

## BEST OF LOS ANGELES

CATEGORIES: Quick Guide

### Get Directions: Los Angeles, CA, USA

Dear Fernanda,

It is nice to hear you are heading to Los Angeles and want some tips. I love that city and spent ten amazing days there last year living at an [Airbnb house in Silver Lake](#). I have selected the best of Los Angeles from my perspective and I hope you like the tips.

As the city is huge, I would rather divide it into sections. Starting from Venice and Santa Monica, then the central part of Beverly Hills and Hollywood than cool and hip Silver Lake and Downtown.

#### VENICE & SANTA MONICA

For me, the best part of Venice is not the beach but [Abbot Kinney Boulevard](#) with its shops, restaurants and graffiti walls. At the corner of Abbot Kinney and Venice Boulevard, there is an [Erewhon Supermarket](#) for your groceries. It is way nicer than Whole Foods. Along Abbot Kinney (I suggest you walk along it twice, back and forth, so you can discover both of its sides) there are quite a few nice places to eat such as [Gjelina](#), [Salt Air](#), [The Tasting Kitchen](#), and [Plant Food & Wine](#), and the delightful [Butcher's Daughter](#).

For dessert have a go at [Salt & Straw](#), the famous ice cream from Portland. And there is an [Intelligentsia Coffee](#) nearby! As for shops, don't go crazy. I like the way they are set in those cute beach houses like [Warby Parker](#), [Happy Socks](#), [Le Labo](#), [Aesop](#) and [Toms](#) (there is a café in the back yard).

Near the beachfront, there is [Dudley Market](#), [Rose Café & Restaurant](#) (your style of place) and the rooftop of [Erwin Hotel called High](#) for a drink at sunset.

Santa Monica is much much larger than Venice. It is a city in itself and has that beach resort vibe. Beware that parking is rather expensive. I enjoy being at the beach, especially near the [Santa Monica Pier](#) at sunset. As for the city, it is nice for a walk, perhaps along the shopping area of [3rd Street Promenade](#) (though most shops are big chain stores). I had a fabulous dinner at [Cassia](#), an Asian-fusion restaurant. If you manage to go there, have a drink at the beautiful [Esters Wine Shop & Bar](#) right across.

#### WESTWOOD, BEVERLY HILLS, WEST HOLLYWOOD & SURROUNDINGS

This is not my favorite part of Los Angeles, but there are a few gems that make it worth it. What I did was concentrate all of these gems in one day driving from one to the other to get it done. Here we go:

In Westwood, there is a simple Iranian ice cream parlor with delicious exotic ice creams called [Saffron & Rose](#). In La Brea, there is the famous [Farmer's Market](#) with all kinds of food and [The Grove](#) shopping area. A few blocks south on Fairfax Avenue you find the unmissable [LACMA](#), the Los Angeles County Museum. Take a picture in front of the [Petersen Automotive Museum](#), a stunning architecture landmark. The art gallery [Sprüth Magers](#) is also nearby.

Where Melrose Avenue meets Highland Avenue you will find [Pizzeria Mozza](#), [chi Spacca](#) (for succulent steaks), [Gavlak](#) and [Regen Projects](#) art galleries. Drive around the very affluent Hancock Park filled with beautiful houses and those very LA palm-tree-lined streets. Where Beverly Boulevard meets Larchmont Boulevard there is a nice shopping area called [Larchmont Village](#).

Have a look at [Hollywood Bowl's](#) schedule. It is worth watching anything staged there just for the setting. You can buy a nice picnic hamper and enjoy the place before the concert starts looking at the Hollywood sign. Breathtaking.

#### SILVER LAKE & LOS FELIZ

Lots of people ask me what is there to see in Silver Lake. Well, I love indie shops, bookshops and cool cafés. The area is chock a block with them. [Griffith Observatory](#) is an iconic tourist sight in the area and a perfect spot for sunset (beware that everybody in LA knows it and the parking lot gets swarmed).

In Los Feliz, there are the great [Skylight Books](#) where you can meet famous writers and the [Skylight Theatre Company](#) with politically engaged plays. [Tacos Tu Madre](#) is small, friendly and open all the time on the corner of Vermont and Russel.

Around that area, not really Los Feliz and not actually Silver Lake, on Virgil Avenue, you must must must make a breakfast or brunch stop at [Sqirl](#), Los Angeles hippest place with food to die for. The lines look long but service is very efficient and you have time to decide what to eat by the time you get to the cashier. Their Malva cake is out of this world. I simply love that place. It opens very early and by 4 pm it is closed.

Down Hollywood Boulevard there is [Go Get Em Tiger](#) for brunch, the [Bar Covell](#), and the always full [Home State](#). Once it turns into Sunset Boulevard there is [Dinosaur Coffee](#), [LA County Store](#), with all items made in LA, [Malo](#) (an inconspicuous Mexican with an excellent fish taco), French-inspired [Café Stella](#) and [Intelligentsia Coffee](#) at Sunset Junction, the beautiful [Sawyer](#), [Alfred Coffee](#), the famous (yet very simple) Thai [Night + Market Song](#) and the very photogenic [Micheltorena Stairs](#). [Mohawk General Store](#) and [Undefeated](#) are two excellent stores to have a look. Park the car somewhere and explore the area on foot.

The further south you go along Sunset, the hipper it becomes until reaching Echo Park, hipster heaven. [Winsome](#) has become my top recommendation in the area after an awesome dinner with friends. Their burger is second-to-none.

#### **DOWNTOWN & THE ARTS DISTRICT**

Downtown is a beast on its own and would deserve a good couple of days to explore it thoroughly. Start at [The Broad](#) and the [Walt Disney Concert Hall](#). Check the [Museum of Contemporary Art MOCA](#) right across the street to see if there is any good exhibition.

The central core of Downtown is quite an exciting experience. It is very Latino, with a good mix of high and low. The area is quickly gentrifying so expect more to open up in the coming months. But places you must have a look are [The Grand Central Market](#) for out-of-this-world food stalls, [The Last Bookstore](#), [Terroni](#) (a sleek Italian eatery), the beautiful old theater houses along Broadway and the [Ace Hotel](#) (go up to the rooftop for a nice view and maybe a drink). The Ace has an excellent schedule of events at its [theater](#). [Broken Spanish](#) is an excellent restaurant (book ahead). As for shopping, many cool brands such as [Mykita](#), [A.P.C.](#), [Aesop](#) and [Acne Studios](#) have opened up shop in the area.

[Little Tokyo](#) is in the area with an array of authentic sushi places. [The Geffen at MOCA](#) has some large-scale exhibitions that don't fit at the MOCA. Once you cross Alameda Street you are in the [Arts District](#), my second most favorite area in Los Angeles after Silver Lake with [Angel City Brewery](#), [Arts District Brewing Co](#), the impressive [Hauser Wirth Schimmel](#) art gallery and its [incredible bookshop](#) (and the new restaurant called [Manuela](#)), and many cool stores along 3rd Street. This is another area best explored on foot.

Don't forget that [Bestia](#), the most incredible Italian restaurant in Los Angeles is in the area and a dinner there is an unforgettable experience. It is busy, loud and crowded, but the vibe is very LA and the food is outstanding (opens at 5 pm every day). I noticed there were quite a few new stores and restaurants popping up while exploring the area, so there must be new gems for you to see and let me know once you get back.

If you still have time and want more information, follow [L.A. Mag](#) and [Eater L.A.](#) on social media for many good recommendations. When you are back in town let's have a coffee so you can update me on the best of Los Angeles for my next trip.

Enjoy,

TravelVince

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