Your Essential Bucket List for Los Angeles Sightseeing

Los Angeles is a sprawling metropolis where Hollywood glamour meets laid-back beach culture. Because the city covers so much ground, planning your route around key neighborhoods makes sightseeing much easier. Whether it is your first visit or a quick weekend return, these iconic landmarks and cultural hubs belong at the top of your LA itinerary.

1. Griffith Observatory and Griffith Park

Perched on the south-facing slope of Mount Hollywood, **Griffith Observatory** offers the best panoramic views of the Los Angeles Basin and the Find out more **Hollywood Sign**. Admission to the building and grounds is free, making it one of the city's highest-value stops.

- **Best time to visit:** Arrive just before sunset to watch the city lights flicker on across the valley.
- **Pro tip:** Hike the Charlie Turner Trail to Mount Hollywood for an even closer, unobstructed view of the Hollywood Sign.

2. Santa Monica Pier and Venice Beach

No trip to Southern California is complete without spending an afternoon along the Pacific coast. Start at the **Santa Monica Pier**, home to the historic Pacific Park Ferris wheel and the official end of Route 66. From there, walk or rent a bike to head south along the beachfront path to **Venice Beach**, famous for its lively boardwalk, Muscle Beach outdoor gym, and the scenic Venice Canals just a few blocks inland.

3. The Getty Center

Located in the Santa Monica Mountains, **The Getty Center** is as famous for its travertine architecture and manicured gardens as it is for its art collection. Visitors can explore European paintings, decorative arts, and photography while enjoying sweeping views that stretch all the way to the ocean on clear days. Entry is free, though you will need to reserve a timed-entry pass online and pay for parking.

4. Hollywood Boulevard and the Walk of Fame

For a dose of classic Tinseltown history, take a stroll down **Hollywood Boulevard**. While the neighborhood is busy and unapologetically touristy, seeing the terrazzo-and-brass stars of the **Hollywood Walk of Fame**, the concrete handprints outside the **TCL Chinese Theatre**, and the **Dolby Theatre** (home of the Academy Awards) is a quintessential LA experience.

5. Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) and The Grove

Situated in the Miracle Mile district, **LACMA** is the largest art museum in the western United States. Even if you don't step inside the galleries, stop by the exterior plaza to see *Urban Light*, the iconic installation of 202 restored vintage street lamps. Just a short drive north is **The Grove**, a lively open-air shopping and dining complex located right next to the historic **Original Farmers Market**, which has been serving up local food stalls since 1934.

6. Downtown LA (DTLA) Cultural District

Downtown Los Angeles has transformed into a hub for architecture, food, and contemporary art. Spend a few hours exploring these neighboring landmarks:



- **The Broad:** A contemporary art museum known for its honeycomb-like exterior and Yayoi Kusama's *Infinity Mirror Rooms* (free general admission with advance reservations).
- **Walt Disney Concert Hall:** Designed by Frank Gehry, its curving stainless-steel exterior is a must-see architectural marvel.
- **Grand Central Market:** A historic food hall offering everything from gourmet tacos to artisan coffee, located right across from the vintage **Angels Flight Railway**.

Quick Tips for Getting Around LA

- **Group by neighborhood:** Traffic in Los Angeles can turn a short drive into a long commute. Pair beach stops together on one day, and group Hollywood and Griffith Park on another.
- **Use the Metro for DTLA and Hollywood:** The Metro B (Red) and E (Expo) lines make it easy to skip parking fees when traveling between Downtown, Hollywood, and Santa Monica.