

Los Angeles

It's not impossible to pull off that culture/food/beach trifecta on your next trip to the city (without flatlining in traffic)—it just takes NASA-like precision. **By Lauren DeCarlo & Candice Rainey**



Every trip to L.A. tends to have a very specific purpose. There's the work trip, where you wind up at the totally fine hotel you stayed at the last three times. Then there's the visiting-friends trip, where you inevitably wind up missing half the stuff you actually want to do because your vacation version of L.A. is far from reality for most locals ("Go to the beach?! Never!"). Rarely do you get the opportunity to visit L.A. and actually

experience L.A. It doesn't help that it's a city with no hard-and-fast center—it's more like a constellation of suburbs that can take so long to traverse you could practically get to the moon faster than you can go from Echo Park to Venice during rush hour (make that *hours*). But really? All you need is three full days, two hotels, and razor-sharp clarity on when to be on the free-ways. We know because we did it. And we finally realized our beach fantasy, got that fix of old Hollywood glamour, and managed to hit all the new and great museums, restaurants, and stores in a single long weekend.



LACMA is just a ten-minute drive from some of the best shopping in town.



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First Night: Silver Lake + Echo Park

LOS ANGELES

EVENING-ISH

You've Landed. Now What?

Pick a flight that arrives in time for dinner—after all, you're in one of the most ambitious food cities in the country right now. Plus, after 7 P.M., the traffic on the 110 will be much lighter—it'll take you 35 minutes to get from LAX to the Hotel Covell in Los Feliz, as opposed to an hour plus during the evening rush. Book your dinner reservation as soon as your flights are locked in (we had trouble getting into the still-hyped Charcoal in Venice). Lucky for us, we scored a great table at Zach Pollack's Northern Italian spot, Alimento, on Silver Lake Boulevard. The always-changing menu is one of the best in town, and it's on the way to the hotel. The dish to get is the *tortellini in brodo*, but all of the small plates are phe-

7 P.M.

That's dinnertime. Unlike N.Y.C., L.A. is an early-to-bed, early-to-rise kind of city. (See page 76 on how to really do breakfast.)

nomenal and shareable, so order as many as your table can handle. Trust us, they'll let you know when it's time to stop: On our last visit, we were digging into the cracked farro salad when the valet appeared tableside, dangling our rental car key at the stroke of 11 P.M.

SIDE NOTE ON THE HOTEL...

The newish Hotel Covell, on Hollywood Boulevard, is a solid home base for exploring the Eastside and Downtown L.A. There are only five rooms (they call them "Chapters"), but they're large and loftlike (300 to 800 square feet). Each is equipped with the things you'd expect at a Los Feliz property. Crosley record player? Check. Smeg fridge stocked with organic coconut water? Check and check. The lobby closes at 11 P.M., so if you're arriving late, someone from the hotel will meet you at Bar Covell, the ground-floor wine bar (or they'll leave your room key there). By the way, not only are there no bellhops, there's no elevator, so be prepared to schlep your Rimowa up a flight of stairs. If that's a deal breaker, consider staying at the Ace Hotel Downtown L.A. (and know that the much-anticipated Nomad will open in the Giannini Place Building, at Olive and 7th Street, in late 2017).



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If Your ETA Is Late Morning

From LAX, take Lincoln toward Venice straight to Travis Lett's Gjelina, especially if you're staying on the Eastside.

By the time you've finished your squash blossom pizza, traffic on the 10 will be lighter.



The gilded entrance to the Hotel Covell in Los Feliz.

Road Rules To Live By

1. Google Maps and Waze should always be consulted before you put the key in the ignition.

The latter is not so much an app as a verb. It's a way of life and—with the particular traffic challenges in L.A.—a lifesaver.

2. Uber changed everything.

Even if you rent a car, sometimes it's easier (and cheaper) to take an Uber so you don't have to deal with

finding a spot on the street or paying for valet parking (and it's definitely the way to go if you're planning to throw a few back that night). Know that Lyft is a viable competitor, at least in the non-residential areas.

3. If you rent, get a hybrid.

In some places you can park for free or get priority parking. The Broad, for example, has spots for electric cars (and chargers) at street level in its garage.

4. Memorize these time frames.

Avoid driving across town during rush hour—7 to 9 A.M. and 4 to 7 P.M., give or take half an hour. Although things start getting hairy around 3 P.M. and are often tough until 8 P.M. Just sayin'. → P. 72

First Full Day: Los Feliz + Silver Lake + Downtown

LOS ANGELES

MORNING TO EARLY AFTERNOON

Embrace the Jet Lag

Jessica Koslow's simple and seasonal Sqirl opens at 6:30 A.M. during the week (8 A.M. on weekends), so try to get there as early as possible, before the line starts to snake onto North Virgil. It's less than a ten-minute drive from the Hotel Covell, and even if you've been, it's still worth a visit for that ricotta toast with homemade raspberry jam. From there, you're off to Griffith Park to partake in one of L.A.'s favorite pastimes: the hike. Hiking in L.A. is everyone else's version of meeting someone for an after-work drink. It's one of the best ways to knock out a meet-up with someone you can't seem to fit in otherwise. (Two

other hikes to try on your next visit: Runyon Canyon in Hollywood, and Will Rogers State Park in Santa Monica.) Before you leave Griffith Park, duck into the observatory for a quick look at the iconic lightning-producing Tesla Coil, which zaps into action just about every hour.

Frank Lloyd Wright's Hollyhock House is a ten-minute drive from Griffith Park and totally worth it. Quick backstory: In 1919, the oil heiress Aline Barnsdall commissioned



The Andy Warhol gallery at The Broad, in Downtown.

Wright to design the house, which sits on 12 acres in Los Feliz. It has all the signature markings of a Wright design: stained glass, open plan, and a melding of indoors and out. Wright also managed to incorporate the hollyhock, Barnsdall's favorite flower, into nearly every aspect of the design—even the dining room chairs. In 2015, the house reopened after a four-year, \$4.3 million restoration, and the only thing that's changed is the view: While you can see the Hollywood sign and Griffith Observatory from the living room, neither existed when construction of the house began.

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Now You're Driving Downtown

Try to leave Los Feliz around 2 P.M. (10 A.M. to 3 P.M. is the sweet spot). If you're there during baseball season, check the Dodgers' schedule before heading out.

LATE LUNCH

Eat Your Way Through Grand Central Market

The main event late afternoon is The Broad museum, so don't waste time at a sit-down lunch. The ginormous food hall has been at the heart of DTLA's evolution from the start and has some of the best takeout in town.

- 1. Tacos Tumbros a Tomas**
Anything with *carnitas*.
- 2. Sticky Rice**
The beef panang curry.
- 3. Eggslut**
The bacon, egg, and cheese on a brioche bun (note: Eggslut closes at 4 P.M.).
- 4. Belcampo Meat Co.**
The Belcampo burger with white cheddar and caramelized onions.
- 5. Wexler's Deli**
The O.G., a pastrami with mustard on rye.

TIME TO DO THE BROAD...BUT KNOW YOU NEED A RESERVATION

Try booking online first, at least a month in advance. If you strike out, attempt to score tickets in person: There's a standby line every day except Monday, when the museum is closed. Definitely check the Twitter feed (@TheBroadStandby) for current wait times before you go. (On holiday weekends, it can be up to two or three hours, and you're waiting out in the sun, so be sure to bring a hat and sunscreen.) Pro tip: Do as one of our editors did last spring and ask the ticket issuer to slip you a reservation on the spot from a no-show. She got herself *and* her three kids in.

COCKTAILS AND LATE DINNER

Then Do Dinner Right Next Door At Otium

Even if Timothy Hollingsworth's nearly year-old restaurant wasn't literally steps from The Broad, you'd have to block out time for a meal here. Hollingsworth spent 13 years at French Laundry, and it shows in dishes like the burrata tart with tomato, basil, curry, and truffle; the cuttlefish with hearts of palm, button mushroom, chilies, and Thai basil; and the weird but wonderful foie gras funnel cake. Sure, it's kind of loud and you may spot a four-top of tourists trying hard not to make a big deal about the celebrity at the corner table, but it's the best damn dinner you'll have all week. →



Photograph by Spencer Lowell

Second Full Day: Los Feliz + West Hollywood + Bel Air

LOS ANGELES

MID-MORNING-ISH

Today We Hotel Swap

It sounds like a pain in the ass, but we're big fans of splitting the trip between two bases, especially in a city like L.A., where hotel personalities are shaped by the cultural idiosyncrasies of the surrounding hood. The Hotel Covell completely embodies the Los Feliz hipster/suburban soul you want to revel in—until you're ready to be somewhere with a bellhop and a proper lobby bar. Which is why we suggest moving to the garden-like Narnia that is the Hotel Bel-Air. You'll be craving that old-H'wood money scene after too many artisanal pour-overs. No need to rush (we left around 11 A.M. to make the roughly 45-minute drive). Head to HomeState, next door to the Covell, order breakfast tacos, and sit outside with the creatives who don't keep office hours. You *can* hit up LACMA en route, but since it's the largest museum in the western United States (think Cézannes and Lichtensteins under one roof) it's okay to save it for your next trip.



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The main pool at the Hotel Bel-Air.

DRINKS AND DINNER

How to Do Old-And-New-School WeHo

For a martini in a dining room with literary soul (Fitzgerald, Faulkner, and Raymond Chandler all wrote and drank here), it's Hollywood's Musso & Frank Grill. It opened in 1919, which means its throwback attributes—non-actor waiters in tuxes, worn-leather banquettes—don't feel forced. For a different kind of nostalgia, Uber to the Chateau Marmont (don't drive—valet parking is \$18). Some jaded Angelinos will tell you it's cliché (though they still go!), but so much history went down here—from Howard Hughes spying on women at the pool to Led Zeppelin riding motorcycles through the lobby. You don't have to stay here to have a drink in the garden (but you do need a reservation; if you can't get one, we also love the nearby Sunset Tower Hotel). Just seven minutes via Uber from the Chateau is Night & Market WeHo on Sunset, the must-go-to Thai street food restaurant by chef Kris Yenbamroong. There are too many dishes to recommend—all the larb, the “party wings,” the grilled pig collar—but know that the food is spicy, even the innocent-sounding papaya salad. If you're a party of five or more, go with the 100-ounce beer tower. →

+ Shop Melrose Place

After all, it's on the way to the Bel-Air. The best stretch is between La Cienega and North Orlando. It's walkable (see right) and you'll hit The Row, Isabel Marant, and Vanessa Traina's home and clothing boutique, The Apartment by the Line. For lunch, Traina recommends the kale salad with avocado from Croft Alley.



Third Full Day: Venice + Santa Monica + Malibu

LOS ANGELES



MID-MORNING

Start with Breakfast in Venice

Breakfast in L.A. is more like a long wine-soaked lunch you might take on a Friday when the boss is out of the office. And because it's a cultural norm (Monday through Friday, not just weekends), expect more-inspiring options than eggs Benedict—especially at Gjusta, Travis Lett's magical mini food court flush with fresh-baked loaves. Anyone who lives here will tell you it's a shitshow

on Saturdays, but the grain bowl, baklava croissant, and flatbreads make it worth trying to figure out which line to stand in (there's a method to the madness: Take a ticket from the dispenser on the back wall, then wait for your number to be called). The Rose is also an option, but we say save that for lunch, when you can eat outside and have a glass (or two) of rosé with the roasted half chicken.

+ A Note on Getting Around Today

On Saturdays, you can get from Bel Air to Venice in about 25 minutes at around 9 A.M. (during the week, leave after 10 A.M.). Park in a lot—we found one on San Juan Avenue and Abbot Kinney—and rent a bike in Venice to cruise beachside to Santa Monica.



Breakfast spread at the Rose Café-Restaurant.

POST-BREAKFAST

Don't Skip Abbot Kinney

Yes, the mile-long bougie strip is crowded, cheesy in spots, and about as bohemian as Mitt Romney. But Venice's main artery still has stores worth ducking into.

Tortoise General Store

A thoroughly Japanese home-goods store you could spend hours in if you're into Hasami Porcelain, wooden sake accoutrements, precious stationery, and

minimalist desk accessories that'll turn any paper hoarder into a neat freak. Buy their Tenuguis (hand-dyed cotton towels) in bulk and use them for place mats or to wrap wine bottles you're gifting.

Burro

The well-edited book selection speaks to that California buzz you'll want to take home with you. Seek out *Cruising L.A.: Architecture Styles in 5 Easy Drives* and *A Poor Collector's Guide to Buying Great Art*.

Stag Provisions for Men

A somewhat unfortunate and obvious name for a menswear store, but it has exactly what you want to be wearing on a beach: Hari Mari leather flip-flops, RRL slim-fit black jeans, worn-in cotton sweatshirts by surfer-inspired brand Faherty.

AFTERNOON

Drinks on the Beach, Then Treat Yourself to a Quick Massage

Our editor-in-chief says Shutters on the Beach always "feels like a vacation." We say it feels like home—if home had a heated terrace and the Pacific Ocean as a backyard. There's no better spot (we like the living room space in the lobby) on the water to have a glass of wine and sink into one of those overstuffed couches near the fireplace. Finish off the afternoon with some me time at the '70s-Laurel Canyon-inflected massage boutique The Now, where walk-ins aren't a problem. Expect macramé wall hangings, all the cactuses, sheepskin rugs—and a legit Swedish massage for only \$35. →

Third Night & Departure Morning: Malibu + Beverly Hills

LOS ANGELES

LATE LATE AFTERNOON

Now Let's Drive Up the PCH

The best way to get back to the Hotel Bel-Air from Santa Monica or Venice? Up the Pacific Coast Highway (which it's never called, by the way—everyone uses the acronym). To your left will be sand, surf, and that gorgeous pink-gold light which shoots off the water and makes everyone look genetically blessed. Is it the most direct route? Absolutely not. But it's such a mind- and mood-altering, quintessential L.A. detour, you won't be in a hurry.

+ If You Want More Gorgeous Coast Porn

Chances are you're not going to get into Soho House's Little Beach House Malibu. (Even L.A. members aren't guaranteed entry.) But a trip to the Getty Villa is no consolation prize and it's free, though you do need a reservation. Roman, Greek, and Etruscan antiquities make up the bulk of the museum, but we also love walking around the swank gardens.

The PCH in Malibu.



SIDE NOTE ON DINNER...

Where are you eating on your last night in one of the most explosive food cities in the country? That depends on your stamina, and on whether you can pull yourself away from the Hotel Bel-Air's kick-ass bar, where we could stare at the Norman Seeff portraits of Tina Turner and Joni Mitchell all night. But if you can muster the energy, here's where *Condé Nast Traveler* editors are returning again and again. (That is, if you aren't interested in having the hotel's house car take you to the In-N-Out Burger nearby.)

1. Hollywood

Chi Spacca, next door to sister joint Osteria Mozza. Bring your corporate card.

2. Fairfax District

Jon & Vinny's, for the chicken cutlet; we also love it for breakfast (the place, not the cutlet, but...).

3. Downtown

Bestia, because wood-grilled bread and whole branzino. The end.

4. Beverly Grove

Terrine, for a patio that makes you want to move here.

5. La Brea

République, for the cathedral-like space—Charlie Chaplin built it in 1928.

BEFORE YOU GO

Squeeze in a Pre-Flight Breakfast

We're talking silver-dollar buttermilk pancakes at the Beverly Hills Hotel's legendary Fountain Coffee Room. The house car at the Bel-Air can take you to and from. Ask for Angelo. ♦

