



# Free & Low Cost Things To Do In Los Angeles

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There is nothing like enjoying the California sun with some awesome events. Here is a great list of things you can enjoy for FREE in Los Angeles.

## **Griffith Observatory and Griffith Park**

**2800 E. Observatory Road Los Angeles, CA 90027**

<http://www.griffithobservatory.org/>

Griffith Observatory sits on the south face of Mount Hollywood and overlooks the Los Angeles basin. Its location gives visitors impressive views of the surrounding area. But there's more than just a pretty photo-op here. The observatory hosts fascinating exhibitions and features a top-notch planetarium.

Most recent visitors cited the beautiful setting as Griffith Observatory's main draw, though the free entry was certainly a bonus. However, you will have to pay between \$3 and \$7 to see the planetarium shows. Griffith Observatory is open from noon to 10 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, with extended hours on weekends. Free but limited parking is available along the winding roads leading up to the property, or visitors can park in the small lot by the observatory for \$4 per hour. A gift shop and cafe can be found on-site as well.

If you're looking to spend some time outdoors (without fighting traffic to get to the beaches), Griffith Park is the place to be. This 4,210-acre stretch is the largest urban park in the country. It features more than 50 miles of hiking and biking trails and numerous waterfalls and lagoons. If you don't want to venture out on your own, several companies offer guided hikes. You will also find a variety of attractions here, including the Los Angeles Zoo & Botanical Gardens, the Hollywood Sign, the Autry Museum of the American West and, of course, the observatory.

Past travelers enjoyed taking in the park's views, especially those provided during their hikes to the Hollywood Sign. Griffith Park is open to the public seven days a week from sunrise to 10 p.m. Admission is free, but individual attractions and facilities (such as sports courts and some of the park's museums) may charge entry fees. Limited complimentary parking is provided throughout the property.

## **The Getty Center**

**1200 Getty Center Drive Los Angeles, CA 90049**

<http://www.getty.edu/visit/center/>

The Getty Center is one of the most impressive architectural achievements in the United States – and it also contains some of the finest works of art in the world. The circular concrete-and-steel structure was designed by renowned architect Richard Meier, and it houses an abundance of art from various ages and nations. Here you'll find Renaissance paintings, 20th-century American photography, Baroque sculptures, historic manuscripts and more, all housed inside a sprawling, modern campus amid the Santa Monica Mountains. The museum also offers spectacular views of Los Angeles on clear days.

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Recent travelers loved the museum for its value and beauty, highlighting the contrast between the art center's subtle refinement and the over-the-top glitz of Hollywood. Many visitors suggest taking a guided tour, noting that the tour highlights interesting parts of the museum they wouldn't have stumbled upon on their own. Free 45-minute guided tours are provided at 11 a.m. or 2 p.m. for groups with 15 to 30 people, while complimentary headsets can be borrowed for self-guided audio tours.

Located just north of Santa Monica near the UCLA campus, the Getty Center can be a bit tricky to get to. (Note: The only public entrance to the Getty Center is by Getty Center Drive from North Sepulveda Boulevard. Some GPS devices offer misguided directions.) Parking costs \$20 per vehicle or \$15 after 3 p.m. For evening events and Saturdays after 6 p.m., parking is \$10. Upon arrival, you board a tram that ascends the hill to the museum grounds. Best of all, entry to the museum is free and no reservations are required. Available facilities include two coffee carts, two cafes, a restaurant, gift shops and a garden with more than 500 kinds of plants. The museum is open Tuesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., except on Saturdays, when it stays open until 9 p.m.

## **Santa Monica Pier and Beach**

200 Santa Monica Pier Santa Monica, CA

<https://santamonicapier.org/>

Just west of downtown Los Angeles, Santa Monica contains one of the most legendary beach scenes in the United States. Santa Monica also boasts an abundance of great restaurants and excellent nightlife spots. The 3 miles of shoreline are renowned as some of the best in the area thanks to the soft sands, ideal weather and bevy of attractions. "State Beach," as its known, averages about 340 days of sunshine a year and acted as the backdrop for the popular television series "Baywatch."

Santa Monica is a very walkable part of town, and many recent visitors suggest you explore the area by bicycle. One of the most scenic rides is along the 26-mile bike path, which runs parallel to the Pacific Ocean and is the longest beach bike path in the world. Travelers also recommend riding the Ferris wheel at the pier and people-watching at the Third Street Promenade.

In addition to the famous pier's Ferris wheel, visitors can zip around on a roller coaster, catch lively street performances, play carnival games and grab a bite to eat from one of the food vendors or at a sit-down restaurant. Several bemoaned the high price tag on some of the pier's food and attractions – ride tickets cost \$5 to \$10 each – but with free entry, your losses will probably be mitigated. The pier is open 24 hours a day, however, hours will vary for local businesses. Parking is plentiful and costs between \$7 and \$25, depending on the season and lot location. Travelers can also get to the area by taking the Big Blue Bus or riding the Metro's Expo Line to the Downtown Santa Monica station.

## Hollywood Walk of Fame and TCL Chinese Theatre

6925 Hollywood Blvd. Los Angeles, CA

<http://www.tclchinesetheatres.com/>

One of Hollywood's most iconic and memorable sites, the TCL Chinese Theatre (originally Grauman's Chinese Theatre) opened in 1927 and represents the excess of Hollywood's Golden Age. You can tour the theater for \$18 (kids tour tickets cost \$8 and senior tickets are \$14 each); tours are offered from 10 a.m. to 9, 9:30, 9:45 or 10 p.m. every day except Monday. Because of this attraction's popularity, it's best to reserve your spot online in advance. This working theater also shows various newly released films throughout the year.

Overall, previous travelers said the tour guides' passion for the subject was evident, making their experiences special. However, some wished the area offered a glitzier atmosphere. Parking can also be challenging to find in Hollywood. Additional information about the attraction's tours and movie showtimes can be found on the TCL Chinese Theatre website.

While you're here, take a stroll along the free-to-enjoy Hollywood Walk of Fame, where hundreds of movie stars have left their handprints and signatures along the sidewalk. The attraction is open to the public 24 hours a day, and most of its activity and notable names are located between the 6800 and 6900 block of Hollywood Boulevard (which, luckily, is directly in front of the theater).

As one of the most famous and recognized sites in all of Hollywood, the theater and the Hollywood Walk of Fame are really a must-see. But it seems like a lot of people have the same idea – recent visitors said the sidewalk gets packed with camera-wielding tourists photographing the ground. Plus, parking is limited along Hollywood Boulevard. Some, however, said the hustle and bustle was part of the quirky allure of the area.

## Zuma Beach

30000 Pacific Coast Highway

<https://www.zuma-beach.com/>

Malibu has a reputation for excessive wealth and exclusivity, yet all of the town's beaches are public – everyone's welcome. If you're seeking an LA beach spot for sunbathing and swimming, look no further than this part of town. The beaches here are far cleaner than those at Santa Monica or Venice Beach.

Malibu's Zuma Beach is considered one of the finest beaches in the Los Angeles area. Locals and tourists laud Zuma for its awesome waves, ample parking and easy access to beachside snacks. Plus, there are a plethora of lifeguard stations and bathroom facilities.

The city of Malibu is northwest of the central LA area. The trip from downtown to Zuma is about 36 miles long, but keep in mind that traffic can quickly build up along the Pacific Coast Highway. Sights like the Getty Villa and the Adamson House are located nearby, and the restaurant-filled Trancas Country Market sits within walking distance of the beach's north end. Zuma Beach is open daily from sunrise to sunset and is free to visit. Parking closest to Zuma beach is metered; 10 minutes of parking will cost you 25 cents. The meter has a max charge of 90 minutes.

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## Third Street Promenade

1351 Third Street Promenade

<https://www.downtownsm.com/>

The Third Street Promenade, popular with shopaholics, has an eclectic vibe similar to its Santa Monica locale. This open-air shopping mall is filled with major chain stores like Urban Outfitters and H&M, as well as more unique boutiques like the Kenneth Karmiole, Bookseller Inc. rare books shop and the toys-focused Puzzle Zoo. You'll also find that outdoor dining options – many of which use local ingredients – are plentiful. And if you're in the mood to cook your own meal, you can find fresh produce at the farmers market every Wednesday and Saturday morning, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Despite all the tempting spending options, the promenade's atmosphere is the main draw for many recent travelers. Unexpected extras like the sculptured shrubs and talented street performers are particularly popular with visitors. The pedestrian-friendly layout reminded some of shopping in Europe, though others were turned off by the large crowds and noisy atmosphere at night.

Open 24 hours daily and free to visit, the promenade is located a few blocks from the Santa Monica Pier and sits near several bus stops and the Metro's Downtown Santa Monica station. There is plenty of parking but finding a spot can get competitive at peak hours. Restaurant and store hours vary by location.

## Sunset Boulevard

Sunset Boulevard Strip

One of the most iconic thoroughfares in the United States, Sunset Boulevard continues to live up to its legends. In the old days, it represented the classic and glamorous Hollywood lifestyle and became the setting of several famous films, including the obvious classic "Sunset Boulevard." Today, the palm-lined street (which connects downtown LA to Hollywood, Beverly Hills and the Pacific Coast Highway) retains its cinematic appeal, and the Sunset Strip portion has become a popular nightlife spot. The strip is also home to many classic music venues, including the [Rainbow Bar & Grill](#) and [The Roxy Theatre](#).

Recent visitors loved driving along this famous boulevard, adding that gorgeous sunsets can be enjoyed during late afternoon drives. But like other parts of LA, this thoroughfare gets congested once rush hour hits, so plan accordingly.

The clubs, bars and restaurants along Sunset Boulevard maintain varied hours, but it is always free to visit and open 24 hours a day. For those without a car, the city's No. 2/302 travels along much of the thoroughfare.

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## Venice Beach

1800 Ocean Front Walk Venice, CA

<http://www.venicebeach.com/>

Developed in the early 20th century, Venice Beach is modeled – canals and all – after its namesake city in Italy. Admittedly, the experiment didn't live up to its Italian inspiration, but the neighborhood has become distinctly Californian, embodying the spirit of the wealthy, the alternative and the just plain bizarre. Rather than towering churches and intimate pizzerias, you'll find canalside mansions near funky boutiques and restaurants.

Venice Beach's claim to fame is its boardwalk. Hosting a daily procession of eclectic characters and scantily clad beachgoers, the boardwalk never fails to impress out-of-towners. Past visitors loved checking out the area's unique scene (including the open-air Muscle Beach and the Hotel Erwin's High Rooftop Lounge), although some cautioned that the parts away from the pier were not appropriate for younger children. Also, remember that Venice Beach can get crowded on sunny days and is better suited for sunbathing, not swimming.

Venice Beach, which is free to visit 24 hours a day, is situated approximately 18 miles southwest of central LA. Street parking and parking lots are available around the neighborhood, though finding a spot can be a hassle at certain times of the day; read all street signs carefully to avoid a ticket or towing. Bus Nos. 1, 33 and 733 also have stops nearby.

## Los Angeles County Museum of Art

5905 Wilshire Blvd. Los Angeles, CA

<https://www.lacma.org/>

Next door to the La Brea Tar Pits & Museum sits the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the linchpin of the Los Angeles museum district. Since its 1965 opening, LACMA has showcased thousands of pieces, from Islamic artifacts to European impressionist paintings to modern art. With constantly shifting exhibitions and unique architecture stretched across more than 20 acres of land, LACMA offers a rewarding experience for both serious art buffs and casual travelers.

You may have come for the Picassos or the Cézannes inside, but don't overlook the outdoor scenery. Recent travelers suggest visiting LACMA at night to admire Chris Burden's Urban Light installation, which is made up of 202 restored cast iron antique street lamps. Others warn that a visit here isn't cheap: Prices at the property's three eateries are high, general admission tickets cost \$25 for adults (children 17 and younger get in for free) and parking will set you back \$16.

Situated on Wilshire Boulevard in west LA, LACMA is open from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays; from 11 a.m. until 8 p.m. on Fridays; and from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays

Take advantage of the FREE jazz nights during the summer. Bring a blanket, a bottle of wine and prepare to dance on Friday and Saturday evenings!

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## La Brea Tar Pits & Museum

5801 Wilshire Blvd. Los Angeles, CA

<https://tarpits.org/>

\$15 for adults; \$5 for kids 3-12

If your kids go crazy for dinosaurs – and really, what kid doesn't? – then a visit to La Brea Tar Pits & Museum is sure to be the highlight of their trip. Although the pits look like the set of a cheesy PG movie, hot tar has been bubbling from the earth at this spot along Museum Row in the Miracle Mile for about 40,000 years. And from the gooiest part of LA, more than 1 million bones from 600-plus species have been discovered. The adjoining museum houses many of the artifacts found at the tar pits; consequently, it is home to one of the largest collections of Ice Age fossils in the world.

You can check out the tar pits completely free of charge, but museum tickets start at \$15 for adults; reduced entry fees are available for children, students, members of the military and seniors. You'll save \$1 on each ticket if you buy tickets online. All tickets include tours of property facilities like the fossil lab, lake pit and observation pit. Complimentary admission is offered on the first Tuesday of every month (excluding July and August) and every Tuesday in September, but ticket lines on these days are long, so consider reserving your pass online before you arrive. Even if you have to pay to visit, most visitors agree that the exhibits are well worth perusing.

La Brea Tar Pits & Museum sits next to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art is open from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day except Independence Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day. In addition to the museum's exhibits, all ticketholders have access to restrooms and a gift shop, plus on-site parking for \$15 per vehicle. The No. 20 bus also stops by the property.

## Greystone Mansion and Park

905 Loma Vista Drive Los Angeles, CA

<https://www.greystonemansion.org/>

Greystone is one of the largest mansions in Beverly Hills and an important landmark for American cinema. Originally built by oil tycoon Edward L. Doheny in 1927 as a gift to his son, Ned, Greystone now represents a golden age in American cinema. Many films, including "The Big Lebowski" and "Ghostbusters," and television shows like "General Hospital" and "Gilmore Girls" have been shot on these gothic-inspired grounds.

Today, the interior of the mansion is closed, but visitors are free to walk around the property. Many visitors call Greystone Mansion a "hidden gem" within LA, saying that it offers respite from the city's hustle and bustle. Travelers describe the park grounds as spectacular, with expertly manicured lawns, a variety of flowers, artful fountains and even a koi pond.

The grounds are open to the public every day from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., with extended hours in the summer. There is no admission fee, and free on-site parking is available.

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## **Belmont Shore Long Beach, CA**

The Leeway Sailing and Aquatics Center on Alamitos Bay in Belmont Shore is a youth sailing program founded in 1929. The city claims it is one of the premier municipal instructional sailing programs in the country.

The US Sailing Center is located on the Alamitos Bay Peninsula in Long Beach. The Sailing Center offers a wide range of programs for High School, College, and Olympic sailors in addition to programs for at-risk youth through local help groups, Learn-to-Sail classes for all ages and disabled sailing opportunities through the Sailing Center's own Disabled Sailing Association.

The Belmont Shore Car Show is the largest one-day annual car show held on the west coast. The car show is typically held in September.

The Long Beach Sea Festival has ocean- and beach-related events in Belmont Shore. The festival was first staged 50 years ago with a handful of events. Currently, the Sea Festival offers around 100 events, ranging from sand castle building, to free Moonlight Movies on the Beach, to boat racing.

Since its inception in August 1964, the Congressional Cup has grown into one of the major international sailing events. Now held in April, it is the only grade 1 match race regatta held in the United States. The one-on-one race format is the same as the America's Cup, and many of the winners of the Congressional Cup have gone on to win the America's Cup as well. The event is held in the waters off Belmont Shore with spectator areas on the Belmont Veterans Memorial Pier.

Kitesurfing is popular in Belmont Shore because of steady side-onshore winds (10 to 35+ knots), large open bodies of water and good launch areas.

## **Earl Burns Miller Japanese Garden**

Earl Warren Dr, Long Beach, CA 90840

<https://www.csulb.edu/japanese-garden>

A Living Museum! Welcome to the Earl Burns Miller Japanese Garden on the campus of California State University, Long Beach. The Garden is a living museum, a place of learning, art and culture for all who enter its gates. Come feed our playful koi, stroll the winding pathways, view the Tea House, or reflect at the Zen Garden. Each season unfolds with colorful blossoms, exciting cultural celebrations, and intriguing exhibits.

## **Shoreline Park Long Beach, CA**

The park area between Long Beach Arena and Downtown Shoreline Marina. It is a wide open green area that is used for picnics and special events.

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The National Park Service approved an exchange of a half-acre of restricted land, between the Aquarium of the Pacific and its parking lot with one acre of unrestricted land adjacent to the PE ROW. The purchase of replacement site is complete. The Aquarium of the Pacific created a classroom, a watershed exhibit, and animal husbandry center.

## **Cabrillo Marine Aquarium**

3720 Stephen M. White Drive, San Pedro, CA 90731

<https://www.cabrillomarineaquarium.org/>

Cabrillo Marine Aquarium is a trusted resource that inspires exploration, respect and conservation of Southern California marine life.

## **Korean Bell of Friendship**

Angels Gate Park 3601 S Gaffey Street San Pedro, CA 90731

This massive and intricately-decorated bell and pavilion was donated in 1976 to the people of Los Angeles by the people of the Republic of Korea to celebrate the bicentennial of the U.S. independence, honor veterans of the Korean War, and to consolidate traditional friendship between the two countries. The bell is patterned after the Bronze Bell of King Songdok, which was cast in 771 A.D. and is still on view in South Korea today.

The bell was cast in Korea and shipped to the United States. Weighing 17 tons, with a height of twelve feet and a diameter of 7-1/2 feet, the bell is made of copper and tin, with gold, nickel, lead and phosphorous added for tone quality. When it was built, it cost the Korean people \$500,000. Four pairs of figures, each pair consisting of the Goddess of Liberty holding a torch, and a Korean spirit, are engraved in relief on the body of the bell. Each of the Korean spirits holds up a different symbol: a symbolic design of the Korean flag; a branch of the rose of Sharon, Korea's national flower; a branch of laurel, symbol of victory; and a dove of peace. The bell has no clapper but is struck from the outside with a wooden log.

The bell is set in a pagoda-like stone structure which was constructed on the site by thirty craftsmen flown in from Korea. It took them ten months and costs \$569,680. The pavilion is supported by twelve columns representing the twelve designs of the Oriental zodiac. Animals stand guard at the base of each column. Recently the Korean Bell underwent extensive renovation and restoration. On January 10, 2014 the Tarps were removed.

Resting peacefully on the knoll overlooking the sea gate from which U.S. troops sailed into the Pacific, the bell site affords an unsurpassed view of the Los Angeles harbor, the Catalina Channel and the sea terraces of San Pedro hill. The bell is rung each year on: Independence day, July 4, National Liberation Day of Korea, August 15, 9:00a.m.-12 Noon and New Year's Eve, September 17 to coincide with bell ringings around the country to celebrate Constitution week, also on January 13 for Korean-American Day. The Bell is also rung 13 times on the 1st Saturday of the month at 11:30 a.m.

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## Point Fermin Lighthouse

807 W. Paseo Del Mar San Pedro, CA 90731

<http://www.pointferminlighthouse.org/visit.html>

Built in 1874, the Point Fermin Lighthouse was the first navigational light into the San Pedro Bay. Phineas Banning, with the support of many local businessmen, petitioned the Federal Government and the US lighthouse Board to place a lighthouse on the point in 1854. Although the Lighthouse Board agreed funding and land disputes delayed its construction until 1874.

Paul J. Pelz, a draftsman for the US Lighthouse Board, designed the Stick Style Victorian lighthouse. The design was used for six lighthouses built between 1873 and 1874, of which three are still standing, East Brothers in San Francisco Bay, Hereford Light in New Jersey, and Point Fermin. The Stick Style is an early Victorian architectural style and is simpler in design and decoration than the later high Victorian period. It is characterized by its gabled roofs, horizontal siding, decorative cross beams and hand carved porch railings.

## Redondo County Beach

Pearl St and Esplanade, Redondo Beach, CA 90277

<https://www.californiabeaches.com/beach/redondo-county-beach/>

Set along the Hollywood Riviera, Redondo County Beach is a 1.5-mile-long sandy beach along the city's waterfront that begins at the Redondo Beach Pier near Veterans Park and continues south. Hailed as the 'LA's Ocean Adventure Capitol,' the beach is a popular attraction for outdoor lovers and offers an array of activities from volleyball courts, surfing, swimming and fishing to walking and mountain biking along the Marvin Braude Coastal Bike Trail. Amenities at the beach include picnic areas with tables, restrooms and showers, a grassy park, children's play area, and on-duty lifeguards on duty.

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