



Santa Monica History

- 1542 Juan Rodriquez Cabrillo drops anchor in Santa Monica Bay.
- 1769 Father Juan Crespi – a Franciscan in Gaspar de Portola’s expedition party – names the area after Saint Monica.
- 1770 Saint Monica’s fertile open country remains under Spanish rule.
- 1828 Mexico, free of Spain, divides the area into three expansive land grants called Rancho San Vicente y Santa Monica, Rancho Boca de Santa Monica and Rancho La Ballona.
- 1850s Santa Monica becomes a lively winter playground for well-to-do East Coasters; commercial opportunities boom
- 1872 Col. Robert S. Baker of Rhode Island purchases 38,409-acre Rancho San Vicente y Santa Monica for \$54,000; wife Dona Arcadia de Baker buys what is now Pacific Palisades for \$40,000.
- 1874 Nevada Senator John Percival Jones, regarded as the founder of Santa Monica, purchases control of Rancho Santa Monica for \$162,000.
- 1875 Santa Monica takes shape; Colonel Baker and Senator Jones plot the city’s physical layout, including ample parks.
- 1875 Senator Jones donates 26-acre Palisades Park to the city; the first residential lot sells for \$300. The seaside sanctuary’s population grows to 1,000 in nine short months.
- 1887 The city of Santa Monica is incorporated – all 8.3 square miles.
- 1888 Senator Jones’ famous ‘Miramar’ mansion is built on the city block of Ocean Avenue in a site that was originally slated for a grand hotel; the landmark Miramar Moreton Bay Fig Tree marks the estate’s location today.
- 1893 Santa Monica’s mile-long wharf is built; the city bustles as the major port of call for Los Angeles until 1903.
- 1909 Santa Monica’s famed pier, the old pleasure pier on the West Coast, opens, drawing an international crowd of enthusiasts.
- 1920 Santa Monica is home to Hollywood’ “A listers” and wealthy East Coasters; population soars to 37,000.



- 1922 Humorist Will Rogers acquires 345 acres in Rustin Canyon and builds a horse ranch and polo field for fellow players Spencer Tracy, Robert Montgomery and Walt Disney.
- 1924 Senator Jones' mansion becomes the grand Miramar Hotel
- 1926 William Randolph Hearst builds Marion Davies a palatial, Georgian-style mansion on Will Rogers State Beach.
- 1934 Muscle Beach ignites an international fitness craze on Santa Monica State Beach.
- 1955 Santa Monica inherits Will Rogers' 345-acre State Historic Park.
- 1980s Santa Monica becomes a hotbed for world-class dining; two first-class beachfront hotels debut and draw international acclaim.
- 1989 Third Street Promenade opens, welcoming up to 7,000 visitors daily.
- 1999 Massive beachfront redesign marks the millennium, including the rebirth of legendary Muscle Beach, renovation of Palisades Park and debut of two new beachfront hotels, the last properties to be built along Santa Monica's shoreline.
- 2007 Santa Monica Travel & Tourism celebrates its 25-year anniversary.
- 2009 The Santa Monica Pier celebrates its centennial anniversary.
- 2010 Santa Monica Place reopens after an extensive remodel as one of the top luxury malls in the country.
- 2013 Tongva Park, a seven-acre park with majestic views of the Pacific Ocean, opens in the heart of Santa Monica.
- 2015 Santa Monica launches its Breeze Bike Share program, the first-ever bike sharing program in the Los Angeles region.
- 2016 Metro's Expo Light Rail 6.6-mile extension to downtown Santa Monica connects Santa Monica to greater Los Angeles by rail for the first time in over fifty years. The new, adjacent Colorado Esplanade opens concurrently, connecting the new Expo Light Rail Station to the Pier, Ocean Avenue, and Palisades Garden Walk Park with a reconfigured public space designed to expand bicycle and pedestrian facilities and to improve landscaping and public art features.