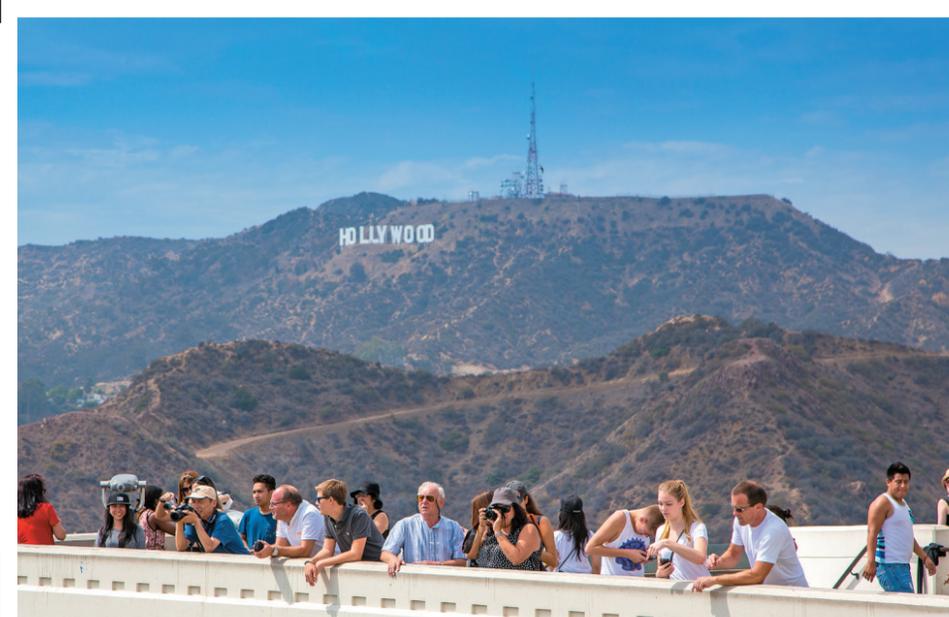


WANDERLUST ▶

# Keeping Up With The Angels

"City of Angels", "Tinseltown", "La La Land", or simply, "L.A." – here's one guide that encapsulates the many facets of Los Angeles, as seen through the eyes of a millennial, writes Ananya Bahl.



“Overwhelmed” best describes my state of mind as soon as I land in El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de los Ángeles del Río Porciúncula – and, no, that feeling doesn’t show up because this name is too tough to pronounce. It’s because I am in Los Angeles – a name derived from the aforementioned tongue twister – a place where Hollywooders hobnob, snobs socialize, the cool collide, and the distinct stand out, all of them adding a collective shine to this glitzy City of Stars. I don’t know where to begin.

They say, rising to the top in Hollywood requires strength and determination, and taking this literally, I embark on a trekking trail with Bikes & Hikes L.A. up Mount Hollywood at Griffith Park: one that gives me a bird’s eye view of not just the sprawled-out city but also the iconic Hollywood sign, before culminating at the Griffith Observatory. Spread across 4,300 acres, this park is a haven for the city’s fitness-conscious – who can be seen sweating it out, sometimes with their pet chihuahuas in tow. The exertion whets my appetite and so we head to a place which all L.A. residents – commoners and celebrities – believe to be the only place worthy of breaking your diet: the homegrown In-N-Out Burger. According to



Clockwise from top: Griffith Park’s hiking trails with views of the Observatory; Musso Frank & Grill, Charlie Chaplin’s favourite; The Downtown cocktail at the hip 71 Above in Downtown L.A.; A fresh brew from Angel City Brewery in the Arts District.



them, no other fast-food chain compares and even mentioning another favourite should be done with caution. Burger and strawberry shake in hand, I chart out my itinerary for the next few days.

The glamour of Hollywood is represented at multiple points in the city. Going on the “Old Hollywood Walking Tour” with April Clemmer, walking down Hollywood and Sunset Boulevards, eating a meal at Musso & Frank Grill which was one of Charlie Chaplin’s favourite restaurants, exploring the famous Dolby Theatre with a guide, touring Warner Brothers Studio, Hollywood where one can pose at



Clockwise from top left: Viewing deck at Griffith Observatory with the Hollywood sign at the back; Madame Tussaud’s on Hollywood Boulevard; A mural in LA’s Arts District; Vegan spread at Plant Food + Wine on Abbot Kinney in Venice; Cocktails at Dream Hollywood’s rooftop Highlight Room; Little Tokyo is a vibrant L.A. district; Perch bistro hosts musical nights; Venice’s Abbot Kinney boulevard is one of the coolest blocks to be seen in.



the set recreation of Central Perk from *F.R.I.E.N.D.S.*, sit under the Sorting Hat from Harry Potter and learn about the art of filmmaking, or indulging in avocado toast on the rooftop Highlight Room at Dream Hollywood (a swanky new hotel where Beyoncé and Jay Z are often spotted) – there’s all this and more to satiate any craving you may have for “the movies”!

The artsy and the bohemian find a home in Los Angeles, too. The quirky Arts District is replete with murals, great coffee (Blue Bottle Café, Bread Lounge), quirky design shops and creative centres (Art Share L.A., Alchemy Works), artisan ice cream (Salt & Straw), and breweries (Angel City Brewery).

The latter half of my trip is spent in culturally diverse Venice Beach. Struggling artists, street buskers, acrobats, and just about everyone can be found on the Venice Beach Boardwalk. After a refreshing bike ride on The Strand, I walk down the boardwalk, serenaded by musicians, and chomp on \$2 fish tacos. In contrast to the boardwalk, Abbott Kinney Boulevard, dubbed the “coolest block in America” by *GQ*, is a mile-long stretch, fringed by the city’s characteristic palm trees, that features eclectic and fashion-forward stores and restaurants (Aviator Nation, Aust., Sabah, The Tasting Kitchen, Kreation Juicery, and Plant Food+Wine). To savour Venice Beach fully, indulge in delectable breakfasts at the Great White (breakfast burritos and smoothie bowls) and Rose Café (chorizo scramble, granola clusters and the pastry board), have a panache-laced meal comprising seasonal American delights at Gjelina and stay at the iconic Hotel Erwin. ■