



nileGUIDE

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



MikeBehnken

Channel Islands

San Francisco, Los Angeles, 5 Days

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Guide Description

AUTHOR NOTE: Fishing, Hiking, Kayaking and Camping

Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - Los Angeles



Carnegie Art Museum

Overlooked treasure

Day 1 - Los Angeles

QUICK NOTE

contact:

tel: +1 805 385 8157
fax: +1 805 483 3654
<http://www.vcnet.com/carnart/>

location:

424 South C Street
Oxnard CA 93030

hours:

10a-5p Th-Sa, 1p-5p Su



Carnegie Art Museum

DESCRIPTION: Although Oxnard is an hour's drive north from Los Angeles, this art gallery merits the trip. Constructed with funds donated by Andrew Carnegie in 1906, the building itself is the really the main attraction. The elegant Neo-Classical structure was originally used as a library, but was transformed into a cultural center in 1963. The collection consists primarily of 20th century works, including the Carnegie collection that began in 1924. Some of the artists found here include Arthur Beaumont, Cornelius Botke, Colin Campbell Cooper, Katherine Leighton and many others. © wcities.com

contact:

tel: +1 415 561 4323(Tourist Information)
<http://www.sutrobaths.com/>

location:

Point Lobos Ave.
San Francisco CA 94121

1 Sutro Bath Ruins

DESCRIPTION: Dr. Adolph Sutro built the baths in the late 1800s to provide a diversion for local families. The four pools were housed under a giant glass dome, with room for 25,000 swimmers and spectators, as well as Dr. Sutro's collection of artifacts. Ruined by fire and earthquake, the foundations are still around for daring people to explore. Fog adds to the surreal quality of the ruins. © NileGuide



courtesy of the cliffhouseproject

contact:

tel: (415) 752-4227
<http://japaneseteagardensf.com/>

location:

At the corner of Tea Garden at Martin Luther King, Jr.
San Francisco CA 94117

2 Japanese Tea Garden

DESCRIPTION: Located in Golden Gate Park, this garden is a marvel of the landscape architects art. This traditional Japanese garden covers five acres. Several paths take you by an authentic pagoda, a monumental Buddha, a miniature waterfall, and over an acutely arched bridge that no kid can resist. Overlooking the gardens koi-filled pond is a Japanese-style tea house, which in spring is covered with a cascade of wisteria. The gift shop sells souvenirs with a Japanese flair. © wcities.com



wcities

contact:

tel: (415) 752-0347
http://www.ci.sf.ca.us/site/rec_park_index.asp

location:

50 Stow Lake Drive
San Francisco CA 94117

3 Stow Lake

DESCRIPTION: One of the most photogenic spots in Golden Gate Park, this placid body of water surrounds Strawberry Hill. A couple of bridges allow you to cross over and ascend the hill (the old 19th-century stone bridge on the southwest side of the lake is especially quaint). A waterfall cascades from the top of the hill, and panoramic views make it worth the short hike up here. Down below, rent a boat, surrey, or bicycle, or stroll around the perimeter. Just to the left of the waterfall sits the elaborate Chinese Pavilion, a gift from the city of Taipei. It was shipped in 6,000 pieces and assembled on the shore of Strawberry Hill Island in 1981. OPEN: Boat rentals daily 10-4, surrey and bicycle rentals weekdays 9-dusk, weekends 10-dusk. © NileGuide



San Francisco Snapshot

Local Info

Sun and fog, grandeur and blight, hipsters and suits, relaxed and industrious... San Francisco's juxtapositions are infinite. Arguably the most beautiful city in the United States, the city by the bay is also the most un-American city, in attitude as well as looks. Old Victorian homes blend with modern, shiny skyscrapers, and the skyline is neither wholly gray concrete nor red brick like its East Coast sister cities.

The second most densely populated city in the U.S., San Francisco is more akin to Europe than to America. The city has 63 miles of bike lanes within its seven-by-seven square miles, with some 40,000 residents cycling to work every day. On Sundays in the spring and summer, some streets are closed to car traffic and open to the public for biking, rollerblading, and just hanging out. Plazas attract farmer's markets, protests, and coffee-sipping denizens. San Francisco has always been iconoclastic, from the early Gold Rush Days, to the 1967 Summer of Love, to the legalization (and subsequent prohibition) of same-sex marriage, a movement which pushed five other states to do the same. Flanked on the east and west side by its beloved bridges, the metropolis could be easily perched next to the Mediterranean Sea. It's no wonder it attracts the third-highest number of foreign visitors in the U.S. each year.

San Francisco isn't so much a city as a collection of neighborhoods, each with its own character and micro-climate, which is why the city can have sun, fog and drizzle at the same time on the same day. In all, there are 27 distinct neighborhoods with dozens of sub-neighborhoods that mesh together like puzzle pieces.

Often only a block or two separates one from the other, one world from the next. The Tenderloin, San Francisco's skid row, borders sparkling and tourist-ridden Union Square; the modish Mission lies side by side with stroller-central Noe Valley; gritty Polk Gulch rubs rich Russian Hill; overlooked Western Addition nuzzles posh Pac Heights; blue-collar Chinatown kisses the corporate Financial District.

The characters who inhabit these communities are a paradox as well – Jimmy Choos pound the pavement

alongside friendly bums, and white-collar workers take the same bus as fuzzy boot-clad street performers. To label San Francisco's citizens as eclectic is an understatement. It's also an understatement to call them "unique." Don't be surprised if you find yourself amongst an impromptu pillow fight along the Embarcadero, a naked bike parade up Market Street, or a flash dance party on public transit.

Despite the stereotype, California does not a hot, sunny destination make. Most visitors underestimate the fog's chill, which is felt most strongly between 4-8pm, after which the wind tends to calm down. San Franciscans are a practical bunch; you'll rarely see a local without a spare scarf, hat, or long sleeves. They also shy away from wintry black and gray wardrobes; color plays a huge part in street fashion, and nobody looks twice if somebody dons a purple velvet suit while walking their dog or if a bride wears red instead of white to her wedding. San Franciscans also know that when it's hot, you take advantage of it, whether it's in November, March, or May. Beach days and mild nights do happen, but they are few and far between, and they are rarely enjoyed in the summer.

San Francisco boasts festivals nearly every weekend, from the largest Chinese New Year's Parade outside of China, to Pride, the oldest of the world's gay pride parades. Much of the population turns out for the annual Bay to Breakers run as well as the three-day Outside Lands concert in Golden Gate Park, both of which make San Francisco a party destination on par with New Orleans, Berlin, Austin, and Miami. Chances are high that you'll be in town for some event like the Stern Grove free concerts, Cinco de Mayo, Treasure Island Music festival, Carnaval, Fillmore Street Jazz festival, or the dozens of film festivals which descend upon the most cultured of cities yearly. Don't forget the Haight Street, Folsom Street, Union Street, North Beach, and Japantown neighborhood street fairs. And the list goes on...

Yet, even with endless fun at their fingertips, San Franciscans are a diligent bunch. It's no coincidence that the city is home to online powerhouses Twitter, Craigslist, Zynga, and Yelp, and only a few miles away you'll find Paypal, Google, and Facebook. San Francisco seems to be

experiencing a second boom to the dot-com era with hundreds of tech start-ups invading SOMA, Potrero Hill, and the blighted 5th street and Market corridor (Twitter recently got a tax break for moving here versus retreating to blander Silicon Valley).

Since the first dotcom boom in 2000, newfound wealth has made an obvious impression on the city. Old SOMA warehouses have turned into condos; decrepit Dogpatch industrial spaces have been transformed into airy live/work lofts; and just wait until 2017, when the "Grand Central Station of the West" opens. The new Transbay Transit Center project will add three 1,200 foot skyscrapers and 10 additional towers to the San Francisco skyline. Lest we forget, the highly anticipated eastern span of the Bay Bridge, with its single self-supporting suspension tower, is slated to finally open in 2013.

To some, all of this development has meant San Francisco has lost its counter culture character. Ridiculously high rents have driven many of the "hippies" out. Those that remain are finding it less hospitable. The Haight-Ashbury neighborhood has been populated with vagabonds ever since the Summer of Love and business owners are finally taking a stand against their loitering. The controversial Sit/Lie Law, which bans sitting or lying on sidewalks between 7 a.m. and 11 p.m., was just passed by voters.

Next to its cable cars and hills (you'll never forget your first ride over the crest of Nob Hill) San Francisco is known as epicurean heaven. Boasting around 3,600 restaurants, San Francisco has fantastic ethnic cuisine – sushi, Vietnamese, Thai, and Chinese, to name just a few. The large Hispanic population contributes dozens of popular taquerias; most are concentrated in the Mission district. The birth of California cuisine, pioneered by Alice Waters of the world famous Chez Panisse, turned the entire country on to fresh, local ingredients, a movement which is reflected across the board in San Francisco eateries like Zuni Café, Range, Michael Mina, and newcomer Prospect.

San Francisco's stunning beauty and easy access to nature make it a paradise for outdoor-lovers. There are over 50 city, state, and federal parks within the city itself, including the crown jewel: Golden Gate Park. Gorgeous golden beaches are mere

San Francisco Snapshot continued

minutes from downtown, mountain biking was born in the Marin hills just north of the Golden Gate Bridge, and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area covers close to 75,000 acres, including 59 miles of bay and ocean shoreline.

You won't find that kind of space in any other major American city. More community-focused than Los Angeles, milder than Boston, more relaxed than New York, more focused than Miami, San Francisco is a destination of dreamers and achievers- people don't just talk the talk, they put their plans into action and aren't afraid to fail. Just look at the San Francisco Giants- even a baseball team deemed "a bunch of rag tag misfits" can pull off a World Series championship...just sayin'. It's obvious San Franciscans love their city, and when you visit, you probably will too.

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History

San Francisco: Miwok Indians to the north and the Ohlones to the south lived a peaceful existence before the coming of Europeans. The Kule Loklo Miwok village, re-created near the Bear Valley Visitors Center at Point Reyes National Seashore in Marin County, provides an insight into their daily life.

With an overland expedition by Don Gaspar de Portola, Europeans first laid eyes on the Bay in 1770. In March 1776, Captain Juan Bautista de Anza founded the Presidio and Mission of as-yet unnamed San Francisco. The Spanish presence at the Mission San Francisco de Asis (now Mission Dolores—completed in 1791; the oldest building in the city) and at the Presidio, three miles away, did not amount to much over the succeeding years. The Mexican revolution of 1821 led to the Secularization Act of 1833, ending the Mission Period. Mission Dolores fell into disrepair. Conversion and disease had done much to destroy the culture of the Miwoks and Ohlones; by the early 19th century, native tribes had effectively ceased to exist.

In 1792, British explorer George Vancouver, visiting San Francisco Bay, discovered a protected anchorage east of the Presidio, called Yerba Buena by the Spanish after the sweet smelling grasses growing around the base of what is now Telegraph Hill.

Vancouver pitched and left a tent there, creating the nucleus of what became Yerba Buena, a small English-speaking community outside Spanish and Mexican authority. In 1846 with the Mexican-American war, the Presidio and Yerba Buena came under American control.

In 1847, Yerba Buena, with a population of about 1,000, changed its name to San Francisco. The next January, gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill, which created only a minor stir. It was left to newspaper publisher and merchant Sam Brannan, trying to drum up trade for his Sacramento Street hardware store, to really trigger the Gold Rush. He brandished a bottle of gold pellets in Portsmouth Square and shouted, "Gold! Gold! Gold from the American River!" Within a year or two, Brannan was a millionaire. 100,000 "forty-niners" came to San Francisco from all over the world within the next year. Brannan's announcement practically emptied San Francisco of its citizenry in 1848, and most forty-niners stayed only long enough to get picks and shovels before they were off to the hills.

By 1854, the gold fields had been exhausted, and San Francisco sank into an economic depression from which it would not emerge until the early 1860s with the discovery of the Comstock silver lode in western Nevada. It was this boom, richer and longer-lived than the California Gold Rush, which began to make a real city out of San Francisco, and millionaires out of some of its citizens. Comstock "bonanza kings" like James Flood, whose home is now the elegant Pacific Union Club, built mansions on Nob Hill. Fabric merchant Levi Strauss created a clothing empire by sewing pants for miners out of his leftover tent canvas.

The wild and woolly Barbary Coast roared through the ups and downs of San Francisco. The city gained a justly deserved reputation for vice of every sort. Brothels, gambling halls, and Chinese opium dens were everywhere on the city's eastern waterfront, and unwitting patrons were frequently "shanghaied" into service as sailors. The remnants of the Barbary Coast's scandalous "dance" revues can be seen in the slowly declining strip joints along Broadway in North Beach.

Early in the morning of April 18, 1906, an earthquake with an estimated magnitude

of 8.1 on the Richter Scale ripped through San Francisco, destroying hundreds of buildings. As gas mains ruptured, a fire spread through the city, causing far greater damage than the quake itself. 500 or so were killed, but an estimated 100,000, who were left homeless, either fled in ferries and watched their city burn from the Oakland hills or joined a tent city of 20,000 in what is now Golden Gate Park.

The city quickly rebuilt itself after the earthquake and fire, like the phoenix rising from ashes on the San Francisco flag. Celebrating civic triumph over adversity, San Francisco hosted the Panama Pacific International Exposition in 1915, a glittering architectural fantasy built on 635 acres of what is now the Marina District. A great success, the Exposition's steel-reinforced plaster buildings were bulldozed shortly after it closed, leaving only the domed pavilion of the Palace of Fine Arts (site of the Exploratorium).

Throughout the 1920s, plans were put forward for bridges to connect San Francisco with the East Bay and Marin. Finally in the early 1930s, work began on the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, which opened in 1936, and the Golden Gate Bridge in 1937.

Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, Gary Snyder, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, and other young writers and thinkers of what was to be known as the Beat Generation established themselves in the cafes and bars of North Beach, continuing the city's literary, bohemian tradition, albeit with a dreamy, druggy, jazz-inflected twist. Rising North Beach rents forced beatniks (a term coined by San Francisco Chronicle columnist Herb Caen) out to the Victorians of Haight-Ashbury, where their boundary-breaking prose had already inspired a new movement of long-haired young cultural mavericks.

Derisively dubbed "hippies" by the beats, who saw them as junior beat wanna-bes, the hippies took their cultural and psychic explorations to different extremes, aided by LSD, a synthesized hallucinogen. Bands like the Grateful Dead and Jefferson Airplane came up with the soundtrack to "tune in, turn on, and drop out," and the 1967 Summer of Love drew over 100,000 young seekers to the Haight.

Flower Power began to manifest itself more and more stridently with political

San Francisco Snapshot continued

unrest as demonstrations and even riots became a feature of life at San Francisco State University and, even more so, at the University of California, Berkeley. "Peace and love" began to turn into a bad trip.

San Francisco's gay community began to assert itself with greater confidence and urgency in the 1970s, electing Supervisor Harvey Milk as the nation's only openly gay politician. Milk was killed in 1978, along with Mayor George Moscone by former Supervisor Dan White. White's subsequent conviction on a mere manslaughter charge prompted riots and the burning of police cars by angry gays and their supporters in front of City Hall on "White Night."

During the 1980s, the gay community reeled under the onslaught of the AIDS epidemic. Though incidences of the disease have leveled off and more effective drugs prolong the life of those afflicted, the Castro has drawn even more tightly together to promote awareness of the disease and to support those whose lives have been affected by it.

In 1989, just as the Bay Area was sitting down to watch the San Francisco Giants and Oakland Athletics play each other in the third game of the World Series, it was rocked by the 7.1 Loma Prieta Earthquake. The legacy of the quake can be seen in the sometimes nightmarish San Francisco traffic, caused by irreparable damage to important sections of freeway.

Today San Francisco is a city of extremes. The magic of a thriving downtown business sector, explosive dot-com businesses South of Market, and a real estate boom in the southern corridor does not seem to be enough to dispel concern over an ever-rising homeless population and intractable problems with San Francisco's public transportation system, Muni. Despite these issues and economic swings, it would be hard to dim the luster of the abundant charms of, as Herb Caen put it, the "Baghdad by the Bay."

San Jose: Before the silicon chip, before Dionne Warwick ("Do You Know the Way to San Jose?") and well before the Spanish gave it a name, San Jose was home to scattered settlements of Ohlone Indians. The Ohlone ("The People") were hunter-gatherers who had lived around the San Francisco Bay since the end of the last Ice Age. The southern end of the Bay, where bustling San Jose now stands, provided the

Ohlones with a particularly felicitous mix of mild climate, redwood forests, acorn-filled oak groves, and creeks and bay wetlands abounding with fish and wildlife.

On November 6, 1769, Gaspar de Portola walked into the Ohlone's peaceful world by mistake. Portola was looking for Monterey Bay, discovered (in 1602), and subsequently described with wild inaccuracy, by Sebastian Vizcaino. It would take Portola two expeditions to find it. On this first mission, he became the first European to lay eyes on San Francisco Bay, and on the Ohlone. Portola set up camp to the north under a tall redwood, a place he called el palo alto. The tree, and its namesake city, are both thriving today.

In 1775, Juan Batista de Anza arrived in the area with a number of Spaniards intent on settling the territory of Alta California, and civilizing the Ohlone. In two years, a mission was built on a site close to the Guadalupe River, dubbed Mission Santa Clara de Asis (after Saint Claire of Assisi). The area around the settlement came to be known as Santa Clara Valley. (Today, San Jose is the seat of Santa Clara County.) To maintain the mission, an agricultural outpost was founded nearby on November 29, 1777: El Pueblo de San Jose de Guadalupe, so called after St. Joseph, the patron saint of the territory. Because this was the first civilian lay presence in Alta California, San Jose can claim the title of the oldest city in the state. Spanish settlers planted vineyards and orchards and developed cattle ranches. The Ohlone learned agriculture, were absorbed into the burgeoning Spanish community, and ceased to exist as a distinct culture.

The year 1821 marked the Mexican Revolution and a change in the administration of Alta California. A period of tension between Mexico and the United States followed, as the American frontier pushed ever westward, culminating in 1846 with the Mexican-American War. The Santa Clara Valley saw the only action between United States and Mexicans (or, more precisely Californios) in Northern California, in fact, at the Battle of Santa Clara.

The discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill in 1848 had a profound effect on San Jose and the Santa Clara Valley. While not a vein of the "mother lode" that ran far south, the Valley's western foothills were rich in cinnabar, an ore containing

mercury and sulfur, both valuable minerals important for the refinement of gold and silver. The Valley's agricultural, industrial and mercantile resources, which fed and clothed miners up at the diggings, also played an important role in bringing prosperity to San Jose. In 1850, two years after the conclusion of the Mexican-American War, California won statehood; thanks in large part to the determined lobbying efforts of two local real estate promoters, and San Jose became the state's first capital. In its year in San Jose (a hard, rainy winter would drive the capital to Benecia, Vallejo, and finally Sacramento), the hard-living State Assembly was known as "the Legislature of a Thousand Drinks."

As the gold rush ran its course and gave way to the silver bonanza of the Comstock Lode, miners came by the thousands to settle in the pleasant climate and fertile land of Santa Clara Valley. As the state grew, so did the Valley's agricultural bounty of wheat, pears, apricots, cherries, plums, and finally, and most significantly, prunes. It was the prune industry that came to dominate Santa Clara Valley. San Jose's agricultural heritage has been largely plowed under by the demands of housing and the technology industry, but individual trees and small stands can be seen here and there within city limits.

Farming and the railroad increased both the population and the ethnic diversity of San Jose. Germans played a key role in city government and civic life, and a local German band was the nucleus for what is now the San Jose Symphony. French immigrants helped shape the fruit industry with expertise and cuttings from the French countryside. And by 1870, more than a third of the city's population was Chinese.

Santa Clara Valley continued to prosper quietly throughout the rest of the 19th and early 20th centuries, with the occasional disturbances of the 1906 San Andreas earthquake and the Great Depression. In 1891, railroad baron Leland Stanford's largesse made possible the opening of Stanford University in Palo Alto. The town—in Santa Clara County—actually sprang up in the shadow of the university, and was subsequently named for Portola's redwood.

Stanford quickly became a leading center of education and research, particularly in the development of new technologies. In 1909, Stanford engineering graduate

San Francisco Snapshot continued

Cyril Elwell, funded with \$500 of seed capital from the university's president, began work in wireless technology that would result in the founding of the Federal Telegraph Company in Palo Alto. Also in 1909, Stanford researcher Charles Herrold broadcast the world's first commercial radio broadcasts from atop San Jose's Garden City Bank building. Stanford graduates William Hewlett and David Packard started a small audio-oscillator business in their garage in the 1930s and are popularly credited with fathering what we now know as Silicon Valley. In truth, the South Bay's high-tech industry was the legacy of a number of brilliant engineers and technologists associated with the university and Palo Alto business community.

After World War II, tens of thousands of veterans made San Jose their home, displacing agriculture and changing the nature of the city, a change that would become even more dramatic with the wartime technology that followed. The exigencies of war had sparked the accelerated development of vacuum tube, radio, and radar technology, and led to the founding of the Stanford Research Institute. In far off Pennsylvania, the birth of the world's first electronic computer, ENIAC, led to IBM building a \$53 million disk drive plant in San Jose. Lockheed, GTE, General Electric, a more mature Hewlett-Packard and Shockley Semiconductor Laboratory (whose founder, William Shockley, had invented the transistor) soon followed. By the late 1950s the area was the center of the nation's technology industry.

Disaffected Shockley employees founded Fairchild Semiconductor, which developed the first practical integrated circuit, or silicon chip as it came to be known. In 1968, refugees of struggling Fairchild went on to form the Intel Corporation, which, in 1971, came out with the microprocessor. In quick succession, video games (starting with Atari's Pong), PostScript printing technology, Cupertino's Apple Computer, the IBM PC, and Sun Microsystems helped to make up Silicon Valley as we know it today.

Having annexed numerous surrounding communities after the war, San Jose's population, helped by the returning GIs, quickly tripled in size. (City Manager A.P. Dutch Hamann directed the annexation campaign, helped by a ruthless staff

derided as "the Panzer Division.") The expenditure of valuable municipal resources in the city's rapid expansion had a profound and negative effect on the city's center. By the late '50s, it started a not-so-gradual decline into urban blight, which was reversed only in the mid-1980s under the stewardship of Mayor Thomas McEnery. An extensive and expensive redevelopment of downtown San Jose saw the construction of several new museums, the HP Pavilion (home of the San Jose Sharks hockey team), first-class hotels, and the San Jose McEnery Convention Center, along with a light rail mass transit system linking downtown San Jose with surrounding suburbs and Silicon Valley cities.

San Jose declared itself "The Capital of Silicon Valley" in the late 1980s. It had become the 11th-largest city in the country. Having put itself back together after the Loma Prieta earthquake of 1989, San Jose now faces an economic tremor. The recent downturn in the suddenly old "New Economy," with its consequent shakeout in Internet-connected businesses, has of course had its impact. But the city's economic diversity including aerospace and diversified consumer electronics technologies, industrial manufacturing, and agricultural processing and distribution, has for the most part kept it a humming industrial engine.

San Jose's ethnic diversity is even more striking, with large and vital Latino, Indian and Southeast Asian populations (who are making increasingly significant contributions to the high-tech industry). A tour through San Jose's neighborhoods reveals a rich mosaic of culture and cuisine. San Jose's museums and performing arts have become some of California's finest as the city's cultural influence rises to match its economic stature.

©

Hotel Insights

San Francisco is a city with accommodations to suit all budgets. If money is no object, the Ritz Carlton, Four Seasons, Fairmont, InterContinental Mark Hopkins, St. Francis Drake, Clift, or the Palace (the latter has a killer lobby bar) are all great bets. For something a bit more unique, try a San Francisco boutique hotels: the Hotel Triton has a

different decorative theme in each room, while the Phoenix Hotel has a distinct retro-chic vibe with its '50s motel set-up around a courtyard pool. The city also has many well-appointed hotels in the medium-to-high price range, including the SF Marriott, Hyatt Regency, the W San Francisco, the Hotel Nikko, and the St. Regis. For more affordable accommodations that are anything but basic, try the Petit Auberge for European-style charm, Hotel des Arts for rooms featuring the works of local artists, or the Hotel Diva for sleek decor that makes the price feel like a steal.

Of course, where you stay may have as much to do with your budget as your location preferences. Luckily, the neighborhoods with the highest concentration of hotels--Union Square, SoMa, and Downtown--are the most convenient to public transportation lines, many top attractions, great shopping, and marvelous dining, and also happen to be within easy walking distance from other areas of the city worth visiting. Nob Hill is a good area to stay if you've got a sizable budget (your payoff is a posh hotel with jaw-dropping views), while staying in Fisherman's Wharf, despite its proximity to many family-friendly attractions, may make you feel a bit geographically isolated, as the neighborhood is all the way at the northeastern end of the city.

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Restaurants Insights

San Francisco takes food seriously--perhaps a bit too seriously, as its obsession with the latest epicurean crazes and insistence on local, humane food sources can border on elitism. However, that focus on excellence--coupled with award-winning chefs and cuisines from around the globe--makes for a city bursting with top-notch eats. Indeed, the city pleases diners of all tastes. It's probably best known for pioneering many trends in health-conscious eating, boasting some of the country's first gourmet vegan and raw foods restaurants as well as a number of wonderful farmer's markets, especially the one at the Ferry Building Marketplace (which is a food palace-cum-tourist attraction in and of itself). However, SF isn't just for wheatgrass lovers. On his TV show, brazen chef Anthony Bourdain decried San Francisco as a vegetarian wasteland, but then did a

San Francisco Snapshot continued

complete 180 after discovering the city had plenty of carnivore-friendly treats to spare.

The must-try foods of San Francisco are many, so come with an appetite! First and foremost, the city's Mexican cuisine is unbeatable. You've never had a burrito until you've had one in California--after all, it's where the burrito was invented, contrary to popular belief that the dish originated in Mexico. The Mission's myriad taquerias--we especially love Papalote, Pancho Villa, and Taqueria Cancun--turn out burritos as big as a baby's arm and several types of salsa to add kick. The city also pays tribute to its diverse Latin population with sublime Salvadorean pupusas at Panchita's 3, Peruvian delights at Limon, and the Brazilian meat Mecca of Espetus Churrascaria. Second, San Francisco's Asian flavors beg to be sampled, from top-notch dim sum at Yank Sing and Ton Kiang, some of the country's best sushi (try Sushi Zone, Ozumo, or Kabuto A&S), fusion done to perfection at Vietnamese-inspired Slanted Door, plus amazing Thai, Indian, and more. Third, lest we forget San Francisco's oceanside location, it's all about seafood here--particularly at Fisherman's Wharf, where it pays to know where to go ahead of time (Scoma's and Alioto's will not disappoint) as many of the restaurants are overpriced and geared towards tourists. And SF's sourdough bread claim to fame? The bread itself is nothing special, but when it's enjoyed in bread-bowl form with a steaming ladle-full of clam chowder inside? Perfection on a foggy day. Last but not least, when it's time to indulge your sweet tooth, you'll find sensational ice cream at Bi-Rite Creamery (the salted caramel is to die for), gourmet chocolates at Recchiuti Confections, preciously-presented treats at Miette, and the city's best desserts, hands down, at Citizen Cake.

For those seeking the ultimate in deluxe dining, Fleur de Lys, Gary Danko, Michael Mina, Boulevard, and Acquerello are consistently touted as the city's finest. No visit to the Bay Area would be complete without a foodie detour to Berkeley and Alice Waters' famed Chez Panisse, the birthplace of California cuisine. However, you don't need to splurge to enjoy a fantastic meal. San Francisco has tons of excellent restaurants in the medium price range, particularly in Russian Hill, Hayes Valley, and the Mission District. Favorites in the latter part of town include Range for

top-notch new American cuisine, Delfina for rustic yet elegant Italian, Andalu for creative small plates, and Charanga for pan-Latin deliciousness. Speaking of dining neighborhoods, a word to the wise: while North Beach does have a ton of Italian eateries, many of them are mediocre and cater to tourists. Stray off Columbus Avenue for higher-quality options.

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Nightlife Insights

San Francisco isn't truly a late-night city, but it certainly has exceptional nightlife to suit all tastes. For culture vultures, the city's symphony, opera, and ballet are fantastic. While the local theater scene certainly isn't as grand as on Broadway, playgoers can enjoy nationally-touring musicals, big theatrical productions, avant-garde shows, and cabaret-meets-dinner theater at Teatro ZinZanni.

The city's thriving music scene is evident in its myriad venues. For rock, head to the legendary Fillmore, Warfield, Great American Music Hall, and indie-favorite Bottom of the Hill. Blues and funk are always on tap at the Boom Boom Room, while Yoshi's boasts phenomenal jazz.

Ready for cocktails? The Mission has a high concentration of bars that attract twenty and thirtysomethings; head to Zeitgeist, Kilowatt, Laszlo, Beauty Bar, or simply walk along Valencia and Mission streets and you'll find a lively watering hole. While the Financial District is typically only a drinking destination for office workers during happy hour, the advent of Rickhouse, with its multi-page menu of inventive elixirs, has put the neighborhood back on the cocktail map. Is beer your thing? Toronado in the Lower Haight offers the biggest variety of microbrews in the city. Love wine? San Francisco is surely an oenophile's city, what with Napa and Sonoma so close. To sample Wine Country's best inside the city limits, head to Bacchus in Russian Hill, Press Club in SoMa, and EOS in Cole Valley--wine bars with excellent bottles and service.

Nightclubs galore can be found in SoMa. While some are bridge-and-tunnel gathering places (like 1015 Folsom), others attract solid local DJ's and nationally touring electronic acts (try Mezzanine, DNA Lounge, and Shine).

The Castro is, unsurprisingly, the epicenter of gay nightlife. Badlands and Toad Hall feature raucous dance floors, while the quieter Harvey's and Blush! Wine Bar are better bets for intimate conversation. Bernal Heights, particularly on Cortland Avenue, has several lesbian bars.

Take note: While North Beach is a popular dining destination, it's also the city's adult entertainment capital. It's a shame that one of the most culturally-rich neighborhoods gets a bit sleazy after hours, so it's best to skip out of this part of town once you've finished dinner.

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Things to Do Insights

From amazing museums to outdoor adventures aplenty, it's a challenge fitting all that San Francisco has to offer into one visit. One of the top attractions--and one you shouldn't miss--is walking across the iconic Golden Gate Bridge towards scenic Marin County. Just be sure to pack some warm layers so you don't wind up shivering in the fog like most tourists. Chinatown and North Beach, while also big tourist draws, are also worth visiting for their rich history and fantastic ethnic cuisine. And it may seem hokey, but riding a Cable Car is a super fun way to see several neighborhoods on the tourist circuit, as two of the lines travel from Union Square all the way to Fisherman's Wharf. Plus you get to go up and down some of the city's steepest hills without suffering muscle fatigue.

The city's many art museums--including the SF MoMA, Asian Art Museum, de Young, and Yerba Buena Center--will not leave you starved for aesthetics, while the Exploratorium and California Academy of Sciences will score huge points with the little ones. Speaking of family fun, there's lots to be had in Fisherman's Wharf, home of many unique museums, a stellar aquarium, and the ferry departure point for Alcatraz. But take note: the area is chockablock with souvenir shops and attracts a special breed of street wanderers (don't worry, they're harmless, if not a bit eccentric). If souvenirs aren't your thing but you're in the mood for a shopping expedition, head to Union Square for elegant department stores, malls, designer shops, and national

San Francisco Snapshot continued

chains. Cool boutiques featuring local designers can be found in Hayes Valley and the Mission. Save some time to explore San Francisco's eclectic neighborhoods. From the city's hippie legacy in Haight-Ashbury, to the Mission's murals and Latin flavors, to gay culture in the Castro, each area offers unique insight into what makes the city tick.

San Francisco and its environs will delight the active traveler. You don't even have to leave the city to enjoy the best of the outdoors. The expansive Golden Gate Park offers tons of picnic spots, walking trails, and unique attractions, including two museums (the de Young and the California Academy of Sciences), Strybing Arboretum & Botanical Gardens, the Conservatory of Flowers, the Japanese Tea Garden, and more. Land's End, a hiking trail that hugs the northwestern corner of the city, offers resplendent views of the ocean, bay, and Golden Gate Bridge. Several beaches, four golf courses, and many small parks add to the city's considerable green spaces. However, for Northern California nature in all its glory, head north to Marin County, where killer hikes on Mt. Tam and exceptional wildlife viewing at Point Reyes will get your blood pumping. Muir Woods' majestic redwoods are also a sight to behold, although the park attracts big crowds--get there as early in the day as possible.

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Travel Tips

San Francisco:

Getting There

Air

San Francisco International Airport (SFO) +1 800 821 8211 <http://www.flysfo.com/>

SFO is located 13 miles from San Francisco and provides service to the following airlines:

Air Canada (+1 800 776 3000/ <http://www.aircanada.ca/>) Air China (+1 800 986 1985/ <http://www.airchina.com.cn/en/index.jsp>) Air France (+1 800 871 1366/ <http://www.airfrance.com/>) American Airline (+1 800 433 7300/ <http://www.aa.com/>) British Airways (+1 800 247 9297/ <http://www.british-airways.com/>) Continental (+1 800 525 0280/ <http://www.continental.com/>) Delta (+1 800 221 1212/ <http://www.delta.com/>) Southwest (+1

800 435 9792/ <http://www.southwest.com/>) Northwest (+1 800 225 2525/ <http://www.nwa.com/>) United (+1 800 241 6522/ <http://www.ual.com/>) US Airways (+1 800 428 4322/ <http://www.usairways.com/>) Virgin America (+1 877 359 8474/ <http://www.virginamerica.com/>) Virgin Atlantic (+1 800 862 8621/ <http://www.virginatlantic.com/>) JetBlue (+1 800 538 2583/ <http://www.jetblue.com/>)

Airport Parking: PCA (Park'N Fly) (+1 800 763 6895/ <http://www.pfnetwork.com/>)

From the Airport

Nile Expert Note: Renting a car isn't necessary to navigate San Francisco proper. The city's neighborhoods and points of interest are accessible by public transportation, and with the exception of some areas with seriously steep hills, the city is fairly walkable. Furthermore, parking is tough in most neighborhoods with ample dining and nightlife. However, if you do want to explore beyond the city--namely, Marin County, Berkeley and Oakland in the East Bay, or the Wine Country--then we recommend renting a car. Many hotels offer parking (for a price).

If you opt to not rent a car, the cab ride from SFO to San Francisco will cost \$40-\$50, depending on where you're going. Taking an airport shuttle is a more affordable option (and may even be free if your hotel offers complementary shuttle service), and taking BART into the city is not only cheap (\$8.50 one way) but also super easy. Take the AirTrain in the airport terminal to the BART stop, exit the train, buy your BART ticket, and descend to the BART platform. BART trains depart for the city about every 10-15 minutes, and the ride takes about 25 minutes. Once in San Francisco, BART makes several stops along Market Street, within easy walking distance from Downtown, SoMa, and Union Square hotels. The reverse trip from the city to the airport on BART is just as simple. © NileGuide

Shuttle: AirTrain shuttle will take you from your terminal to the rental car center 24 hours a day. It also services the parking garages and the BART station connection at the airport.

Car Rental: Alamo (+1 800 327 9633/ <http://www.alamo.com/>) Avis (+1 800 831 2847/ <http://www.avis.com/>) Budget (+1 800 527 0700/ <http://www.budget.com/>) Dollar (+1 800 4000/ <http://www.dollar.com/>)

Enterprise (+1 800 325 8007/ <http://www.enterprise.com/>) Hertz (+1 800 654 3131/ <http://www.hertz.com/>) National (+1 800 227 7368/ <http://www.nationalcar.com/>) Payless (+1 800 729 5377/ <http://www.paylesscarrental.com/>) Thrifty (+1 800 367 2277/ <http://www.thrifty.com/>) BLS Limousine Service (+1 800 843 5752/ <http://www.blslimo.com/>)

Shuttle: Airport Express (+1 415 775 5121/ <http://www.airportexpresssf.com/>) USD 14-USD 17. Bay Shuttle (+1 415 564 3400/ <http://www.bayshuttle.com/>) USD 14 adult, USD 8 child, and USD 65 per van.

Public Transit: BART Rapid Rail to northern San Mateo County, San Francisco and the East Bay from the airport. The SFO BART station is located on the Departures/Ticketing Level (Level 3) of the International Terminal, on the Boarding Area G side of the terminal near the Berman Reflection Room. (<http://www.bart.gov/>)

Caltrain rail service between San Francisco and San Jose, with weekday commute-hour service to Gilroy. BART connects SFO to the Caltrain rail system at the Millbrae Station. (<http://www.caltrain.com/>)

Samtrans 24-hour service connecting SFO to San Mateo County and parts of San Francisco and Palo Alto. SamsTrans buses stop at Terminal 1, 2, and International. (<http://www.samtrans.org/>)

Useful Products: PocketBay- A convenient and useful credit-card sized map of San Francisco and its public transportation that fits in a wallet so that users can access the essential information on the city at all times. (<http://www.pocketbaymaps.com/>)

If you're internet savvy, check out <http://www.hopstop.com/> for the quick and easy route, via public transportation, to get you where you want to go.

Train

Amtrak services two San Francisco stops daily from nationwide locations (+1 800 872 7245/ <http://www.amtrak.com/>).

Bus

Greyhound (+1 800 231 2222; +1 512 458 4463/ <http://www.greyhound.com/>) accesses San Francisco daily.

Car

San Francisco can be reached via I-80, I-280, and I-101.

San Francisco Snapshot continued

Getting Around

When you have a transportation query, you can pick up a phone and dial 511, or visit 511.org. Whether you're driving, taking public transportation, or looking into carpool options, 511 has all the information you need. It's available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Bus

The Muni Buses service the entire city(<http://www.sfmuni.com/>) and is San Francisco's main transportation system.

Bart rapid transit services downtown San Francisco as well as Oakland, Pittsburg, Fremont, and other Bay areas. (<http://www.bart.gov/>)

Ferry

For ferries to Alcatraz Island, use Alcatraz Cruises, departing from Pier 33. (+1 415 981 7625/ <http://www.alcatrazcruises.com/>)

Taxi

Bayshore Cab(+1 415 648 4444) Luxor Cab(+1 415 282 4141) Yellow Cab Cooperative(+1 415 282 3737) Green Cab(+1 415 626 4733)

Traffic Information

To find out city traffic information go to <http://www.traffic.com/>

If traveling overseas, take the safety precaution of registering your trip at <https://travelregistration.state.gov> and for helpful, practical advice about traveling technicalities and safety standards check out <http://travel.state.gov/>.

San Jose: **Getting There**

Air

Mineta San Jose International Airport(SJC) (+1 408 501 7600/<http://www.sjc.org>) is located only three miles north of downtown San Jose. Its two terminals accommodate over 11 million passengers a year.

The following major airlines touchdown and take-off from its runways:

Alaskan Airlines(+1 800 252 7522/<http://www.alaskaair.com>) American Airline(+1 800 433 7300/<http://www.aa.com>) Continental(+1 800 525 0280/<http://www.continental.com>) Delta(+1 800 221 1212/<http://www.delta.com>) Frontier Airlines(+1 800 432 1359/<http://www.frontierairlines.com>)

Horizon Air(+1 800 547 9308/<http://www.horizonair.com>) Mexicana(+1 800 531 7921/<http://www.mexicana.com>) Northwest(+1 800 225 2525/<http://www.nwa.com>) Southwest(+1 800 435 9792/<http://www.iflyswa.com>) United(+1 800 241 6522/<http://www.ual.com>) US Airways(+1 800 428 4322/<http://www.usairways.com>)

From the Airport

Car Rental: Alamo(+1 800 327 9633/<http://www.alamo.com>) Avis(+1 800 831 2847/<http://www.avis.com>) Budget(+1 800 527 0700/<http://www.budget.com>) Dollar(+1 800 4000/<http://www.dollar.com>) Enterprise(+1 800 325 8007/<http://www.enterprise.com>) Hertz(+1 800 654 3131/<http://www.hertz.com>) National(+1 800 227 7368/<http://www.nationalcar.com>) Payless(+1 800 729 5377/<http://www.paylesscarrental.com>) Thrifty(+1 800 367 2277/<http://www.thrifty.com>)

Taxi: Yellow Cab(+1 408 293 1234) operates out of Terminal A United Cab(+1 408 971 1111) operates out of Terminal C. Yellowcab(+1 408-245-5222/<http://yellowcabca.tripod.com/index.html>) Rides to downtown average USD13, while rides to San Francisco approximately cost USD100.

Ride Shares: Atlas Express(+1 888 467 0000) Bay Express Shuttle(+1 408 243 8205) San Jose Express(+1 800 773 0039) Silicon Valley Airporter(+1 800 400 2365) South and East Bay Airport Shuttle(+1 408 559 9477) Most fares average USD15.

Rail: The VTA Airport Flyer(+1 800 894 9908/<http://www.vta.org>) ushers passengers to the Santa Clara CalTrain Station(+1 800 660 4287/<http://www.caltrain.com>), which provides access to the Metro Light Rail Station, which services San Jose, as well as train service to San Francisco. The Flyer exits the airport every 10 minutes on weekdays and every 15 minutes on weekends. It operates 5:30AM-midnight daily. Rides are free.

Train

Amtrak(+1 800 872 7245/<http://www.amtrak.com>) chugs into San Jose's train station at 65 Cahill Street on a daily basis. The Capitol Corridor Line makes 22 daily runs between San Jose and Sacramento, California's state capital. And the impossibly scenic Coast Starlight Line hums into San Jose daily while making runs between Seattle and Los

Angeles. CalTrain(+1 800 660 4287/<http://www.caltrain.com>) is a local train line that connects San Jose with San Francisco. Rides last 90 minutes and cost USD5.25.

Bus

Greyhound(+1 800 231 2222/<http://www.greyhound.com>) operates out of San Jose's bus station at 70 South Almaden Avenue. Buses continually arrive from all points of the compass.

Highway

San Jose's crisscrossing network of Interstate highways makes it extremely car accessible. Interstate 880(Nimitz Freeway) streams into San Jose from Oakland to the north and turns into Route 17 as it continues south into Santa Cruz along the coast. Highway 101(Bayshore Freeway) enters from San Francisco in a southeast direction before persisting south to Los Angeles. And Interstate 280(Junipero Serra Freeway) also wanders down from San Francisco, bending along San Jose's southern edge before connecting with Interstate 680(Sinclair Freeway) which drifts in from Concord and Walnut Creek from the northeast.

Getting Around

Car

Driving in San Jose can be a tedious process if unfamiliar with its mesh of one-way streets. Parking and then using the Downtown Area Shuttle to maneuver through San Jose is strongly recommended. The Interstates, especially the Bayshore Freeway, would frighten most NASCAR drivers during morning and afternoon rush hours. When not gummed with traffic most cars zoom along at terrific speeds and harbor no patience for out-of-town drivers cautiously seeking their mapped out exit.

Taxi

Taxi's are readily available and can be easily found at most major hotels. A small list of cab companies include: Checker Cab(+1 408 293 1199) Yellowcab(+1 408-245-5222/<http://yellowcabca.tripod.com/index.html>) Deluxe Cab(+1 408 441 9600) Golden Star Cab(+1 408 573 7777) Rainbow Cab(+1 408 271 9900) Veterans Cab(+1 408 946 2227) Airport Car Service(+1 650 254 1230)

Train

San Francisco Snapshot continued

The Metro Light Rail System(+1 408 321 2300) features almost 29 miles of track with 33 stops. Trains attend each station every 10 minutes on weekdays, every 15 minutes on weekends, and every 30 minutes during evenings. Tickets cost USD1.25 and are good for two hours.

San Jose's historic trolley car service operates from early April through early October. It features nine popular downtown stops such as the Civic Center, the San Jose Convention Center, and Japantown.

Bus

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, or locally known as VTA(+1 800 894 9908/http://www.vta.org), stands as San Jose's main source for public transit. Its fleet of 520 buses services all of downtown and the surrounding area with connections to other bus lines that link with Santa Cruz and San Francisco. One-way fares start at USD1.50.

DASH(Downtown Area Shuttle) is a free service that wanders through downtown M-F 6:15a-7p. Stops include the San

Jose Convention Center, San Jose State University, and the Children's Discovery Museum.

Foot

San Jose's downtown is refreshingly compact making it extremely conducive for walking. San Pedro Square, the Center for Performing Arts, the San Jose Museum of Art, the convention center and many other prime attractions are all within several blocks of each other.

Plenty of bike routes and bike trails make San Jose extremely bike happy.

©

Fun Facts

San Francisco

State: California

Country: United States

San Francisco By The Numbers:

Population: 789,600(city); 7.2 million(metropolitan)

Elevation: 128 ft/ 39 m

Average Annual Rainfall: 20.4 in/ 52 cm
Average January Temperature: 51°F/ 11°C
Average July Temperature: 60°F/ 16°C
Number of Hills in SF: 47

Quick Facts: Major Industries: Oil, Electronics, Computers, Tourism, Higher Education, Biotech

Electricity: 110 volts, 60Hz, standard two pin plugs

Time Zone: GMT-8; Pacific Standard Time(PST)

Country Dialing Code:+1

Area Code: 415& 650

Did You Know?

San Francisco is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the United States. Each year, more than 17 million visitors from around the world make the City by the Bay a destination on their vacation or business itinerary.

Irish Coffee was invented in San Francisco.

©

Los Angeles Snapshot

Local Info

People either love it, or they hate it--but no matter what, Los Angeles makes no excuses and changes itself for no one. And you've got to admire that. Made up of dozens of communities, there is no one single experience that can sum up the life and the heartbeat of this city. But what can be noticed about Los Angeles by both tourists and locals alike is the hustle-and-bustle lifestyle, the vibrant and unique neighborhoods, and the extreme diversity that sets it apart from any other city. From the eternal sunshine and Hollywood glitz to all the small communities with their own distinct cultural personalities, this City of Angels will forever be many things to many people.

Downtown

While not exactly in the center of town geographically due to the sprawling nature of the city, Downtown Los Angeles is still teeming with activity. There are cultural hotbeds like Olvera Street and Chinatown that are just minutes away from Los Angeles landmarks such as the Bank of America Building and the Walt Disney Concert Hall. And if you have a hankering for more art and culture while Downtown, the Museum of Contemporary Art(MOCA) is a definite must-see.

Hollywood

The big sign just about says it all--Hollywood is glitz, glamour, and unavoidable. While many people are critical of Hollywood, they still can't help but satiate their curiosity by visiting this busy area. The center of things is, without a doubt, Hollywood Boulevard, location of world-famous tourist spots including Mann's Chinese Theater, the Hollywood Walk of Fame, and the Kodak Theatre where the Oscars are now held annually.

The Miracle Mile/Hancock Park area is another of L.A.'s historical neighborhoods. Here you will find Wilshire Boulevard's Museum Row. The museums are contained within Hancock Park, a small but peaceful oasis in the center of hectic urban activity. To venture into the far distant past, stop by the Brea Tar Pits, La, and to immerse yourself in a famous museum, the LACMA: Los Angeles County Museum of Art is a popular attraction on Miracle Mile.

Ritz West Hollywood is home to one of the city's most famous(or infamous) attractions: the Sunset Strip. Here you'll find most of the city's hippest clubs frequented by up-and-coming actors and socialites, as well as some of the city's finest hotels and shopping, including the upscale Melrose Avenue Shopping District. West Hollywood is also the center of the city's gay and lesbian community, and it puts on one of the flashiest and most exhilarating annual Halloween parades in the state.

Beverly Hills and the Westside

This world-famous city with its world-famous zip code is synonymous with wealth, status, and celebrity. The understated elegance and grace of the residential neighborhoods are balanced out by Rodeo Drive, which offers some of the finest(and most expensive) shopping in the world.

Santa Monica and Beach Cities

Back in the heyday of Route 66, Santa Monica was the end of the line. Today, this beachfront community offers the best in entertainment for all ages on its famous Santa Monica Pier. You can enjoy some carnival-style food and games or take a ride on the ferris wheel for a breathtaking view of the city and shoreline. When you're ready for some shopping, the active Third Street Promenade has a diverse directory of stores and eateries.

The motto of the coastal community of Malibu is "27 miles of scenic beauty," and that about describes it best. The main attraction here is the drive along the Pacific Coast Highway, which takes you past beach after beach on one side of the road and million-dollar hilltop estates on the other. Make sure you have plenty of film and sunscreen. Even at night, the stars just seem brighter.

Venice, just south of Santa Monica, is the city's home to all things eclectic and many things downright bizarre. This small, artsy beach town offers one of the greatest collections of cafes, bars, galleries, antiques and one-of-a-kind shops around. Weekend afternoons on the boardwalk are definitely a memorable experience for any visitor to the city.

San Fernando Valley

On the other side of the Hollywood Hills sits "The Valley," as known by locals. It features a seemingly endless sea of suburban cul-de-sacs, strip malls, funky shops and restaurants. Hollywood makes its presence known in the cities of Burbank and Universal City, which are home to Warner Bros. Studio and Universal Studios. There are two things you can always count on in the Valley: the earthquakes always feel stronger, and the temperature is always 10 degrees hotter.

South Central and Compton

Although the South Central neighborhood of Crenshaw gained worldwide publicity as the center of the infamous 1992 riots, this area is rich in history and culture. South Central also is home to famous Los Angeles landmarks such as the Watts Towers, the historic Shrine Auditorium, and Exposition Park. Within the famed Exposition Park is the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, the California Science Center, and the IMAX California Science Center. It has also long been a place of culture and diversity, as evidenced by the African American Cultural Center.

Long Beach and the South Bay

Long Beach is a fairly large city in its own right and is a neighbor to the well known district of Orange County. Aside from a plethora of shopping and dining options, this beach community is perhaps best known for the Queen Mary, a Titanic-esque ocean liner now permanently docked here and open for tours. They also have many outdoor activities for tourists to take advantage of, as well as museums and beaches that all can enjoy.

The South Bay is made up of smaller beach towns and quiet neighborhoods such as Hermosa Beach, Redondo Beach, Manhattan Beach and Palos Verdes Estates.

Pasadena and Points East

Pasadena is one of the most prominent communities in the entire state of California. Old Town Pasadena provides one of the greatest clusters of bars, shops, cafes and restaurants in the entire L.A. area. The city is also known for the Norton Simon Museum, which is the largest collection

Los Angeles Snapshot continued

of art owned by one man, and the Rose Bowl. And every New Year's Day, this not-so-sleepy town becomes the focus of the entire world for the annual Tournament of Roses Parade.

East L.A., as evidenced by its name, forms the eastern edge of the city and is a great example of a neighborhood rich in cultural expression.

LAX and Inglewood

LAX is one of the largest airports in the United States, when it comes to the sheer number of people passing through its hallways. The airport is the main feature of the otherwise-sleepy, suburban neighborhood of Westchester. This pocket of quiet, tree-lined streets and neighborhood schools and churches is a refreshing oasis in an often-frenetic city.

Inglewood features a wide variety of restaurants, music and sports venues. Here you will find Hollywood Park Racetrack and the The Forum arena, an entertainment hotspot. Inglewood also hosts the annual Hollywood Black Film Festival, which pays homage to African-American filmmakers of past, present and future.

©

History

California's earliest residents were Native Americans. Prior to the mid-18th century, several native peoples dominated the area, most notably those from the Tongva nation.

The earliest key date in the development of Los Angeles is August 2, 1769. It was on that afternoon that a group of Spanish explorers from the east, led by Juan Crespi and Captain Gaspar de Portola, entered what came to be known as Los Angeles, in the area around Elysian Park. It was then that Crespi realized the potential the area had to become a sizable settlement. Then in 1771, Junipero Serra created the Mission San Gabriel Archangel in the present day San Gabriel Valley. It wasn't until 1781 that the town was founded and named "El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de los Ángeles del Río de Porciúncula"—quite a mouthful to say and subsequently shortened to Los Angeles.

Throughout the late 18th and early 19th centuries, was only a small farm town that remained part of Mexico, until the Mexican-American War. On March

9th, 1842, Francisco Lopez discovered gold in the Santa Clarita Valley and by 1845, U.S. troops began battling for control of California. On January 9, 1847, Commodore Stockton recaptured Los Angeles for the third and final time, and just days later Mexican general Andres Pico surrendered California to U.S. General John Fremont. A subsequent boundary dispute ensued as to where the borders of the city and county should be, but on April 4, 1850, the city of Los Angeles was incorporated, with California officially entering the union five months later.

The late 1800s and early 1900s saw Los Angeles grow exponentially. One reason for this was the railroads, which finally reached Los Angeles from the East. The railroads resulted in a major expansion of economy and population, as evidenced by the fact that L.A.'s population doubled in the last decade of the 1800s and tripled in the first decade of the 1900s. In 1913, William Mulholland built an aqueduct, which allowed water to be brought to Los Angeles from 200 miles north. This important event, coupled with the earlier railroad boom, is considered to be largely responsible for L.A.'s growth into a major population center.

By the 1920s, many industries were beginning to stake their claim in the city. The most popular of these industries was the budding film industry. Filmmakers from the East came to Southern California for its eternal sunshine and varied landscape. Where else in America could they find perfect weather and largely empty surrounding land, as well as mountains, lakes, forests and beaches all within an hour's drive? As movies and movie-making became more ingrained in American culture during the 1940s and 50s, millions began flocking to L.A. in hopes of becoming a star and striking it rich. By the mid-to-late 1950s, the population of L.A. had reached two million and appeared to be going nowhere but up.

As the city grew, more people meant more problems. In 1943, a clash between sailors, marines and local Hispanic gangs broke out, known as the Zoot Suit Riots. For several days and nights, downtown Los Angeles was transformed into a battle-zone. Although the riots were finally quelled by police, this would not be the last time the city witnessed large-scale urban unrest. Devastating race riots erupted in 1965 and again in 1992, after the Rodney

King verdict, giving the city its reputation for being a hotbed of racial tensions. Riots, however, weren't the only problems that affected the history of Los Angeles. Runaway air pollution and the damage caused by several earthquakes—the largest and most memorable of which was the Northridge earthquake in 1994, with a total magnitude of 6.7—have also given the city its fair share of crises to deal with over the years. But with the 21st century has come an increase in the improvement and gentrification in many parts of the city.

Certain things can always be counted on to thrive in L.A.: cultural diversity, beautiful weather, the well-known traffic on the 405 Freeway, and eager souls arriving each day to the City of Angels in search of their own piece of heaven.

©

Hotel Insights

According to the tired but true axiom, the three most important things in real estate are location, location and location. In the universe of Los Angeles, that cannot be stressed enough, and where you stay will have a tremendous impact on your L.A. experience. The following are some of the most-recommended areas to lodge.

Downtown

Downtown Los Angeles contains the heart of the financial and business districts of the city, and is perfect for corporate travelers. All of the best amenities can be found at the swanky The Standard Hotel which truly gives a new meaning to the word "standard," or at the luxurious Millennium Biltmore. Formerly the Regal and famous since 1923, it was home to the Academy Awards during the Golden Age of Hollywood. Those wanting to stay within a budget but who still want singular and eclectic accommodations, might try the charming Best Western Dragon Gate Inn located right in the heart of Chinatown, the Hotel Figueroa with its funky Southwestern motif, or the elegant Miyako Inn and Spa where you can either gratify yourself with a relaxing massage or have a little late night fun at their karaoke bar.

Beverly Hills

For those with means, there is simply no other place to stay in town. World-class luxury and service can be found

Los Angeles Snapshot continued

at the Beverly Hills Hotel, the Beverly Hilton or the Beverly Wilshire Beverly Hills. The world-famous Peninsula is also a high-class, luxurious choice for anyone wanting the best amenities and service. Wherever you choose to stay in this high-end neighborhood, you will be close to some of the very best shopping and dining in the world.

Hollywood

Considering Hollywood's status as a tourist mecca, it should come as no surprise that it offers many places to lodge, especially for those on a budget. The Hollywood Celebrity Hotel and the Best Western Hollywood Hills Hotel offer decent rooms for those who want to keep their costs down. All are close to every famous Hollywood attraction, as well as Universal Studios. You'll be in the thick of the action here, although you may not want to walk alone at night in the darkest parts of Hollywood.

Pasadena

Nestled at the base of the San Gabriel Mountains, Pasadena offers some of the greatest lodging options for those who want to get away from the urban energy of the rest of L.A. If you want only the best, stay in elegant style at the Ritz-Carlton Huntington Hotel. The Pasadena Hilton also offers top-notch amenities and great service. For those looking for something other than a large hotel, try the beautiful and charming Artist's Inn and the Bissell House, both offering personalized luxury and service in a bed-and-breakfast setting.

Santa Monica

Maybe it's the sound of ocean waves that help you sleep easier, or maybe it's being near both shopping and recreation, but either way Santa Monica has proven to be the way to go for many visitors to the area. For those with pockets deeper than the sea, consider the Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel, the Fairmont Miramar or the ultra-luxurious Shutters on the Beach. All three are located within walking distance of all of Santa Monica's wonders, both natural and man-made, and offer the full royal treatment. For those on more of a budget, the Ocean View Hotel and the classic Art Deco Cadillac Hotel (located in nearby Venice) offer more affordable accommodation while sacrificing very little in the way of amenities or location.

West Hollywood

There's always something to be said for being close to the action. For those who long to be in the center of L.A.'s star-studded nightlife, you can't get much closer than a hotel room in West Hollywood. The Chateau Marmont, the Mondrian and the Sunset Tower Hotel offer accommodations fit for a king (with a bill to match). Meanwhile the Hyatt and the rock'n' roll atmosphere of the Standard Hotel offer great rooms at a fraction of the cost of their neighbors. Just about every hotel in the area is located on Sunset and lies within walking distance of the hottest clubs.

Westwood

This high-end neighborhood not only boasts UCLA, but also offers many bars, restaurants and entertainment options. It also features some of the best accommodations at reasonable prices. The Hilgard House offers wonderful accommodations that isn't exactly cheap, but certainly won't cause you to break the bank. The upscale W Los Angeles is a popular choice featuring world-class service and comfort.

©

Restaurants Insights

When it comes to dining and drinking, anything that one can possibly dream up can be found in Los Angeles. Celebrity-only seating on the West Side is countered by family-style seating in Silverlake, and cuisines from Ethiopian to Polish are all here somewhere. With so many choices and a limited time frame, here are some highlights that should not be missed.

Downtown

After a prolonged period of economic hardship, downtown L.A. went in for a facelift, replacing the old shabby buildings with new businesses and recreation centers. One of the establishments that helped the downtown comeback is R-23, which quickly gained a reputation for serving unbelievable sushi. Another downtown hot spot is the Water Grill, which offers upscale seafood for the international dining set. If you're looking for a unique and entertaining experience without the sky-high prices, enjoy a meal at Shabu Shabu House Restaurant—a form of Japanese cooking where servers bring you plates of fresh meat, and the customers cook it

themselves in hot pots. And for a more casual but earth-shaking good time, check out Epicentre, which is designed to look like a cafe, post-earthquake.

La Cienega and Beverly Hills

When dining in this celebrity "hot zone," be sure to bring your high-limit credit cards and your best evening attire. Some great options include Chaya Brasserie for a legendary mix of Californian, French and Italian, and of course, the world-famous Spago Beverly Hills headed by Wolfgang Puck. La Cienega Boulevard offers L.A.'s famed "Restaurant Row," which features The Stinking Rose for all your garlic desires, Tokyo Table for delicious but more affordable Japanese cuisine, and the highly favored Fogo de Chao Churrascaria for some Brazilian fare, and many other local favorites.

Hollywood/Melrose

A small step away from the big money of Beverly Hills, these hot spots offer a warmer and hipper version of the same scene. Musso and Frank's Grill offers American cuisine with an old Hollywood style. Joachim Splichal serves the highest of haute cuisine at Patina, and West Hollywood's Asia de Cuba features Asian-Cuban fusion in a dining room decorated all in white. Also in West Hollywood is perhaps the one of the finest Moroccan restaurants in all of Los Angeles, Dar Maghreb, which is more than just dining—it's an unforgettable experience. Finally, for lowbrow gastronomic pleasure that should not be missed, wait in line for the oldest Hollywood tradition, a Chili Cheese Dog from Pink's.

Santa Monica/Venice/Malibu

These beachfront neighborhoods of Santa Monica, Venice and Malibu offer the full range of dining options from earthy-hippie cuisine in Venice to star-studded glamour in Malibu. When not gazing into the deep blue Pacific, be sure to focus your attention on Babalu for down-to-earth Caribbean cuisine, Chez Mimi for one of the most romantic French experiences you will have this side of Paris and Geoffrey's for fresh cuisine with a heart-stopping view of the California coast. Wolfgang Puck's Chinois On Main is a wonderful choice, as well as

Los Angeles Snapshot continued

The Lobster for some delightfully simple but sophisticated seafood dishes.

©

Nightlife Insights

As the entertainment capital of the world, Los Angeles is overflowing with theater, art, dance, film and television. The city has a variety of options for every entertainment taste.

Theaters

The creative activity in the theaters of Los Angeles proves the naysayers wrong: just because the city's more frivolous side is the most publicized, Los Angeles does indeed have a rich history of culture and soul. The Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County complex in downtown Los Angeles houses many of the city's major theatre venues, including the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, the Mark Taper Forum, Pantages Theatre, and the Ahmanson Theatre.

Museums

Los Angeles is indeed multi-faceted: with beautiful beaches on one end, trendy clubs on another, and amazing museums spread throughout, it is no wonder people flock here to get a taste of everything it has to offer. The Getty Center is a breathtaking architectural work before you even see the collections inside. The Los Angeles County Museum of Art has impressive permanent collections as well as top-billed shows. If contemporary art is more your cup of tea, then pay a visit to the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) which has featured extremely innovative art exhibitions. L.A. is also home to many smaller, private galleries, concentrated especially in Venice and the Melrose area of Hollywood. If nature and science excite you more than a rare Van Gogh, the California Science Center is a hands-on educational facility that takes science to the extreme while the Natural History Museum has 35 galleries of environmental science displays to explore. For a more serious-minded museum visit, the Los Angeles Museum of Tolerance is a stop for the humanitarian-minded tourist. The museum offers classes in racial diversity and acceptance, and offers tours for school children and interested adults. It is a powerful, moving and informative institution.

For those who have eclectic or more specialized tastes, be sure to check out the Museum of Neon Art, the Vintage Animation Gallery and the Museum In Black.

Cinema

Mann's Chinese Theater on Hollywood Boulevard stands out as one of the most famous cinema houses ever built. Crowds descend upon the faux-Asian theater every day to measure the famous feet and hands imprinted on the sidewalk outside. Across the street from the Mann's Chinese, the Egyptian Theater stands in its Vegas-style glory.

Comedy

With countless small theaters and clubs in Los Angeles, open mic nights for struggling comedians are everywhere. For a more polished performance check out the famous Groundlings. This well-known "training camp" for television shows like Saturday Night Live has an ever-changing lineup of up-and-comers with an occasional star headliner. The Improv and the Comedy Store consistently feature well-known, professional headliners as well as budding new talent.

Music

When they are not out partying on the Sunset Strip, rock and roll musicians can be found performing at several Los Angeles venues. The El Rey Theatre and the Palladium are great for watching shows while in the city. The Forum, the Gibson Amphitheatre and the Staples Center are the location of choice for larger rock shows. Classical and jazz concerts are usually found at the Hollywood Bowl and The Greek Theatre.

Sporting Events

L.A. sports fans have plenty to keep them busy with the Los Angeles Lakers, the Clippers, the WNBA's Sparks, the Dodgers and the Kings. If those sports aren't your bag, check out the Hollywood Park Racetrack for some fast-paced betting fun.

Amusement and Theme Parks

Los Angeles and its surrounding areas are home to many world-famous and exciting amusement parks. The most well-known the world over is Disneyland, America's Magic Kingdom and Disney's

California Adventure. Experience the magic of moviemaking at Universal Studios and check out the good-time rides and attractions of Knott's Berry Farm. For roller-coaster thrills go to Six Flags Magic Mountain, and for watersliding chills, don't miss Raging Waters. **Nightclubs**

What's hot in this city changes almost overnight, and word of mouth is everything. However, for a good sampling of what L.A. has to offer, be sure to check out: Area, The Knitting Factory, LAX, and Beauty Bar.

Shopping and Hanging Out

People-watching in Los Angeles can definitely be considered a spectator sport. Although it bears no resemblance to the former hit television show, Melrose is the best sidewalk spectacle. Crammed full of sidewalk cafes, bars, coffeehouses and boutiques, the street is always full of activity and unusual characters.

If true Hollywood stars and Über-Glam shopping are what you are looking for, Rodeo Drive is the ultimate destination. The world-renowned street is always bustling with film stars in baseball caps trying to blend in and Hollywood wives in diamonds trying to stand out. Gucci, Prada and Tiffany & Co. are all represented here, so if you have buying in mind be sure to bring all of your credit cards.

If the ultra-chic shops and thousand-dollar price tags aren't exactly what you seek, Santa Monica's Third Street Promenade offers shoppers a wide variety of upscale boutiques and well-known chains, all under the shining sun of this beach town. Universal City Walk is the Valley's answer to great shopping and entertainment along a stretch of pedestrian walkways. And if you're looking for something downright bizarre or unique, don't leave town without checking out Necromance for all of your Gothic, bone jewelry and dead animal specimen needs or the Wound & Wound Toy Company specializing in amazing wind-up toys from past and present.

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Things to Do Insights

Walking around Los Angeles is not an easy task. As the world's largest metropolis, Los Angeles has become as famous for cars and traffic as it is for its film industry. So

Los Angeles Snapshot continued

grab a rental, and make your way out to these tourist hot spots.

Downtown

Located in the heart of downtown, the modest Pueblo de Los Angeles remains the city's oldest structure. Built in 1818, it serves as a historical monument to the mission era of California, and also provides tourists with the perfect reason to visit downtown and not miss one of the city's best-kept sightseeing secrets. Located in the middle of the historic pueblo is Olvera Street, an L.A. landmark since the early 1930s. Any day of the year the cobblestone street is alive with inexpensive Mexican delicacies, kitschy shopping and several wandering mariachi bands. If too many hours on Beverly Hills/Rodeo Drive Shopping District have strained the magnetic strip (or the limit) of your credit card, the Garment District offers a great low-cost shopping alternative. The Cooper Building and Santee Alley house designer outlet stores and clothing in all styles, labels and sizes.

Hollywood

The Griffith Observatory is one of the largest in the country. At night you can stargaze from balconies on the outside of the building, as well as from on the roof. Face north in the parking lot and you will get a spectacular view of the Hollywood Sign. Take Hollywood Boulevard approximately three blocks to Vine. At this famous intersection begins the Hollywood Walk of Fame, so named for the bronzed stars placed into the pavement that bear the name of a legendary entertainer in music, movies and television. L'Orangerie is a classy French restaurant near here. Continuing up Hollywood Boulevard you will come to Mann's Chinese Theater, more famous for the front courtyard than for any film ever shown there. The footprints and handprints outside include so many stars, and create such a stir, it's sometimes hard to squeeze your way in.

Malibu and Santa Monica

The beach community of Santa Monica offers great shopping and dining. The Third Street Promenade and The Pier are major centers of activity. Here you can ride roller coasters, shop, eat, fish or just take in the ocean air. Beurivage is a fantastic restaurant with ocean views. When you're ready to hit the coast, head north on the

beautiful Pacific Coast Highway. A few miles north of Malibu is Leo Carillo State Beach. This unique inlet features rock formations and tide pools overflowing with some of the most unusual aquatic life in the world. If you are lucky, you will also be able to see dolphins frolicking just offshore. When you are done here, head south to Venice City Beach.

Mount Wilson

The 110 freeway north ends at Colorado Boulevard, where you will turn right and head into Old Town. In addition to being a quaint historical city, Old Town Pasadena Shopping District is known for world-class restaurants, thriving theater and many antique shops. One of the best features of Old Town is the architecture. An elegant dining option nearby is Bistro 45, which has contemporary French options on its menu. For those who feel confined by gravity and want to get a different perspective of Pasadena, simply follow signs to the Angeles Crest Highway and head up--straight up! This winding (and at times treacherous) mountain road takes you through the Angeles National Forest en route to the Mount Wilson Observatory, some 5000 feet above sea level.

Museum Row

This stretch of Wilshire Boulevard is also known as Museum Row, and with good reason. Most of the city's main museums are located here, as well as several small but influential, art galleries, such as the Vintage Animation Gallery and the Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions. After checking them out, take a quick drive up Fairfax to another Los Angeles historical monument, Canter's Deli. This Jewish-American diner has been a long Hollywood tradition. After your first bite of a Canter's Deli sandwich you will know why stars, locals and tourists have made this eatery a Los Angeles must-see location. After indulging in all the best that Canter's has to offer, finish the day off with the astounding glamour of the mansions in Hancock Park, a neighborhood dotted with homes built in the golden years of Hollywood. If you'd like to do something more adventurous, the La Brea Tar Pits are just a short drive away.

If you are planning on checking out a few centrally-located things, going on foot is fine. However, if you want to explore the parts of this sprawling city that are hard to

get to, planning a day with a tour company is recommended.

Walking Tours Los Angeles Conservancy(+1 213 623 2489/ <http://www.laconservancy.org/>) OffN Running Tours(+1 310 246 1418/ <http://offnrunningtours.com>) Red Line Tours(+1 323 402 1074 x31/ <http://www.redlinetours.com/>)

Trolley Tours Beverly Hills Trolley Tour(+1 310 285 2438/ http://www.beverlyhills.org/presence/connect/CoBH/Homepage/For+Visitors/What+to+Do/Cultural+Events,+Activities+and+Tours/LG-CM-Trolley_Tours)

Studio Tours Universal Studios(+1 800 8 6483 7725/ <http://www.universalstudioshollywood.com>) Warner Bros. Studio Tour(+1 818 972 8687/ <http://www2.warnerbros.com/vipstudiotour/>) Paramount Studio Tour(+1 323 956 1777/ <http://www.paramount.com/studio/>) Sony Pictures Studio Tour(+1 323 520 8687/ <http://www.sonypicturesstudios.com/>)

Bus Tours Starline Tours(+1 800 959 3131/ <http://www.starlinetours.com/>) Columbia Tour Shuttle(+1 213 739 5757) Guideline Tours(+1 800 604 8433/ <http://www.guidelinetours.com/>)

Adventure Tours Catalina Adventure Tours(+1 310 510 2888/ +1 562 432 8828/ <http://www.catalinaadventuretours.com/>) Descanso Beach Ocean Sports(+1 310 510 1226/ +1 310 510 1588/ <http://www.kayakcatalinaisland.com/>)

Fishing Tours Discovery Tours--Flying Fish Boat Trip(+1 310 510 2000)

Boat Tours Los Angeles Harbor Cruise(+1 310 831 0996) Star Party Cruises(+1 562 799 7000/ <http://www.reggae-boat.com/>) Crystal Cruises(+1 866 446 6625/ <http://www.crystalcruises.com/>)

Air Tours Helitac Aviation(+1 213 483 6898/ <http://www.helitac.com>) Hollywood Aviators(+1 818 994 2004/ <http://www.hollywoodaviators.com/>)

Sports Tours Big League Tours(+1 866 619 1748/ +1 317 534 2475/ <http://bigleaguetours.com/>)

Los Angeles Snapshot continued

Segway Tours Segway Los Angeles(+1 310 395 1395/ <http://www.segway.la/rental.php>)

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Travel Tips

Getting There

Air

Los Angeles International Airport(LAX)+1 310 646 5252<http://www.lawa.org/lax/>

LAX is located 16 miles from downtown.

Bob Hope Airport(BUR)+1 818 840 8840<http://www.burbankairport.com/>

BUR is located three miles from downtown.

LAX provides service to the following airlines:

Aeromexico(+1 800 237 6639/<http://www.aeromexico.com/>) Air New Zealand(+1 800 262 1234/<http://www.airnewzealand.com/usa/>) Airtran Airways(+1 800 247 8726/<http://www.airtran.com/>) American(+1 800 433 7300/<http://www.aa.com/>) Alaska Airlines(+1 800 252 7522/<http://www.alaskaair.com/>) British Airways(+1 800 247 9297/<http://www.britishairways.com/>) China Airlines(+1 800 227 5118/<http://www.china-airlines.com/>) Continental(+1 800 525 0280/<http://www.continental.com/>) Delta(+1 800 221 1212/<http://www.delta.com/>) Frontier(+1 800 265 5505/<http://www.frontierairlines.com/>) Hawaiian Airlines(+1 800 367 5320/<http://www.hawaiianair.com/>) Japan Airways(+1 800 525 3663/<http://www.jal.co.jp/>) Korean Airlines(+1 800 438 5000/<http://www.koreanair.com/>) Lufthansa(+1 800 241 6522/<http://www.lufthansa-usa.com/>) Northwest(+1 800 225 2525/<http://www.nwa.com/>) QANTAS(+1 800 227 4500/<http://www.qantas.com.au/>) Singapore Airlines(+1 800 742 3333/<http://www.singaporeair.com/>) Southwest(+1 800 435 9792/<http://www.southwest.com/>) Sun Country(+1 800 359 6786/<http://www.suncountry.com/>) United(+1 800 241 6522/<http://www.ual.com/>) US Airways(+1 800 428 4322/<http://www.usairways.com/>)

BUR provides service to the following airlines:

Alaska Airlines(+1 800 252 7522/<http://www.alaskaair.com/>) Aloha

Airlines(+1 800 367 5250/<http://www.alohaairlines.com/>) American(+1 800 433 7300/<http://www.aa.com/>) Southwest(+1 800 435 9792/<http://www.southwest.com/>) United(+1 800 241 6522/<http://www.ual.com/>) US Airways:(+1 800 428 4322/<http://www.usairways.com/>)

Airport Parking Service: Park'N Fly at Park One(+1 800 763 6895/<http://www.pfnetwork.com/>)

Shuttle: A free shuttle bus service provides transportation from the airport to the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority Bus Center(+1 800 266 6883/<http://www.mta.net/>). From there, city buses are available to serve the Los Angeles area. Other Public bus companies include Culver City Bus Lines(+1 310 253 6500), Santa Monica Big Blue Bus(+1 800 266 6883) and Torrance Transit(+1 800 266 6883). The shuttle can be picked up under the LAX Shuttle& Airline Connections sign on the Lower/Arrival Level in front of each terminal.

Metropolitan Express(+1 800 338 3898) is a bus service that provides transportation from LAX to downtown Los Angeles. Union Station/LAX FlyAway(+1 866 435 9529) is a 24 hour service that provides airport shuttle service from Union Station to LAX for a small fare.

Taxi: The following companies provide taxis that can easily be located at the Lower/Arrival Level in front of each terminal:

Authorized Taxicab Supervision(ATS) (+1 323 776 5324) Beverly Hills Cab Company(+1 310 273 6611) Independent Taxi Owners Association(+1 213 666 0045) L.A. Taxi/United Checker Cab(+1 213 627 7000;+1 310 715 1968)

Car Rental: Alamo(+1 800 327 9633/<http://www.goalamo.com/>) Avis(+1 800 331 1212/<http://www.avis.com/>) Budget(+1 800 527 0700/<http://www.budget.com/>) Dollar(+1 800 800 4000/<http://www.dollar.com/>) Enterprise(+1 800 736 8222/<http://www.enterprise.com/>) Hertz(+1 800 654 3131/<http://www.hertz.com/>) National(+1 800 227 7368/<http://www.nationalcar.com/>)

Car-Share

Another attractive ground transportation option is Zipcar, which operates in certain U.S. cities. This new breed of rental car allows you to rent on an hourly basis rather

than a daily basis. Be sure to register online before your trip. Zipcar(+1 877 353 9227/<http://www.zipcar.com/>)

Train

Amtrak(+1 800 872 7245/<http://www.amtrak.com/>), located at 800 N Alameda Street, provides service to Los Angeles via several national routes including Coast Starlight, Pacific Surfliner, Southwest Chief and Sunset Limited.

Bus

Greyhound(+1 800 231 2222/<http://www.greyhound.com/>) accesses Los Angeles from major cities around the country. The downtown bus station(+1 213 629 8401), located at 1716 E 7th Street, is open 24 hours daily.

Car

Approach Los Angeles from the east by Interstate 10, from the northeast and southwest by Interstate 5 and south via Interstate 5 and take Interstate 110 from the south.

Getting Around

Public Transit

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority(+1 800 266 6883/<http://www.metro.net/>) provides local and express bus service throughout Los Angeles and to major surrounding attractions including Disneyland and Universal Studios Hollywood. Other services include the Green Line light rail and the Metro Red Line subway.

If rollin' like a celebrity is your wish, call on New Century Limo(+1 800 250 9434/ <http://www.newcenturylimo.com/>).

Traffic Information

To find out city traffic information go to<http://www.traffic.com/>

If traveling overseas, take the safety precaution of registering your trip at<https://travelregistration.state.gov> and for helpful, practical advice about traveling technicalities and safety standards check out<http://travel.state.gov/>.

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Fun Facts

Los Angeles State: California **Country:** United States

Los Angeles Snapshot continued

Los Angeles By The Numbers:

Population: 3,849,368(city);
13,000,000(Metropolitan) Elevation: 256 ft/
78 m Average Annual Rainfall: 14 in/ 36 cm
Average January Temperature: 57°F/ 14°C
Average July Temperature: 72°F/ 22°C

Quick Facts:

Major Industries: tourism,entertainment,
communications, shipping, manufacturing,
finance,oil Electricity: 110 volts, 60Hz,
standard two pin plugs Time Zone:
GMT-8(GMT-7 daylight saving time); Pacific
Standard Time(PST) Country Dialing Code:
1 Area Codes: 213, 310, 323, 626, 818(1
and the area code must be dialed even for
local calls)

Did You Know?

Los Angeles allows visitors to glimpse
millions of years of geologic history. At
theLa Brea Tar Pits you can see residue of
the days when dinosaurs walked the Earth,
and the tar is still oozing in some places.
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