

# Tinseltown trio

Los Angeles is for film lovers, food fans and families. Here's how to love it... By Britt Collins



Star turn: LA's Walk of Fame. Opposite, clockwise from top left, the Getty Museum; even the kids are cool on Venice Beach; Mickey's fun at Disneyland; dental examination at Universal Studios



TOTAL GUIDE  
CALIFORNIA  
LA THREE WAYS



## Film fans

With sunshine and poolside glamour, LA attracts cinophiles, dreamers and stargazers of all stripes

**FRIDAY AFTERNOON:** Enter the cavernous lair of the '60s *Batman* TV show on a two-hour VIP tour (£31) of Warner Bros (3400 Riverside Dr, Burbank; 00 1 877 492 8687, <http://vip.studiotour.warnerbros.com>). Then **make new Friends as you settle on the sofas in the studio's Central Perk.**

**LATER:** Oozing old-world Hollywood glamour, yet still drawing today's top stars, Chateau Marmont (8221 Sunset Blvd; 00 1 323 656 1010, [www.chateaumarmont.com](http://www.chateaumarmont.com)) is the place to begin your night. **Order mango Daiquiris and sneak peeks at Scarlett Johansson and Ryan Gosling** as they dine by the palm-fringed pool.

**FRI NIGHT:** Despite its tatty trinket shops, Hollywood Boulevard's Walk of Fame ([www.walkoffame.com](http://www.walkoffame.com)) is one of LA's glories. Walk in the footsteps of Elizabeth Taylor and James Dean outside the ornate Grauman's Chinese Theatre (6801 Hollywood Blvd). Then order a ribeye at the historic surf-and-turf joint Musso & Frank Grill (00 1 323 467 7788, [www.mussoandfrank.com](http://www.mussoandfrank.com); mains around £10). You've probably seen **old snaps of Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin flirting with Ava Gardner and Kim Novak** over Manhattans here.

**SAT AM:** Load up on **milkshakes, pancakes and grilled Swiss cheese sandwiches** at Mel's Drive-in (8585 Sunset Blvd; [www.melsdrive-in.com](http://www.melsdrive-in.com);

mains around £5). The '50s-style joint is inspired by the deli-diner where Harrison Ford hung out in George Lucas's coming-of-age film *American Graffiti*. Don't bother with the disappointing walk to the Hollywood sign. Head instead to neighbouring Sunset Ranch (3400 N Beachwood Dr; 00 1 323 469 5450, [www.sunsetranchhollywood.com](http://www.sunsetranchhollywood.com); rides from £25) for a horseback ride in the hills.

**LATER:** **Watch Halloween projected on Rudolph Valentino's crypt** at Cinespia (6000 Santa Monica Blvd; [www.cinespia.org](http://www.cinespia.org); £6.50; films start at 9pm) at the Hollywood Forever Cemetery, home to the dead famous.

**SAT PM:** **Settle into the Cadillac-seat booths** at the Dresden Restaurant (1760 N Vermont Ave; 00 1 323 665 4294, [www.thedresden.com](http://www.thedresden.com); mains around £10) for dinner and a show. Made famous by cult-flick *Swingers*, the bar-restaurant was already locally known, thanks to lounge-act Marty and Elayne, who've been playing there Tuesday to Saturday since 1982.

**SUN AM:** Wake up with a Bloody Mary, eggs Florentine and spiced-apple bread on the leafy back-patio at Eveleigh (8752 Sunset Blvd; 00 1 424 239 1630, [www.theeveleigh.com](http://www.theeveleigh.com); mains around £8), a weekend favourite for its rustic vibe and farm-fresh fare. Perked up? Drive to Point Dume State Preserve (Westward Beach

Rd, Malibu; [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov)). From the bluff along the Pacific Coast Highway, **look out for sunbathing seals and pods of porpoises.**

**LATER:** Lunch on a grilled vegetable panini and green-apple Martini at Geoffrey's (27400 Pacific Coast Highway, Malibu; 00 1 310 457 1519, [www.geoffreysmalibu.com](http://www.geoffreysmalibu.com); mains around £14), above Zuma Beach of *Baywatch* fame. If you're brave enough to tackle the waves, join Matthew McConaughey, Teri Hatcher and the like for some surfing. On to the Griffith Observatory (2800 E Observatory Rd; [www.griffithobs.org](http://www.griffithobs.org); free), **the scene of James Dean's climactic shoot-out in *Rebel Without a Cause*.** It offers sweeping views of LA's lights and free telescopes for a glimpse of the stars.

**SUN PM:** Have a sweet ol' time in the Pacific Dining car (1310 W 6th St; 00 1 213 483 6000, [www.pacificdiningcar.com](http://www.pacificdiningcar.com); mains around £10), a converted Victorian railway-car. All dimly lit cosiness and comfort food, **this is 'the swanky steak pit' James Ellroy described in *LA Confidential*.** Head for a nightcap at the nearby Roosevelt Hotel's Library Bar (7000 Hollywood Blvd; 00 1 323 466 7000, [www.thompsonhotels.com](http://www.thompsonhotels.com)), Marilyn Monroe's hideout from the world. Side up on a zebra-striped stool with a Bad Habit (£9), a whiskey-and-bitters, beneath the '20s decadence of Art Deco chandeliers.

## Family fun

From 3D rides at Universal Studios to bonkers Venice Beach, the city's wildest sights are a real playground

**FRIDAY MORNING:** Hit Universal Studios (100 Universal City Plaza, Universal City; 00 1 800 864 8377, [www.universalstudioshollywood.com](http://www.universalstudioshollywood.com); £50). First, take a ramble around the New York Street set and *War of the Worlds*. Next, **the amusement park, for *The Simpsons* virtual rollercoaster.** It's worth getting the All-You-Can-Eat pass so you can dine around all day.

**LATER:** Any youngster over the age of seven would feel robbed to come to LA and not go on a Hollywood bus tour. You'll **see the homes where the Beckhams, Madonna, Orlando Bloom and Tom Cruise live** (or lived) with Starline Tours (00 1 323 463 3333, [www.starlinetours.com](http://www.starlinetours.com); £24).

**FRI NIGHT:** Kids addicted to iPods? Educate them with dinner at Toi (7505 Sunset Blvd; 00 1 323 874 8062, [www.toirockinthaifood.com](http://www.toirockinthaifood.com); mains around £7), **a rock-themed hotspot with cheap Thai food and vintage tunes,** from Bowie to the Stones. Surrounded by the city's best music shops, it's been luring old-school hipsters like Sean Penn and Johnny Depp for generations.

**SAT AM:** Buy an organic lemon sorbet from N'Ice Cream (619 Ocean Front Walk; [www.ilovenicecream.com](http://www.ilovenicecream.com)), and **stroll past the fire-eaters, break-dancers, tattoo parlours and surf shops on the Venice Beach boardwalk.** Then hit the arcades and Ferris wheel of

Santa Monica pier ([www.santamonicipier.org](http://www.santamonicipier.org)) for some classic family fun.

**LATER:** A sea-facing hippie haven, Figtree's Café & Grill (429 Ocean Front Walk; 00 1 310 392 4937, [www.figtreescfe.com](http://www.figtreescfe.com); mains around £6) has perfected crowd-pleasing grub. Order blue-chip nachos, then **eat at one of the outside tables so you can ogle the eccentrics who flit past.** After lunch, rent rollerblades or bicycles (201-1/2 Ocean Front Walk; 00 1 310 450 6634, [www.boardwalkskate.com](http://www.boardwalkskate.com); bikes £12 a day) and ride along the Pacific.

**SAT PM:** Drive 20 minutes up the coast road to Malibu and slip into a seaview table at Moonshadows (20356 Pacific Coast Highway; 00 1 310 456 3010, [www.moonshadowsmalibu.com](http://www.moonshadowsmalibu.com); mains around £8), **a beach shack hanging over a rocky shore.** Make sure you're there in time for sunset, best enjoyed with Mojitos for the grown-ups and Shirley Temples (ginger ale and grenadine) for the under-21s.

**SUN AM:** Fill up on a breakfast of multigrain banana pancakes at retro Swingers Diner (802 Broadway St; 00 1 310 393 9793, [www.swingersdiner.com](http://www.swingersdiner.com); mains around £8). It has plenty of quirks to keep the kids entertained while they eat: **Warhol-cow wallpaper, jukeboxes with a surfer soundtrack and a sunshine-yellow Formica lunch-counter,**

surrounded by sleepy-eyed locals and starlets noshing on oversized BLTs and tofu scramble.

**LATER:** Sneak in a little culture on the 'Demons, Angels and Monsters' tour at the Getty Museum (1200 Getty Center Dr; [www.getty.edu/visit](http://www.getty.edu/visit); free). This kid-friendly audio guide will help them **seek out supernatural spirits and beasts in the gallery's art collection,** with the voice of a child pointing out the highlights. Afterwards, wander through the fountains and gardens, then lunch on Cobb salad on the shimmering white-marble terrace. Fascinating though it all is, your children will probably remember the journey here best of all: a five-minute tram ride up a steep hill to the top.

**MON AM:** You'll need a whole day for the big finale: Disneyland Magic Kingdom (313 Disneyland Railroad, Anaheim; 00 1 714 781 4565, <http://disneyland.disney.go.com>; one-day park-hopper pass £78). **Launch into orbit before plunging back to Earth on the Space Mountain rollercoaster,** brave the big-drop lift of The Twilight Zone Tower of Terror and take the tots on The Little Mermaid: Ariel's Undersea Adventure, in which you sit in a clam shell for a journey through a Disneyfied undersea world. By the time you board the plane for your late flight home, they'll be so tired, they'll sleep all the way back to London. >



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views from The  
Standard's  
rooftop bar

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## Food lovers

Whether you're on a budget or a blow-out, you'll live and dine like a star in LA

**FRIDAY NIGHT:** A deceptively simple menu conceals the rebel-chef genius behind The Tasting Kitchen (1633 Abbot Kinney Blvd; 00 1 310 392 6644, [www.thetastingkitchen.com](http://www.thetastingkitchen.com); mains around £25) in Venice. Focusing on Italian ingredients, but given Californian flair, the dishes in this buzzy canteen change daily. Chef Casey Lane might serve you a plate of **salami charcuterie, followed by black cod with celeriac purée, Prosecco sauce and black truffle**. It's a hot fave, so book ahead.

**LATER:** Head out of Venice and over to downtown for post-dinner drinks at Villains Tavern (1356 Palmetto St; 00 1 213 613 0766, [www.villainstavern.com](http://www.villainstavern.com)), the watering hole of choice for *Mad Men*'s Christina Hendricks when in town. Tucked among warehouses, it's all **turn-of-the-century gothic-style chandeliers with live blues, rock, roots and bluegrass bands**.

Mixologists serve creative concoctions. Snatch yourself a Penicillin (honey, ginger and scotch) and join the hootenanny.

**SAT AM:** Make like an in-the-know Angeleno for the Cliff's Edge (3626 W Sunset Blvd; 00 1 323 666 6116, [www.cliffsedgecafe.com](http://www.cliffsedgecafe.com); breakfast mains around £12) in Silver Lake.

**Sit outside under the fig tree for comforting Cali-bistro fare.** It's cultivated a devoted following among locals and stars including Colin Farrell and Brangelina.

**LATER:** Try out-of-this-world sushi at Urasawa (218 N Rodeo Dr; 00 1 310 247 8939), a tiny Japanese joint in Beverly Hills. It's *omakase*-only (that means you eat whatever the chef decides to serve you – perhaps sesame tofu, Kobe beef and hot pots) and a prix-fixe of £157, but it only seats 10 people and the meal (number of courses varies) lasts three hours. Too pricey? Hop to the Bazaar in the SLS Hotel (465 S La Cienega Blvd; 00 1 310 246 5555, [www.thebazaar.com](http://www.thebazaar.com); tapas £5-28), a **decadent bistro-bakery-bar with fanciful cakes spread out like the Mad Hatter's tea party** and Mojitos poured over cotton candy.

**SAT PM:** For a mellower scene, head to The Varnish (118 E 6th St; 00 1 213 622 9999, [www.213nightlife.com/thevarnish](http://www.213nightlife.com/thevarnish)). This speakeasy behind Cole's French Dip restaurant is the place to chill with handcrafted cocktails and show tunes. Created by the owners of Milk & Honey New York, this wash of moody reds and low lights is every bit as classy. **Sample a Gin Fix with pomegranate grenadine.**

**SUN AM:** Join the carnival that is the Los Angeles Farmers' Market (00 1 323 933 9211, [www.farmersmarketla.com](http://www.farmersmarketla.com); 10am-7pm on Sundays), located at 3rd and Fairfax since 1934. **Don't miss the goat's-cheese enchilada from Loteria!** and the chocolate-and-caramel crêpes from The Parisian Crêpe Company.

**LATER:** Track down LA's best food trucks. Their kitchens – and prices – might be humble, but the cuisine is generally flawless. To find where they're parked on any given day, look on their websites. Locate the sought-after Grilled Cheese Truck ([www.thegrilledcheesetruck.com](http://www.thegrilledcheesetruck.com); sandwiches around £3) for a Gruyère melt or macaroni-and-cheese grill. And scoff a chilli dog at Pink's Hot Dogs ([www.pinkshollywood.com](http://www.pinkshollywood.com); dogs around £3), where you might have to spend ages queuing, but tough it out.

**This LA icon has been serving its famous franks since 1939** and sells 25 varieties, including vegan options. Bruce Willis reportedly proposed to Demi Moore here.

**SUN PM:** Feast in the woods at Inn of the Seventh Ray (128 Old Topanga Canyon Rd; 00 1 310 455 1311, [www.innoftheseventhtray.com](http://www.innoftheseventhtray.com); mains around £20). High in the canyons, the bistro sits in a forest, with tables edging a creek and fairy lights strung around sycamore trees.

**Frogs and a jazz band compete across the water.** The menu is inventive, from crispy vegan duck to black cod, and the cellar holds 400 different wines, many from California. Later, nab a space around the pool at The Standard's downtown rooftop bar (550 S Flower St; 00 1 213 892 8080, [www.standardhotels.com/downtown-la](http://www.standardhotels.com/downtown-la)) to watch movies or gigs against the city-skyline backdrop. >