

Making the most of a LAX stopover

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As fares get cheaper and cheaper, more Kiwis are heading to the United States for a holiday – with many passing through LAX (Los Angeles International Airport).

If you find yourself at the world's fourth busiest airport with some time to burn before your next, here are a few suggestions to make the most of it.

Two to three hour stopovers

With newly renovated terminals and added dining and retail offerings, LAX offers the chance to sample the tastes and sights of Los Angeles, even if you've only got a few hours.

Terminal 2: A nearly completed \$332 million renovation features a design theme that reflects the energy of LA's on-the-go culture, with nearly 20 retail and dining concepts as well as lounge-style seating with more charging stations. Stop by Virgin Atlantic's first-ever Clubhouse, inspired by the West Coast way of life. The Clubhouse offers a stylish, luxury experience along with healthy dining options for Virgin's Upper Class passengers and Flying Club Gold members.

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Terminal 3: With the December 2017 additions of new super-local LA restaurants, foodies can enjoy the flavours of the city without even leaving the airport. Ashland Hill, a Santa Monica gastropub with a focus on craft beer, burgers and other casual fare, joins healthy EarthBar, tequila spot La Familia as well as globally-inspired Blue Window and Shake Shack.

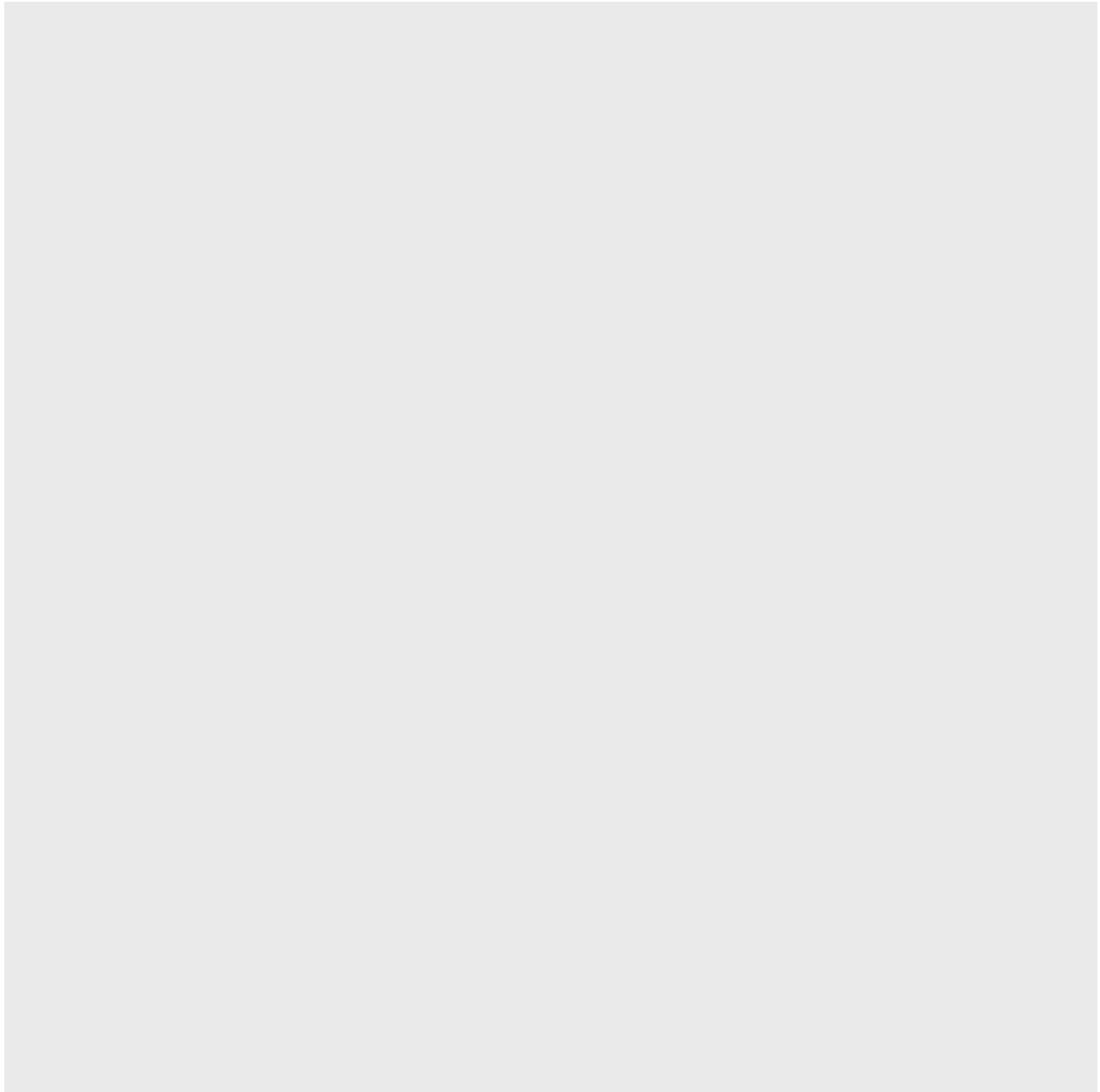
Tom Bradley International Terminal (TBIT): Travellers can enjoy TBIT's "Great Hall" featuring 14,000 sq. m. of premier dining, retail shopping and an Integrated Environmental Media System designed to entertain waiting passengers. Five new business-class and first-class lounges await those with access.

Art aficionados should reference LAX's handy [online guide](#) to its impressive collection of public art and take a self-guided tour. As part of its expansion and renovation, LAX has transformed many of its public spaces into art spaces by featuring temporary art exhibitions and installations throughout the airport. Presented in partnership with the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, LAX features 11 exhibition sites located in Terminals 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, and TBIT.

Four to six hour stopovers

Visitors who are keen to get their toes in the sand don't have to travel far from LAX to do so – some of LA's best beaches are short drive away.

South Bay: About five miles from the airport is Manhattan Beach. It is renowned for some of the best surfing waves in Southern California and regarded as the birthplace of beach volleyball. This beach neighbourhood can be explored on foot via the [self-guided walking tour itinerary](#). Or, take a break from the beach and grab a cocktail at [The Shade Hotel's Zinc@Shade](#) or enjoy a meal at the stunning oceanfront restaurant, [The Strand House](#).



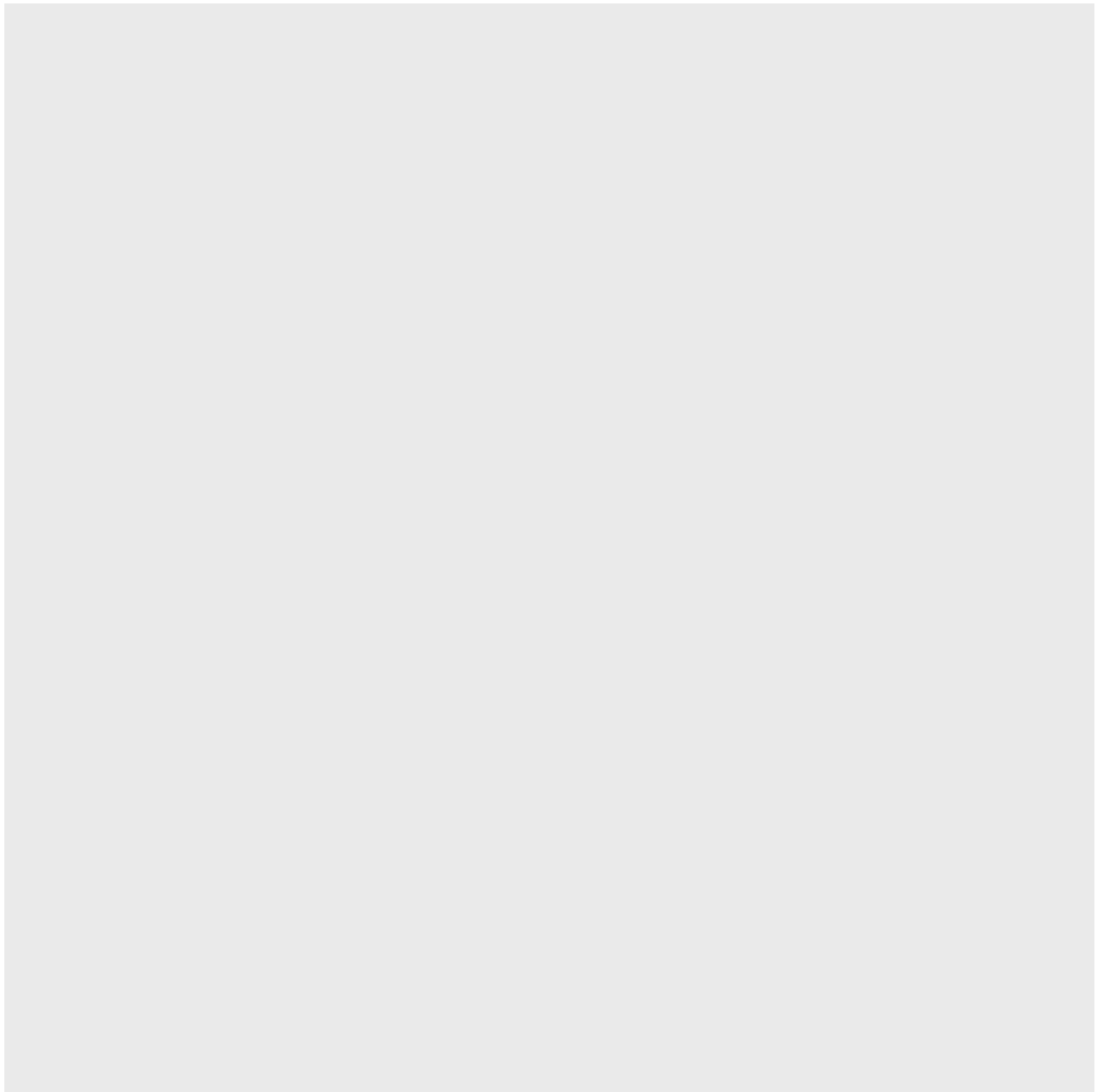
Sunset at Manhattan Beach in Southern California. Photo / 123RF

Afterward, head up the coast about two miles to Hermosa Beach and jump on a beach cruiser to explore with [Beach Cities Bike Tours](#).

Marina del Rey: Another nearby waterside community that is less than 10 miles from LAX is Marina del Rey, one of the largest constructed small boat harbours in the world. Visitors can take a stroll at the quaint Fisherman's Village along the Marina. Travellers can also bike on the Marvin Braude coastal bike trail, tour the Ballona Wetlands, or set up a picnic with an outdoor movie at Burton Chace Park. For those who have extra time, enjoy a sunset dining cruise aboard a Hornblower Cruise luxury yacht.

Venice Beach: Around 10 miles from LAX is Venice Beach, famous for street art and commissioned murals, Venice Beach Boardwalk, Abbot Kinney and creative California cuisine. For a refreshing drink and uninterrupted views of the Pacific Ocean, visitors can stop at the High Rooftop Lounge at Hotel Erwin.

Santa Monica: A bit farther out, about 15 miles from LAX, is trendy Santa Monica; named one of the 'Top 10 Beach Cities in the World' by National Geographic. The iconic Santa Monica Pier is a must-see featuring an amusement park, ferris wheel and The Looff Hippodrome, home to the iconic Carousel. In addition to the numerous dining options, shopping ranges from the sleek outdoor Santa Monica Place to quaint boutiques along Main Street and Third Street Promenade that include an outdoor collection of stores, movie theatres and cafes.



Santa Monica pier. Photo / 123RF

Eight hour plus stopovers

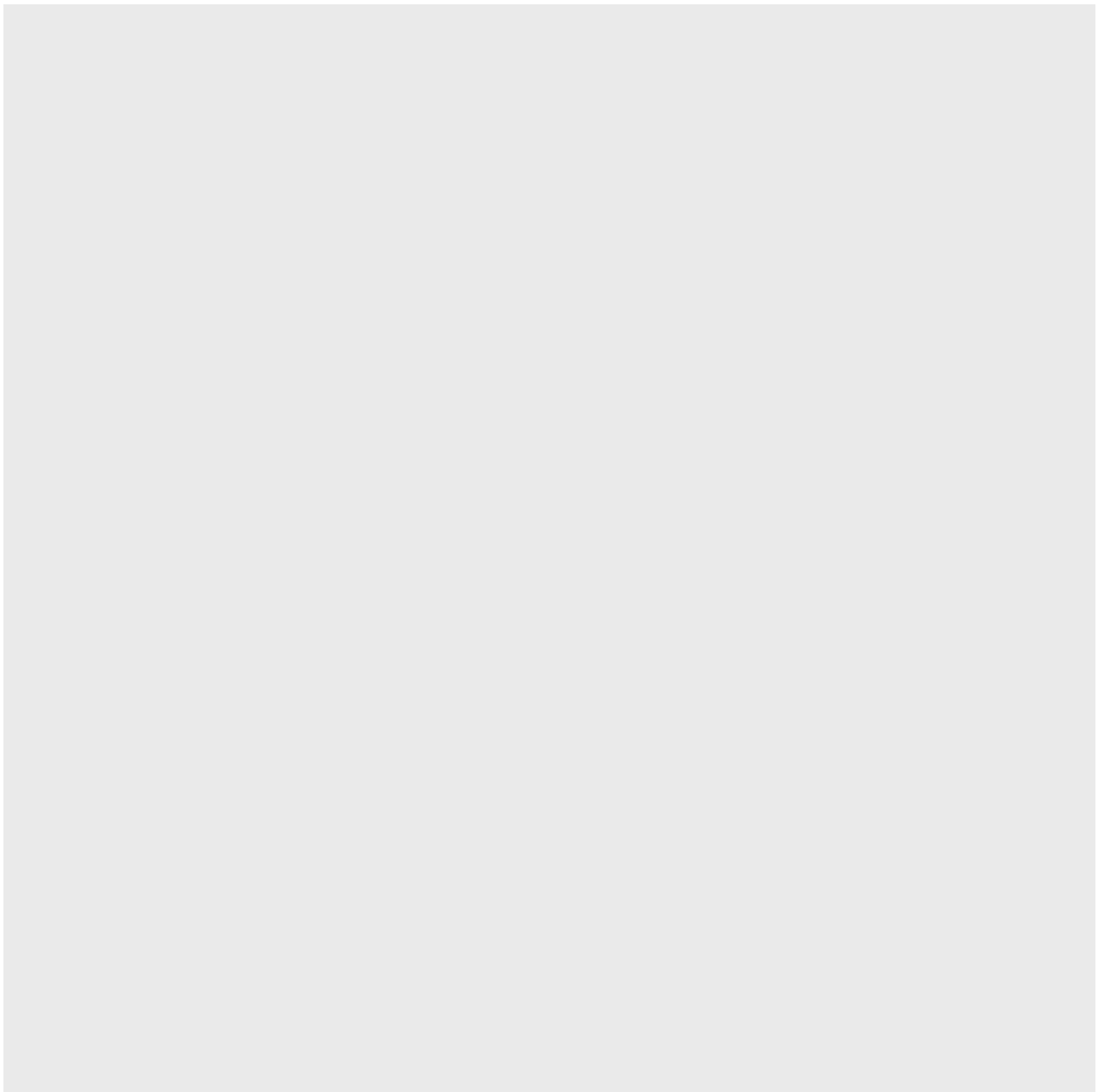
For travellers with eight-hour or more stopovers, take advantage of LA's ever-improving public transit system. A great option to kick off the car-free journey is by using the FlyAway bus service, which provides frequent non-stop transportation between LAX and locations throughout the city. Find the bus on the Lower/Arrival Level underneath the green "FlyAway, Buses and Long Distance Vans" signs.

Downtown Los Angeles: The FlyAway goes to Union Station in Downtown LA Tickets are priced at US\$8 for a one-way fare. From there, visitors can take Metro buses and trains to various points throughout the city. The Metro has a free [iPhone app](#), which shows arrival times, maps, alerts and more. Bus route maps are also available at the airport. Across the street from

Union Station is the historic Olvera Street, home to authentic and delicious Mexican restaurants, including new comer Chiguacle, which touts the "ancestral flavours of Mexico," the new Italian American Museum of Los Angeles, street vendors and much more.

Other highlights in Downtown LA include exploring LA LIVE, a sports and entertainment district that surrounds STAPLES Center and Microsoft Theatre. This district is also home to restaurants, bars and the Grammy Museum.

About a mile and a half from LA LIVE is The Broad, Downtown LA's newest contemporary art museum, which offers free admission. Adjacent to it sits the world-renowned Walt Disney Concert Hall by Frank Gehry that offers free docent-led guided tours. Across the street from The Broad is the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles also called MOCA. This is LA's first museum dedicated to only contemporary art.



The Broad, Downtown LA's newest contemporary art museum. Photo / 123RF

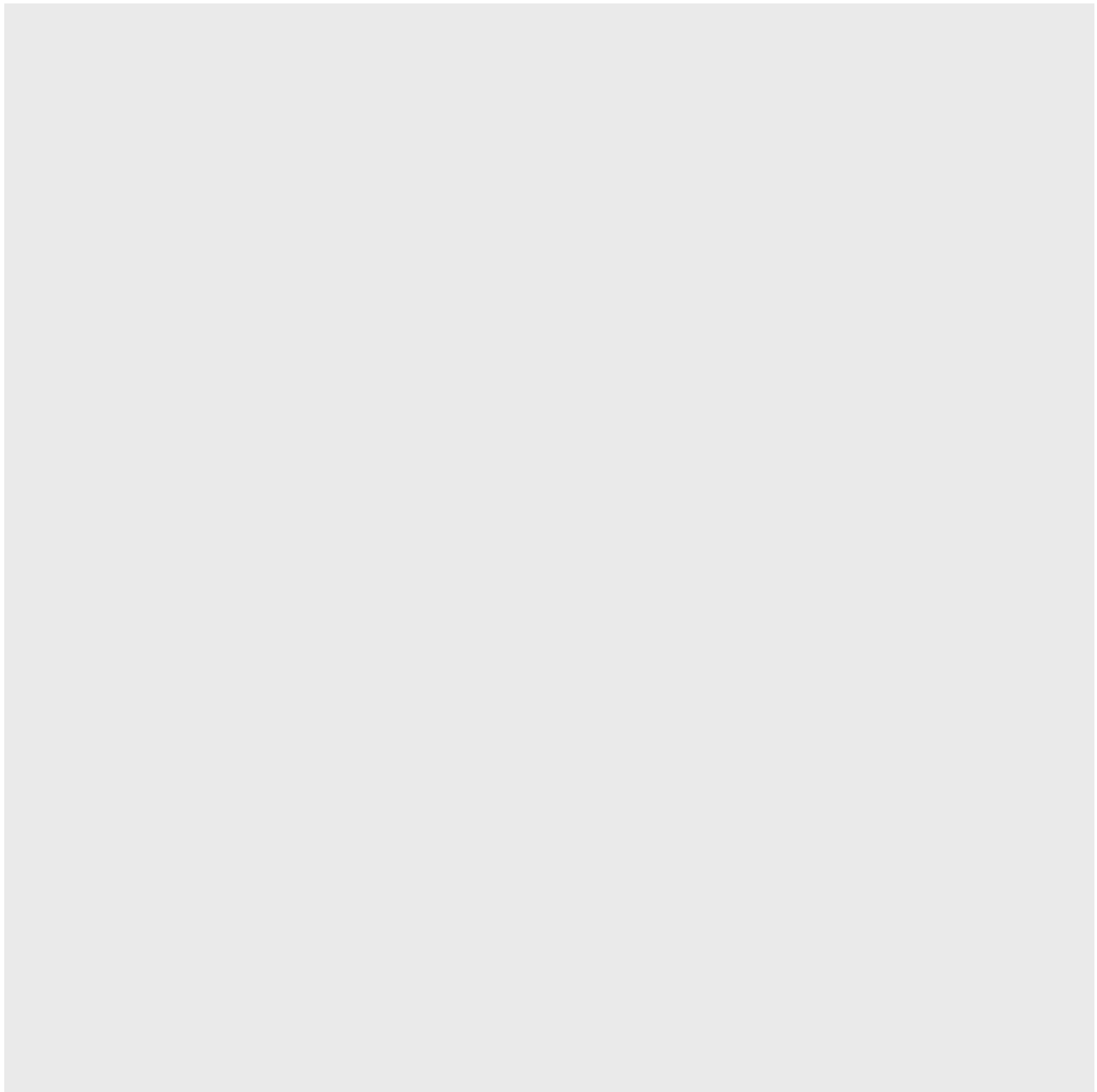
For the foodie, Downtown LA is home to many notable culinary offerings including [Grand Central Market](#), [Baco Mercat](#), [B.S. Taqueria](#), and [71Above](#) that not only offers diners a delectable menu, but gorgeous views of LA from the 71st floor at the US Bank Building. Visitors who want to take in views of LA's Skyline while enjoying a drink can stop at popular rooftop bars located at [The Standard](#), [Ace Hotel](#) and [Perch](#).

The Arts District is another area to enjoy while in Downtown LA. It is a creative hub with community spaces catering to the young, creative, and inspired. It is also home to breweries, independent coffee shops, museums, street art murals, restaurants and retail.

Hollywood: Travellers who have their eyes set on Hollywood have two car-free transportation options. The FlyAway offers a comfortable bus service for an \$8 one-way ticket. The bus drops off one block south of Hollywood Boulevard. Or, if coming from Downtown LA, the [Metro Red Line](#) from Union Station to Hollywood is about a 20-minute ride. Visitors can get off at the Hollywood and Highland station and be in the heart of Tinsel Town.

Explore [TCL Chinese Theatre IMAX](#), get a picture with Darth Vader and explore the theatre's courtyard with its famous cement footprints and handprints of Hollywood's favorite celebrities from Marilyn Monroe to George Clooney. Just around the corner is the Dolby Theatre at [Hollywood & Highland](#), which is the home of the Academy Awards. Visitors can take pictures of the Hollywood Sign, the Hollywood Walk of Fame and then walk over to Madame Tussaud's wax showcase of celebrities.

For those who get hungry along the way, restaurant options in Hollywood include [Paley.](#), located at Columbia Square, the birthplace of the Golden Age of Hollywood, and the meat-centric [Gwen](#) by Chef Curtis Stone. Visitors can also stop at [Yamashiro](#)—a Japanese restaurant tucked away on Sycamore Avenue that offers unbeatable views or to [Musso & Frank](#), the oldest restaurant in Hollywood known for its killer martinis.



The Hollywood Walk of Fame. Photo / 123RF

For another stunning view of the city, visitors can walk to one of Hollywood's hotels, [Mama Shelter](#) and check out their newly opened rooftop lounge featuring a 360° view of the Hollywood, Downtown Los Angeles and the Westside.

Visitors can also explore with [L.A. City Tours](#), which offers specific LAX Layover excursions that show off movie stars' homes, Hollywood and other LA iconic sites and include pick-ups from LAX. Other not-to-miss iconic architectural gems include [Hollyhock House](#) and [Stahl House](#), which also offer tour options.

For those with a few hours to fill, hop back on the Metro Red Line from the Hollywood and Highland Station for one stop north to Universal City. Experience how movies are made on the Universal Studios Hollywood tour and see the backlot of movie sets, not to mention exciting attractions such as The Wizarding World of Harry Potter.

Overnight Layovers

For layovers that creep into the wee hours of the night, travellers can rest in comfort and style at [Sheraton Gateway Los Angeles](#). The hotel completed its second phase of multi-million-dollar renovation with sophisticated upgrades to their 802 guestrooms and suites as well as the hotel lobby area and Sheraton Club. Travelers who upgrade to the Sheraton Club have access to the lounge 24/7 and are provided with complimentary continental breakfast, evening hors d'oeuvres and panoramic views of LAX.