

HOLIDAY ISSUE

SOUTHERN

CALIFORNIA LIFE

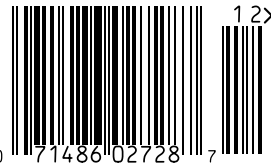
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THE HOOD



# THE MANY FACES OF MONICA

BY LINDA LANG / PHOTOS COURTESY OF SANTA MONICA TRAVEL & TOURISM

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:**  
1. The 5-acre site upon which the Annenberg Community Beach House now sits was originally developed by William Randolph Hearst for actress Marion Davies. 2. Goods, a tiny shop on Ocean Park Blvd., carries a curated selection of handcrafted artisan goods from around the world. 3. The Pico Branch Library offers free access to computers, the Internet, and the library's many electronic resources including its online catalog. 4. Just a short walk from downtown, Montana Avenue is home to some 150 merchants and restaurants.



**IT MAY BE ONE CITY BUT IT HAS MULTIPLE PERSONALITIES** — eight to be exact — in an area spanning just 8.3 square miles. Connected by famed boulevards and wide tree-shaded streets frequented by joggers, bikes, sports cars and convertibles, each embraces its own character and attractions.

Together, they offer everything from high-end department stores, exclusive designer boutiques, upscale home décor and art galleries to resale shops, locally-made artisan goods, entertainment venues, farmer's markets, and a wide range of innovative restaurants. And then there are the historic landmarks, airport, pier, Santa Monica College, and, of course, three and a half miles of sun-drenched, white-sand beach with bike paths, volleyball courts, restaurants, surfing and fishing spots.

### DOWNTOWN & THIRD STREET PROMENADE

The promenade has emerged as a premier open-air pedestrian shopping and foodie paradise. Covering three car-free blocks, it's anchored by upscale **Santa Monica Place** — home to Nordstrom, Bloomingdale's, Nike, Kate Spade New York, ArcLight Cinemas, and others and the end of the new Expo line connecting to Santa Monica to the westside and downtown Los Angeles.

The **Wednesday Farmer's Market** at Arizona Avenue and 2nd Street features fresh produce and goods from over 75 farmers, making it one of the largest grower-only Certified Farmers Markets in California. On Saturdays at the same location is a second very popular market with over 60% of the produce sold organically grown.

Downtown is also home to the historic Georgian Hotel and legendary Fairmont Miramar Hotel frequented over the decades by President Bill Clinton and other notables. Adjacent to the Miramar, **The Bungalow** with its cozy lodge-style rooms and spectacular ocean views is one of the most popular gathering spots for the young crowd.

### MAIN STREET

You immediately notice a slower pace where early morning surfers like to breakfast leisurely while others choose to jog or bike ride before work. The eateries are also a bit laid back. Local favorites include **Aussie Pie Kitchen** where Food Network Chopped TV show champ chef Joe Youkhan has reinvented the Australian meat pie, and **Enterprise Fish Company** which has served daily-caught mesquite-grilled fish for 37 years. For dessert fans, **Three Twins Ice Creams** presents the widest selection of organic ice cream in the country with a portion of all proceeds donated to saving rain forests and other habitats.

Among the many independently-owned shops along Main Street are **Mindfulness** which offers jewelry, accessories and art by local designers and artists. **Lost & Found** has one store carrying clothing and accessories from independent designers and a second offering home goods crafted by local and global artisans. If you're into buying or selling collectibles, **Angel City Books & Records** has a great selection of classic literature, vintage music and a gallery of work by local artists.

### MID-CITY

**Mid-City**, home to several large entertainment companies, is the arts and entertainment hub. **Bergamot Station**, a former railroad depot, houses a number of art galleries including one of the largest contemporary art collections in Los Angeles. The **Broad Stage** at Santa Monica City College has become one of the city's most popular theatrical venues. Mid-City is also where you'll find premium sports equipment at **Bay Street Boards** staffed by lifelong surfers, and **Rip City Skates** where skateboarders have hung out since 1978 after Santa Monica turned the sport into a popular craze.

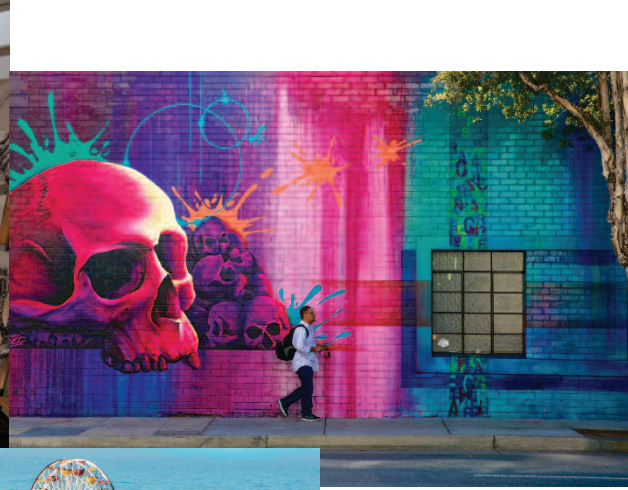


“DOWNTOWN IS ALSO HOME TO THE HISTORIC GEORGIAN HOTEL AND LEGENDARY FAIRMONT MIRAMAR HOTEL FREQUENTED OVER THE DECADES BY PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON AND OTHER NOTABLES.”



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** 5. Shops boldly exhibit distinctive artwork along Main Street. 6. The Broad Stage at Santa Monica City College has become one of the city's most popular theatrical venues. 7. Winding biking and jogging paths and volleyball courts offer lots of fun in the sun. 8. Farmer's Market at Arizona Avenue and 2nd Street is one of the largest grower-only Certified Farmers Markets in California. 9. The city was named after Saint Monica whose statue stands watch in Palisades Park. 10. Top quality coffees, savories and sweets are 18th Street Coffee House specialties. 11. The Third Street Promenade has emerged as a premier open-air pedestrian shopping and foodie paradise.





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

12. The Bungalow, next to the Miramar Hotel, is one of the hottest gathering spots for the young crowd. 13. Pacific Park® on Santa Monica Pier offers 12 thrill rides including the world's only solar-powered Ferris wheel. 14. Wilshire Boulevard has a number of graffiti murals. 15. Iconic Santa Monica State Beach on the north side of the pier connects to the city via a series of bridges, walkways and stairs. 16. The "Whale of a Mural" by Daniel Alonzo is one of the striking murals along Ocean Park Blvd. 17. Upper West on Pico, which feels like a Tribeca loft with 28-foot ceilings and chicly-lit extended bar, is known for its happy hours and roasted veggie burgers. 18. Primo Passo, the casual coffee lovers spot on Montana Avenue serves top-notch beverages in a modern, minimalist setting with shaded sidewalk seating.



## OCEAN AVENUE AND SANTA MONICA PIER AREA

Ocean Avenue is best known for the official end of Route 66 and

108-year-old **Santa Monica Pier** with its solar-powered Ferris wheel and Pacific Park's amusement rides and games. You'll also find lots of diverse, oceanfront restaurants along with tanned bodies, surfers, and body builders to observe while dining or meandering along the beachfront.

The pier has also seen its share of ups and downs and has barely escaped demolition several times. Following a complete renovation in 1996, an amusement park was added along with the aquarium, and the deck became a popular venue for outdoor concerts, movies and other entertainment. KTLA also televised the first live variety show from here in 1948 starring western musician Spade Cooley and his band.

## WILSHIRE BOULEVARD

One of the most renowned streets in Southern California, **Wilshire Boulevard** starts at Ocean Avenue and adheres to a pretty straight path to its end in downtown L.A.. It passes **Douglas Park** with its lawn bowling green, reflecting pools, picnic tables, playground, and tennis courts. The boulevard is also lined with fine dining spots including **Mélisse**, the elegant five-star restaurant owned by two-star Michelin chef Josiah Citrin. You can also build your own Hawaiian poke bowl at **Spinfish Poke House** or order one of their signature bowls. Into chocolate, banana split or churro waffles? **Bru's Waffle** reinvents breakfast classics.

The area is also known for its designer consignment shops as well as stores like **Johnnie-O**, a stylish men's boutique offering beachwear, polo shirts and oxfords. For those looking for the perfect shoe fit, **New Balance** carries hundreds of styles fitted by trained professionals.

## OCEAN PARK BOULEVARD AND SANTA MONICA AIRPORT AREA

Southeast of the pier is **Ocean Park Boulevard** with its coffee shops, boutiques, art galleries and just to the east, **Santa Monica**

The **Buffalo Club** on Olympic is known for its American menu of small plates as well as main dishes served in the supper club-style Iroquois Room or Garden Courtyard. **Bay Cities Italian Bakery and Deli** is a popular spot for imported wines, cheeses, gourmet goodies and great sandwiches.

## MONTANA AVENUE

Although just a short walk from downtown, **Montana Avenue** seems far removed from all the activity around the pier and promenade. Home to some 150 merchants and restaurants, there's Artisan chocolatiers John and Kelly's award-winning boutique, **John Kelly Chocolates**; **Limonaia's** handcrafted home goods, jewelry and goods from around the globe; and **Shopaholic Sample Sales** which carries trendy designer clothing for gals at discounts of 50 to 80 percent. Popular eateries include **Father's Office**, a gastropub founded by chef Sang Yoon of TV's Top Chef Masters fame that serves tapas, salads and burgers. And then there's **Sweet Lady Jane**, the café and bakery that twice made the list of "Oprah's Favorite Things."

For those seeking to further their personal well-being, **Mighty Pilates** offers more than 75 classes weekly while **Yogaworks**, which is home to some of the country's most influential yoga teachers, offers classes for all ages and experience levels.



## THE HOOD

**Airport.** An active airport for private jets, it's also home to the **Museum of Flying** housing some 24 aircraft, a flight simulator, and interactive area. Adjacent is the **Spitfire Grill** also filled with World War II and Douglas Aircraft memorabilia. Antique collectors also frequent the bi-monthly **Santa Monica Airport Outdoor Antique & Collectible Market**, where you can find some rare treasures at pretty good prices. The **Ruskin Theatre** at the airport is also considered one of the best off-the-beaten-path playhouses in L.A.

Nearby is 17.9-acre **Clover Park** with picnic tables, BBQ grills, playgrounds, baseball diamond, softball and soccer fields, volleyball, tennis courts and a 15-station par fitness course. Ocean Park Boulevard, funky and diverse, has its own local vibe, eclectic restaurants, and trendy boutiques — especially the shopping scene at 18th Street.



## PICO BOULEVARD

One of the most ethnically diverse neighborhoods is along **Pico Boulevard**, another major street connecting the city to downtown L.A.. On the south side of Santa Monica, Pico is alive with activities at Santa Monica College's performing arts venues and planetarium, award-winning dining, clothing boutiques, record stores, art galleries and a smaller Saturday farmers' market.

Here you'll find **Piero Selvaggio's Valentino**, one of the nation's most acclaimed Italian restaurants, and **The Upper West** with innovative cuisine by talented 31-year-old chef Nick Shipp. Situated in Shutters on the Beach is **Coast**, an ocean-view restaurant with patio dining serving regional and Mexican items. For casual dining, **The Brixton** gastropub offers comfort food and brews.

For vintage-inspired dresses, leather jackets and novelty gifts, check out **Brat. Chris + Mary** is another laid-back shop stocking high-quality home goods, accessories, and clothing made by local artisans. There's also small Farmer's Market at Virginia Park with live music on weekends.

Explore and enjoy! ❖



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