring authentic Japanese restaurants, shops, and cultural institutions. Visit the Japanese American National Museum, sample ramen and sushi, and browse Japanese bookstores and gift shops. *Nisei Week Festival* in August celebrates Japanese culture. The Go For Broke Monument honors Japanese-American soldiers. Compact area perfect for a few hours of exploration. Excellent authentic Japanese cuisine at various price points. Mochi ice cream was invented here at Mikawaya.



Notable

Melrose Avenue

2-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

A **trendy shopping street** featuring vintage boutiques, streetwear stores, independent designers, and Instagram-worthy murals including the famous Pink Wall. The area from Fairfax to La Brea is prime for unique fashion finds. *Great for fashion-forward shoppers* seeking unique pieces. Many stores cater to younger, edgier styles. Street parking available but can be challenging. Combine with vintage shopping on nearby Fairfax Avenue. Popular for street photography. Stores typically open late morning/early afternoon.



Notable

Abbot Kinney Boulevard

2-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Named *America's coolest street*, this **Venice Beach thoroughfare** features independent boutiques, art galleries, trendy restaurants, and creative shops. The mile-long street perfectly captures Venice's eclectic, artistic vibe. *Ideal for discovering unique gifts and local designers*. First Fridays event features special promotions and food trucks. Excellent dining options from casual to upscale. Parking can be tricky; arrive early or use ride-share. Walk to Venice Beach (10 minutes) after shopping. More upscale than the Venice Boardwalk.



Optional

Santee Alley (Fashion District)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed

Map

The **heart of LA's Fashion District**, this pedestrian alley offers bargain shopping with wholesale pricing on clothing, accessories, and textiles. Over 150 vendors in a bustling, market-like atmosphere. *Bring cash for best deals* and be prepared to negotiate. Open Thursday through Sunday (busiest on Saturday). Can be overwhelming but great for finding affordable fashion. Some items are samples or overstock from major brands. Located in downtown LA; exercise caution with belongings in crowded areas. Combine with visits to other downtown attractions.

Tips for Neighborhoods & Districts

- **Explore on Foot:** Park once and walk within neighborhoods; driving between areas is more practical
- **Local Favorites:** Ask residents for recommendations; hidden gems often aren't in guidebooks
- **Safety:** While most neighborhoods are safe during the day, research areas before visiting at night
- **Parking:** Use parking apps like SpotHero to find and reserve affordable parking
- **Cultural Events:** Check neighborhood websites for street fairs, art walks, and cultural festivals

- **Sales Tax:** California sales tax is 9.5% in LA; factor this into your budget
- **Best Deals:** Visit during holiday sales (Black Friday, after Christmas) for significant discounts
- **Parking:** Many shopping districts offer validated parking with purchase; ask in stores
- **Bargaining:** Acceptable at markets and Fashion District but not at established retail stores
- **Shipping:** Most stores can ship purchases home if you're traveling internationally

Food & Dining

LA's dining scene is as diverse as its population, offering everything from celebrity chef restaurants to authentic ethnic eateries and food trucks. The city's culinary landscape reflects global influences and California's farm-to-table philosophy.



Holbox★★★★★ 4.8 (2,837)

1-2 hours

Map

Holbox is a highly-rated restaurant in Los Angeles, rated 4.8★ from 2837 reviews. Located at 3655 S Grand Ave c9, Los Angeles, CA 90007, USA.

Opening Hours

- Monday: Closed
- Tuesday: 11:30 AM – 9:00 PM
- Wednesday: 11:30 AM – 9:00 PM
- Thursday: 11:30 AM – 9:00 PM
- Friday: 11:30 AM – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 11:30 AM – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: 11:30 AM – 9:00 PM



JOEY DTLA★★★★★ 4.8 (5,441)

1-2 hours

Map

JOEY DTLA is a highly-rated restaurant in Los Angeles, rated 4.8★ from 5441 reviews. Located at 700 W 7th St Ste S430, Los Angeles, CA 90017, USA.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 11:00 AM – 12:00 AM
- Tuesday: 11:00 AM – 12:00 AM
- Wednesday: 11:00 AM – 12:00 AM
- Thursday: 11:00 AM – 1:00 AM
- Friday: 11:00 AM – 1:00 AM
- Saturday: 11:00 AM – 1:00 AM
- Sunday: 11:00 AM – 12:00 AM



Bacari Silverlake★★★★★ 4.6 (1,734)

1-2 hours

Map

Bacari Silverlake is a highly-rated restaurant in Los Angeles, rated 4.6★ from 1734 reviews. Located at 3626 Sunset Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90026, USA.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 5:00 – 11:00 PM
- Tuesday: 5:00 – 11:00 PM
- Wednesday: 5:00 – 11:00 PM
- Thursday: 5:00 PM – 12:30 AM
- Friday: 5:00 PM – 1:00 AM
- Saturday: 10:30 AM – 2:30 PM, 4:00 PM – 1:00 AM
- Sunday: 10:30 AM – 2:30 PM, 4:00 – 11:00 PM



Redbird★★★★★ 4.6 (1,831)

1-2 hours

Map

Redbird is a highly-rated restaurant in Los Angeles, rated 4.6★ from 1831 reviews. Located at 114 E 2nd St, Los Angeles, CA 90012, USA.

Opening Hours

- Monday: Closed
- Tuesday: 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Wednesday: 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Thursday: 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Friday: 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM, 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM, 5:00 – 9:00 PM



Maccheroni Republic★★★★★ 4.6 (3,110)

1-2 hours

Map

Maccheroni Republic is a highly-rated restaurant in Los Angeles, rated 4.6★ from 3110 reviews. Located at 332 S Broadway, Los Angeles, CA 90013, USA.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM, 5:00 – 9:30 PM
- Tuesday: 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM, 5:00 – 9:30 PM
- Wednesday: 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM, 5:00 – 9:30 PM
- Thursday: 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM, 5:00 – 9:30 PM
- Friday: 11:00 AM – 9:30 PM
- Saturday: 11:00 AM – 9:30 PM
- Sunday: 11:00 AM – 9:30 PM



Philippe The Original★★★★★ 4.6 (12,209)

1-2 hours

Map

Philippe The Original is a highly-rated restaurant in Los Angeles, rated 4.6★ from 12209 reviews. Located at 1001 N Alameda St, Los Angeles, CA 90012, USA.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 6:00 AM – 10:00 PM
- Tuesday: 6:00 AM – 10:00 PM
- Wednesday: 6:00 AM – 10:00 PM
- Thursday: 6:00 AM – 10:00 PM
- Friday: 6:00 AM – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 6:00 AM – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: 6:00 AM – 10:00 PM



Top Pick

Grand Central Market

1-2 hours No Booking Needed

Map

A **historic downtown food hall** operating since 1917, featuring over 30 vendors offering everything from tacos and Thai food to artisan coffee and gourmet pastries. Mix of traditional and trendy vendors creates a unique atmosphere. *Perfect for sampling diverse cuisines* in one location. Popular spots include Eggslut, Sarita's Pupuseria, and G&B Coffee. **Open daily** with varying vendor hours. Communal seating can get crowded during lunch. Great for food tours and Instagram photos. Located in the heart of downtown near Angels Flight Railway.



Top Pick

Koreatown Dining

2-3 hours for dinner No Booking Needed

Map

LA's **Koreatown is the largest Korean community outside Korea**, offering authentic Korean BBQ, late-night eateries, karaoke, and spas. Many restaurants operate 24 hours. *Must-try experience* for foodies. Korean BBQ restaurants let you grill meat at your table. Popular spots include Kang Ho Dong Baekjeong, Quarters BBQ, and Park's BBQ. Also try Korean fried chicken, bibimbap, and soon tofu. Many establishments in Plaza shopping centers. Parking can be challenging; use parking lots. Great late-night dining destination.



71Above★★★★★ 4.5 (2,804)

1-2 hours

Map

71Above is a highly-rated restaurant in Los Angeles, rated 4.5★ from 2804 reviews. Located at 633 W 5th St 71st floor, Los Angeles, CA 90071, USA.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 5:00 – 9:00 PM
- Tuesday: 4:00 – 9:00 PM
- Wednesday: 4:00 – 9:00 PM
- Thursday: 4:00 – 9:00 PM
- Friday: 4:00 – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: 5:00 – 9:00 PM



Bestia★★★★★ 4.5 (4,060)

1-2 hours

Map

Bestia is a highly-rated restaurant in Los Angeles, rated 4.5★ from 4060 reviews. Located at 2121 E 7th Pl, Los Angeles, CA 90021, USA.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 5:00 – 11:00 PM
- Tuesday: 5:00 – 11:00 PM
- Wednesday: 5:00 – 11:00 PM
- Thursday: 5:00 – 11:00 PM
- Friday: 5:00 – 11:00 PM
- Saturday: 5:00 – 11:00 PM
- Sunday: 5:00 – 11:00 PM



République★★★★★ 4.5 (7,255)

1-2 hours

Map

République is a highly-rated restaurant in Los Angeles, rated 4.5★ from 7255 reviews. Located at 624 S La Brea Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90036, USA.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM
- Tuesday: 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM, 5:30 – 10:00 PM
- Wednesday: 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM, 5:30 – 10:00 PM
- Thursday: 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM, 5:30 – 10:00 PM
- Friday: 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM, 5:30 – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM, 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM



Cicada Restaurant and Lounge★★★★★ 4.5 (414)

1-2 hours

Map

Cicada Restaurant and Lounge is a highly-rated restaurant in Los Angeles, rated 4.5★ from 414 reviews. Located at 617 S Olive St, Los Angeles, CA 90014, USA.

Opening Hours

- Monday: Closed
- Tuesday: Closed
- Wednesday: Closed
- Thursday: Closed
- Friday: 6:30 – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 6:30 – 11:00 PM
- Sunday: Closed



Water Grill★★★★★ 4.5 (2,243)

1-2 hours

Map

Water Grill is a highly-rated restaurant in Los Angeles, rated 4.5★ from 2243 reviews. Located at 544 S Grand Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90071, USA.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 11:30 AM – 10:00 PM
- Tuesday: 11:30 AM – 10:00 PM
- Wednesday: 11:30 AM – 10:00 PM
- Thursday: 11:30 AM – 10:00 PM
- Friday: 11:30 AM – 11:00 PM
- Saturday: 11:30 AM – 11:00 PM
- Sunday: 11:30 AM – 10:00 PM



Orsa & Winston★★★★★ 4.5 (311)

1-2 hours

Map

Orsa & Winston is a highly-rated restaurant in Los Angeles, rated 4.5★ from 311 reviews. Located at 122 4th St FARMERS AND MERCHANTS BANK BUILDING, Los Angeles, CA 90013, USA.

Opening Hours

- Monday: Closed
- Tuesday: 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Wednesday: 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Thursday: 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Friday: 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 5:00 – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: Closed



Perch★★★★☆ 4.4 (7,624)

1-2 hours

Map

Perch is a highly-rated restaurant in Los Angeles, rated 4.4★ from 7624 reviews. Located at 448 S Hill St, Los Angeles, CA 90013, USA.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:30 – 1:00 AM, 4:00 PM – 1:00 AM
- Tuesday: 4:00 PM – 1:00 AM
- Wednesday: 4:00 PM – 1:00 AM
- Thursday: 4:00 PM – 1:30 AM
- Friday: 11:30 AM – 1:30 AM
- Saturday: 10:00 AM – 1:30 AM
- Sunday: 10:00 AM – 12:00 AM



Meteora★★★★☆ 4.4 (391)

1-2 hours

Map

Meteora is a highly-rated restaurant in Los Angeles, rated 4.4★ from 391 reviews. Located at 6703 Melrose Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90038, USA.

Opening Hours

- Monday: Closed
- Tuesday: Closed
- Wednesday: 5:30 – 9:30 PM
- Thursday: 5:30 – 9:30 PM
- Friday: 5:30 – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 5:30 – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: 5:30 – 9:30 PM



Dunsmoor★★★★☆ 4.4 (405)

1-2 hours

Map

Dunsmoor is a highly-rated restaurant in Los Angeles, rated 4.4★ from 405 reviews. Located at 3501 N Eagle Rock Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90065, USA.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 5:30 – 10:00 PM
- Tuesday: 5:30 – 10:00 PM
- Wednesday: 5:30 – 10:00 PM
- Thursday: 5:30 – 10:00 PM
- Friday: 5:30 – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 5:30 – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: 5:30 – 10:00 PM



Notable

Smorgasburg LA

2-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

A **weekly outdoor food market** on Sundays at ROW DTLA featuring 100+ vendors, artisans, and food makers. Sample everything from gourmet donuts to international street food. The market atmosphere is lively with live music and local brands. *Family-friendly and dog-friendly*. Cash and cards accepted at most vendors but bring cash for easier transactions. Parking in the ROW DTLA structure. Arrive hungry and plan to try multiple items. Open rain or shine with covered areas. Also operates at Paramount Studios lot on Thursdays.



Notable

Santa Monica Farmers Markets

1-2 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Award-winning farmers markets operating four days a week with over 75 farmers selling fresh California produce, flowers, and artisan goods. The Wednesday downtown market (since 1981) is the largest and most popular. *Perfect for experiencing local food culture* and meeting farmers. Many top LA chefs shop here. Sample seasonal fruits and vegetables. Prepared food vendors offer breakfast and lunch options. Free cooking demonstrations on Wednesday. The Sunday Main Street market has a more neighborhood feel. Bring reusable bags.



Notable

LA Food Tours

2.5-3.5 hours Book Ahead

Map

Guided culinary walking tours exploring LA's diverse food scenes in neighborhoods like Downtown, Little Tokyo, Arts District, and more. Tours typically include 5-7 food tastings and cultural insights. *Excellent way to discover hidden gems* and learn neighborhood history. Tours last 2.5-3.5 hours and cover 1-2 miles of walking. Guides share insider knowledge about LA food culture. Book advance reservations. Popular companies include Melting Pot Food Tours and Six Taste. Vegetarian and dietary restriction options available on request.

Tips for Food & Dining

- **Reservations:** Book popular restaurants weeks in advance, especially for weekend dinners
- **Tipping:** Standard 18-20% gratuity; some restaurants add automatic service charge for large parties
- **Food Trucks:** Follow favorite food trucks on social media for location updates
- **Happy Hours:** Many restaurants offer excellent happy hour deals (typically 3-6 PM)
- **Dietary Restrictions:** LA restaurants are very accommodating to vegan, vegetarian, and allergy needs

Beach Bars

Real, highly-rated Beach Bars in Los Angeles, sourced from Google Places (rating above 4★).



The Harbor Room★★★★★ 4.6 (130)

1-2 hours

Map

The Harbor Room is a highly-rated beach bar in Los Angeles, rated 4.6★ from 130 reviews. Located at 195 Culver Blvd, Playa Del Rey, CA 90293, USA.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 PM – 2:00 AM
- Tuesday: 12:00 PM – 2:00 AM
- Wednesday: 12:00 PM – 2:00 AM
- Thursday: 12:00 PM – 2:00 AM
- Friday: 12:00 PM – 2:00 AM
- Saturday: 11:00 AM – 2:00 AM
- Sunday: 12:00 PM – 2:00 AM



The Strand House★★★★★ 4.5 (3,045)

1-2 hours

Map

The Strand House is a highly-rated beach bar in Los Angeles, rated 4.5★ from 3045 reviews. Located at 117 Manhattan Beach Blvd, Manhattan Beach, CA 90266, USA.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 11:30 AM – 9:00 PM
- Tuesday: 11:30 AM – 9:00 PM
- Wednesday: 11:30 AM – 9:00 PM
- Thursday: 11:30 AM – 9:00 PM
- Friday: 11:30 AM – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 10:00 AM – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: 10:00 AM – 9:00 PM



Shellback Tavern★★★★★ 4.5 (817)

1-2 hours

Map

Shellback Tavern is a highly-rated beach bar in Los Angeles, rated 4.5★ from 817 reviews. Located at 116 Manhattan Beach Blvd, Manhattan Beach, CA 90266, USA.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 11:30 AM – 12:00 AM
- Tuesday: 12:30 – 2:00 AM, 11:30 AM – 12:00 AM
- Wednesday: 12:30 – 2:00 AM, 11:30 AM – 12:00 AM
- Thursday: 12:30 – 2:00 AM, 11:30 AM – 12:00 AM
- Friday: 12:30 – 2:00 AM, 11:30 AM – 12:00 AM
- Saturday: 12:30 – 2:00 AM, 10:00 AM – 2:00 AM
- Sunday: 10:00 AM – 2:00 AM



SeaLegs at the Beach★★★★★ 4.5 (1,239)

1-2 hours

Map

SeaLegs at the Beach is a highly-rated beach bar in Los Angeles, rated 4.5★ from 1239 reviews. Located at 17851 Pacific Coast Hwy, Huntington Beach, CA 92649, USA.

Opening Hours

- Monday: Closed
- Tuesday: Closed
- Wednesday: Closed
- Thursday: Closed
- Friday: Closed
- Saturday: 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM
- Sunday: 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM



Descanso Beach Club★★★★★ 4.5 (2,021)

1-2 hours

Map

Descanso Beach Club is a highly-rated beach bar in Los Angeles, rated 4.5★ from 2021 reviews. Located at 1 St Catherine Way, Avalon, CA 90704, USA.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Tuesday: 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Wednesday: 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Thursday: 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Friday: 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Saturday: 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Sunday: 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM



The Venice Beach Bar & Kitchen★★★★☆ 4.4 (1,251)

1-2 hours

Map

The Venice Beach Bar & Kitchen is a highly-rated beach bar in Los Angeles, rated 4.4★ from 1251 reviews. Located at 323 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, CA 90291, USA.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 – 10:00 PM
- Tuesday: Closed
- Wednesday: 12:00 – 10:00 PM
- Thursday: 12:00 – 10:00 PM
- Friday: 12:00 – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 11:00 AM – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: 11:00 AM – 10:00 PM



COCO BEACH SPORTS BAR & GRILL★★★★☆ 4.4 (296)

1-2 hours

Map

COCO BEACH SPORTS BAR & GRILL is a highly-rated beach bar in Los Angeles, rated 4.4★ from 296 reviews. Located at 404 Washington Blvd, Marina Del Rey, CA 90292, USA.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Tuesday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Wednesday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Thursday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Friday: 12:00 PM – 2:00 AM
- Saturday: 9:00 AM – 2:00 AM
- Sunday: 9:00 AM – 12:00 AM



Beach and Brew Venice★★★★☆ 4.4 (329)

1-2 hours

Map

Beach and Brew Venice is a highly-rated beach bar in Los Angeles, rated 4.4★ from 329 reviews. Located at 405 Washington Blvd, Venice, CA 90292, USA.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 3:00 – 10:00 PM
- Tuesday: 3:00 – 10:00 PM
- Wednesday: 3:00 – 10:00 PM
- Thursday: 3:00 – 10:00 PM
- Friday: 3:00 – 11:00 PM
- Saturday: 1:00 – 11:00 PM
- Sunday: 1:00 – 10:00 PM



Big Dean's Ocean Front Cafe★★★★☆ 4.4 (1,741)

1-2 hours

Map

Big Dean's Ocean Front Cafe is a highly-rated beach bar in Los Angeles, rated 4.4★ from 1741 reviews. Located at 1615 Ocean Front Walk, Santa Monica, CA 90401, USA.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 – 7:00 PM
- Tuesday: 11:00 AM – 8:00 PM
- Wednesday: 11:00 AM – 8:00 PM
- Thursday: 11:00 AM – 8:00 PM
- Friday: 11:00 AM – 9:00 PM
- Saturday: 10:00 AM – 9:00 PM
- Sunday: 10:00 AM – 8:00 PM



Flora Rooftop Bar and Lounge★★★★☆ 4.4 (286)

1-2 hours

Map

Flora Rooftop Bar and Lounge is a highly-rated beach bar in Los Angeles, rated 4.4★ from 286 reviews. Located at 2130 E Maple Ave, El Segundo, CA 90245, USA.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 4:00 – 9:00 PM
- Tuesday: 4:00 – 9:00 PM
- Wednesday: 4:00 – 10:00 PM
- Thursday: 4:00 – 10:00 PM
- Friday: 4:00 – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 4:00 – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: 4:00 – 10:00 PM



Perch★★★★☆ 4.4 (7,624)

1-2 hours

Map

Perch is a highly-rated beach bar in Los Angeles, rated 4.4★ from 7624 reviews. Located at 448 S Hill St, Los Angeles, CA 90013, USA.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:30 – 1:00 AM, 4:00 PM – 1:00 AM
- Tuesday: 4:00 PM – 1:00 AM
- Wednesday: 4:00 PM – 1:00 AM
- Thursday: 4:00 PM – 1:30 AM
- Friday: 11:30 AM – 1:30 AM
- Saturday: 10:00 AM – 1:30 AM
- Sunday: 10:00 AM – 12:00 AM



The Waterfront Venice★★★★☆ 4.3 (1,652)

1-2 hours

Map

The Waterfront Venice is a highly-rated beach bar in Los Angeles, rated 4.3★ from 1652 reviews. Located at 205 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, CA 90291, USA.

Opening Hours

- Monday: Closed
- Tuesday: 11:00 AM – 9:00 PM
- Wednesday: Closed
- Thursday: 11:00 AM – 9:00 PM
- Friday: 11:00 AM – 9:00 PM
- Saturday: 11:00 AM – 9:00 PM
- Sunday: 11:00 AM – 9:00 PM



The Venice Whaler★★★★☆ 4.3 (3,311)

1-2 hours

Map

The Venice Whaler is a highly-rated beach bar in Los Angeles, rated 4.3★ from 3311 reviews. Located at 10 Washington Blvd, Venice, CA 90292, USA.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 11:00 AM – 12:00 AM
- Tuesday: 11:00 AM – 12:00 AM
- Wednesday: 11:00 AM – 12:00 AM
- Thursday: 11:00 AM – 2:00 AM
- Friday: 11:00 AM – 2:00 AM
- Saturday: 9:00 AM – 2:00 AM
- Sunday: 9:00 AM – 2:00 AM



The Rooftop★★★★☆ 4.3 (491)

1-2 hours

Map

The Rooftop is a highly-rated beach bar in Los Angeles, rated 4.3★ from 491 reviews. Located at 550 Flower St, Los Angeles, CA 90071, USA.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 PM – 2:00 AM
- Tuesday: 12:00 PM – 2:00 AM
- Wednesday: 12:00 PM – 2:00 AM
- Thursday: 12:00 PM – 2:00 AM
- Friday: 12:00 PM – 2:00 AM
- Saturday: 12:00 PM – 2:00 AM
- Sunday: 12:00 PM – 2:00 AM



Broken Shaker at Freehand Los Angeles★★★★☆ 4.2 (817)

1-2 hours

Map

Broken Shaker at Freehand Los Angeles is a highly-rated beach bar in Los Angeles, rated 4.2★ from 817 reviews. Located at 416 W 8th St, Los Angeles, CA 90014, USA.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Tuesday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Wednesday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Thursday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Friday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Saturday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Sunday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM

Practical Information

Optimal Visiting Seasons

Best Overall: March-May & September-November

- **Spring (March-May):** Mild temperatures (60-75°F), blooming flowers, and clear skies. *Beware 'June Gloom'* starts in late May with marine layer clouds.
- **Summer (June-August):** Peak tourist season with warm temperatures (70-85°F inland, cooler at beaches). Expect crowds at major attractions. *Book accommodations early.* Beach areas experience morning fog that usually burns off by afternoon.
- **Fall (September-November):** Excellent weather, fewer crowds, and lower prices. September-October often has the best beach weather with warmest ocean temperatures.
- **Winter (December-February):** Mild weather (55-70°F), occasional rain, lowest accommodation prices. Perfect for outdoor activities. Holiday season brings festive decorations but larger crowds.

Avoid: Late May through June for beach visits due to persistent morning fog ('June Gloom'). Summer weekends at theme parks and beaches are extremely crowded.

Getting Around Los Angeles

By Car (Most Common):

- LA is car-centric; **renting a car is highly recommended** for flexibility
- Major rental companies at LAX and throughout the city
- Expect traffic during rush hours (7-10 AM, 3-7 PM weekdays)
- Parking: Street parking often has time limits and restrictions; read signs carefully. Apps like SpotHero and ParkWhiz help find parking
- Freeways: I-405, I-10, I-5, US-101 are main arteries. Use navigation apps like Waze or Google Maps for real-time traffic

Public Transportation:

- **Metro Rail:** Six lines connecting major areas. $1.75 per ride; Metro's daily fare cap is $5; the seven-day cap is $18. Useful for Downtown, Hollywood, Santa Monica, and Long Beach
- **Metro Bus:** Extensive network but can be time-consuming. Same pricing as rail

- **TAP Card:** Reloadable card for metro and bus ($2 card fee + fare)
- LA Metro app provides trip planning and real-time arrivals

Ride-Share & Taxis:

- Uber and Lyft widely available; often faster and more convenient than public transit
- Airport pickups from designated lots (follow LAX-it signs at LAX)
- Surge pricing during peak hours and events

Bicycles & Scooters:

- Bike-share programs: Metro Bike Share
- E-scooters (Bird, Lime) available in beach areas and downtown
- Dedicated bike paths along beaches and some neighborhoods

From Airport (LAX):

- FlyAway Bus to Union Station or Van Nuys ($9.75)
- Ride-share/taxi from LAX-it lot
- Metro C Line connects to other lines ($1.75)
- Rental car shuttles from terminals
- Private shuttles to hotels (arrange in advance)

✈ Airport Transfer

Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) to city center:

- **LAX FlyAway Bus:** Direct nonstop service to Union Station, Van Nuys, or other hubs in 30-45 minutes for $9.75 one-way
- **Metro C Line + LAX Shuttle:** Free shuttle connects terminals to the Metro station in about 10 minutes, then Metro rail into the city for $1.75
- **Taxi:** Metered fare to downtown Los Angeles takes roughly 30-45 minutes and costs about $50-70 depending on traffic
- **Private Transfer:** Prebooked town car or SUV to most LA neighborhoods takes 30-60 minutes and costs around $80-120

Shopping Guide

What to Buy:

- **Entertainment Memorabilia:** Movie props, Hollywood souvenirs, vintage posters at Hollywood shops
- **Surf & Beachwear:** California-style clothing from beach brands (Hurley, Roxy, Vans) at Venice/Santa Monica
- **Vintage Fashion:** Unique finds on Melrose Avenue and Silver Lake
- **California Products:** Local honey, olive oil, wine, artisan chocolates at farmers markets
- **Streetwear:** Limited-edition sneakers and urban fashion in Fairfax District
- **Art & Crafts:** Original artwork and handmade goods at Arts District galleries

Best Shopping Areas:

- **Luxury:** Rodeo Drive (Beverly Hills), South Coast Plaza (Costa Mesa)
- **Mid-Range:** The Grove, Third Street Promenade, Westfield Century City
- **Bargain:** Santee Alley Fashion District, Ross/TJ Maxx stores, outlet malls (Citadel, Camarillo)
- **Unique/Vintage:** Melrose Avenue, Abbot Kinney, Fairfax Avenue, Rose Bowl Flea Market (second Sunday monthly)

Bargaining Tips:

- *Acceptable:* Fashion District, flea markets, some independent boutiques
- *Not Acceptable:* Department stores, chain retailers, luxury boutiques
- Cash payments often get better deals at markets
- Buying multiple items increases negotiating power

Tax & Refunds:

- Sales tax: 9.5% in LA County (included at register, not on price tags)
- California participates in tax-free shopping for international visitors at participating stores (look for signage)

Annual Events & Festivals

Major Annual Events:

- **Academy Awards (Oscars):** Late February/early March - Hollywood Boulevard closed for ceremony preparations
- **LA Marathon:** March - Course runs through city; traffic disruptions
- **Coachella Valley Music Festival:** April (Indio, 2 hours from LA) - World's premier music festival
- **Cinco de Mayo:** May 5 - Celebrations in Olvera Street and throughout city
- **LA Pride Festival:** June - West Hollywood's massive LGBTQ+ celebration
- **Nisei Week:** August - Little Tokyo's Japanese cultural festival (since 1934)
- **LA County Fair:** September - One of largest county fairs in US (Pomona)
- **Halloween:** October 31 - West Hollywood Carnaval (500,000+ attendees)
- **Day of the Dead:** November 1-2 - Celebrations in downtown and Latino neighborhoods
- **Hollywood Christmas Parade:** Late November - Stars and entertainment on Hollywood Boulevard

Monthly Events:

- **Downtown Art Walk:** Second Thursday - Galleries open late in Arts District
- **Rose Bowl Flea Market:** Second Sunday - 2,500 vendors, antiques, vintage
- **First Fridays (Abbot Kinney):** Monthly - Special promotions and food trucks
- **Venice Art Walk:** Monthly - Artists open studios in Venice

National Holidays:

- New Year's Day, MLK Jr Day (3rd Mon Jan), Presidents Day (3rd Mon Feb), Memorial Day (last Mon May), Independence Day (July 4), Labor Day (1st Mon Sept), Thanksgiving (4th Thurs Nov), Christmas (Dec 25)
- Many attractions have reduced hours or close on major holidays; check in advance

Sample Day Itineraries

Day 1: Classic Hollywood & Griffith Park

- **Morning (8 AM):** Breakfast in Los Feliz, then drive to Griffith Observatory before crowds arrive
- **10 AM:** Hike to Hollywood Sign viewpoint (bring water, wear comfortable shoes)
- **1 PM:** Lunch at Grand Central Market downtown
- **3 PM:** Visit The Broad museum (pre-booked tickets)
- **5 PM:** Walk Hollywood Boulevard, see Walk of Fame, TCL Chinese Theatre
- **Evening:** Dinner in Hollywood, optional show at Dolby Theatre or comedy club

Day 2: Beach Day

- **Morning (9 AM):** Breakfast in Venice, explore Venice Canals
- **10:30 AM:** Venice Beach boardwalk - street performers, Muscle Beach, shopping
- **1 PM:** Bike or walk to Santa Monica (rent bikes on boardwalk)
- **2 PM:** Lunch at Santa Monica, explore Third Street Promenade
- **4 PM:** Santa Monica Pier - rides, games, ocean views
- **Sunset:** Watch sunset from pier (bring jacket, gets cool)
- **Evening:** Seafood dinner in Santa Monica

Day 3: Museums & Culture

- **Morning (9 AM):** Getty Center (arrive at opening to avoid crowds)

- **12:30 PM:** Lunch at Getty café with views
- **2 PM:** Drive to LACMA, see Urban Light installation
- **2:30 PM:** Tour LACMA collections
- **5 PM:** Walk across to La Brea Tar Pits
- **Evening:** Dinner in Fairfax District or West Hollywood

Day 4: Theme Park Adventure

- **8:30 AM:** Arrive at Universal Studios Hollywood at opening (buy tickets online in advance)
- **9 AM - 6 PM:** Full day at park - Studio Tour, Harry Potter World, Jurassic World, Transformers
- **Strategy:** Start with Studio Tour or hit popular rides first, use single rider lines when possible
- **Evening:** CityWalk for dinner and entertainment (outside park, no ticket needed)

Day 5: Diverse Neighborhoods

- **Morning (9 AM):** Breakfast in Silver Lake, explore vintage shops
- **11 AM:** Drive to Arts District, see street art and murals
- **12:30 PM:** Lunch in Arts District
- **2 PM:** Visit Little Tokyo - museums, shops, Japanese gardens
- **4 PM:** Beverly Hills - window shop Rodeo Drive, Beverly Gardens Park
- **Evening:** Sunset at Griffith Observatory (second visit for sunset), dinner in Los Feliz

Tips for All Itineraries:

- Start early to maximize daylight and avoid traffic
- Build in buffer time for LA traffic (always worse than expected)
- Use parking apps to find spots in advance
- Bring layers - temperatures vary between neighborhoods and times of day
- Stay hydrated - California sun is strong even on mild days
- Download apps for attractions ahead of time to check wait times and hours

Best Photography & Instagram Locations

Iconic Landmarks:

- **Hollywood Sign from Griffith Observatory:** Sunrise or golden hour (1 hour before sunset). Wide-angle lens recommended. Arrive early for parking.
- **Urban Light at LACMA:** Best at dusk when lamps are lit (they turn on at sunset). Very crowded, so patience required for clear shots.
- **Santa Monica Pier:** Sunset shots with Ferris wheel. Shoot from beach for silhouettes or from pier looking back at shoreline.
- **Walt Disney Concert Hall:** Midday for dramatic shadows on steel curves. Multiple angles available from surrounding streets.
- **Bradbury Building (Downtown):** Interior Victorian architecture. Open business hours, free entry. Natural light best 10 AM-2 PM.

Street Art & Murals:

- **Melrose Avenue:** Paul Smith Pink Wall (8221 Melrose), Made in LA mural, dozens of colorful murals along the street
- **Arts District:** Constantly changing street art. Walk along 4th Street, Traction Avenue, and surrounding blocks. *Angel Wings murals* are especially popular.
- **Venice Beach:** Colorful murals along boardwalk and Abbot Kinney Boulevard. *Touch of Venice* mural is iconic.
- **West Hollywood:** Rainbow crosswalks at intersection of Santa Monica Blvd and San Vicente

Architectural Photography:

- **The Broad Museum:** Honeycomb exterior best photographed from Grand Avenue. Interior 'veil and vault' design creates interesting patterns.
- **Los Angeles Central Library:** Art Deco exterior and stunning atrium. Free to enter during business hours.
- **Union Station:** Historic 1939 architecture with beautiful courtyards. Free to explore. Peak light midday.
- **Capitol Records Building:** Cylindrical tower resembling stack of records. Best viewed/photographed from Hollywood & Vine intersection.

Nature & Landscapes:

- **El Matador Beach (Malibu):** Dramatic rock formations and sea caves. Low tide reveals tide pools. Sunset golden hour is magical. Requires stairs down cliff.
- **Point Dume (Malibu):** Panoramic coastline views from clifftop. Whale watching in winter/spring. Sunset photography paradise.
- **Echo Park Lake:** Downtown skyline reflected in lake with lotus flowers (summer bloom). Best from northeast corner. Pedal boats add interest.
- **Griffith Park Trails:** Multiple Hollywood Sign viewpoints. Wisdom Tree trail offers 360° city views. Sunrise recommended for soft light and clear skies.

Sunset & Skyline Views:

- **Griffith Observatory Lawn:** 360° views - Hollywood Sign, downtown skyline, Pacific Ocean. Arrive 90 minutes before sunset for parking.
- **Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook:** Climb 282 steps for panoramic LA views. Sunset views spectacular. Free admission and parking.
- **OUE Skyspace LA permanently closed in October 2020; it is no longer a public observation deck.**
- **Rooftop Bars:** Perch (downtown), High Rooftop Lounge (Venice), EP & LP (West Hollywood) - purchase required but worth it for sunset views.

Photography Tips:

- **Golden Hour:** 1 hour after sunrise and 1 hour before sunset provides best natural lighting in LA's harsh sun
- **Permits:** Commercial photography may require permits at some locations; casual photography generally allowed
- **Crowds:** Popular spots like Pink Wall get very crowded; visit early morning weekdays for fewer people
- **Safety:** Don't leave camera gear visible in cars; bring only what you need for shoots
- **Drones:** Heavily restricted near airports, downtown, and most public spaces. Check FAA regulations before flying

Electricity & Technology

Electrical Standards:

- **Voltage:** 120V AC
- **Frequency:** 60Hz
- **Plug Type:** Type A (two flat parallel pins) and Type B (two flat parallel pins with grounding pin)
- **Adapters:** International visitors from Europe, Asia, Africa, and Oceania will need plug adapters. Available at airports, electronics stores (Best Buy), and drugstores (CVS, Walgreens)
- **Converters:** Most modern electronics (phones, laptops, cameras) have dual-voltage capability (110-240V) and only need plug adapters. Check your device specifications. Hair dryers and straighteners often require voltage converters if not dual-voltage.

Internet & Connectivity:

- **WiFi:** Widely available free at hotels, cafes (Starbucks, Coffee Bean), libraries, and many public spaces
- **Mobile Networks:** Major carriers are Verizon, AT&T, T-Mobile. International visitors can purchase prepaid SIM cards or temporary plans
- **Public Charging:** Available at airports, some cafes, and shopping centers. USB ports common in newer establishments
- **Tourist SIM Cards:** Available at LAX airport or mobile carrier stores in city. T-Mobile has tourist-friendly prepaid options

Where to Buy Electronics:

- Best Buy (multiple locations) - electronics, adapters, cables
- Apple Store (Beverly Center, Third Street Promenade, The Grove) - Apple products and accessories
- Target/Walmart - budget adapters and basic electronics
- CVS/Walgreens - emergency phone chargers and adapters

Food & Dining Culture

Must-Try LA Specialties:

- **Tacos:** LA has arguably the best tacos outside Mexico. Try street tacos from food trucks, especially *tacos al pastor* and *carne asada*. Famous spots: Leo's Tacos, Guisados, Tacos 1986
- **Korean BBQ:** Interactive dining where you grill meat at your table. Kang Ho Dong Baekjeong and Park's BBQ are top choices. Don't miss Korean fried chicken too.
- **In-N-Out Burger:** California's iconic burger chain. Order 'Animal Style' (off-menu) for grilled onions and special sauce. Multiple locations citywide.
- **Sushi:** World-class sushi from budget to omakase. Try Sugarfish (mid-range) or splurge at Sushi Zo
- **Food Trucks:** Gourmet food trucks revolutionized here. Kogi BBQ (Korean-Mexican fusion) started the trend. Find trucks at Smorgasburg or follow on social media
- **California Burritos:** San Diego-style burritos with french fries inside. Widely available at taco shops
- **Açai Bowls:** California health trend - Brazilian superfruit bowls topped with granola and fruit. Ubiquitous at beach areas
- **Dim Sum:** Outstanding Chinese dim sum in San Gabriel Valley (20 minutes east). Elite, Sea Harbour, and Din Tai Fung
- **Armenian Food:** Large Armenian community means excellent kebabs, lavash, and dolma. Try Carousel or Mini Kabob

Dining Etiquette & Tips:

- **Tipping:** 18-20% standard for table service. 15% minimum. Some restaurants add automatic gratuity for parties of 6+
- **Reservations:** Essential for popular restaurants. Use OpenTable, Resy, or call directly. Book 2-4 weeks ahead for weekends
- **Water:** Tap water safe to drink. Restaurants serve free water (with ice unless you request otherwise)
- **Portions:** American portions are large. Don't hesitate to ask for takeout containers
- **Dietary Restrictions:** LA is extremely accommodating. Vegan, vegetarian, gluten-free options everywhere. Always ask about modifications
- **Corkage:** Many restaurants allow bringing your own wine ($20-40 corkage fee). Call ahead to confirm

Where to Eat by Budget:

- **Budget ($):** Food trucks, Grand Central Market, ethnic restaurants in Koreatown/Little Tokyo/Thai Town, In-N-Out Burger
- **Mid-Range ($$):** The Grove restaurants, Third Street Promenade, neighborhood bistros in Silver Lake/Los Feliz
- **Upscale ($$$):** Beverly Hills dining, Santa Monica beachfront, Melisse, Providence, n/naka (requires advance reservations)
- **Celebrity Chef:** Wolfgang Puck's Spago, Nancy Silverton's Mozza, Curtis Stone's Maude (book months ahead)

Food Neighborhoods:

- **Koreatown:** Korean BBQ, Korean fried chicken, late-night dining
- **Arts District:** Bestia, Zinc Café, trendy restaurants and coffee shops
- **Little Tokyo:** Ramen, sushi, Japanese curry, mochi ice cream
- **San Gabriel Valley:** Best Chinese food in USA, including dim sum and hand-pulled noodles
- **West Hollywood:** Trendy restaurants, rooftop bars, celebrity sightings
- **Venice/Abbot Kinney:** Farm-to-table, organic, health-conscious dining

Farmers Markets for Fresh Produce:

- Wednesday & Sunday Santa Monica Farmers Markets - largest and best
- Saturday Hollywood Farmers Market
- Sunday Original Farmers Market (The Grove location)
- Bring reusable bags; sample fruits; buy local honey, bread, and flowers

Tourist Passes

Go Los Angeles Pass

An **all-inclusive pass** providing access to 40+ attractions including theme parks, tours, and museums. Choose from 1, 2, 3, 5, or 7-day passes. *Best value for visitors planning to see many attractions.* Includes Universal Studios, Warner Bros. Tour, hop-on-hop-off buses, and more. Digital pass on mobile device - no tickets to print. Some attractions require advance reservations even with pass. **Savings of up to 50%** compared to individual ticket prices. Pass activates on first use and expires after consecutive days (not valid for selected dates).

gocity.com

Los Angeles Explorer Pass

A **flexible attraction pass** where you choose 3, 4, 5, or 7 attractions from a list of 40+ options. Valid for 60 days after first use, allowing you to explore at your own pace. *Ideal for selective travelers who want specific attractions.* Includes Universal Studios, Warner Bros. Tour, boat tours, museums, and more. Digital pass on smartphone - scan at each attraction. Reserve popular attractions in advance. **Save up to 40%** vs. buying individual tickets. More flexible than day passes for visitors staying longer.

gocity.com

SoCal CityPASS

A **discounted ticket package** for Southern California's most popular attractions. Current options include Disneyland Resort and/or Universal Studios Hollywood, plus two additional attractions selected from the listed SoCal parks and zoos. *Best for families wanting theme parks and San Diego attractions.* Tickets valid for 14 days from first use. **Save up to 30%** compared to gate prices. Does not include Universal Studios. Purchase online and receive mobile tickets. Some blockout dates apply at Disneyland during peak seasons.

www.citypass.com

LA Metro TAP Card

The **reusable fare card** for LA's public transportation system (buses and rail). Purchase card for $2, then load with cash value or day/weekly passes. *Essential for budget travelers using public transit.* Day Pass ($7) offers unlimited rides for 24 hours. Metro’s seven-day fare cap is $18. Tap card at validators when boarding. Refillable at metro stations and many convenience stores. Free transfers between buses and trains within 2 hours. Available at TAP vending machines at all metro stations, online, or at many retailers.

www.taptogo.net

Los Angeles County Museum Pass

Many LA County museums offer **free or discounted admission** for residents and reciprocal benefits for members. *Great for museum enthusiasts spending several days in LA.* LACMA, Natural History Museum, and others offer free hours for LA County residents (bring ID). Some museums honor memberships from other institutions through reciprocal programs. The Broad and Getty museums are always free (reservations may be required). Check individual museum websites for current free day schedules and special discounts. Students with valid ID receive discounted admission at most museums.

www.lacma.org