

CLOCKWISE FROM THIS IMAGE: Loll by the pool at the Silver Lake Pool & Inn; You'll be in soda heaven at Galco's Old World Grocery; Pick up a vintage treasure at historic Highland Park (also opposite, top left); Erewhon lures in LA's wellness disciples with its wholesome beverages.



48 HOURS IN
LOS ANGELES

Elizabeth Whitehead looks beyond the Hollywood sign to discover LA's true character in its lesser-known neighbourhoods.



PHOTOGRAPHY ELIZABETH WHITEHEAD (GALCO'S FACADE & OWNER JOHN NESE, HIGHLAND PARK VINTAGE STORE); YURI HASAGAWA (HIGHLAND PARK NEIGHBOURHOOD); M MCGREGOR (EREWHON); JENNIFER CHONG (HERMOSA BEACH); ANGEL ORRIGI (PUPPET THEATRE)

DAY ONE

Los Angeles is one of the USA's most sprawling cities, but many visitors rarely venture beyond Hollywood and Santa Monica. To experience the city's true character, leave the Hollywood sign behind and eat, play and wander your way through LA's eclectic neighbourhoods. Each has its own distinct personality, from Silver Lake's mid-century architecture to Highland Park's offbeat charm and the South Bay's palm-lined promenades that will have you humming 'California Dreamin'.

8AM Wake up at the luxurious **SILVER LAKE POOL & INN**, a boutique hotel that feels like a desert oasis crossed with a mid-century modern time capsule. Think vintage leather furniture, warm woods and sun-faded turquoise accents that evoke the golden age of American roadside motels.

9AM For breakfast, walk straight past **EREWHON**, bustling with wellness devotees lining up for their morning ginger shots, and keep strolling to **MILLIE'S CAFE**. A local institution, Millie's serves classic American diner fare with a Mexican twist. The huevos rancheros, loaded with zesty guacamole, is great fuel for a day of exploring.

10AM Get your bearings on a Mid-Century Modernism Tour of Silver Lake with **ARCHITECTURE TOURS L.A.** Led by a local guide, you'll visit the historic buildings that give LA its unique identity, from sleek MCM masterpieces by Richard Neutra and Rudolph Schindler to quirky Space Age diners. The tour transforms Silver Lake into an open-air museum, where you're uncovering architectural gems hidden in plain sight.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Soak up LA's coastal culture at Hermosa Beach; John Nese serves up 700 varieties of soft drink at his nostalgic soda store; Find out firsthand why Bob Baker Marionette Theater is making puppetry cool again.

1.30PM Eating at a taco truck is an LA must. They're not hard to find – there's one parked on virtually every corner. Look for a truck with a line at the window, and be sure to load up your plate with salsas, pickles and coriander at the self-serve condiment bar.

2.30PM Uber 20 minutes to **HIGHLAND PARK**, one of LA's oldest neighbourhoods. Spend the afternoon perusing the vintage stores and, when you're all shopped out, head to **GALCO'S OLD WORLD GROCERY** to refresh with a soda. You'll be spoilt for choice: owner and soda enthusiast John Nese has curated around 700 different soft drinks from all over the world. It's quirky, it's kitschy and very LA. Browse shelves stacked with nostalgic sweets and hundreds of sodas, or create your own custom soft drink blend in store.

4PM Make your way down the road to the **BOB BAKER MARIONETTE THEATER** to catch a puppet show. Don't be fooled, this isn't just for kids! This beloved LA institution is the longest-running marionette theatre in America, and perfectly epitomises the playful spirit of LA. The theatre even had its own performance slot at Coachella this year – if that's not a stamp of cool, what is? >>





6PM Head to **HIGHLAND PARK BOWL**, the city's oldest bowling alley. Lovingly restored by the 1933 Group, it features vintage timber lanes and leather booths that preserve the venue's century-old character. Settle in for burgers, beers and bowling into the night.

DAY TWO

9AM Time to check out. Head straight for the ocean and drop your luggage at **THE PORTOFINO HOTEL & MARINA** in Redondo Beach – the perfect spot to explore LA's underrated South Bay region. Known for its laid-back beach culture, this stretch of coastline offers the beachy charm of Santa Monica, sans crowds.

9.30AM Start the day with a cup of joe at **EAT AT JOE'S**, a beloved Redondo greasy spoon that's been serving up hearty American food since 1969. Try the diner's signature 'John Wayne special' – eggs served atop a mountain of home fries and smothered in Spanish sauce.

10.30AM Pick up an e-bike from **BEACHSIDE BIKE & E-BIKE RENTALS & REPAIRS** close to the Redondo Beach Pier, and cycle along The Strand, a 35-kilometre promenade that stretches all the way to Santa Monica. The route is quintessential LA: palm trees,

locals rollerblading past and people playing volleyball on the sand.

1.30PM Return your bike and head to **QUALITY SEAFOOD INC** a few feet away, a long-standing market on the boardwalk that boasts one of the largest selections of live seafood on the West Coast. Wander between seafood counters piled high with oysters the size of your palm and crab claws ready to be cracked open and dunked into ramekins of cocktail sauce. If you're feeling adventurous, try the sea urchin poke bowl or steamed periwinkles.

4PM Bar-hop around neighbouring **HERMOSA BEACH**, taking in sparkling ocean views from the top floor of **HENNESSEY'S TAVERN** or kicking back on the patio at **PALLMILLA COCINA Y TEQUILA**, a Mexican restaurant and bar known for its margaritas and Baja fish tacos.

6.30PM Walk down to **THE COMEDY & MAGIC CLUB** to catch a show. This longstanding venue has played host to many comedy legends, and you'll still find Jay Leno performing here most Sunday nights.

9PM End the night on a high at **BARNACLES BAR** across the road, a casual haunt that's always buzzing. **IT**

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:

Try for a strike at the city's oldest bowling alley; Highland Park is known for its colourful shops and atmosphere; Discover the South Bay region from the oceanfront Portofino Hotel & Marina; You can cycle The Strand from Redondo Beach all the way to Santa Monica; Take a break to enjoy the waves – and people watch.



PHOTOGRAPHY: ELIZABETH WHITEHEAD (HIGHLAND PARK STREETSCAPE); DANIELLE BERNABE (BOWLING ALLEY)