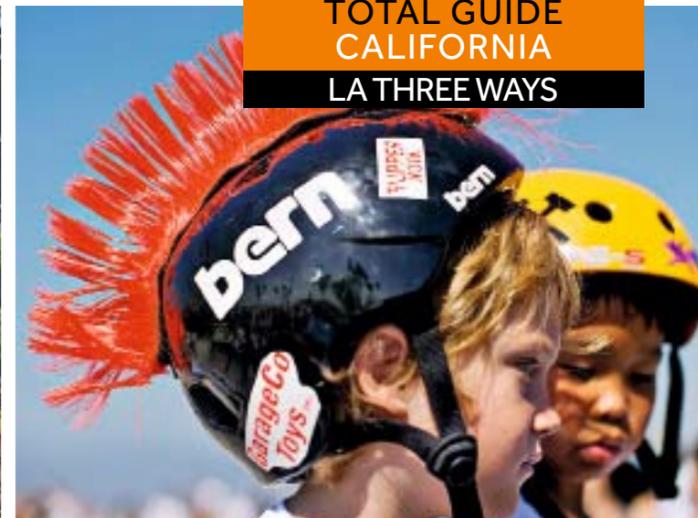


Tinseltown trio

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) 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) 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; 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;

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; 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; £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; 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; 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). 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; 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; 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; 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), 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; £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; £24).

FRI NIGHT: Kids addicted to iPods? Educate them with dinner at Toi (7505 Sunset Blvd; 00 1 323 874 8062, 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), 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) 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; 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; 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; 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; 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; 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. >



High life:
sip cocktails
and drink in the
views from The
Standard's
rooftop bar

AD

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; 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), 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; 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; 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). 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; 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; 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; 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; 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) to watch movies or gigs against the city-skyline backdrop. >