



EXPRESS

LOGIN REGISTER



-1°C

Apps

Puzzles

Horoscopes

Shop

Paper

HOME NEWS SHOWBIZ & TV SPORT COMMENT FINANCE **TRAVEL** ENTERTAINMENT LIFE & STYLE

CRUISE **ACTIVITY HOLIDAYS** BEACH HOLIDAYS SHORT & CITY BREAKS TRAVEL NEWS

Home Travel Activity Holidays

Los Angeles and San Diego as you've NEVER seen them before: where to stay and what to do



'They are terrified!' BBC editor reveals



Paul Burrell shaken as medium uncovers



Putin's new super nukes threaten 'new Cold War' as



Vikings season 5, episode 11: Lagertha's death



BBC Breakfast: Dan Walker left red-faced after he

Los Angeles and San Diego as you've NEVER seen them before: where to stay and what to do

VIRGIN HOLIDAYS has launched more than 300 new experiences for travellers to help personalise their holidays and curate bespoke trips. This is your guide of where to go and what to see in Los Angeles and San Diego.

By **FELICITY THISTLETHWAITE**

12:02, Sat, Oct 28, 2017 | UPDATED: 12:36, Sat, Oct 28, 2017



Latest videos



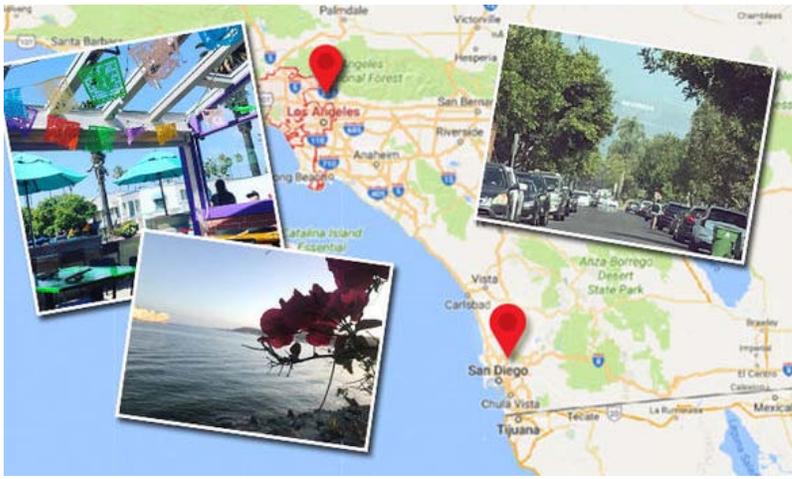
Jessica Jones season 1 recap: What happened in Jessica Jones season 1?



Global Awards 2018: Charlotte Hawkins flashes cleavage as she wows in slashed frock

By continuing to use the site, you agree to the use of cookies. You can find out more by following [this link](#).

Accept Cookies



Virgin Holidays: Los Angeles and San Diego as you've never seen them before

When you think of Los Angeles you think of the Hollywood hills, sunshine and the A-list elite - right?

But there's another side to the sprawling city that could endear you to the home of celebrity far quicker than the crowds around the Walk of Fame.

Stepping out onto the tarmac at LAX, escaping a dreary autumn in England, the sunshine was like a welcome old friend.

Flying Virgin Upper Class was a treat in itself, but the exploration trip truly began after navigating security, picking up our bags and jumping into a waiting SUV.

The palm-tree-lined streets of LA are exactly how they look in all the movies.

RELATED ARTICLES



Things to do in Venice: attractions, hotels and restaurants



Maldives Coco Bodu Hithi 'lifestyle manager' lets slip THIS secret



Snow UK: Is it going to snow tonight? Where will it snow? Latest Met Office forecast



Ivanka Trump posts glamorous 2018 Winter Olympics video after Hope Hicks resignation



Paul Burrell breaks down as he admits he's 'letting go' of Diana amid psychic revelations



Looking at getting away for a few days? Get packing with these deals



Swish SNOW WEAR for peak season

Where to stay in LA?

Huge houses swept past as we drove toward our first stop in the City of Angels: Andaz West Hollywood.

The hotel is on Sunset Boulevard in West Hollywood and is overlooked by a plethora of eye-waveringly beautiful homes in the hills.

The staff, when pushed, point out Johnny Depp's palatial pad and the Chateau Marmont next door - a star-spotting hot spot.

Effortlessly cool, the hotel oozes the laid-back attitude LA embodies from the off.

A glass of wine as you check-in? Yes please.

The hotel manager, Henning Nopper, has been part of the Hyatt family since 1999 when he worked as a Banquet Manager at the Grand Hyatt in Seattle.

And it's clear his enthusiasm for the job isn't waning yet as he personally introduces the group to his award-winning team.

Nopper fills me in on the heritage of the hotel over a lobster roll or two. Famously, he tells me, room 1015 was where Rolling Stones guitarist Keith Richards chucked a TV out the window in 1972.



Ski holiday 2018:
The best family ski resort is one you've probably never heard of



Experience Arizona's unexplored side this year



Virgin Holidays: Most tourists stick to Hollywood but they're missing out

What to do in LA?

In the bag: Winter gear that will help you make light of the cold

Top JACKETS for snowy adventures

PICTURED: 'The World's Most Spectacular Bridges' including San Fran's Golden Gate Bridge

Enjoy skiing in peace with a visit to

As an introduction to the Southern California city, Andaz West Hollywood was certainly no bad start.

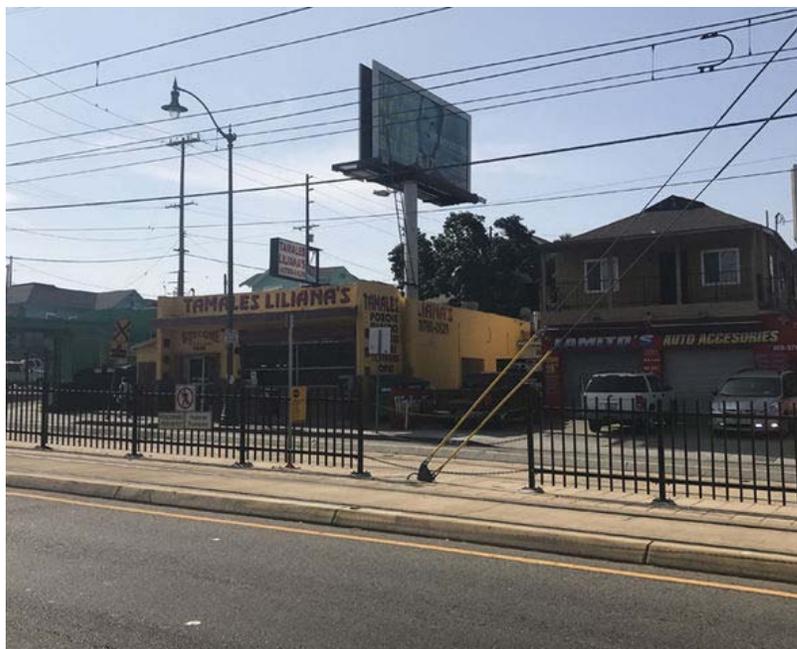
There are a whopping 3.9 million residents of Los Angeles and 45m tourists visited the city in 2015.

How many do you think stuck to the traditional Hollywood stars bus tour, tourist-trap steak houses and over-priced shopping outlets?

Well that's all about to change with the introduction of Virgin Holidays' North America experiences package.

Experiences will allow those travelling to the USA and Canada to easily explore like never before.

Having tried it out, it would be almost criminal to go to LA now and not take part in Diane and Lisa Scalia's Melting Pot Food Tours.



Virgin Holidays: This East LA food tour is the best way to see Boyle Heights' community

the Sainte Foy alps resort

Skiing in Austria: St Anton hits peak condition

Skiing in Austria: Help to follow in Fab Four's tracks

The planet's finest hangouts: Check this places off of your bucket list in 2018

TUI Wonders Of Halong Bay review: Multi-centre holiday offers a stunning view of Vietnam



Virgin Holidays: Tamales for breakfast was the order of the day

East LA street food tour

Sisters Lisa and Diane Scalia came up with Melting Pot Food Tours back in 2008.

They, like many true Los Angelians, worried tourists coming to the city were missing out on the wonderfully rich culture and street life happening in East LA.

The tour starts in Boyle Heights: a neighborhood of almost 100,000 residents east of Downtown.

If you Google the area as an outsider, it might sound scary. Headlines slamming anti-gentrification and condemnation of “outsiders” are top of the search.

But behind the headlines are real people fighting to make a living. And what Lisa and Diane are trying to do is help those people help themselves by showing off the best of the best food, drink and culture in the area to tourists who wouldn't usually venture out this way.

We take the tour a matter of weeks before Día de Muertos - Day of the Dead - a huge celebration in Mexico.

The streets are lined with painted skulls, pictures of Frida Kahlo and incredibly intricate clothing to celebrate the Mexican ancestral holiday.

Submerged into the heart of the community as we take part in the walking-eating tour, it's clear the sisters are close friends with hundreds of members of the neighbourhood.

South Africa: There's more than just iconic wildlife in this uplifting country

Les Deux Alpes: Slope off to France's resort for a family friendly ski holiday

Samoëns: Explore the adventures in south eastern France's ski resort

Why New Hampshire should be your next winter holiday destination

St Petersburg: Discover the festive fun in Russia's

Our first stop was for a breakfast tamale - a dough-based wrap steamed in a banana leaf - at Tamales Lilianas.

Then Lisa and Diane guided us through three floors of the stunning El Mercado de Los Angeles, a vast Mexican marketplace.

La Gloria Mexican Foods and Luceros Bakery were the final two stops in Boyle Heights on our whirlwind tour.



Virgin Holidays: This bakery is in the El Mercado de Los Angeles



Virgin Holidays: Lisa (right) is one of the sisters running Melting Pot Food Tours

Farmers market tour

fairytale city

**Val Thorens, France:
Live the high life
with a ski break**

**Seattle: Unlock the
secrets of the natural
beauty in the
Washington state**

**A cultural and
culinary adventure:
Vietnam is vibrant,
colourful and rich in
traditions**

**Chamonix: Hit the
challenging slopes of
France's action-
packed adventure**

Armed with plenty of Frida Kahlo portraits and full of delicious food, the sisters decided it was time to take the group to LA's Original Farmers Market.

A landmark "unlike any other in southern California", they say.

Artisan butchers, bakers, LA's finest cheese counter and even an international spice merchant endorsed by Oprah Winfrey.

A corned beef sandwich with pickle was first on the menu from Magee's Kitchen. As history would have it, Blanche Magee thought farmers heading to the market to sell their goods might like to have lunch. So she filled a picnic hamper and started feeding them.

On the Farmers Market website it reads: "Today, folks still line up for outstanding roast or corned beef, tempting turkey and marvellous ham platters."

Then it was time for a beer at E.B's Beer and Wine bar - named after Market founder Earl Bell Gilmore.

Sadly, that's where Lisa and Diane left the tour after a long day of food tasting and a second-to-none guided tour of 'real' Los Angeles.



Virgin Holidays: The community was preparing for Day of the Dead, celebrated in November



Virgin Holidays: Los Angeles is a city easy to get lost in

Where to eat in LA?

Dinner at Rossoblu in Downton LA was like stepping over the threshold into the world of the Kardashians.

The LA you see in the movies was right here in the quiet, dark streets of Downtown Los Angeles - an 'up-and-coming' trendy area.

Fairy lights adorn the Instagram-ready garden outside while the inside is every bit as *Sex and the City* as you can imagine.

Raw wood and slate were paired with casual leather seat but the most exquisite glassware. It was clear the venue has tried to appeal to the luxury laid-back LA lifestyle.

The meal was incredible with a mixture of pastas, meats and impressive fish dishes like a stream to our table.

San Diego

The next day it was time to leave the hustle and bustle of A-list heavy LA behind and head for the quiet, arty shores of San Diego.

On the road trip down to the city we stopped off at Temecula

Valley. Think Napa but less showy and more welcoming.

Top tip: if you visit but one vineyard, it has to be Monte De Oro.

Ask to speak to Ken Zignorski, Managing Partner and General Manager of Monte De Oro and possibly the nicest man walking this planet.

After a stop-off at the vineyards, we headed down into San Diego - one of the most economically and culturally diverse cities in Southern California.

While it might be famous for its miles and miles of white-sand beaches, there is plenty more to see in this fine city.



Virgin Holidays: Temecula Valley was quiet, calm and perfect for a glass of wine



Virgin Holidays: This view, from Kona Kai Hotel in San Diego, was exquisite

Where to stay in San Diego?

The Kona Kai Resort and Spa is a small nugget of tranquility and calm in a city that has plenty of restaurants and bars to keep any tourist craving the busy life going.

Set on the Kona Kai Marina, every room has an impressive view of the hundreds of boats moored up.

Watching the sun set on the beach at one of the many gas-lit bonfires is a highlight of the resort.

What to do in San Diego?

A visit to San Diego wouldn't be complete without dropping in on Moniker General and Liberty Public Market.

Ranked one of the Top 20 food halls in the US, you simply have to stop off and enjoy the Mess Hall Bar, Grape Smuggler wine and tapas bar, and Pi Pizza Bar, dishing out Roman-style pie by the foot.

Still not full? Head down to La Jolla and drop into Galaxy Taco. Headed up by celebrity chef Trey Foshee, the restaurant pays homage to Mexican culture and cuisine.

Travellers looking for something a bit different, head down to You & Yours Distilling Co.

Positioned in downtown's East Village the distillery has a wonderful tasting bar where you can try out the vodka and gin.

You & Yours Distilling Co. also provides weekend tours, distiller-led educational programs and tastings.



Virgin Holidays: La Jolla's Galaxy Taco is unmissable - you must go on a trip to San Diego



Virgin Holidays: La Jolla is much-loved by the people of San Diego, especially this beach

How to book the tours?

Enjoy a seven night tour of West Coast USA with Virgin Holidays, including Virgin Atlantic flights from London Heathrow direct to Los Angeles.

You'll have four nights at the Andaz West Hollywood with room

only accommodation and then a further three nights at the Kona Kai Resort and Spa in San Diego, all for £1295 per person.

The price is based on two adults travelling and includes care hire and all applicable taxes and fuel surcharges which are subject to change. Virgin Holidays is a member of ABTA and is ATOL protected.

To book:, 0344 557 3859 or visit one of our individual retail stores or one of the 110 stores located in Debenhams and House of Fraser stores nationwide or visit www.virginholidays.com

Melting Pot food tours start from £45 per person. Wine tastings in Temecula start from £20 per person.

RELATED ARTICLES

- › [Norwegian Air: Airline's PREMIUM seats reviewed](#)
- › [Where to stay and what to do in Bath including the Apex Hotel review](#)
- › [Hotel review Splendid Venice: Boutique luxury with a rooftop terrace](#)

Recommended stories

Recommended by 



Suits season 7 cast: Is Katherine Heigl replacing Meghan Markle?



We Tried HelloFresh: Here's What Happened (Sponsored - Popdust)



Outlander season 4: Meet Sam Heughan rival as handsome newcomer muscles in





How This App Made by 100 Experts Gets You Speaking a New Language in 3 Weeks

(Sponsored - Babbel)



Question Time crowd erupts in THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE as Brexiteer rubbishes Treasury



A Chef's Honest Review Of HelloFresh

(Sponsored - Southern Plate)



The 11 Best Organizing Tips We Learned This Year

(Sponsored - PureWow)



California Gives Solar Panels at No Cost Down

(Sponsored - Hidden Tips)



5 Mouthwatering Fried Chicken Recipes

(Sponsored - Awesome Cooker)



6 Mouthwatering Chicken Recipes

(Sponsored - Awesome Cooker)



Delicious Cake Mix Hacks

(Sponsored - Awesome Cooker)



YES: The 2018 'Sports Illustrated' Swimsuit Issue Features Unedited Photos for the First Time

(Sponsored - PureWow)

Popular In the Community



 <p>NOW THE EU IS TRYING TO BREAK</p>	 <p>'THE BRITISH ARE NOT EXCEPTIONAL!'</p>	 <p>OFF THE C BRUSSELS</p>
 <p>veterisbumbuli 3h</p> <p>At my advanced age I'm beginning to</p>	 <p>miggss 1d</p> <p>The grey man of politics spouts tripe</p>	 <p>Wis 4h</p> <p>The more the more p</p>

Conversation (1)

Sort by Best ▾



Add a comment...



I prefer Santa Barbara.

SandyBrown ·

Reply

· Share

· Report this comment ·



TODAY'S PAPER

Thursday, 1st March 2018

See today's front and back pages, download the newspaper, order back issues and use the historic Daily Express newspaper archive.

SEARCH

Search...



CONNECT WITH US

NEWS

LATEST NEWS

SPORT

PICTURES

LIFE & STYLE

UK	Brexit	Football	Pics	Life		
World	European Union	Transfer news	Celebrity Galleries	Style		
Politics	Theresa May	Premier League	Royal Galleries	Health		
Nature	Angela Merkel	Manchester United	Sport Galleries	Cars		
Royal	Donald Trump	Liverpool	COMMENT	Garden		
Weather	The Queen	Arsenal		Food		
History	Kate Middleton	Chelsea		Property		
Obituaries	Meghan Markle	Tottenham Hotspur	Columnists	Diets		
Sunday	Diesel	Manchester City	Beachcomber	Tech		
Weird	Cancer	West Ham	FINANCE	Saturday		
Science	Diabetes	Everton		City & Business	Win	
Scotland	Dementia	Celtic		Personal Finance	S Mag	
	YouTube	Rangers	The Crusader	Top 10 Facts		
	SHOWBIZ & TV	Stats	Retirement	EXPRESS.CO.UK		
	Celebrity News	Tennis	TRAVEL		Sitemap	
	TV & Radio	Boxing			Cruise	Site Archive
		F1			Activity Holidays	Contact Us
		UFC	Beach Holidays		Report a Tech Issue	
		Cricket	Short & City breaks		Advertising	
		Golf	Travel News		Privacy Policy	
		Rugby Union	ENTERTAINMENT		Cookie Policy	
		Racing			Films	Terms & Conditions
					Gaming	Developed by Netro42
				Theatre	Syndication and Licensing	
			Books	Clarifications and Corrections		
			Music			
			Puzzles			