


## The 15 Best Los Angeles Tours

Maximize your time in Los Angeles with the insider tips and historical context provided by the best local tours.

By Kyle McCarthy, Contributor July 3, 2019



Get a little exercise on your vacation with this hike to the Hollywood sign with Bikes and Hikes LA.   
(COURTESY OF BIKES AND HIKES LA)

AT MORE THAN 468 SQUARE miles, [Los Angeles](#) defies easy exploration. Even those who dream of touring the city's [top attractions](#) in a sporty convertible may be discouraged by the city's notorious traffic congestion and tough parking rules. To enjoy that stress-free, laid-back vacation California is famous for, choose an easy, efficient guided tour. Using both traveler sentiment and expert opinion, U.S. News selected 15 of the top tours in Los

Angeles whose entertaining introduction to the city will engage intrepid explorers, first-time visitors and local residents alike.

### **Bikes and Hikes LA – Hollywood Sign Hike**

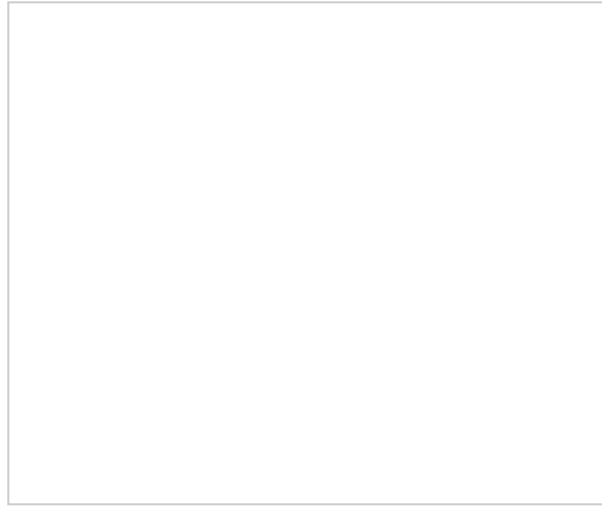
Summit Mount Hollywood on this 2 1/2-hour hiking trip. The tour starts in [Griffith Park](#) where you will see its Greek theater, observatory and bird sanctuary before hiking up the mountain to see the famous Hollywood sign and panoramic vistas of the city. Be ready for a workout: You'll hike approximately 4 miles round-trip. While praising the excellent guides and overall experience, reviewers say tours may run long and require a fairly high level of fitness, so future tourgoers should keep that in mind. The tour starts at around \$30 per person (6 or older); for \$95 more, book a private tour to hike at your own pace. Tours are offered daily year-round and depart at 10 a.m. and in the late afternoon for a sunset tour. The company also offers an early morning Hollywood Hills hike and several bike tours of LA.

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### **Melting Pot Tours – The Original Farmers Market Food & History Tour**

Join foodie guides for an up-close and personal tour of the [Original Farmers Market](#), a historic family-owned covered market with more than 100 vendors and stories to tell. There's not much walking as most of the 2 1/2-hour tour is spent sampling doughnuts, candy, cheeses, ethnic specialties and more while hearing culinary details and market folklore. Guides also share the personal stories of the vendors behind the eight to 10 independent stalls selected for the tour. Tour-takers rave about the tour and the delicious food samples guides select. Tickets cost approximately \$65 for adults and \$50 for children 5 to 12. Guides can accommodate special diets with advance notice. Farmers Market tours are held Thursday through Saturday from 9:30 a.m. to noon. Melting Pot Tours hosts other outings in Pasadena and East LA as well.





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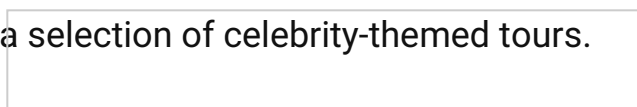
### **Open Bus Tours – Star Homes Tours**

Open Bus Tours whisks you through Hollywood and Beverly Hills in an open-top Mercedes van to show you the places where the rich and famous play. The guide will point out landmarks associated with past and current celebrities, contemporary sports figures and YouTube stars, plus drive past famous movie studios and filming locations, if available. You can snap photos of mansions, the Hollywood Sign, the Sunset Strip, the Dolby Theatre and more. Visitors say they like leaving the LA driving to fun, knowledgeable guides who entertain them with gossip, history and local legend as they point out A-list hot spots. The two-hour guided tours depart from the [Hollywood Walk of Fame](#) up to four times daily. Tickets cost approximately \$35 for adults, \$30 for children 3 to 10 and \$20 for infants 2 and younger. The company also offers a Best of Los Angeles tour.

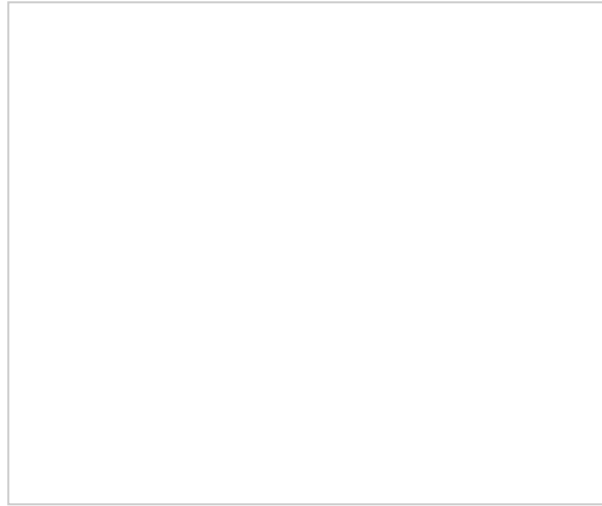
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### **Starline Tours – Grand Tour of Los Angeles**

Patrons praise the convenient hotel pickup, efficient sightseeing and knowledgeable guides on this tour from Starline Tours. On the 5 1/2-hour bus tour, you'll see major sights, including the [TCL Chinese Theatre](#), [Sunset Boulevard](#), Rodeo Drive and more. Note that the bus only stops for photos at the lunch stop: the Original Farmers Market. Tickets start at \$64 for adults and \$49 for children 3 to 11. Hotel pickup is an additional fee. Starline also offers a selection of celebrity-themed tours.








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The Los Angeles Sites and Bites tour will help you see the best of everything LA has to offer.  (COURTESY OF TOURIFIC ESCAPES)

### **TOURific Escapes – Hollywood Sites & Bites Food Tour**

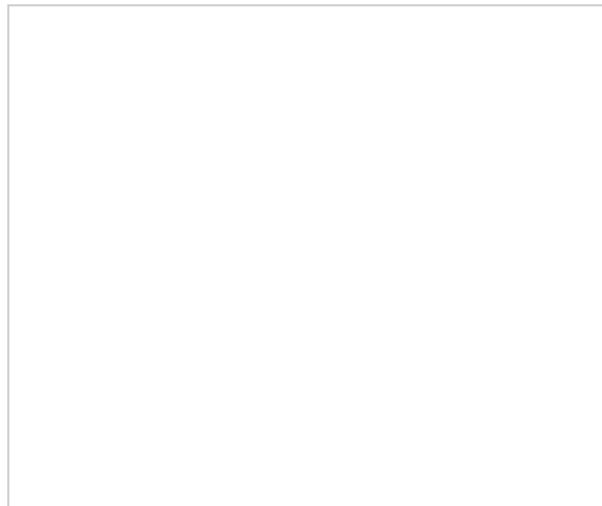
Eat and sightsee while touring the Hollywood neighborhood on the walking and driving tour from TOURific Escapes. The four-hour program is offered daily for up to seven

people and includes five food tastings, a walking tour of film-related attractions and a drive past local landmarks, including the Sunset Strip and [Paramount Pictures Studios](#). Travelers say this tour is worthwhile because of the guide's insights and commentary about the area's history and foods sampled, and the warm welcome from each restaurant. Tickets cost around \$100 for participants 6 and older, and about \$80 for children 5 and younger. TOURific Escapes also offers a Celebrity Insider Movie Locations tour and a Chocolate Indulgence tour.

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### **TMZ Celebrity Tour**

Gossip, secrets and buzz-worthy club names come with this popular Hollywood Celebrity Hot Spot Tour from TMZ, the famous celebrity news website. The two-hour, guided bus tour departs several times daily from Hollywood and makes no stops. Instead, the entertaining guides show video clips, share stories, do giveaways and manage a remote studio on wheels in case wandering celebrities want to stop for an interview. Recent tour-takers who love celebrity gossip and pop culture offer very positive reviews of the outing, while some complain about not seeing enough stars' homes, specific sites or celebrities during their tour. Tickets cost approximately \$50 for adults and \$32 for children 2 to 12.



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### **LA City Tours – LA City Tour, Celebrity Homes & Beaches**

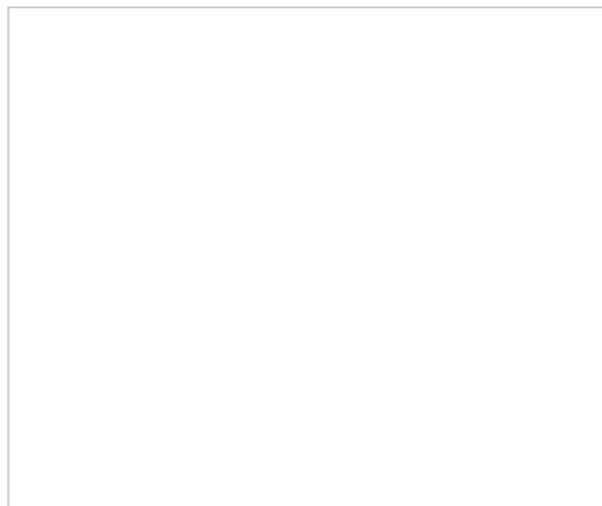


See Los Angeles comprehensively and efficiently with L.A. City Tours' six-hour minibus tour of the city's top architectural, cultural and entertainment venues. Several 20-minute stops are scheduled during the drive across the city: Hollywood Walk of Fame, [Santa Monica](#), Griffith Park Observatory and Beverly Hills are a few spots you'll see. Your fifth stop, which doubles as a lunch break, will be at either the Original Farmers Market (for morning tours) or in [Venice Beach](#) (for noon tours). Some reviewers wish they could have spent more time at each stop, though others say this tour helped them determine where to return during their trip. Many also agree that the guides' senses of humor and trivia knowledge add to the entertainment value. Tickets start at \$84 for adults and \$60 for children ages 3 to 11. Ticket prices include a map, bottled water and pickup and drop-off at most [Los Angeles hotels](#). LA City Tours also offers cruise and plane layover tours.

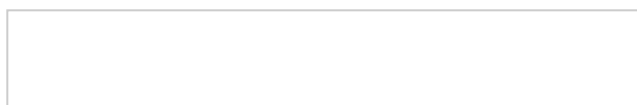
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### **Dearly Departed Tours – Tragical History Tour**


Spend three hours immersed in macabre facts about the homes and locations where celebrities have lived, died or been caught in indiscretions on the Tragical History Tour. The multimedia outing will cover tales about Whitney Houston, John Belushi, Hugh Grant and more. Tour-takers love the stories and informative guides. Others call it a must-do activity in Los Angeles. Tickets cost approximately \$65 per participant. Tours run daily at noon and are not recommended for children younger than 12. Dearly Departed Tours also runs a popular Helter Skelter Tour which explores the Manson Family murders.



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During this trip with A Day in LA, you'll see top Los Angeles sights like Venice Beach.  (COURTESY OF A DAY IN LA)

## A Day in LA Tours – LA City Tour 1

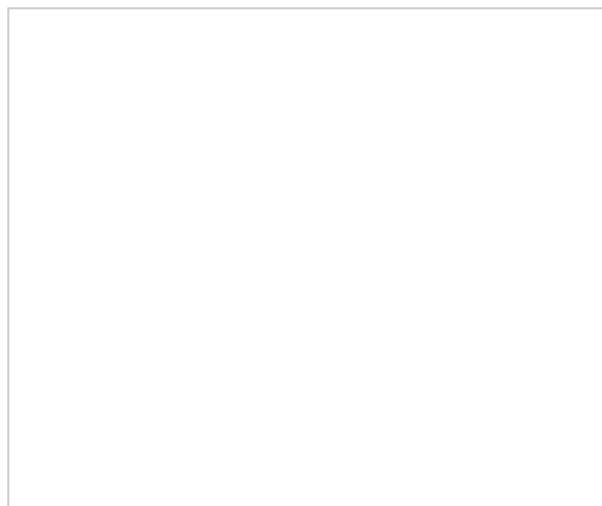
Cruise from Venice Beach to Griffith Park and everywhere in between on this 7 1/2-hour tour. Tourgoers will hop on an air-conditioned bus, which has device charging ports, and cruise in comfort to areas like Beverly Hills, Venice Beach and Santa Monica. First-time visitors to LA rave about how much you see in one day despite the city's famous traffic. Others appreciate spending about 40 minutes at each attraction so they could explore and take photos. Tickets start at \$94 for adults and \$79 for children 12 and younger. A Day in LA Tours offers free hotel pickup from both Los Angeles hotels and hotels in the Anaheim/Disneyland area. Want to be more active when touring? Check out the company's hiking and biking tours.



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### **Six Taste – Downtown Los Angeles Food Tour**

On this four-hour Downtown LA walking tour by Six Taste, visitors will sample signature dishes from around six eateries while learning more about Thai, Mexican, barbecue and other cuisines, the history of downtown and the city's diverse cultures. Locals and visitors alike rave about the Six Taste guides and their selection of hard-to-find stands and shops, as well as the delicious tastings. Downtown tours run on Saturdays and Sundays only at varying times. Tickets start at \$65 per person. Some dietary accommodations can be made with advance notice, though the tour is not suited to vegan or gluten-free diets. Other popular Six Taste tours explore Persian Square, Sawtelle Japantown and Koreatown.



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### **Ultimate Hollywood Tours – Celebrity Home Tour**


See more than 50 movie star homes on Ultimate Hollywood Tours' two-hour bus tour. The open-air bus drives by the past or present homes of celebrities like Johnny Depp, Lucille Ball, Bruno Mars, Will Ferrell, Katy Perry, Charlize Theron, Michael Jackson and many others. You'll pass shops and clubs where celebrities hang out and buses also pause for photo opportunities. You will even stop to take your picture at the famous Hollywood sign. Travelers rave about the entertaining guides, whose humor and insider knowledge make these small group tours a blast, even if they don't spot any celebrities. Tours depart multiple times daily beginning at 9:15 a.m. Tickets start at around \$40 for



adults, \$30 for children 2 to 12 and \$10 for infants. Ultimate Hollywood Tours also runs a Hollywood Insider Studio tour.

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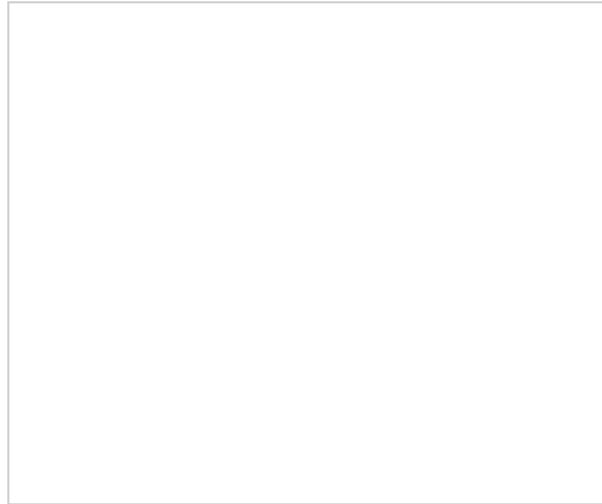


Architecture Tours L.A. offers a glimpse at the city's history through its varied buildings, like this house designed by Rudolph Schindler.  (COURTESY OF ARCHITECTURE TOURS L.A.)

## Architecture Tours L.A. – Silver Lake

Architecture buffs and design professionals should book ahead for this tour of the Silver Lake neighborhood. For two to three hours, you'll view mid-century modern and contemporary homes by master architects Richard Neutra, Rudolph Schindler, John Lautner and other notables. Architectural historian and author Laura Massino Smith is your expert guide as she chauffeurs you through the neighborhood via van. Tour-takers appreciate Smith's insider access to homes designed by master architects that would

otherwise be impossible to find or view up close. Tours run daily around 9:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Tickets start at \$75 per person. Architecture Tours L.A. runs a variety of other tours through Los Angeles neighborhoods, such as Hancock Park/Miracle Mile and West Hollywood/Beverly Hills. You can also opt for specialized tours of Frank Lloyd Wright or Frank Gehry masterpieces.



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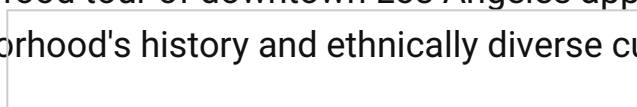
### **The Real Los Angeles Tours – The Real Hollywood Tour**

On this walking tour, guides take visitors on a two-hour, 2-mile stroll through Hollywood to explore its history. Tourgoers will see attractions like the old house where Charlie Chaplin's children went to school, the historic Pantages and Egyptian Theatres and the famous TCL Chinese Theatre. Patrons love the comprehensive commentary, suitable for school-age children, and recommend taking the tour at the beginning of your trip so you can return and spend more time at your favorite attractions. Tours run daily at 10 a.m. Tours cost approximately \$30 for patrons 12 and older, and are free for children 11 and younger. Real Los Angeles Tours also runs a Central Downtown LA tour, which you can combine with the Hollywood tour.

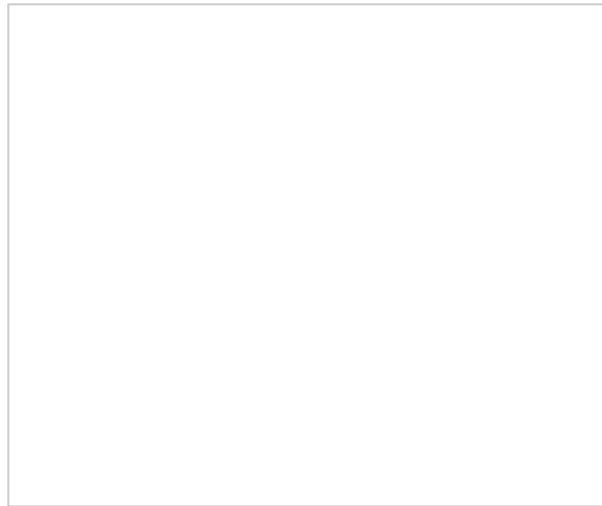
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### **Sidewalk Food Tours of Los Angeles – Downtown Los Angeles Food Tour**

This vegetarian-friendly food tour of downtown Los Angeles appeals to travelers interested in the neighborhood's history and ethnically diverse culinary scene. Over three



hours, you'll make six food stops that could include German currywurst, French pastry, Mexican tacos, Asian fusion and Texas barbecue. You'll also walk through [Grand Central Market](#) and see sights like the Biltmore Hotel and the Million Dollar Theatre. Visitors rave about the knowledgeable guides and appreciate finding restaurants to return to, while locals enjoy learning about downtown and the city's hidden gem restaurants. Expect 2 to 3 miles of walking and bring a full water bottle. Tours run at 11 a.m. Thursday through Monday. Tickets cost approximately \$75 per person. Sidewalk Food Tours also offers private food tours.

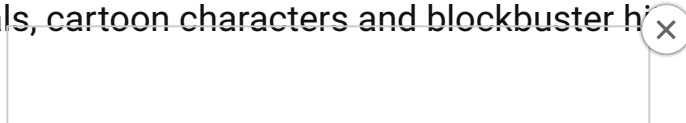


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### **Universal Studios Studio Tour**

Movie fans will get a thrill out of [Universal Studios'](#) Studio Tour, a theme park attraction that moves tram riders through 4 acres of studio backlot. Jimmy Fallon serves as your video tour guide who introduces short clips which enhance the narration from your in-person guide. During the tram ride, you'll encounter the Bates Motel from "Psycho," the shark from "Jaws" and other key props. Interactive experiences include watching a 3D King Kong battle a Tyrannosaurus rex and racing alongside stars from "The Fast and the Furious" movie franchise. Both experiences are favorites of reviewers who especially enjoy the special effects. The hourlong backlot tours leave throughout the day. Tours are included with the Universal Studios Hollywood theme park ticket, which starts at \$109 per person for one-day general admission. The park offers multiple shows and rides featuring famous animals, cartoon characters and blockbuster h

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### Kyle McCarthy, Contributor

Kyle McCarthy is the author of a dozen Frommer guidebooks, contributor to many publications, ... **READ MORE »**

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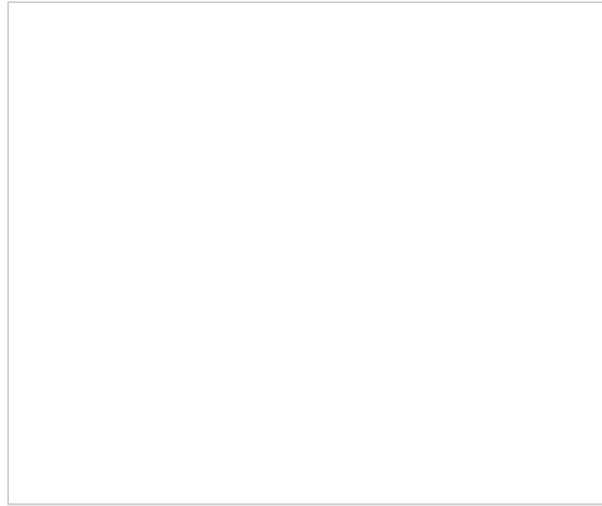
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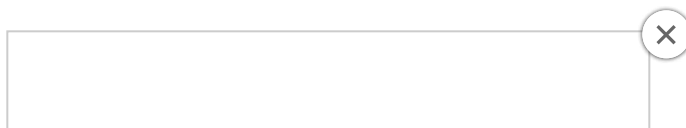
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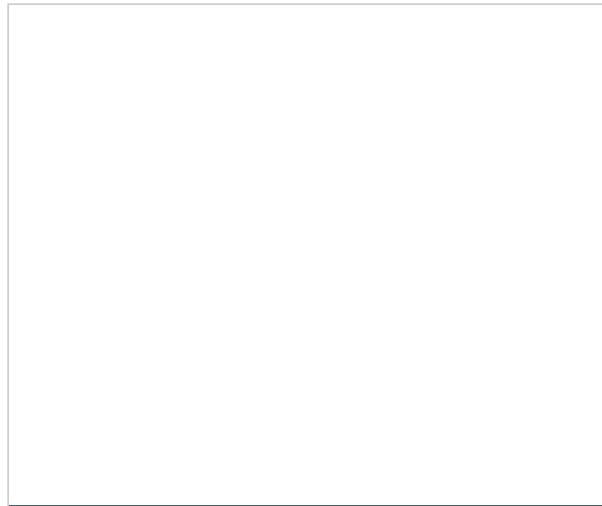






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