L.A. Bound: The Ultimate Guide to Moving to Los Angeles

by Erica Wernick
LA BOUND
THE ULTIMATE GUIDE
to moving to los angeles

by ERICA WERNICK
Dedicated to all of my friends and family for their unconditional support, ENTND, and this grand city of opportunities and creativity.

Mention of specific companies, organizations, or authorities in this book does not imply that they endorse this book or its author.

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All photos by Erica Wernick with the exception of Joshua Shernoff, for the Friends couch.
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SOME PHOTOS OF PLACES AROUND LA

CONGRATS!
INTRODUCTION

Moving to Los Angeles is quite an adventure.

When I look back on my experience five years ago, when I moved from Philadelphia to fulfill my dream of being a Graphic Designer for TV, I remember thinking it was no big deal; I was just packing my things in boxes and hopping on a plane. But my oldER (don’t you dare call me old), wiser, currently settled self now thinks, “HOLY CRAP, ERICA! I CAN’T BELIEVE YOU DID THAT!”. Seriously, think about it: I’m sleeping on my sister’s best friend’s sister’s couch, with no clue how to find an apartment besides stalking Craigslist, and no job, and 3,000 miles away from basically everyone I had ever known in my life. It is an incredible achievement that I eventually found my way. The whole process of moving here is dependent on so many factors, like knowing how the city is laid out. Like the freeways. I will never try to take the 405 from Culver City to Burbank in rush hour again. NEVER AGAIN! Or finding an apartment. “What do you mean I have to drive by the area?? But the apartment looks amazing on Craigslist, it HAS to be in a nice area....oh....THAT’S why it’s so affordable, there are homeless people camping out in front” *You learn these things quickly, but man, it would have been SO nice to learn them BEFORE living through them*

And then something happens when you live in Los Angeles. Everyone who also wants to move here somehow flockes to you. It doesn’t matter if you have been here for 6 months or 6 years, you will get these emails and phone calls: “My coworker’s son wants to move to Los Angeles, can he call you?” “My neighbor’s friend’s cousin is moving to Los Angeles, do you have any advice?” And if you are a lovely, nice, beautiful, awesome person who wants to pay it forward, you’ll answer their questions and then put it all in a book.

Living in LA can be a roller coaster. Fortunately, I have met amazing people, and found incredible work. Wanting to be a graphic designer in the entertainment industry sounds much easier than trying to be an actor or a writer, but that’s really not the case. Breaking into any industry is difficult, and it can be a slow process of finding success. I will never forget my first day on a sound stage, on a studio lot, chatting away with Eric McCormack. I couldn’t believe I was talking to Grace’s BFF Will and he was commenting on our similar names! “Erica? Oh, that’s easy to remember, I’m Eric.” Who am I and what am I doing here?? This is amazing (and Eric McCormack is super nice and professional, if you’re wondering).

That rush of excitement makes everything worth it. When you really love what you do, this crazy LA adventure is par for the course. When you find yourself on the set of *Entourage*, watching Adrian Grenier shoot a scene, you’re like, “This is OK. The Ramen noodles and grilled cheese weren’t so bad as long as it led to hanging out at E’s house.”

Since that first conversation with Eric McCormack, I have been incredibly lucky to have worked on shows like *Glee, The Office, The Middle*, and *Revenge*, and films like *The Five Year Engagement*. Watching Jason Segel film a scene is as great as it sounds. Seeing your graphics behind him is even better!

So if you read this book, you will get to work with Jason Segel. Maybe. Ok, fine, that may not be your exact outcome, but you will be that much closer to your dreams AND have saved stons of time you can in turn devote to those dreams. Did I mention money? You will also save thousands of dollars by doing things the right way the first time. (Hey, want to throw me a few bucks? No? Bueller?)

This is the guide that I wish I had when I moved to LA. Real, honest information from people who have lived through it. All of the recommendations are tried and trusted. I explain the logistics of how to literally get your ass out here so that your experience of moving to LA is effortless, and parking ticket-less!! (I’m actually really excited to help give birth to a new generation of new-to-LA people who won’t get parking tickets. I know, I’m changing the world, one dreamer at a time.)

Now, go! Read this book! Keep it with you at all times and embrace this incredible city. And make sure to let me know how it goes! laboundguide.com, erica@laboundguide.com.
While moving to Los Angeles is often a spontaneous adventure, it is smart to prepare the logistics. Trust me, you will be SO much happier if you put a little bit of time into planning your move. It will ease your fears (and your parents’), and give you a head start in finding success in the City of Dreams.
VISIT LA FIRST

“I’m sure I’ll like it, it will be just like ‘The Hills’!”
Q: **It looks glamorous and beachy, won’t I like it?**

A: *I hope so! But everyone is different…*

People think they know Los Angeles without ever having stepped foot in the Pacific Ocean. They see LA represented on television, or they hear from friends how wonderful it is. But none of that matters. It doesn’t matter if your cousin tells you you’ll love it, or if the Kardashians make it look glamorous. What matters is you. Period. You are the one who will be living in this city, so you are the one who needs to like it. And there is no better way to figure that out than to visit. For more than 3 days.

Most people who move to LA have a love/hate relationship with the city. They love all that California has to offer including the lifestyle, the weather, and the opportunities. But people hate traffic. And they hate being thousands of miles away from their families. So, you need to experience the city for yourself and see which part outweighs the other. I personally love LA and plan on being here forever. The traffic and distance are small consequences in comparison to all of the incredible things you can’t really do anywhere else in the country. **But Los Angeles is not for everyone.**

I have a friend who moved to LA from New York, without ever having visited before. He found an apartment, furnished it, and within 30 days decided he hated it here and went back to New York. *Save yourself this trouble!* Figure out if LA is a good fit before moving your life across the country. If you love living in New York, chances are you wouldn’t love living in LA, and vice versa. Sunshine effects people in a myriad of ways.

My advice would be to first make sure LA is the right place for you. I hear a lot about people moving back home because LA wasn’t their speed, or it was too hard to do what they wanted to do.

*Melissa F.*  
From Philadelphia now lives in Hollywood Hills East

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### GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR FIRST DATE

*If you’re looking to score, you have to put in the time.*

1. **TAKE A TRIP LONGER THAN 3 DAYS**

   Don’t think of this visit as a vacation. Think of this trip as getting to know the city as a resident. Sure, you can do some touristy things, but try grocery shopping, and grabbing brunch, and other activities you would take part in daily if you lived here. Stay on a friend’s couch instead of a hotel. It will give you a more realistic feel than being on vacation. Three days is not enough time to experience LA as a resident. If possible, stay 5-10 days.

2. **PLAN AROUND BLACK OUT DATES**

   Don’t schedule your visit for June or December. Los Angeles basically shuts down for Christmas, for a good 2-3 weeks. It’s a ghost town. And June is when many people take vacations. You want to make sure your contacts aren’t on hiatus when you visit.

3. **SCHEDULE INTERVIEWS**

   Since you will be researching your line of work as per Chapter 5, set up interviews and meetings with the contacts you’ve made. Even if a company is not hiring, ask if you can meet with them anyway, show them your portfolio, or take them to coffee. This town is all about networking, so start networking your butt off! Not only will it build your business relationships and increase your chances of being hired, you will also be forced to find your way around the city.

4. **RENT A CAR**

   Unless you have a friend who will allow you to borrow their car, you should rent one. If you aren’t old enough, or can’t afford to, ask a friend to show you around. As you will read in Chapter 8, getting around LA is an adventure in itself, so why not buckle up and enjoy the ride? Drive around all different parts of the city to get a feel of the freeways and the traffic, and the sights. Keep this book with you and check out all of the neighborhoods in Chapter 7. You’ll want to see the places in which you could potentially live.
“I hear stories of people moving to LA with $10 and a car.”
LOGISTICS OF MOVING COSTS

Q: HOW MUCH MONEY DO I NEED TO MAKE THE MOVE?

A: $5,000 to $6,000

As much as I would love to tell you that you can get by with $1,000, that just isn’t feasible. Without even considering your travel costs, you will need at least $3,000 as a bare minimum to live. If you have relatives or friends who can help support your move, that is fabulous. (Be VERY appreciative!!) But for those of you who are on your own, you need to consider these initial costs:

RENT
- first month’s $1000
- last month’s $1000
- security deposit $500
- application fee $30-$45/app.

TRAVEL (FLYING)
- ship car $600-$1200
- one way plane $140-$400

TRAVEL (DRIVING)
- drive cross country $1000

COUCH SURFING
- utilities pitch in $50/mo.
- rent pitch in $250/mo.

FOOD
- groceries $20-$40/wk.

GAS
- fill up $3-$4.50/gal.

DON’T FREAK OUT!

It will all work out! People have been making this move for years, and without this guide! You are ahead of the game.

Part of me was glad I didn’t have a lot of cash because it kept me hungry to find a job.

- Justin V.
  FROM PLEASANT GAP, PA
  NOW LIVES IN HOLLYWOOD

Remember, these are just averages. Your costs may be more, they may be less. Some apartments will ask for a higher security deposit, and some may not ask for last month’s rent. There are always ways to cut corners, but these costs cover the bulk that is relatively non-negotiable. If you stay on a friend’s couch for 2 weeks or less, they may not ask you to contribute anything financially. Trader Joes is amazing for saving money on groceries. Gas is probably your biggest daily cost considering you will be driving around town looking for jobs and a place to live.

- Alex F.
  FROM PHILADELPHIA
  NOW LIVES IN HOLLYWOOD HILLS EAST
PLAN A

place to

CRASH

“Surf’s up, dude.”

- Surfers
Q: **WHERE DO I LIVE UNTIL I FIND AN APARTMENT?**

A: **couches and/or friend's places**

As you will read in chapter 6, it is much easier to find an apartment when you are actually in Los Angeles. You need to be here to find a decent place. Yes, that means moving to LA without exactly having somewhere to live. Before you freak out about that, read on! I will explain three ways you can easily plan alternatives until you find an apartment. Also, **EVERYONE** goes through this. Sleeping on someone’s couch is like a right of passage. That means a) most people will let you crash because they had to do it when they moved here, and b) you should feel part of the LA family!

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**PLAN YOUR LA VISIT CLOSE TO YOUR MOVE TIME**

As I mentioned in Chapter 1, you should plan to visit LA before moving here. If you already know you are going to move here no matter what, you can use that visiting time to find an apartment. Try visiting a month or two before you plan on moving. If you find a place you like on your visit, you can book it and have it waiting for you when you make the move. It’s easier to do this with larger corporate complexes than smaller buildings, but if you time it right, it can work (most apartment leases start on the first or 15th of the month). Then you can bypass the whole couch sleeping phase!

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**1. CRASH WITH A FRIEND OR A FRIEND OF A FRIEND**

When I first moved to Los Angeles, I crashed on the couch belonging to my sister’s best friend’s sister whom I had never met. And she was a life saver! As long as the connection is through someone trustworthy and you can make an agreement ahead of time, this is a really great way to spend your first couple of weeks in LA while you look for your own place. Many people here like to pay it forward from their first moments in town, so don’t be afraid to ask.

If you plan on spending more than two weeks, you should offer financial compensation worth a portion of their rent and/or utilities. I know people who have stayed at a friend’s place for 1 week all the way up to two months. Make sure you keep the communication open so as to not overstay your welcome. Before you know it, their couch will be a distant memory and you will be opening up your home to the new generation of hopeful Angelenos!

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**2. COUCH SURFING WITH STRANGERS**

If you don’t know anyone in LA when you move, you can couch surf with strangers who offer their homes with two great websites: couchsurfing.org and airbnb.com. There are countless reviews and ratings for each person offering, so it’s not a completely blind connection. Everyone I know who has used these sites have had really awesome experiences, many that turn into friendships—and it’s always good to have more friends in a brand new city! Here is a little more info on the sites:

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‘Are you asking me to have a Frienaissance?’
— Phoebe Buffay
LOGISTICS OF GETTING TO LA

Q: SHOULD I DRIVE CROSS-COUNTRY?

A: why not?!

There are two ways to physically get to los angeles. You can ship your car and fly one way, or you can drive your car cross country. If you don't have a car, you can fly and ship whatever items don't fit on the plane. There are benefits to each option, and so much depends on timing and the condition of your car. When I moved to LA, my car was super old, so it was safest not to put it through a 3,000 mile road trip. Here is a breakdown of your options:

I would definitely recommend road tripping it, and doing it with a really great person who isn’t in a hurry, and up for doing things that you normally don’t get to do. Like driving 30 miles out of the way to see the world’s largest prairie dog, a five legged cow, or a really wonderful national park.

- Camden S.
  FROM VIRGINIA
  NOW LIVES IN
  WEST HOLLYWOOD

SHIPPING YOUR CAR

If you don’t have a person who is able to drive with you across the country, or you have a car that may not be able to take the long drive, shipping your car is a great option. Here are some helpful tips:

COST // $650-$1100, depending on distance and sedan/SUV
$150-$450 for one-way flight

TIME // 3-14 days, depending on distance

PACKING YOUR STUFF // Only put items in the trunk (for safety and weight), and nothing valuable like jewelry, important documents, navigation systems, etc.

RESOURCES // Check out shipanycar.com for helpful information
Make sure your shipping company is licensed and insured.

NOTE: You will definitely need a car wash when you receive your car in California. It will be filthy as hell!

DRIVING YOUR CAR

If you like playing the license plate game, then driving cross-country is a much more fun option. You can take your time over a week and stop at landmarks all over the United States, or you can go quickly to save money. Either way, find a friend to go with you! It will make the adventure more enjoyable, and take the driving pressure off of you. Driving 8-12 hour days is grueling enough, so split the time.

COST // $1000 - $3000, depending on distance and stops

TIME // 2 - 10 days, depending on distance and stops

PACKING YOUR STUFF // When you drive, you can pack whatever you can fit in your car. Just be careful about leaving a packed car (with visible items) in parking lots.

RESOURCES // Check out aaa.com for helpful information. There are also plenty of great trip ideas online, just do a search!

NOTE: Whether you ship your car or drive it out here, don’t stress about fitting all of your stuff in the car. You can always ship items via the post office/UPS/FedEx for roughly $1 per pound.
RESEARCH YOUR LINE OF WORK

AKA BE PREPARED TO work your butt off

“I’m like, really good looking. So I’ll probably be famous when I move to LA.”

— People. Way too many people.
DREAMS AREN’T USUALLY FREE

Q: I’M TALENTED. ISN’T THAT ENOUGH?

A: no (99% of the time)

In a town of who-you-know, what-you-do only gets you so far. LA is about networking and working hard. Talent is half the battle; the other half is diligence. I know, the last thing you want to do after spending 4+ years studying, is working hard and doing more homework. But a brilliant friend of mine says, “It’s not about being lucky. It’s about being prepared when luck comes your way.” Plus, the beauty of the situation is that hard work weeds people out. Be the strong and successful while the weak make more room for you! Wake up early! Get your mocha-frappa-latte-whatever and take your head start before the bazillions of competition sitting around Los Angeles! And you lucky freaks, it won’t even be that hard for you because you’re reading all of my secrets right now. Try some of these techniques that I used to land my dream job:

1) THE INTERNET HAS ALL THE ANSWERS

I hate to be that old person who wonders in amazement over that thing called the Internet, but seriously—what did we do before Google?! Everything you ever wanted to know can be found from a Google search (or at the very least, an online book *cough* ebooks *cough*). So get out your digital devices and start searching! Research your line of work: how it’s done in LA, who does it, where it’s done.

For example, if you’re looking for an advertising job, find out where the best ad agencies are, what the companies do, and who the best creatives are in LA. Or if you’re an actor, find out what the best casting agencies are, where to find open calls, and how to book an acting class. All of the information you can soak up beforehand will set you apart from the lazy “like, really good looking” people.

WORK THE SHIT OUT OF SOCIAL MEDIA!

Facebook, Twitter, Linked In, and even IMDb are incredible resources for connecting with people in your industry. So start tweeting!

2) TALK TO PEOPLE WHO ARE ALREADY DOING IT

The only resource better than the Internet is people. People who have already found success in your line of work. Find these people and email them. (But please don’t stalk celebrities.) Ask them what path they took and what advice they may have. Ask specific questions that pertain to your industry. Compliment their success. You may send 50 cold emails and only receive 2 responses. But all it takes is one. If you’re really lucky, you may even find a mentor.

SAMPLE EMAIL

Dear Successful Graphic Designer in TV/Film,

Hello! I just watched “Entourage” and really enjoyed your graphics in Season 6. It must be so great to see your work on screen!

I recently graduated from the Tyler School of Art with a BFA in Graphic Design, and I would love to do what you do. Designing graphics for film has always been a dream of mine, but I am confused about the process of finding a job. Do design companies make the graphics? Is this a freelance gig? Where can I search for job listings?

Any advice you may have is greatly appreciated. Looking forward to seeing more of your work in future films!

Best,
Erica Wernick

It may feel weird to randomly contact someone you don’t know, but sending an email is a lot less scary than calling someone on the phone, so take advantage of the confrontational buffer. The information you may get from one response will far outweigh feeling weird for 10 minutes. If you do get a response, follow up! Please don’t forget to thank them for their time, and follow through with keeping in touch. Send a resume, a reel, a portfolio. This is how I landed my first several jobs. From one response.

Q: OK, BUT HOW DO I FIND THE EMAIL ADDRESS?

Refer back to #1. Google. Facebook. Linked In. IMDb. Union/organizational websites for your industry. When you can’t find an email, send through social media. DM. PM. Whatever it takes! This simple preparation will put you leaps and bounds ahead of your competition, and will jump start your success in finding work.
Throw any preconceived notions out the window and be prepared to be surprised by what this city can offer you. It can be really trying, but can be really rewarding, too.

- Stephanie S.  
FROM VIRGINIA  
NOW LIVES IN  
WEST HOLLYWOOD

TELL EVERYONE YOU MEET WHAT YOU WANT

Not to be hoaky and hippy, but put it out in the universe. Talk to anyone and everyone about what you want to do. Put it out there, and it will come back to you. I am speaking from experience. Besides the hoaky universe stuff, think of it literally: the more people you talk to, the better chance you have of finding someone who can help you. The more conversations you generate about it, the more you will learn what it takes to get there. I told anyone and everyone that I wanted to get in the union as a Graphic Designer. People would give me little tips here and there, and then BAM! I got into the union several years before most people. Obviously some people won’t care or won’t want to hear it, but there are nice people out there who may give you little bits of information that you can string together to form some bigger answers.

By the way, when I say everyone, I’m including your mom. Yes, moms and cousins and friends can be very helpful when they have a neighbor who has an uncle who works in Los Angeles. It may not always work out, but it is definitely worth the effort to make the connection. It helps to know someone, and it’s always less nerve-racking to contact someone you have an ‘in’ with (even if it’s, “Hey, my cousin’s friend Mary told me to contact you.”) as opposed to cold calling. *Shout-out thank you to my mom!

Web Gods how to move to LA!

LA Bound: The Ultimate Guide to Moving to Los Angeles #1 Best Seller www.laboundguide.com
Everything you need to know about moving to Los Angeles in this #1 Best Selling ebook.

How to move to LA! A Handy Guide www.laboundguide.com
Seriously, this book has anything you ever wanted to know about making the trip to living in lala land...

How to move to Los Angeles - The Only Book You Will Ever Need www.laboundguide.com
Did we mention how great this ebook is? Yes? Well, here it is again. The answers to all of your questions!
GET YOUR BUTT OUT HERE like, asap

"I'm so excited! I'm so excited!
I'm so....scared...."

- Jessie Spano
THE PERFECT TIME DOES NOT EXIST

Q: BUT DON'T I NEED A JOB FIRST?

A: no!

Everyone seems to think you need a job set up before you move to Los Angeles. I get it. It's far, it's scary, and people like security. But having security in LA is like having filet mignon for dinner in college: it's a pretty rare occurrence that only really happens when your parents buy it for you.

If you wait for all the stars to align, you may never make it here. The longer you wait for the 'perfect time', the longer you push off the opportunities that await you. Obviously, some planning is a good idea, i.e. Chapters 1-5. But if you sit around and plan forever, your dreams will be snatched up by the people who took a chance. Your chance.

LA is the kind of city where you just need to be here; whether it's searching for an apartment, or a job—especially if you are coming out for the entertainment business. It is a fast industry. People are hired one day after getting a call. You want to be in LA when that call comes.

"I know a lot of people who are stalling their careers by waiting for a job before moving out, which I think is a mistake. If this is the city you want to be in, or the industry you want, you just have to make it happen."

- Camden S.

FROM VIRGINIA

NOW LIVES IN

WEST HOLLYWOOD
Ok, you want reasons? I’ll give you reasons:

1. You can’t get an apartment without being here.
   Apartments go FAST! Especially the good ones. And you do want a good one, right? Unless you have a friend you trust, already in LA, who is able check out places for you in person, it just won’t happen. You also want to be able to drive by places and gauge the safety factor.

2. You can’t get an entertainment industry job without being here.
   You think apartments go fast? Entertainment jobs go even faster. If someone gets fired, or leaves a job in the industry, there are hundreds of people lining up to fill it. In an instant. People that are here in LA, able to start tomorrow. Sometimes you only get 1-2 days notice to start a job. Also, if you want to work in production, you may be hired as a PA. PAs have to run around town picking up lunch and dropping off dailies. You need to know how to get to these places. You need to know the city.

3. It’s very difficult to get a non-industry job without being here.
   A very wise teacher once explained this theory: companies don’t want to hire you for a permanent (as opposed to temporary) position if you are not already living in the city in which they are located because they don’t want to be responsible for the emotional repercussions that come along with uprooting your life to a brand new city. What if you take the job, make the move, and end up hating LA? Or, can’t stand to be away from your family or a significant other? A company doesn’t want to deal with that fallout. They just want to hire someone reliable. They have a company to run, and that is their priority.

4. You won’t be able to maintain new networking relationships.
   If you did any research in your field (you will after reading Chapter 5) and reached out to professionals, they will probably forget you if you wait a year to move. LA is full of big dreamers, so there are countless people who will seize your professional mentor when you are not here. Finding work in LA relies so heavily on who you know, so you want to be in their face, not 3,000 miles away in an email.

Just do it. It may take a few months to get familiar with the city and get on your feet, but it will be an incredible adventure.

- Annabelle R.
  FROM BOSTON
  NOW LIVES IN
  LOS FELIZ

The main thing is to make the main thing the main thing.

- Stephen Covey
  AUTHOR OF
  "THE SEVEN HABITS OF HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE"
Finding your bearings once you land in LA seems like a relatively simple task—except for the fact that you may be so freaked out/excited/scared/overwhelmed that you won’t know where to begin. The next few chapters will guide you through all of the logistics, and possibly save your life (or your sanity).
WHERE THE HELL SHOUL I LIVE?

“I need a place that’s safe, and nice, and hip, and by the beach but in the center of everything, oh, and cheap, please!”
NEIGHBORHOOD BREAKDOWN

Q: Describe each neighborhood in 3 words

1. **HOLLYWOOD**
   - A: central, trendy, artistic
   - AVG RENT: STUDIO / $1000; 1 BDR / $1150; 2 BDR / $2000
   - Hollywood is the most central location with easy access to freeways and lots of cool bars and restaurants. Tourists, and more tourists. Clubs. Bragging rights to say you really live in “Hollywood”. Just do a drive by first because a few parts are a little shady.

2. **HOLLYWOOD HILLS EAST**
   - A: hollywood sign, slightly hipster, b-list celebs
   - AVG RENT: STUDIO / $1100; 1 BDR / $1250; 2 BDR / $2200
   - Hollywood Hills East is quiet(er). It is mostly residential, but just a few blocks from restaurants. Hang out in Franklin Village where you may run into Kristen Bell or Steven Tyler. Bragging rights to say you live in “The Hills” under the Hollywood sign. Plus, I live here. Clearly, it rocks.

3. **LOS FELIZ**
   - A: green, quiet, restaurants
   - AVG RENT: STUDIO / $1000; 1 BDR / $1300; 2 BDR / $2100
   - Los Feliz is pretty much as east as you want to go. It’s a few minutes farther than Hollywood Hills East, more green than most places (home to the famous Griffith Park and Observatory), and a really great strip of restaurants. It’s quiet and pretty safe.

4. **SILVERLAKE**
   - A: hipster, hipster, fun bars
   - AVG RENT: STUDIO / $1000; 1 BDR / $1250; 2 BDR / $2100
   - Ah, Silverlake. Home of the hipsters. Really great houses up in the hills. Awesome bars to hop to and from. Super close to Dodger Stadium. Intelligentsia Coffee. If you like your skinny jeans, this is the neighborhood for you.

5. **WEST HOLLYWOOD**
   - A: trendy, gayborhood, restaurants
   - AVG RENT: STUDIO / $850; 1 BDR / $1300; 2 BDR / $2000
   - WeHo, as we like to call it, is LA’s finest gayborhood. No easy freeway access, but if you live near any of the main streets (Santa Monica Blvd, Melrose Ave, Sunset Blvd), you can walk to many restaurants and bars.

6. **DOWNTOWN**
   - A: urban, lofts, up and coming
   - AVG RENT: STUDIO / $1050; 1 BDR / $1300; 2 BDR / $1900
   - Downtown is the only part of LA that really looks like a “city”; tall buildings, walkable streets, plenty of Starbucks. Most 20 to 30-somethings do not live here when they first come to LA, some parts are pretty sketchy. But it is up and coming. A ton of lofts. Home to the Staples Center and Nokia Live.

7. **MIRACLE MILE, MID WILSHIRE**
   - A: The Grove, midtown, Wilshire
   - AVG RENT: STUDIO / $1000; 1 BDR / $1300; 2 BDR / $2100
   - These are both the same to me. Whenever someone mentions one of these areas, I swear they use these names interchangeably. It’s south, closer to West LA, near the fabulous Grove shopping.

---

**SPEAK LIKE A LOCAL! SOME NOTES FOR FITTING IN**

Some common street names are hard for people (& navigational systems) to pronounce:

- Cahuenga // CUH-WENG-UH
- La Cienega // LA-SEE-EN-EH-GUH
- Sepulveda // SIH-PULL (accent here)
- Barham // BAR-UM

We, as Los Angelinos, say some words incorrectly. Don’t ask, just join us, will you?:

- Los Feliz // LOS FEEL-EZ

We put the word “the” in front of our freeway numbers:

- 405 // THE 405
- 101 // THE 101
- 10 // THE 10
- 5 // THE 5

*Use the 405 as infrequently as possible. It’s nicknamed “the parking lot”

**NOTE:** Pink numbered circles indicate most popular places to live when first moving to LA, according to a study I conducted.
HANCOCK PARK
A: affluent, beautiful, tree-lined
AVG RENT: STUDIO / $1500; 1 BDR / $2150; 2 BDR / $3200
Ugh, Rossmore Avenue. SWOON. Hancock Park is a super nice area where the apartments are huge and beautiful and quite expensive. You may not be able to afford living here in your first year in LA, but driving down Rossmore to “ooo” and “ahh” is always free.

SHERMAN OAKS
A: suburban, quiet, families
AVG RENT: STUDIO / $900; 1 BDR / $1150; 2 BDR / $1700
The good ol’ Sh’oaks. I wouldn’t recommend going any farther in the valley than here. It’s a great suburban neighborhood that is close to Malibu, but it’s about 20+ minutes (40 in traffic) from all the Hollywood happenings.

STUDIO CITY
A: suburban, young, somewhat affluent
AVG RENT: STUDIO / $1100; 1 BDR / $1250; 2 BDR / $2100
Studio City is definitely the hippest part of the valley. If you want to be in the valley, I would suggest here. It has a younger vibe with some cool restaurants/bars, but still a suburban feel if the “city” scares you.

NORTH HOLLYWOOD
A: artsy, affordable, sometimes sketchy
AVG RENT: STUDIO / $800; 1 BDR / $1000; 2 BDR / $1700
NoHo is the artsy part of the valley. Many people move here for their first place because it is super close to Hollywood and the rent is much cheaper. But you want to do a drive-by. Half of NoHo is awesome, but the other half, you probably shouldn’t walk alone at night.

BURBANK
A: residential, quiet, families
AVG RENT: STUDIO / $1000; 1 BDR / $1150; 2 BDR / $2000
Burbank is the closest to Hollywood, being the very first exit off the 101. It houses big studios like Warner Brothers and Disney. Family oriented, cheap rent, and very safe. You can even check out Porn Star Karaoke on Tuesday nights at Sardo’s. Like real porn stars. Singing karaoke. YES.

GLENDALE
A: clean, safe, middle class
AVG RENT: STUDIO / $1000; 1 BDR / $1150; 2 BDR / $2000
My first apartment was in Glendale (see below). Glendale is another suburban part of the valley that is totally safe. Even though I no longer live in Glendale, I still go there all the time for shopping (great mall with free parking), and The Americana at Brand (which is a less touristy version of The Grove - pretty outdoor shopping).

10-14: THE VALLEY Over the hill, 5° warmer, suburban

MY FIRST APARTMENT IN GLENDALE. I LOVED IT! IT WAS QUIET AND SAFE. BUT IT WAS FAR FROM EVERYONE, SO I EVENTUALLY MOVED TO HOLLYWOOD HILLS EAST.
BEVERLY HILLS
A: affluent, manicured, extravagant
AVG RENT: STUDIO / $1400; 1 BDR / $1600; 2 BDR / $2500
Beverly Hills is exactly what you think it would be. Gated communities, highly manicured greens, outrageous real estate. Not the best spot for a first place; not only because of the expense, but also because of the traffic. It can be difficult to get in and out of the 90210.

WESTWOOD
A: college town, bordering affluent, Diddy Riese
AVG RENT: STUDIO / $1000; 1 BDR / $1450; 2 BDR / $2300
Westwood is where UCLA lives. The residents are mostly undergraduate and graduate level college students. It’s close-ish to the beach, but sort of far from everywhere else. And Diddy Riese is so delicious, it was worthy of a descriptive word! You pick your cookie, you pick your ice cream, and BAM! You have a sandwich made in heaven.

CULVER CITY
A: quaint, active, cool westside breeze
AVG RENT: STUDIO / $900; 1 BDR / $1350; 2 BDR / $1800
If you get a job at Sony Studios, live here! (Or if you want to be near the beach, but not actually at the beach.) Culver City has an awesome “Downtown” area with restaurants and bars and a movie theater. It’s a little rough around the edges, but up and coming.

SANTA MONICA
A: beautiful beach, expensive, touristy
AVG RENT: STUDIO / $1200; 1 BDR / $1400; 2 BDR / $2250
I love Santa Monica. It is a beautiful beach town. You’ve got the famous Santa Monica Pier and the Third Street Promenade. That being said, it can get QUITE congested. Good luck finding parking. Tourists flock to Santa Monica, but the locals seem to know where to go.

NOTE: The beach towns are a far distance from Hollywood, so trips to and from won’t happen frequently. If you have a job in Hollywood, and live in Santa Monica, it may take you 1+ hrs to get there.
VENICE
A: beach town, laid back, artsy
AVG RENT: Studio / $1100; 1 BDR / $1250; 2 BDR / $2000
Venice is right next to Santa Monica, and yet has a very different feel. It is more laid back, more artsy (really amazing First Fridays art walk on the first Friday of every month), and sometimes a little sketchy. Venice makes me think of Muscle Beach and skaters and a few loose cannons.

MANHATTAN BEACH, HERMOSA, REDONDO
A: beach town, laid back, energetic
AVG RENT: Studio / $1400; 1 BDR / $1650; 2 BDR / $2250
These 3 beaches are very close to each other, and great places to live if you want to live at the beach. They are laid back, beautiful, and full of young, active 20 to 30-somethings. Redondo has a more suburban feel, Hermosa is a little fratty, and Manhattan is slightly more upper class with young families. There also may be a few cougars lurking around Manhattan Beach, so beware.

HOLY CRAP, THAT IS A LOT OF NEIGHBORHOODS!
Yes, LA is very spread out and every neighborhood is very different from each other. But don’t freak out! It is important to remember that your first place doesn’t have to be permanent. Some places allow 6-month leases. Even if you sign a year lease, you will be surprised at how quickly one year passes. So, if you get a place in Hollywood and hate it, you can always move.

HOW THE HELL DO I FIND AN APARTMENT??
Here are some great websites to check out

CRAIGSLIST
losangeles.craigslist.org FREE
Craigslist is always my go-to. I have found great success with Craigslist (even a roommate). Of course, you have to be careful with strangers, but in terms of apartments, almost every other rental search website also lists on Craigslist, so it is a legitimate way to find housing. And hey, it’s free! Start looking now to get an idea of what’s available.

WESTSIDE RENTALS
westsiderentals.com $60
I know a ton of people who have used Westside Rentals. It is a great place to look because it’s a site that connects landlords with tenants. The downside is that it costs $60 for a 60-day membership. If you already have a roommate, you can split the cost. The site is always up to date, and even offers discounts on services such as cable.

THE RENTAL GIRL
therentalgirl.com FREE
I love The Rental Girl because it is divided into general parts of town with a different Rental Girl assigned to each part. There aren’t that many listings for each area, but they list thorough descriptions, including video tours. They also have a great blog full of helpful information.

ZILLOW
zillow.com FREE
Zillow is awesome. I’m on the iPad app daily. Mostly for fun, but also to check out prices in my area. It gives you a nice visual by using the map to present places. Make sure you have the “For Rent” filter applied.

NOTE: Some places ask for $500 security deposit, some ask for 1st month’s and last month’s rent, so be prepared.
“To get ahead quicker in Hollywood, always take Fountain.” - Bette Davis
Yes, traffic in LA really is that bad. But you can do one of two things: 1) freak out and complain; or 2) learn how to live with it, and acquire some great podcasts or music. Many Angelenos choose #1 all the time, but #2 will be a more pleasant way to live.

Much of your experience with traffic in LA will rely on the proximity of your working location to your living location. So, if at all possible, try to live close to where you work. If you rarely need to leave your neighborhood, you will rarely have trouble with traffic.

That being said, there will be times when you need to drive across town. In those times, you just need to be prepared! In my early naive days, I tried to drive from Playa del Rey to Burbank on the 405 in rush hour. F THAT! Where was this book then?? Here is everything I wish I knew when I moved here:

**THE FREQEWAYS OF LOS ANGELES**

101
*Ventura/Hollywood Freeway*
Take this in and out of Hollywood, South towards Downtown, or North to the Valley. You can also take it all the way to Malibu.

110
*Harbor Freeway*
Take this Downtown. You can also take this to other freeways such as the 105 or the 10 to get to the beach or the airport. But beware of rush hour. It gets really messy where the 110 meets the 101.

170
*Hollywood Freeway*
Take this to more parts of the valley from the 101. Usually not too bad.

405
*San Diego Freeway*
Take this ONLY IF YOU HAVE TO!!! The 405 is one of the busiest freeways. You can take this to the beach (Santa Monica) and the Westwood area. Just make sure to check the traffic before you leave. The 405 is nicknamed 'the parking lot'. When part of it was shut down for construction, the closing was appropriately named CARMAGEDDON.

Welcome to LA :)

10
*Santa Monica / San Bernardino Freeway*
You can take the 10 down to the beach (Santa Monica, Venice, any beach that is south) from Hollywood. I use the 10 a lot because you can take surface streets to it if the other freeways are backed up.

105
*Glen Anderson Freeway*
The 105 takes you to the airport and Hermosa/Manhattan/Redondo Beaches. It's usually not bad once you get on it, but depending where you are coming from, you may have to take a few freeways to get there.

5
*Golden State Freeway*
Take the 5 to Glendale/Burbank/towards Pasadena from Los Feliz.

134
*Golden State Freeway*
The 134 goes to Glendale. You can get on it from the 5 or the 101.

Note: Most freeways follow the odd/even rule in which odd numbers run North and South, even run East and West. There are exceptions, of course. In the Valley, the 101 also runs East and West, and the 105 also runs East and West.
**THE PCH (PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY)**

**Pacific Coast Highway**

The most beautiful highway. This is the one you see in all the movies when a character is driving in Southern California. The PCH runs parallel to the ocean. You can take it all the way up to San Francisco. Within Los Angeles, you can use it for a scenic ride to any of the beach towns. Even if you get stuck in traffic, the view makes it worth while!

**NOTE:** *FREEways are FREE!! Tolls would make traffic much worse than it already is. Our once existing carpool lane is turning into a “fast” lane, in which you need to pay for a pass. I have yet to figure out how it’s worth the payment.*
GET TO KNOW YOUR NEW BFFs!

Websites and apps that will save your life. Or just save you time.

WAZE

waze.com FREE
This app is AMAZING and I didn’t know it existed until I wrote this chapter. Use it as your navigation and listen in amazement as it takes you around any traffic jam, accident, long light, etc. It knows EVERYTHING and the estimated travel time is spot on. Waze will save you.

SIGALERT

sigalert.com FREE
I use this all the time because it is visually simple. You can view the maps (red for traffic, green for no traffic), or search a specific freeway where it will list the average MPH for each exit. Cross-check with other apps because it isn’t always accurate.

GOOGLE MAPS

maps.google.com FREE
If you’re checking directions before you leave the house, Google’s traffic can be helpful. It isn’t always up to the minute accurate, but gives you a general idea.

ALWAYS CHECK TRAFFIC BEFORE YOU LEAVE!

Some trips may require 4 freeways. These apps will help you decide which to take. Remember, you can always take surface streets to almost anywhere in LA, so don’t lean on the freeways as your go-to. Just don’t take Santa Monica Blvd. during rush hour. Use Bette Davis’ advice and take Fountain!

TIME TRAVEL: LA TRAFFIC IS A WHOLE NEW WORLD

Sometimes, it’s as if time is standing still. I mean, you’re not moving, so the clock must also be stuck. Right? Plan ahead with these general rules:

3 MILES // 15 - 25 minutes
8 MILES // 30 - 60 minutes
TO THE BEACH // From Hollywood, plan 1 hour
TO/FROM THE VALLEY // Traffic flows into the valley at the end of the work day, into Hollywood at the start of the day. Against traffic could take 20 minutes. With traffic could take 1 hr 20 min.
AWARD SEASON // Beware of Hollywood and Highland in Hollywood. Streets are often closed off for movie premieres and the Oscars. This sounds exciting, until you are driving through it.

OK, BUT PUBLIC TRANSIT EXISTS, RIGHT?

BUS / SUBWAY / TRAIN

metro.net $1.50 / SINGLE; $5 / 1 DAY PASS; $20 / 7-DAY; $75 / 30-DAY
Public transportation is pretty weak in LA. But it does exist, and if you need to use it, you can make it work. Unfortunately, the subway/train does not have many stops, and the bus can take forever, so it is best to live near a bus or train stop if you don’t have a car. The neighborhood with the most access is Downtown. It is a hub with connections to all of the subway/train lines. Taking public transportation may increase your commute time from 25-50%, so plan accordingly. Check out the Smart Ride app at smartrideapp.com for nearby stops and arrival times. While having a car is certainly more conducive in LA, public transportation is always an option. I have friends who have mastered it, so you can too!
Once you figure out parking, it isn’t too bad.
Most people get parking tickets in their first year of living in Los Angeles. And they are not cheap. (Start at $60) But you have this guide. So you can learn from my mistakes.

Check the signs. Re-check them. Take pictures of them. They can be confusing as hell, but here are the common restrictions:

Street Cleaning: Usually 2 days a week for a 2-hour period. Each side of the street is a different consecutive day (i.e. one side Monday from 10am-12pm, the other side Tuesday from 10am-12pm)

Permit Parking: Some streets are only for residents of that street.

Restricted Hours: Some residential streets only allow 2-hour parking. Other streets allow parking from 8am-8pm or to 12 midnight. This indicates which hours you must pay the meter. If a sign says “8am-8pm” that means you don’t have to put money in the meter after 8pm.

In some neighborhoods, you can’t park overnight; some you can’t park at all. And some streets don’t allow left turns during rush hour. Just look for signs. Every time. You will be totally fine if you take your time to read them. Set an alarm in your phone for an extra reminder.

Driving in LA sounds annoying as hell!
It’s just a given about LA. Traffic sucks. Parking sucks.
You will quickly learn that people who live on the east side or north will rarely go to the beach just because it will take forever to get there. And those who live in the South Bay will rarely come up north. LA is very spread out. People don’t like to leave their neighborhoods. But if your neighborhood kicks ass, it’s really no big deal. You can venture out for special occasions. Or a Tuesday at 11am.
BECOMING A RESIDENT

“Does this mean I need to start rooting for the Lakers?”
GETTING YOUR CA LICENSE

Q: DO I HAVE TO TAKE A DRIVING TEST AGAIN?

A: yes, just the written portion

Taking the written driving test is just one of the annoyances you need to deal with when you move to LA. Technically, you are supposed to get a new license within 10 days of moving here, and register your car within 20 days. Because of the hassle and the fees, many people wait much longer than 10 days ("cough* 3 years *cough"). If you get pulled over for not having California plates, let the cop know that you are just in town visiting. And then go register as soon as possible! Check out dmv.org for helpful information about the rules and regulations.

You do have to take the written portion of the driving test to obtain a California license. YES, you need to study. There are random CA laws you may not know without reviewing the material. But don’t worry, it’s not rocket science, and there are practice tests on the website: dmv.ca.gov/pubs/interactive/tdrive/exam.htm Many people are cocky and think they don’t need to study, and then they almost always fail! If you fail, you have 2 more chances to take the test again. So save yourself some time and take those practice tests.

Q: DO I NEED A SMOG CHECK?

A: yes

A smog check tests the pollutants that come from your car. I’m sure you have heard of the smog problem in Los Angeles, and yes, it really exists. To protect LA, your car needs to be tested every 2 years. Don’t worry about your car passing—my 1999 Nissan Sentra passed when I moved here. Some vehicles are even exempt from the test: hybrids, electric cars, gas powered vehicles from 1975 or older, motorcycles, trailers, etc. For more info on smog tests, check out dmv.ca.gov/vr/smogfaq.htm#BM2536

Schedule an appointment with the DMV online. It reduces your wait time from hours to minutes! 

- Alex F.
FROM PHILADELPHIA
NOW LIVES IN
HOLLYWOOD HILLS EAST

WHAT YOU MUST PAY TO BE A REAL ANGELENO

These costs are annoying, but something you just need to take care of:

LICENSE // $32. If you fail the test, you can take it again for free 2 more times

PLATES & REGISTRATION // $100-$450, a lot of variables you can calculate here: dmv.ca.gov/wasapp/FeeCalculatorWeb/index.jsp

REGISTRATION RENEWAL // $46-$450 every year, varies on car

SMOG TEST // $60 every 2 years, smogtestonly.com offers $10 off if you visit their website or Yelp page

CAR INSURANCE // too many variables to list a specific number, but you must provide proof within 30 days of registration
MAKE SOME FRIENDS

you’ll need them on this ROLLER COASTER

“Aren’t all the people in LA fakes or flakes?”
There is a misconception about the people in LA: people are fake, full of Botox, and only pursue relationships that will help get them ahead. I’m not saying these people do not exist in Los Angeles—check out Beverly Hills, some tend to hang out there. However, the biggest point that people seem to forget is that most people in LA are not from LA. They are from all the cities and towns you are from. People migrate from all over the world to live and work in this amazing town. So you will meet all types of people, many of them being pretty effing awesome.

Between jobs and just exploring your brand new home, you will meet tons of people. But if you want to speed up that process, here are three great ways to make friends:

1. **Collegiate Alumni Groups**

   College groups are an incredible way to meet people. So many universities have alumni associations in major cities. LA is full of them. Ask your college, do a Google search, or look for a Facebook group. You don’t need to attend any stuffy events—many groups just get together at a bar to watch your team in sporting events. It’s a nice relaxed atmosphere in which to meet new people. I have met most of my friends this way and these are people that I never knew in college!

2. **Kickball/Dodgeball**

   I know it sounds silly, but it’s actually awesome. You can sign up with friends, or join a team of people you don’t know. Games are once a week for roughly 10 weeks with socializing at a nearby bar after every game. And no, you don’t need to be athletic. It’s kickball. You played it when you were 10, you can play it now! Almost every 20–30-something I know is in this league. So get kickin’! kickball.com and kickball.com/dodgeball

3. **Hometown Bars**

   People LOVE to support their hometowns when they are far from home. There is something so cool about cheering on the Eagles with people who get me, 3,000 miles away from Philadelphia. An immediate bond forms and you suddenly have a place to go to for Thanksgiving! (People usually only fly home for Christmas.) And these bars cater to your city, usually because the owner is from that city. So you can expect to see sports memorabilia and city-specific food. Here is a list of bars to get you started:

   **Baltimore // Ravens**
   - The Parlor
     - 7250 Melrose Ave
     - Los Angeles CA 90046
     - 323.930.2100
     - thewestwingla.com
   - The Poopdeck
     - 1272 The Strand
     - Hermosa Beach CA 90254
     - 310.376.3223

   **Boston // Patriots**
   - Sonny McLeans Irish Pub
     - 2615 Wilshire Blvd
     - Santa Monica CA 90403
     - 310.449.1811
   - The Little Bar
     - 757 S. La Brea Ave
     - Los Angeles CA 90036
     - 323.937.9210
   - The Poopdeck
     - 1272 The Strand
     - Hermosa Beach CA 90254
     - 310.376.3223

   **Chicago // Bears**
   - Tinhorn Flats
     - 2623 W Magnolia Blvd
     - Burbank CA 91506
     - 818.567.2470
   - Rush Street
     - 9546 W Washington Blvd
     - Culver City CA 90232
     - 310.837.9546
   - Trip
     - 2101 Santa Monica Blvd
     - Santa Monica CA 90405
     - 310.396.9010

   **Dallas // Cowboys**
   - Yankee Doodles
     - 1410 3rd St Promenade
     - Santa Monica CA 90401
     - 310.394.4632
   - Yankee Doodles
     - 1410 3rd St Promenade
     - Santa Monica CA 90401
     - 310.394.4632
   - Yankee Doodles
     - 1410 3rd St Promenade
     - Santa Monica CA 90401
     - 310.394.4632

   **Buffalo // Bills**
   - Bushy’s Sports Bar
     - 3110 Santa Monica Blvd
     - Santa Monica CA 90404
     - 818.567.2470

   **D.C. // Redskins**
   - Joxer Daly’s Irish Pub
     - 11168 W Washington Blvd
     - Culver City CA 90232
     - 310.838.3745

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**Q: Will I like anyone in LA?**

A: yes!
Invest time and energy in what you’re passionate about and the right friends will find you.

- Alex F.
  FROM PHILADELPHIA
  NOW LIVES IN
  HOLLYWOOD HILLS EAST

Compared to NYC, I have found LA to have a better pace of life. People are more friendly and open.

- Annabelle R.
  FROM BOSTON
  NOW LIVES IN
  LOS FELIZ

<table>
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<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Bar/Restaurant</th>
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<td>DENVER // BRONCOS</td>
<td>Brennan’s Pub</td>
<td>4089 Lincoln Blvd Marina Del Ray CA 90292</td>
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<tr>
<td>GREEN BAY // PACKERS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tattle Tale Room</td>
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<tr>
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<td>310.828.3960</td>
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<tr>
<td>MINNESOTA // VIKINGS</td>
<td>McCabe’s Bar and Grill</td>
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<td>310.828.3960</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEW YORK // GIANTS</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHILADELPHIA // EAGLES</td>
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<td>PITTSBURGH // STEELERS</td>
<td>Brittan Pub</td>
<td>318 Santa Monica Blvd Santa Monica CA 90401</td>
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So I’m poor

like, really

Poor

Just because that Pretty Woman walked Hollywood Blvd nightly, doesn’t mean you have to, too.
Moving to LA is not an easy task. It usually requires a lot of money, even if you do it as cheaply as possible. And since I told you in Chapter 6 that you don’t need a job lined up first, I guess I should probably tell you how to make money until you find that job. Before the night sweats begin, let this fact ease your mind: you are not alone. Every 20-something (and many 30-somethings) trying to make it in LA is living on a budget. So if you don’t find steady work right away, you can relax knowing your friends can’t afford that 4th beer either. (Don’t worry, you’ll soon discover the beauty of 2-Buck Chuck at Trader Joes.) Here are some great ways to pay the bills in the meantime; keep in mind, it’s helpful when the temporary job is not full-time so that you have flexibility to go on interviews/auditions, etc.:

**BARTENDING / WAITING TABLES**

These can be difficult to find (there are a lot of actors in this town...), but a great way to make cash fast and keep your schedule flexible for interviewing/auditioning. And hey, you never know who you will meet. Use losangeles.craigslist.org to find these jobs. Or walk around town giving your resume to restaurants around 4pm.

**RETAIL**

Retail is also a great way to keep a flexible schedule, and not be tied down to a 9 to 5 in an office. Office air-conditioning is the worst. Walk around town asking stores if they are hiring. Ask to fill in an application, and leave a resume.

**BABYSITTING / NANNY**

Believe it or not, there are tons of families in LA. Families who need sitters! If you have experience babysitting, check out care.com and vipnannyagency.com. Both require experience, and VIP Nannies requires a background check (they often supply nannies to celebrities).

**PAID AUDIENCE WORK**

Yes, it’s true. Some television shows pay their audience members. While lame, it’s great for you because it’s an interesting way to make quick cash (although not a lot of cash). You’ll make about $65/8hrs. Check losangeles.craigslist.org/lac/tfr/ and losangeles.craigslist.org/tlg/ and search “audience”.

**BACKGROUND WORK**

Being an extra probably sounds like more fun than it actually is, but don’t knock it until you try it. Register with centralcasting.com and you can find work pretty frequently walking in the background of TV shows and movies. You will make roughly $65/8hrs if you’re not in SAG-AFTRA. Just remember to be respectful when you’re on set.

**PAID TEST SCREENINGS**

Only in LA! Paid test screenings are the best! It’s a lot of money for a little amount of time ($70 to watch one pilot episode). The drawback is the timing. The screenings usually happen at a certain time of year, and you have to wait for a phone call. You also have to qualify for the specific screening based on TV shows you already watch (the company will ask you these questions). Lastly, if you work in the entertainment industry, you don’t qualify at all. But hey, if you’re new here and unemployed, you technically don’t work in the entertainment industry!

**INTERNSHIPS**

I’ve never believed in unpaid internships. Even if you are doing simple tasks, the company should at least be able to pay you minimum wage. That being said, I do have friends who obtained really great jobs from unpaid internships, and it helped them learn the language of their industry and beef up their resume. So, look for internships (try to grab the paid ones!). They may help you get a foot in the door.

**TEMP WORK**

Temp work is a great way to start meeting potential employers. It also gets you out of the house, and forces you to feel productive at a “real” job. You usually make a higher hourly rate than working retail or being an extra. Be prepared: they may test your computer skills and check your references. Check the next page for a list of agencies.
A+ EMPLOYMENT CO, INC.
themploymentco.com
818.840.0998

APPLE ONE
appleone.com
818.247.2991

COMAR AGENCY
comaragency.com
310.248.2700

CO-OP TEMP SERVICES
newcooptemps.com
323.655.1009

CORESTAFF
corestaff.com
626.449.7551
sonyresumes@corestaff.com

ELEVENTH HOUR
11thr.com
310.821.6900

EXECUTIVE TEMPS
executive-temps.com
818.563.2939

FRIEDMAN PERSONNEL
friedmanpersonnel.com
310.550.1002

GRAPEVINE
thegrapevinela.com
310.601.7442

VNH STAFFING
vnstaffing.com
310.284.3939

VOLT
jobs.volt.com
213.388.3271
technical, engineering, computer, administrative

NOTE: Many of these agencies specialize in the entertainment industry.

It is hard work wiggling into your industry, and if this is truly what you want to do, you will do what it takes until you get on your path.

- Camden S.
FROM VIRGINIA
NOW LIVES IN
WEST HOLLYWOOD

Be kind, don’t feel entitled to anything—everyone starts at the bottom.

- Kelsey K.
FROM MINNEAPOLIS
NOW LIVES IN
HOLLYWOOD
Perseverance is one of the most important keys to success in Los Angeles. People come and go rather quickly when they realize the dedication that is required. The success stories stem from the people who stick it out and never give up. As long as you love what you do, your journey in LA will undoubtedly be worth it.
STAY FOR AWHILE
if not forever, at least a year

Try to last longer than Kim Kardashian’s marriage.
6 MONTHS IS NOT ENOUGH

Q: **BUT ISN’T 6 MONTHS ENOUGH?**

A: **no, no, and no**

**UNLESS YOU ARE ABSOLUTELY MISERABLE IN LOS ANGELES,**
do not leave after 6 months. Success, to any degree, takes time. You
need to give it that time. Don’t worry, a year will fly by. So will the year
after that. If you consistently work hard, things will happen for you. But
just know that you can’t always put a time limit on WHEN they happen.
Listen to genius writer Kelly (who writes for “After Lately”, Chelsea
Handler’s show, after spending time on “The Office”):

> I moved out here to be a comedy writer, and I remember thinking,
> ‘Damn, I’m pretty funny! This should only take a couple years’. Well that’s hilarious and ridiculous, and I wish I could go back to 22-year-old Kelly and be like, ‘LOL you adorable idiot!! You know nothing!’ Don’t get me wrong, some people do get lucky and are on their dream trajectory in no time at all. But for the rest of us, especially those with goals to be a professional in the entertainment business, you can expect it to take anywhere from 5-10 years, so make sure you’re mentally prepared for that. Luckily SoCal is a sunny, beautiful land, and there’s no better place to be waiting around for your dreams to come true.

You will see people come and go in 6 months. They get frustrated that they haven’t “made it” yet, and don’t feel like putting more time or energy into the prospect. People are lazy. People don’t like to work hard. Sad for them, yes. But you are not those people. You are smart and diligent! (Obviously, because you bought this book.) When those people leave, you get to move up your place in line. You get to say, “See ya, suckers! I’ll call you from my fancy parking space right in front of my office on the WB lot!” (seriously, that is the dream).

If you ever do decide to leave, don’t feel like you failed and you can never come back. LA isn’t going anywhere. Come back any time and try again. Sometimes things happen beyond your control, and you may be pulled to another location (like near family). But just because you can pull the dreamer out of LA, doesn’t mean you can pull LA out of the dreamer..... - oh, let me be cheesy for a moment.
DON’T FORGET YOU ARE LA

“All I wanna do is have some fun, until the sun comes up over Santa Monica Boulevard.”

– Sheryl Crow, remember her?
Q: CAN I AFFORD TO DO ANYTHING IN LA?

A: absolutely!

OK, SO WE’VE ESTABLISHED THAT MOVING TO LOS ANGELES is not the easiest thing to do. The entire process involves some effort, especially the whole finding-a-job-and-making-a-life-out-here part. But now is when you take a moment and realize that YOU ARE IN LA!

Southern California is not a bad place to be when you have a lot of time and little money. Actually, it’s pretty effing awesome. Besides the weather being consistently fantastic (Clouds? What are clouds? I’ve heard of them before...), there is so much to see and do in this city that you can’t do anywhere else. And if you’re willing to drive anywhere from 1 hour to 3 hours, there are incredible places to visit outside of LA as well. So while you’re working your ass off looking for your dream job, don’t forget to HAVE FUN! Enjoy California life. Hike Runyon Canyon. People watch in Venice. See your favorite band play the Hollywood Bowl. Go wine-tasting in Santa Barbara. See the Lakers play your hometown team. From small activities to big adventures, you will be able to fill your time. Here is a list of tested, inexpensive activities to get you started:

DAILY WANDERING

BEACH / $0-$15
There are so many beaches to explore, all incredibly different from each other including Hermosa, Venice, Santa Monica, Malibu, Pacific Palisades (refer back to Chapter 7 for more insight). You can lay out, surf, play volleyball, or walk/roller blade/bike. Bring your own snacks, and you only need to pay for parking.

DRIVE / $0
Need to get out of the house? Go for a drive. Take Sunset Blvd. all the way to the beach and enjoy riding up the PCH along the ocean. Or take the Canyon route off the 101 N and drive through the incredible winding mountains. Windows down, music blasting, sunshine.

Work hard, be happy, and take full advantage of funemployment. California is beautiful, you should soak that shit up!

– Kelsey K.
FROM MINNEAPOLIS
NOW LIVES IN
HOLLYWOOD
GRiffIth p ARK / $0
4730 crystal springs drive, los angeles, 90027 (many entrances)
There are so many things to do in Griffith Park. You can just hang out, picnic, throw a frisbee. Or you can go up to the Observatory for an incredible view of LA and a cool astronomy museum. There is also the old abandoned (somewhat creepy) zoo remnants that you can check out, or if you’re wanting exercise, you can hike up the trails or run through the Fern Dell.

PERSHING SQUARE / $3 + FOOD
532 south olive street, los angeles, 90013
Take the Metro downtown to Pershing Square ($1.50 each way). It’s a cool place to walk around. You can sit in the bench overlooking Downtown LA that Joseph Gordon-Levitt sat in “500 Days of Summer”. Or you can eat in the Grand Central Market, roam the incredible LA Central Library, and enjoy FREE (during the summer) concerts, films, and other special art and events.

hiking

BRONSON CANyoN / $0
2000 n fuller ave, los angeles 90046
This is the trail that takes you to the Hollywood sign. There are a few different routes you can take, one that leads you to the front of the sign (not super close), the back of the sign (much closer), and the back of the sign higher up. There are views of all of Los Angeles, including Burbank. Check laist.com for hiking directions to the sign. Oh, and before you start your hike, visit the Batcave from the 1960s “Batman” TV show!

RUNYON CANyoN / $0
2000 n fuller ave, los angeles 90046
Runyon is probably the most popular hiking trail in Los Angeles. It has amazing views of all of Los Angeles down to the ocean, and really great people watching. This is the kind of trail where girls hike in bikini tops and people run into their agents. You can also participate in FREE yoga classes that are held several times a day.

NOTE: These are real hikes, not strolls in the park, so make sure to wear sneakers and bring water with you. And maybe bring a friend so you can avoid a 127 Hours kinda thing.
SANTA MONICA STAIRS / $0

*adelaide drive, santa monica*

Ok, I know this isn’t exactly a hike, but just you wait. It’s a HIKE! These stairs are a pretty famous exercise spot where you may see gym buffs and celebrities. *exercisela.com* suggests parking along San Vicente near the top of the stairs around 7th Street.

TEMESCAL CANYON / $0

*temescal canyon, pacific palisades*

Temescal Canyon is GORGEOUS! It’s a bit of a strenuous hike, but when you get to the top—O.M.G. Views of the ocean and the Pacific Palisades. It’s amazing to be up there at sunset, but a little difficult to get down when it’s dark, so bring a flash light! The trails are right by Pacific Palisades High School (I know, can you believe kids go to high school by the ocean?!).  

Head west on the 10 until it ends at the PCH and continue up the PCH. Turn right on Temescal Canyon Road, and drive 1.1 miles. Just after Sunset Blvd, turn left into parking area for Temescal Gateway Park. There may be a parking fee there, but you can also search directions to the high school, and you’ll see free parking by the trails.

ENTERTAINMENT

A DRINKING GAME / $15

*adrinkinggame.com*

Super fun! They have actors perform a live staged reading of a classic 80s movie like, “Top Gun” and “Ghostbusters”. When you hear their list of “buzz words” throughout, everybody drinks. Sometimes you even get props to play with, related to the film. It’s fun, different, and cheap!

CINESPIA SCREENINGS / $12

*6000 santa monica blvd, hollywood, 90038 cinespia.org*

Only in L A can you watch a movie in the cemetery in which classic Hollywood actors are buried. The Hollywood Forever Cemetery on Santa Monica Blvd. screens flicks like ‘Scream’ and ‘Clueless’ on Saturday nights. Bring a picnic, blankets, beer and wine, and enjoy a movie under the stars! Note that parking is nuts, and the lines are long, so you have to get there super early (2 hours or so ahead of time).

FREE SCREENINGS / $0

*gofobo.com & follow @hollywoodhelper on twitter*

See movies for FREE! Get passes to public or private screenings by registering with gofobo. You have to arrive an hour before the screening starts, but it’s a great way to see random films before they are released.

HOLLYWOOD BOWL / $10-$150 SEATS

*2301 n highland ave, los angeles 90068*

The Hollywood Bowl is an awesome outdoor concert venue. Great bands, musicals, orchestras, and movie sing-a-longs play throughout the summer. The seats are long wooden benches, and you can bring your own food and drinks (most shows allow you to bring your own alcohol, too) so you don’t have to spend money on the high priced venue food! It can get cool at night, so bring a jacket.

MOVIES / $1.50 - $5.00

*valley plaza 6, 6355 bellingham ave, north hollywood 91606*

If you don’t mind seeing a two-month old movie, the Regency theaters are great. The Noho location has tickets for $1.50 on Tuesdays and Sundays, $3 all other days. And $1 hotdogs. Otherwise, you’re going to pay almost $20 at the Arclight theaters around Los Angeles.
TV SHOW AUDIENCE / $0

You can get free tickets to talk shows like ‘Jimmy Kimmel’ and ‘Chelsea Lately’, game shows like ‘Let’s Make A Deal’ and ‘The Price is Right’, and competition shows like ‘The Sing-Off’. You usually have to get them weeks in advance because it’s a popular activity, and you have to get there super early to stand in line, but it’s always a fun time once you get in. Plus, you could win money on the game shows!

UCB (& OTHER IMPROV VENUES) / $0-$10

Upright Citizens Brigade (started by Amy Poehler and other talented comedians) has shows in its tiny black theater every night of the week. The Sunday night show at 7:30 ASSSCAT is free! Improv at UCB is always really great, and sometimes have celebrity performers. I’ve seen Tim Meadows in the free show, and some celeb shows are booked in advance. You have to stand in line about an hour before the show starts, but the time passes quickly.

WRAP PARTIES / $0

When a TV show or film wraps, they usually have a pretty kick-ass wrap party for the cast and crew. Everyone is allowed a plus one, so if you don’t work in TV, find a friend who will let you tag along at least once! It’s a fun experience, one of the ‘glamorous’ moments you’ll experience while in LA, and it’s free (food, open bar, parking, etc.).

MUSEUMS

THE GETTY AND THE GETTY VILLA / $15

Both museums have amazing architecture and gardens, and incredible views (oh yeah, and art, too). Everyone living in LA has been to The Getty at least once. It’s just one of those must-do activities. The $15 fee is just for parking (admission is free), so carpool with a friend and split the cost! You can even go to both locations in one day and only pay one parking fee. Just let them know at the front desk.

GREYSTONE PARK AND MANSION / $0

Greystone is a huge, gorgeous mansion and historical landmark in Beverly Hills. It used to belong to the Doheny family, and their son Ned who inherited the family fortune (first to strike oil in LA). Five months after moving into the mansion, Ned was murdered inside by his friend Hugh Plunket. It’s grand and creepy, and free admission (only the exterior grounds)!

HUNTINGTON LIBRARY / $0-$23

The Huntington Library houses a rare book collection, art gallery, and pretty amazing botanical gardens. Admission costs $20 during the week, and $23 during the weekend, but if you get tickets in advance, you can get in for free on the first Thursday of every month.

LACMA / $15-$60

The Los Angeles County Museum of Art covers a vast history of art. The famous lights outside (‘Urban Light’ made up of 202 street lamps from the 1920s and 1930s) are in a million movies, so I’m sure you’ll want to take a picture there! There are 7 buildings in the complex, and general admission costs $15. If you think you will make trips to LACMA often, you can buy a 1 year membership for $60 that includes free admission to the museum. Or, you can just take pictures at the lamp posts for free (they are on Wilshire Blvd by Fairfax Ave)!
VENTURING OUT OF LA

WINE TASTING / $5-$15

malibu winery, temecula, santa barbara, solvang
Wine tasting is a lot of fun, and the winery grounds are pretty spectacular. If you are willing to drive anywhere from 1 hour (Malibu) to 2.5 hours (Solvang), it will be an experience worth the trip. To save money, you can do it in a day without spending the night, but please don’t drink and drive!!

DAY / OVERNIGHT TRIPS / $$

You can do these cheaply (notice I left out Vegas…) if you go with a group of people and split the cost for gas and hotels.

orange county/laguna 1 hour driving
See where Lauren Conrad grew up. Jaws will drop. You can also attend the OC County Fair during July and August. Tickets are $11, or $3 if you get there between 10am-11am. ocfair.com

catalina island 1 hour by boat $72.50 round trip
Water activities like kayaking ($25/hr), swimming, etc. and tours, shopping, golfing, and eating (this trip is a little more expensive).

san diego/la jolla 2-2.5 hours driving
Explore the city of San Diego; the beach town of La Jolla is BEAUTIFUL!

palm springs 2 hours driving
Palm Springs is hot, so sit by the pool with a cocktail and let your stresses melt away. Don’t forget the SPF.

big bear lake 2+ hours driving
A beautiful lake to visit during the spring/summer for lake activities and camping, and skiing in the winter (see, you can still ski in California!) where you can stay in cabins or hotels.

joshua tree 2-3 hours driving
Joshua Tree is another camping spot where you can hike, mountain bike, rock climb, etc. You can take a day trip, or spend a few nights camping in the desert. Just make sure to bring plenty of water!

NOTE: Costs may vary from what is listed. Gas costs were not included, because that will always depend on where you are coming from.

BRIDLEWOOD WINERY IN SANTA BARBARA
SOME PHOTOS OF PLACES AROUND LA

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: THE VIEW FROM THE GETTY VILLA, THE GETTY VILLA, LA JOLLA
OPPOSITE PAGE: ONE OF THE CANALS IN VENICE
From left to right: Bat cave in Bronson Canyon, Fern Dell in Griffith Park, back of the Hollywood Sign on the Bronson Canyon hiking trail, Santa Monica Pier.

Opposite page: Sun setting over the ocean from Temescal Canyon hiking trail.
CONGRATS!

you’ve completed

THIS GUIDE

and are officially

LA BOUND

Keep in touch and let me know how it goes! laboundguide.com