



USA SURVIVAL HANDBOOK

A Guide for MLI Students



BEVERLY HILLS
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HOLLYWOOD

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	4	Chapter 6: Travel in the U.S.	18
U.S.A. Survival Handbook - A Resource Book	4	By Car	18
About Mentor Language Institute	4	Interstate System	18
		Car Rental	18
Chapter 1: Living in the U.S.	5	Fuel	18
English Language Skills	5	By Plane	19
Items You Hopefully Packed	5	Airline Baggage Requirements	19
A Brief Introduction to U.S. Culture	6	Allowable Liquids	19
Tipping	6	By Train	20
Temperatures in the United States	7	By Bus	20
Metric Equivalents	7		
Holidays in the United States	7	Chapter 7: Housing and	
Telephone System in the U.S.	8	Accommodations	21
Telephone Cards	8	Finding a Place to Live	21
911	8	Renting	21
411	8	Applying to Rent	21
		Signing a Lease	21
Chapter 2: Staying Healthy	9	Paying a Security Deposit	21
Medical Care in the U.S. and Health Insurance	9	Paying Other Rental Costs	21
Culture Shock	9	Landlords	22
How to Deal with Culture Shock	9	Ending a Lease	22
Laws in the United States	10	Finding Budget Accommodations in the U.S.	22
Safety and Security - Crime	10		
		Chapter 8: While in Los Angeles	23
Chapter 3: Where to Find Help	11	The Weather	23
The Public Library	11	About Los Angeles	23
The Internet	11	Exploring L.A.	24
The Local Phone Book	11	Driving	24
Involvement in Your Community	11	Public Transportation	24
		Taxis	24
Chapter 4: Financial Management	12	Bikes	25
U.S. Currency	13	Special Attractions	25
Methods of Payment	13	Theme Parks	25
Sales Tax	13	Movie- and Television-Related Tourist	
Getting a Bank Account	14	Attractions	26
International Money Transfers/Sending		Entertainment & Shopping Centers	26
Money Overseas	14	Shopping	27
U.S. Postal Service	15	Museums	28
		Other Attractions	30
Chapter 5: Identification and Driving	16	Nightlife	30
Getting a Driver's License	16	Movies	30
Foreign Driver's License	16	Theater & Live Music	31
International Driver's License	16	Clubs and Bars	31
Car Insurance	16		
Tips for Safe Driving in the U.S.	17	Chapter 9: Embassies & Consulates	32
Car Accidents	17		

INTRODUCTION

USA Survival Handbook - A Resource Book

This USA Survival Handbook is a compilation of various tips and resources that should be of help when you first arrive in the United States. It also provides recommendations for further research and resources for longer stays in the United States.

About Mentor Language Institute

Mentor Language Institute offers English as a Second Language (ESL), English for Academic Purposes (EAP), and English for Specialized Purposes (ESP) instruction that meets the needs of students and empowers them with a lasting ability to use English successfully in their academic, professional, and personal pursuits.

CHAPTER 1: LIVING IN THE U.S.

English Language Skills

Your life in the United States will be much easier if you can communicate effectively in English. There are several ways to sharpen your English skills:

- Take a refresher course at a language school. You've already started on this important step!
- Watch TV, listen to the radio, and read books and magazines in English. There are many resources on the internet that use media to teach English and quite a few of those resources are free.
- Finally, practice with friends who also know English. There is no substitute for practice, and once you are used to speaking English, you'll feel much more comfortable in the United States.

Items You Hopefully Packed (or Might Need to Get)

There are many important items you'll need in the United States, whether you're traveling or staying in one place. Here is a basic list:

- **Appropriate Clothing:** The U.S. has several climates due to its geographical variety. Therefore, you'll need to check the conditions of the place where you're living or visiting, in addition to considering the season. This information is easily available on the internet, and each state's website will give detailed information about local climate conditions.
- **Passport, F-1 Visa, I-20 Form:** These items are essential to entering the United States and traveling around, so you'll need to keep them in a safe place at all times. In fact, when traveling, you should make a copy of these documents and keep them in your suitcase just in case anything happens to the originals.
- **Driver's License:** Be sure to keep your driver's license and international driver's license (if you have one) on you. Make copies of each document and keep them separate.
- **Medications:** If you take prescription medication, get documentation in English from your doctor for ordering more medication in case you run out.
- **Power Adapters:** The U.S. runs on 110 volt current. While you can run most small appliances, such as hair dryers, clocks, shavers, etc with an adapter, we recommend that you leave most of these items at home and buy new ones here. If you did bring any electronic devices, you will need the appropriate adapter to charge them here. If you couldn't find one of these adapters in your home country, they are available in the US. Plugs in the U.S. look like the one to the right. Also note that the U.S. current is 60Hz. If your country runs on 50Hz, your electric alarm clock will not keep accurate time.



A Brief Introduction to U.S. Culture

The United States is a multicultural nation and hosts a wide variety of ethnic groups, traditions, and values. The United States is ethnically and racially diverse due to large-scale immigration from many different countries throughout its history. The United States has been called a melting pot, but due to many immigrants keeping their unique ethnic identities, the image of a salad bowl rather than a melting pot may seem more appropriate.

Today the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of the Census recognizes four races: Native American (or American Indian), African American, Asian and White (European American). The U.S. Government does not consider Hispanic Americans to be a race, but rather an ethnic group. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Whites made up 75.1% of the population and Hispanic or Latino constituted the nation's prevalent minority with 12.5% of that population. African Americans made up 12.3% of the total population, 3.6% were Asian American and 0.9% were Native American.

The United States has no official language at the federal level; however, English is considered to be the de facto national language. More than 97% of Americans can speak English well. The national dialect is known as American English, with four major regional dialects: northeastern, south, inland north, and midwestern. The Midwestern accent is considered the "standard" accent in the United States.

Some of the most important characteristics of American culture include privacy, individualism, independent thinking, and personal hygiene.

- **Privacy** is the right of every person living in the U.S. Americans like to have their own space and highly value their own privacy. They may not always be willing to share or discuss certain types of information, such as age, weight, relationship status and income level, with casual friends.
- Americans are taught from a young age to think **independently**, ask questions, and challenge authority. However, Americans often lack knowledge of life outside the U.S. and other cultures.
- Americans are often concerned about **personal hygiene** and cleanliness. It is not uncommon to see Americans take one or two showers every day, and they often expect others to be just as clean.

In general, Americans can be open and friendly. They are uncomfortable with silence and will make "small talk" when there is a lull in the conversation. They make direct eye contact when they speak, but do not like to stand too close.

Tippling

It is common to leave a tip in the U.S. whenever you are dealing with people in the service industry, such as in restaurants, bars, hotels, hair salons, taxis, etc. People working in the service industry in general do not make a high salary and make a lot of their income from tips. It is important to follow this practice. The standard tip for restaurants and other related services is 20% of the total bill. \$3 - \$5 is typical for hotel services, food delivery, and taxis.

Temperatures in the United States

Depending on the state you are staying in, the temperatures in the U.S. will vary. It is easy to find information from state and city websites for seasonal temperatures. Keep in mind that the temperature in the U.S. is usually shown in degrees Fahrenheit. To convert Fahrenheit temperatures to Celsius, subtract 32 from the Fahrenheit number. Then, divide the number by 9. Finally, multiply that answer by 5. Here are the basic equivalents:

32° Fahrenheit	=	0° Celsius
95° Fahrenheit	=	35° Celsius

Metric Equivalents

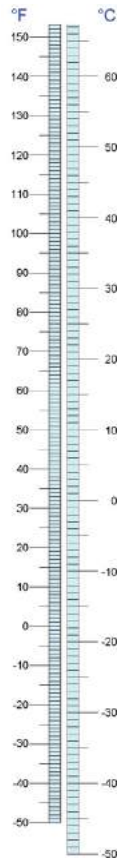
There are many metric conversion websites and charts available online. Here are a few common equivalents that may be useful in your everyday life:

1 mile	=	1.6 kilometers
1 inch	=	2.54 centimeters
1 foot (12 inches)	=	30.48 centimeters
1 ounce	=	28.35 grams
1 pound (16 ounces)	=	0.45 kilograms
1 cup	=	0.4 liters
1 quart (4 cups)	=	0.95 liters
1 gallon (4 quarts)	=	3.79 liters
1 yard (3 feet)	=	0.91 meters

Holidays in the U.S.

The following is a list of the most commonly celebrated holidays in the United States.

- January 1 - New Year's Day
- Third Monday in January - Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., or Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Third Monday in February - Washington's Birthday
- Last Monday in May - Memorial Day
- July 4 - Independence Day
- First Monday in September - Labor Day
- Second Monday in October - Columbus Day
- November 11 - Veterans Day
- Fourth Thursday in November - Thanksgiving Day
- December 25 - Christmas



Telephone System in the U.S.

It is important to become familiar with the U.S. phone system as soon as possible. The format for phone numbers in the U.S. is:

(xxx) yyy - zzzz

xxx is the area code for a region and **yyy - zzzz** is the individual phone number. When you dial a long distance number (from one area code to another), you have to dial "1" before the area code and number. In the larger states, dialing long distance may be required in the same area. For instance, in the greater Los Angeles area, there are several area codes and you must dial a "1" if you are calling a number with a different area code. For example, to place a call from Torrance, California to Alhambra, California, you would dial the following sequence: 1-626-284-9852

To call a local number, you only need to dial the individual phone number. For example, if you had the same area code (626) as the number above, you would only need to dial "284-9852." Phone numbers with 800 or 888 in place of the area code are toll free and cost nothing, but you must always dial a 1 and the area code with these toll free numbers.

To make international calls from anywhere in the United States, the dialing sequence is:

011 - Country Code - City Code (drop the "0" before the city code) - **Number**

Country and city codes can be found in any local phone book or through an operator. (Dial "0" for the operator.)

Telephone Cards

International calls are expensive, so it's best to buy a telephone card if you plan on making international calls. Telephone cards can be used for long-distance and international calls. You can find telephone cards in many grocery stores and post offices. You can also use telephone cards at public pay phones, which are coin-operated. The telephone card is not inserted into the public pay phone as in other countries. You will need to dial a toll free number and then you'll be prompted to enter your access code or account number and pin. Just follow the instructions. Telephone cards are much cheaper than regular phone service.

911

The nationwide emergency phone number in the U.S. is 911. You can dial 911 on any telephone in an emergency and you will be connected to emergency services such as the police, fire department, or ambulance. There is never a charge or fee for a 911 call.

411

If you need to find a telephone number, you can dial 411, or Directory Assistance, for information, but this costs money (usually about \$1). You will need to know the name of the person or business you are calling and the city and state they are in. Directory Assistance for toll free numbers is 1 (800) 555-1212. This toll free number is free and especially useful when trying to find airlines, chain hotels (such as Holiday Inn, Sheraton, etc...), train service, or bus companies.

CHAPTER 2: STAYING HEALTHY & SAFE

Medical Care in the U.S. and Health Insurance

For F1 students, you are not required to have health insurance for your stay in the United States, but it is suggested. If you want health insurance, you need to pay for insurance independently.

Despite having health insurance, health care costs may still be expensive, especially if you become sick or injured. There are clinics, or medical offices, that provide free or low-cost services. Most communities have at least one clinic. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has a website that lists clinics and other healthcare choices. To find a clinic or doctor near you, visit <http://ask.hrsa.gov/pc/>. Type in your zip code to get the information.

Culture Shock

The feeling of culture shock usually occurs a couple of weeks after arriving in a new country. Most people experience culture shock when they come to a completely new environment. The language, people, and food are different. Some people are affected by culture shock more than others. However, being open-minded and aware of what is happening to you can help with a speedy recovery. The following are a few signs of culture shock:

- Getting angry and irritated easily over minor frustrations.
- A strong desire to go back to one's own country.
- Feelings of being lost, exploited or abused.
- Too much or too little sleep.
- A continued preference to be alone.
- An inability to solve simple problems.
- A lack of self confidence.

How to Deal with Culture Shock

Culture shock can also be an opportunity to gain new perspectives and understand oneself better. Here are some tips on dealing with culture shock:

- Have patience and realize that adjusting to the U.S. can take time.
- Exercise on a daily basis. Take a walk, swim, or enroll in an aerobics class.
- Take up a new hobby.
- Try to keep in contact with people from your own country. This will reduce your feelings of loneliness.
- Make friends and try to interact with Americans as much as possible. This will help you learn English faster and gain a deeper understanding of American culture.
- Make simple goals and evaluate your progress on a daily basis.
- Find alternative ways to deal with the things that don't satisfy you.
- Maintain your self confidence. Remember your goals and plans for the future.
- Seek professional help if you get too stressed out. There are several websites where you can find a suitable professional.

Laws in the U.S.

After coming to the United States, it's important to become familiar with the basic laws at a local, state, and federal level. Laws may vary from state to state, including speed limits and the age of consent. Check with your state's Department of Motorized Vehicles (DMV) for local traffic laws. The age at which you may legally buy and drink alcohol may also vary depending on the state you are in; however, that age is 21 years in most states.

If you are under 21 years old, do not drink alcohol. If you are caught, you will be subject to local, state, and federal laws. Most bars require photo identification before entering and are very strict concerning this requirement. It is illegal to drive after drinking too much alcohol (blood alcohol level of .08%), and it is also illegal to drink alcohol while driving or to have any open containers of alcohol in the car (open containers must be kept in a locked container in the trunk).

Those under the age of 21 will be arrested if they are caught driving after drinking ANY alcohol (blood alcohol level of .01%). In the United States, it is illegal for a person under 21 to have any alcohol in his/her possession.

The U.S. government website <http://www.usa.gov> provides useful information and links for further research on federal and state laws.

Safety and Security - Crime

Like most countries, the U.S. has both safe and unsafe areas. However, it's always good to use basic common sense in your daily life as well as when you travel. Here are some basic tips to keep in mind:

- Do not leave your door unlocked at any time.
- Avoid wearing expensive items, such as jewelry or watches, and carrying valuable items. Put such items in a safe place.
- Don't carry large amounts of cash. Be careful when using an ATM machine. Your bank can give you advice on how to use ATMs safely.
- Avoid jogging or walking when it's dark.
- If you ride a bike, wear a helmet and obey all traffic laws.
- Don't carry your passport with you every day. Put it in a safe place and carry another form of identification, such as a driver's license.
- Do not sleep in your car by the roadside, in parking lots, or in rest areas.
- Avoid leaving valuable or expensive items where they can be seen in your car.
- Try to stay on main roads and use well-lit parking lots.
- Do not accept offers of rides from strangers, even if they appear to be friendly.
- Do not hitchhike. It's illegal and dangerous.
- If hit from behind while driving, indicate to the other driver to follow you to a public place and call 911 for police help.
- If you think someone is following you while driving, drive to the nearest police or fire station. If someone is following you on foot, try to find a store, restaurant or business nearby to ask for help.

CHAPTER 3: WHERE TO FIND HELP

The Public Library

In the United States, public libraries are free and available to everyone. There are libraries located in almost every city or community. You can find information on various topics and can get a library card that allows you to borrow items, such as books and DVDs. Most libraries have newspapers and magazines to read and computers with internet access. You can always ask the library staff for help with any services offered by the library.

The Internet

There are many sources of information on the internet, including the websites of federal, state, and local government agencies. If you don't have a computer, you can usually find one to use in your public library or at an "internet café." You can use the internet to search for jobs, find housing, and locate community organizations and resources to help you. You can also find important news and discover interesting information about leisure activities in your city as well as learn about life in the United States.

The Local Phone Book

The local phone book, or telephone directory, has phone numbers and important information about government and business services. In the phone book, you can find emergency information, local maps, and other useful information. The white pages list phone numbers of people with landlines at home, and the yellow pages have phone numbers and addresses for businesses and organizations. In the blue pages, there are local, state, and federal government office phone numbers and addresses. If you dial 411 on your phone, you can get a specific phone number anywhere in your city or region.

Involvement in Your Community

Your community is an excellent resource. Here are some ways to get involved:

- Get to know your neighbors by introducing yourself.
- Join groups at your school or place of worship.
- Volunteer at a school, community organization, or place of worship.

CHAPTER 4: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

U.S. Currency

The **United States dollar** (\$, USD) is the official currency of the United States. It is divided into 100 cents. The U.S. banknote, or "paper money" is printed in denominations of \$1, \$2, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50, and \$100. U.S. paper money is primarily the color green and has a standard size. The famous faces from American history and the number in the corner help distinguish the difference among the paper money denominations. The most common bills are shown below*.



One Dollar



Five Dollars



Ten Dollars



Twenty Dollars



Fifty Dollars



One Hundred Dollars

United States coins (¢) have names marked on them, not numbers. Coins have different denominations and various sizes. The most common coins are shown here:



Penny = 1¢



Nickel = 5¢



Dime = 10¢



Quarter – 25 ¢



Half Dollar = 50¢



Dollar coin = 100¢

*Note: Due to changes in bills and coins over the years, you may see bills or coins that look slightly or very different. Always pay attention to what each bill or coin says.

Methods of Payment

Personal Checks: You will receive a small supply of personal checks if you open a checking account. These checks are small forms that you fill out to pay for bills or other things. Checks guarantee that, as long as you have the money in your account to cover the check, your bank will pay the person or business you have written the check to. Always keep checks in a safe place.

ATM Cards: With most accounts, you'll get an ATM card. This card is linked to your bank account. You can use this card to get cash or deposit money in your account using an ATM (Automated Teller Machine). Usually you do not pay a fee for using your own bank's ATM, but you may have to pay a fee if you use an ATM at another bank. The bank will give you a special number, called a PIN ("personal identification number") to use at the ATM. Be careful when using ATMs. Never give anyone your ATM card or PIN.

Debit Cards: You may receive a debit card to use for your checking account. Often, your ATM card can also be used as a debit card. You can use debit cards instead of writing a check at most locations, and many places no longer accept checks, accepting only debit or credit cards instead of cash.

Credit Cards: You may also be able to get a credit card from your bank, as well as other places of business such as department stores. Credit cards—also called "charge cards"—allow you to make purchases and pay for them later. You will get a bill in the mail each month on items you have bought with your credit card. If you pay the complete amount each month, you will not have to pay interest. If you do not pay the entire amount and just pay the minimum amount (a percentage of your bill), then you will be charged interest. Some credit cards have very high interest rates, so be careful.

Keep the numbers for all bank accounts and debit, ATM, and credit cards in a safe place in case they are lost or stolen.

Traveler's Checks: Traveler's checks are preprinted, prepaid checks that are safe and easy to use when traveling. It would be wise to bring traveler's checks in U.S. dollars with you when coming to the U.S. They can be used the same as cash and many stores accept them. You'll probably need I.D. like a passport, but if the checks are lost or stolen, you can have them replaced with a simple phone call. Traveler's checks from Bank of America, Visa, Thomas Cook, American Express, and Citibank are commonly used. Also, some companies like Travelex offer traveler's checks that work like debit cards.

Sales Tax

For certain items and services, all but 5 states (Oregon, Montana, Alaska, Delaware and Maryland) charge a sales tax at the time of purchase. The tax amount is generally calculated by applying a percentage rate to the taxable price of a sale. The sales tax is typically from 4% to 10%, depending on the city and/or state, although some items are exempt in some states, such as food in markets. Therefore, when checking the price tag on certain items, be aware that the price may be a little more.

Getting a Bank Account

The safest place to keep your money is in a bank account. There are different kinds of accounts at banks. Two common ones are checking accounts for paying bills and savings accounts to save money with interest. There are some banks that charge fees for some of their services. It's a good idea to compare the services, fees, hours, and locations of banks before you open an account. Also, make sure the bank you use is a member of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC). The FDIC provides banks with insurance to protect the money that people have deposited in the bank. If the bank closes, the FDIC will reimburse, or pay back, the money in your account (up to \$100,000).

You will need to prove your identity when opening a bank account, so make sure you bring along important documents such as your driver's license, documents related to visas, passport, etc. You'll also be required to deposit, or put, money into your new account. After that, you can withdraw, or take, money from your account. Withdrawing money can be done by going to an Automatic Teller Machine (ATM), writing a check, or filling out a withdrawal form in the bank.

International Money Transfers/Sending Money Overseas

There are three major ways to send money from the United States to another country: **Money Orders** (U.S. Postal Service & Banks), **Cash Transfers** (Paypal & Western Union), **Banking Transfers** (Checks, Foreign Drafts & Wire Transfers)

Money Orders:

The United States Postal Service issues international money orders. The maximum amount allowed is \$700 per money order, but you can purchase multiple money orders per day, up to a maximum of \$10,000. U.S. Money Orders can be cashed in banks or post offices in most countries around the world. The processing fee can be from \$3 - \$8.50 per money order.

All post offices in the U.S. provide this service. In the event there are problems, you should always keep your receipt since the money order is traceable. Most banks also issue money orders. The maximum is \$1,000 and the fee is around \$10.

If you have a bank account, there are several ways to transfer money abroad through the banking system. Not all banks have the same rules, so check with your local bank for details.

Cash Transfers

Western Union, a well-known leader in transferring money, can send money worldwide, including the ability to transfer money online or by phone.

PayPal is another well-known money-transfer system that allows you to transfer money overseas to any person with a valid email address. To send money via PayPal, you have to register an account and verify it using your credit card or bank account.

Banking Transfers (Cashier's Check)

Sending cashier's checks abroad is another way to transfer money. This may take from a few days to a week for the bank to prepare the check. First, you mail the check to the recipient. The money comes out of your account when the check or draft is prepared. The fee for this service is around \$25. Since the money is

transferred from your bank to another (corresponding) bank, the recipient must have access to the corresponding bank.

Foreign drafts are used to send money to a foreign country. This way is cheaper and safer than sending cash. The receiver can access the funds quicker than a draft or check in U.S. currency. Also, it is cheaper and requires less information on the sender's part than a wire transfer.

For wire transfers, you don't have to be a bank customer to wire funds; however, you must pay cash. This is quicker than a check or foreign draft. It is done almost immediately. The fee is about \$65 for non-customers and about \$40 for bank customers. The recipient must be able to access the corresponding bank from which the wire transfer was sent.

U.S. Postal Service

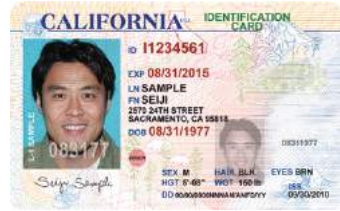
The prices in this guide are accurate as of May 2013. The following chart is from the U.S. Postal website, which you can visit at <http://www.usps.com>

Domestic Prices			
Domestic Service	Average Delivery Time	Starting Price	Pricing Factors
Express Mail®	Overnight, most locations	From \$14.10	Prices based on weight and distance - Flat rate envelope available
Priority Mail®	1 - 3 days	From \$5.60	Prices based on weight and distance - Flat rate options available
First-Class Mail®	1 - 3 days	From \$0.46	Prices based on weight and shape
Parcel Post®	2 - 8 days	From \$5.60	Prices based on weight and distance
Media Mail®	2 - 8 days	From \$2.53	Prices based on weight (content restrictions apply)
International Prices			
Global Express Guaranteed®	1-3 business days	From \$49.95	Prices based on weight, size and distance - USPS GXG envelope pricing is available!
Express Mail International®	3 - 5 business days	From \$33.95	Prices based on weight and distance - Flat-rate envelope available
Priority Mail® International	6-10 business days	From \$28.25	Prices based on weight and distance - Flat-rate envelope available
First-Class Mail International™	varies	From \$1.10	Prices based on weight, shape and distance

CHAPTER 5: IDENTIFICATION AND OTHER IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

Getting a Driver's License

If you want to drive in the United States, you will be required to have a driver's license. You should get your driver's license from the state where you live. Check with the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) in your state for requirements. You can find the DMV online or in the blue pages of the phone book. In general, you will probably need your passport, home country's driver's license/international driver's license, and documents related to your visa in order to apply for a driver's license in the U.S.



Sample CA Driver's License

Owning a car can be a convenient way to get around. However, you are required to buy car insurance in the U.S. You must also register your vehicle, and pay for the licenses related to your car. Heavy traffic can make driving difficult in some cities, especially bigger cities like Los Angeles or San Francisco.

Foreign Driver's License

Some foreign residents may already have a driver's license from their home countries. If you have a foreign driver's license, it will be recognized in every state. It is usually valid for up to one year after your date of entry, but check the DMV office in the state you'll be driving in for the length of time the foreign license is valid. You will be required to carry your passport with you if you choose to drive with a foreign driver's license.

International Driver's License

It is a good idea to get an international driver's license in your country before departing as you will not be able to get an international driver's license in the U.S. It is typically valid for up to one year from the day you received it.

Car Insurance

If you drive a car in the United States, you must have auto insurance. You will need to find out what the law requires in your state when it comes to how much auto insurance coverage you need to maintain. Check with the DMV in your state, print out your state's requirements, and save that information for the next step in the process.

Insurance prices are all based on statistics, so the price each of us pays varies. The price you pay for insurance coverage will depend on a number of factors, such as the driver's age, years of driving experience, what neighborhood you live in, the make and model of the car you are driving, what kind of safety features the car has, and whether or not you have anti-theft devices installed.

The National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) recommends that you ask the insurance company about the following discounts before signing up:

- **Good Driving Record:** Many insurance companies offer discounts to drivers who have not been in an accident or received a ticket.
- **Good Grades:** Young drivers can get discounts for maintaining a B average or

better in school.

- **Driver's Education:** Some insurance companies offer a discount for drivers who complete a driver's education or driver's safety course.
- **Safety Equipment:** Equipment such as antilock brakes and antitheft devices can get you a discount.
- **Higher Deductibles:** A higher deductible usually means lower premiums, or a lower monthly payment.

Get free auto insurance quotes and compare rates by using DMV.org's Car Insurance Center.

Before you sign your new insurance policy, be sure to carefully review it to make sure it includes all the coverage required in your state. Keep proof of your insurance policy in your car or in your wallet at all times. If you are stopped by the police and you are not able to show proof of auto insurance coverage, you could be fined. Most insurance companies will issue an insurance ID card. Keep this card in your car's glove box along with the registration.

Tips for Safe Driving in the U.S.

- Drive on the right-hand side of the road.
- Always have your driver's license and auto insurance card with you.
- Always wear your seat belt. Seat belts must be worn by all passengers, especially children.
- Use your car's signals to show when you are turning left or right.
- Obey all traffic laws and signals.
- Pull over to the side of the road if an emergency vehicle —police car, fire truck, or ambulance— is passing by you on either side of the street.
- Do not pass a school bus when its red lights are flashing.
- Do not drive if you have been drinking alcohol or taking drugs.
- Be very careful when driving in bad weather, such as fog, rain, ice, or snow.

Car Accidents

If you are involved in a car accident, first check to see if there are any injuries and call 911 to report injuries. You can also call 911 to report an accident, even if there are no injuries. 911 is a free direct number for emergency services that you can dial anywhere in the U.S.

When involved in an accident, you are required to exchange the following information with the other driver involved in the accident:

- Names, driver's license ID numbers, and contact information (telephone number).
- Name of insurance companies and policy numbers.
- License plate number, model and year of the cars involved in the accident.
- Registration numbers and expiration dates.

If you crash into a parked car, you are required by law to leave your name, phone number and license plate number on a piece of paper. You can put this information under the windshield wiper or in another visible place where it can be retrieved. You must also write down the model of the car you hit and its license number for your own records.

CHAPTER 6 TRAVEL IN THE U.S.

The U.S. is a very large and geographically diverse country. If you don't have a lot of time, air travel is the best. However, if you have time and want to see a lot of the country, then you might consider traveling by train, car, or bus.

By Car

Most Americans use cars for traveling within the city, and when traveling to nearby cities in their state or region. Many American cities were designed for cars, so renting a car is the best way to get around in cities like Los Angeles, Atlanta and Miami, where public transport is not as commonly used. However, for cities like New York, Chicago, Boston, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. having a car is not necessary. Online maps or directions are available on several websites, including MapQuest and Google Maps.

Drivers can also get directions by calling 1-800-Free411, which will provide text message directions.

The Interstate System

The United States has a convenient system of U.S. and Interstate highways. Interstates are usually freeways, while U.S. highways are freeways on some sections and not on others. These roads connect population centers and make it possible to cover long distances or to drive to the other side of a large city. Primary Interstates have one- or two-digit numbers, with odd ones usually running north-south (e.g. I-5) and even ones running east-west (e.g. I-10). Three-digit interstate numbers represent shorter, secondary freeways (e.g. 134). The U.S. highways are generally older routes that lead through the city centers. Interstates were built parallel to U.S. highways for traffic bypassing the cities.

Car rental

Renting a car in the U.S. can cost anywhere from \$20 and \$100 per day, depending on the type of car and location. There are also discounts for week-long rentals. The major rental agencies are Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Hertz, Avis, Thrifty Car Rental, and Dollar Rent A Car. The internet and the Yellow Pages are the easiest ways to find car rental agencies. Most rental agencies have downtown offices in major cities and at major airports. Not all companies allow picking up a car in one city and dropping it off in another. You should check with the rental agency when making your reservations. Online travel websites, such as Orbitz and Expedia, can be useful for comparing the best prices and making reservations. Most Americans renting cars are covered for loss or damage to the rental car either through their credit card or car insurance policy. If you buy supplemental liability insurance, it may add \$30/day to the price of a rental. Many travel insurance policies include coverage for rental car damage, so check your policy against the rental terms and conditions.

Enterprise - 1-800-RENT-A-CAR

Hertz - 1 - 800-230-4898

Thrifty Car Rental - 1-877 -283-0898

Avis - 1-800-230-4898

Dollar Rent a Car - 1-800-800-3665

Fuel

In the United States, gasoline ("gas") is sold by the gallon and equals 3.785 liters. The U.S. generally has relatively low taxes on gas and fuel prices compared to other countries, and as a result, gas prices are much lower than in many parts of the world. Prices will vary by region and season.

By Plane

The most convenient and quickest method of travel in the U.S. is by plane. It takes about six hours to travel from one coast to another. Most cities in the U.S. have one or two airports. Discount air carriers are popular. Southwest Airlines is one of the best known discount airlines. There are several ways to get cheap airline tickets in North America. You can choose routes where the fares are cheapest, choose times when the routes are cheapest, shop around to compare, and fly on discount airlines.

Airline Baggage Requirements

The information given in this resource guide is general information about travel baggage allowances and limitations. Please check with the airline you will be flying on for more specific information. Recently, many airlines have started charging for checked bags, no matter how small or light, and they are becoming increasingly strict about baggage requirements. Usually, you can check 1 to 3 bags with a weight range from 50 – 70 lbs, depending on the airline. For carry-on luggage, the primary rule is that bags carried on board must be small enough to store below your seat or in the overhead compartment.

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) **prohibits** the following items:

- Sharp Objects
- Sporting Goods
- Guns & Firearms
- Tools
- Martial Arts & Self Defense Items
- Explosive & Flammable Materials, Disabling Chemicals & Other Dangerous Items

Allowable Liquids (from the TSA website)

There are restrictions on the amount of items containing liquids (mainly toiletries) that can be carried on the plane. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has determined that liquids, aerosols and gels, in limited quantities, are safe to bring aboard an aircraft. The one bag limit per traveler limits the total amount each traveler can bring. The following are the allowable amounts of liquids for travelers:

3-1-1 for carry-ons = 3.4 ounce (100ml) bottle or less (by volume); 1 quart-sized, clear, plastic, zip-top bag; 1 bag per passenger placed in screening bin. One-quart bag per person limits the total liquid volume each traveler can bring. 3.4 ounce (100ml) container size is a security measure.

Declare larger liquids. Medications, baby formula and food, and breast milk are allowed in reasonable quantities exceeding 3.4 ounces (100 ml) and are not required to be in the zip-top bag. Declare these items for inspection at the checkpoint. Officers may need to open these items to conduct additional screening.

Always refer to the TSA website for the most up-to-date information and requirements.

www.tsa.gov

By Train

With the exception of highly populated areas, train travel in the U.S. is not as prevalent as in other countries. In addition, it can be expensive. The national rail system, Amtrak, provides service to many cities; however, the focus is more on sightseeing rather than quick, convenient travel. There are some promotional discounts like 15% off for students and seniors, and a 30-day U.S. Rail Pass for international travelers only. Check the website for 'weekly specials'. For long-distance travel on Amtrak, passengers can reserve a seat in coach (Economy class) or pay extra for an upgrade to a private sleeping compartment, which also includes meals in the dining car. Amtrak trains in the West have a lounge car with large windows and are perfect for sightseeing.

Amtrak can be reached at 1-800-USA-RAIL.

Many major cities offer reliable commuter trains that carry passengers to and from the suburbs or other areas. There are also subways in many of the major cities for short-term commuting or travel within a city.

By Bus

Travel by bus inside and outside of the cities is widespread, but not always available in many places. It is generally dependable, safe, and affordable. Greyhound Bus Lines is the largest line for bus travel in the U.S. Discounts are available to travelers who purchase their tickets 7-14 days in advance. Greyhound's North American Discovery Pass gives unlimited travel for ranges of 4 to 60 days. You do not need to make reservations on Greyhound buses since seating is on a first come, first served basis.

Greyhound Bus Lines - 1-800-229-9424

Travelling Outside the U.S.

Prior to travelling outside the United States, please speak with MLI staff.

CHAPTER 7 – HOUSING AND ACCOMODATIONS

Finding a Place to Live

There are many options when it comes to housing in the United States. A lot of people initially stay with friends or family members. Others rent a room, apartment, or house. In the United States, most people spend about 25 percent of their income on housing. Here are some housing options in the United States:

Renting

Apartments and houses can be rented. You can find these in several ways:

- Look for "Apartment Available" or "For Rent" signs on buildings or in yards.
- Look in the newspaper in the section called "Classified Advertisements" or "Classifieds." You can also look online on websites like "Craigslist." Find the pages or sections listing "Apartments for Rent" or "Homes for Rent."
- Look in the phone book's yellow pages under "Property Management." There are companies that rent homes. Please be aware that these companies may charge you a fee to help you find a home.
- Ask friends, family, or co-workers if they know of places to rent.
- Check bulletin boards in libraries, grocery stores, and community centers for "For Rent" notices.
- Call a local real estate agent.

Applying to Rent

You will be asked to fill out a rental application form. The application form may ask for a Social Security number and proof that you are working. However, if you tell the landlord that you don't have these things, most landlords should accept your passport and a bank statement from a bank in the US. There may also be a deposit and a small application fee.

Signing a Lease

Once you have an agreement to rent an apartment or house, you will need to sign a rental agreement or "lease." A lease is a legal document. Most leases are for one year, so talk to your landlord about the length of your stay. When signing a lease, you agree to stay for a specific length of time and pay your rent on time. Housing for shorter periods of time, such as one month, may also be available. One of the requirements of the lease is to keep the home clean and in good shape. You may be charged extra if you leave the place dirty or damaged.

Paying a Security Deposit

Renters typically must pay a security deposit when they move in. This deposit may be equal to one month's rent. This deposit will be returned if the home is clean and in good condition when you move out. If not, some or all of your deposit may be kept and used to pay for cleaning or repairs.

Paying Other Rental Costs

For some houses or apartments, the rent payment includes the cost of utilities (gas, electricity, water, and trash removal). For other rentals, utilities must be paid separately. Ask if utilities are included when you are looking for housing. If they are, make sure this is in your rental agreement before signing it. If utilities are not included, you should find out how much they will cost.

Landlords

A Landlord is the owner of a house or apartment that is rented to an individual. Landlords are required to keep the home or apartment safe and in good condition. If you have problems in the place you are renting:

- First, talk to your landlord. Describe what is wrong and that you want it fixed.
- Next, write a letter or e-mail to your landlord describing what is wrong. Be sure to keep a copy on file.
- Finally, call the local Housing Office. Most city or local governments have inspectors who check houses for problems.

Ending a Lease

Ending a rental agreement is called “terminating your lease.” Most landlords require a written notice at least 30 days before leaving. If your lease is not over, you may have to pay a penalty for terminating your lease early.

Finding Budget Accommodations in the U.S.

Hostels

Staying at a hostel is a great way to keep your travels affordable. Most hostels keep the price down by having their guests share rooms, although some hostels have private rooms available. If you’re interested in staying in a hostel, Hostelling International USA is a membership organization with a listing of hostels all over the United States. You must be a member to stay at one of their hostels and your membership is valid in the U.S. and around the world, including in your home country. If you decide to stay in their hostels while traveling, it is more convenient to become a member before you travel. There are also other hostel organizations in the United States that may or may not require membership. The following websites are for Hostelling International USA and other hostel organizations:

www.hiusa.org

www.hostelusa.com

www.hostels.com

www.hostelworld.com

Hotels & Motels

There are also other budget accommodations that are popular with travelers in the U.S. Many people planning their trips ahead of time make reservations at a hotel or motel before traveling. Hotels and motels are basically the same. The term “motel” today generally refers to a “limited service” property. For example, a motel may provide fewer amenities and does not provide food service. A useful website for finding hotels or motels is www.tripadvisor.com which is a website where people post their experiences at different hotels and/or motels around the world. This website also posts the hotel rates and lists the hotel rates on discount websites, such as expedia.com and orbitz.com, that connect people with hotels. Whatever website you visit to find a hotel or motel, be sure to make a note of the rate on the website and then call the hotel or motel directly to ask for a discount. Many websites that post different hotel rates charge a percentage above what the posted hotel rate is, so it is usually cheaper to compare and call the hotel or motel directly. Please remember that it is acceptable to negotiate the rate of hotels or motels in the United States, so don’t be afraid to ask for a discount!

www.tripadvisor.com

CHAPTER 8 : WHILE IN LOS ANGELES

The Weather

Many people think of Los Angeles as a place where it is always warm and sunny. And it often is, so make sure you bring light, comfortable clothing. The sun can get very strong, so be sure to wear sunscreen and sunglasses when you're out. It can also get very dry, so be sure to drink plenty of water, and girls may want to use more moisturizer.

However, it can get cold, especially in the mountains and near beaches in the winter, although it rarely gets to freezing temperatures anywhere but the highest mountains. Be prepared for many days to be warm and sunny, but be sure to bring a few sweaters and jackets just in case the nights get a little chilly. Of course, if you plan to go hiking or skiing in the mountains, you will need to bring or buy appropriate cold-weather clothing for those activities.

About Los Angeles

When people say Los Angeles, they usually mean the overall metropolitan area and not the specific city of Los Angeles. The greater Los Angeles area includes over 60 independent cities in 5 counties. If you start in downtown Los Angeles and head toward the beach, you will pass through Hollywood, West Hollywood, Beverly Hills and Santa Monica, but you would probably think it was all one city unless someone told you otherwise.



Exploring L.A.

If you are going to spend any time in Los Angeles, you should decide on how you are going to get around. Depending on how long you are going to be here and how much you are willing to spend, here are some of your options.

Driving

Most people in Los Angeles drive to and from work or school, but if you are going to be here for a limited period of time, and you are staying within the city, it's probably best to avoid buying a car and only renting a car when you need one. If you do decide to drive, make sure you have the appropriate license and insurance (see chapter 6), and pay attention to traffic and parking signs.

Public Transportation

While using public transportation in the city of Los Angeles is not as easy as many other big cities, it is not as difficult as many people will tell you. Public transportation in Los Angeles is primarily made up of bus lines, with a few subways and trains. For more information, including maps, timetables and trip planners, visit: <http://www.metro.net>.



Fares

A single ride on a bus or subway is usually \$1.50* (trains and buses that travel outside of the city are usually more). If you are going to be taking more than one bus or subway, consider buying a pass, which will allow you unlimited rides on most buses and subways.

Day Pass \$5

Weekly Pass \$20

Monthly Pass \$75

Taxis

Due to the size of Los Angeles and the traffic here, taxis in Los Angeles can get very expensive very quickly. If you're taking a quick trip from one part of Hollywood to another, it's a great way to get around, but a trip from downtown to Santa Monica (two popular tourist areas) would cost over \$60 each way. If you do need to catch a cab, you're unlikely to find one on the street like in other large cities; instead, you'll have to call for one, and they usually take 10-15 minutes to arrive. Here are some helpful numbers.

United Independent Taxi

(Los Angeles & Beverly Hills)
(800) 411-0303

Independent Taxi

(800) 521-8294

Checker Cab

(Los Angeles & West Hollywood)
(800) 300-5007

Yellow Cab

(800) 200-1085

*These prices are current as of April 2013 and are subject to change.

Bike

Los Angeles is not the friendliest place to ride a bike, but many people visiting for a short period find it to be a good alternative to cabs and buses. Be careful when riding a bike through heavy traffic, when drivers are the least likely to notice you. For your safety (and because it's a law in some places), always wear a helmet and bright colors, and consider other safety equipment as well.

Special Attractions

Due to the size of L.A., it's unlikely you'll be able to see everything. This list will give you a few places to start, depending on your interests.

Theme Parks

Disneyland

Perhaps Los Angeles's most famous theme park, Disneyland is located in the suburb of Anaheim, less than an hour drive from Hollywood. There are two parks, Disneyland and Disney California Adventure, and both are great places for families and groups without children. Tickets are available for both parks together (called a 'Park Hopper') or individually. Prices range from \$87-125* per day for adults, depending on the type of ticket, and discounts are sometimes available online, especially for group or multiple-day tickets. More information can be found at disneyland.disney.go.com/disneyland.



Universal Studios

Originally only a movie studio, Universal Studios has become a theme park revolving around the movies, and they still make movies there as well. Learn about the history of film while riding on some exciting rides and attractions, and when you're finished, you can go shopping at Universal City Walk. Tickets are \$80* per adult, and discounts and specials are usually available. More information can be found at www.universalstudioshollywood.com.

Six Flags Magic Mountain

For thrill seekers, Six Flags Magic Mountain boasts one of the largest collections of roller coasters in the world. Tickets are \$61.99* per adult, and discounts and specials are usually available. More information can be found at www.sixflags.com/magicmountain.



Knott's Berry Farm

Smaller in size, Knott's Berry Farm is a popular park amongst locals for its combination of exciting roller coasters, relaxed atmosphere and country-western theme. Tickets are \$59.99* per adult at the gate, and discounts and specials are usually available online. More information can be found at www.knotts.com.

*These prices are current as of May 2013 and are subject to change.

Movie- and Television-Related Tourist Attractions

TV Show Tapings

If you would like to be a part of a studio audience for television shows like the Tonight Show or a sitcom, you can usually get free tickets, but you must make reservations at least a month in advance. If you have a specific show you would like to see, go to that show's website for tickets, but if you just want to go to any show, websites like www.tvtickets.com can be helpful.

Studio Tours

If you want to learn more about television and movie studios but you don't want to go on the rides (and spend the whole day) at Universal Studios, consider a tour of one of these studios instead. These tours must be reserved in advance, but they can be a fun and informative way to learn more about the world of film and television.

Warner Brothers: Tickets are \$49* per adult, and discounts and specials are usually available. More information can be found at <http://vipstudiotour.warnerbros.com/>

Paramount: Tickets are \$48* per adult, and discounts and specials are usually available. More information can be found at <http://www.paramountstudios.com/special-events/tours.html>



Celebrity Spotting

While the Hollywood & Highland complex and Universal City Walk can be great places to go shopping and sightseeing, you're unlikely to spot many celebrities there. If you want a better chance at spotting local celebrities, visit coffee shops and supermarkets during the week in neighborhoods where celebrities live (West Hollywood and Beverly Hills are good places to start), or go to restaurants and clubs where the famous go to be seen (such as The Ivy in Beverly Hills). If you want to spot out-of-town celebrities relaxing, try the hotel bars and pools at glamorous hotels (such as Chateau Marmont in West Hollywood).

Entertainment & Shopping Centers

These locations are more than just a great place to shop or see some sights; these centers combine multiple things to do and are favorites of many tourists.

Hollywood & Highland

A must for any tourist visiting Los Angeles, the Hollywood/Highland complex and surrounding area is full of things to do and see, including the Dolby Theater (where the Oscars are filmed), shopping, and lots of restaurants, as well as the following nearby attractions.

Madame Tussaud's: See all of your favorite celebrities in person — or rather, in wax. Tickets are \$30* at the door, but discounts may be available. More information can be found at <http://www.madametussauds.com/hollywood/>

*These prices are current as of May 2013 and are subject to change.

Hollywood Walk of Fame - This 15-block stretch of Hollywood Boulevard (and 3-block section of Vine) has over 2400 stars in the ground, with the names of famous celebrities from Hollywood's history. Walk along and find the names of your favorite celebrities.

Grauman's Chinese Theater - This massive movie theater is often closed since premieres are often held here, but on the right days, you can catch a movie in this beautiful, historic theater. And even when the theater is closed, you can still see the countless handprints, footprints and signatures of celebrities from the 1920s until now, as well as take a picture with one of the many characters walking around (please note: the characters work for tips).



El Capitan Theater - If you're in town while a Disney or Pixar film is being released, there's no better place to see it than at this historic theater, across the street from Hollywood & Highland complex.

L.A. Live

This new entertainment complex boasts not only a number of stores and restaurants, but also the Grammy Museum, Nokia Theater, Club Nokia and a 14-screen movie theater. And Staples Center (one of Los Angeles's biggest sport arenas) is within a short walking distance.

The Grove & Farmer's Market

The Grove is one of L.A.'s most popular and satisfying destinations. When you're not shopping or watching a movie, you can relax next to a large fountain or grab a bite in the Farmer's Market next door.

Shopping

Los Angeles has a wide variety of places to go shopping, from designer to discount. Below are some of the most popular places.



Rodeo Drive

One of the most expensive streets in the world to shop on, this Beverly Hills shopping mecca is not only popular with wealthy shoppers with a taste for high-end goods, but window shoppers can also have fun strolling down the streets surrounded by shops like Prada, Gucci, Chanel, Burberry, Versace and more.

Third Street Promenade

A great place to spend a sunny afternoon, Third Street Promenade is an open-air blend of restaurants, movie theaters, and lots and lots of shopping. And there's even more shopping at Santa Monica Place, a mall attached to the Promenade. When you're tired of spending money, take a relaxing stroll over to the Santa Monica Pier and ride on the Ferris Wheel.

Melrose Avenue

Whether you're looking for a new pair of shoes for the club or a deer's head for your wall, the diverse mix of high-end and discount stores on Melrose is likely to suit any need, including things you didn't realize you needed.

Venice

Known more for its strange inhabitants than actual shopping, Venice Beach's eclectic mix of shopping, artists and performers will entertain those with a taste for something a little bit different.

Garment or Fashion District

Originally a wholesale market, the Fashion District has become a great place to pick up a deal, but be careful: you will also find a lot of fake, counterfeit merchandise.

Outlet Malls

If you're looking for the best deal on name brand items, you might want to travel outside of Los Angeles. About 1.5 hours (driving) north of L.A. are the Camarillo Premium Outlets, and 2 hours east are the Desert Hills Premium Outlets. Great places to go for a day of discount shopping, the distance makes these locations a destination for serious shoppers only.

Museums

Los Angeles has a large number of museums dedicated to everything from classic cars to Latin American art. If you have a specific preference, look online.

LACMA

The largest museum in Museum Row, and home to tar pits in addition to a wide variety of arts and crafts from many different cultures and historical periods, LACMA is probably the best choice for any museum lover in Los Angeles. Each wing is separated into areas of interest, from modern painting and sculpture to international art from Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America, and some buildings have their own focus (for example, the Pavilion for Japanese Art). Admission is usually \$15*, but there are a number of discounts available and even some free days.

<http://www.lacma.org/>



Getty & Getty Villa

The Getty & Getty Villa focus on classical art and antiquities, and the buildings and grounds are often just as fascinating and beautiful as the art within them. Admission is free, but parking at both locations is \$15. <http://www.getty.edu/>



MOCA & Geffen Contemporary

If your taste in art is more contemporary, these two museums in downtown Los Angeles will surprise and delight. A free shuttle will take you between the museums. Admission is usually \$12 for both museums combined, but there are a number of discounts available and even some free days. <http://www.moca.org/>

Natural History Museum

If you are more interested in nature and science, check out L.A.'s Natural History Museum, and learn about subjects ranging from animals to dinosaurs, gems to fossils. Admission is usually \$12, but there are a number of discounts available and even some free days. <http://www.nhm.org/>

Huntington Gardens & Library



This unique location houses a library and art collection that could be considered a museum by itself, but it's also home to an enormous botanical garden, with world-famous Japanese, Chinese, Rose and Desert gardens, to name only a few. Admission is usually \$15 during the week and \$20 on weekends, but there are a few discounts available and even some free days. <http://www.huntington.org/>

Museum of Tolerance

The Museum of Tolerance explores the history of prejudice and racial diversity throughout the world, with a special emphasis on the Holocaust and the history of discrimination in the United States. <http://www.museumoftolerance.com>

The Nethercutt Collection

For something a little different, drive up to the San Fernando Valley and explore this fascinating collection of automobiles, antique furniture and mechanical musical instruments. Admission is free* to the museum (cars), but reservations (also free) are necessary to see the collection across the street (additional cars, as well as furniture and instruments). <http://www.nethercuttcollection.org/>

*These prices are current as of May 2013 and are subject to change.

Other

Griffith Park

Griffith Park is one of the largest parks in California, and exploring everything here would take weeks. Whether you want to hike to the Hollywood Sign, visit the Observatory to see the stars (or just see where a few stars have filmed movies), see a concert at the Greek theater, learn about the history of transportation at Travel Town Museum, or see the animals at the Los Angeles Zoo, there is plenty to do here. Next door is the Autry National Center, where you can learn about Southwestern and local Native American histories. A number of these sites are free, so check websites for more information.

<http://www.ci.la.ca.us/rap/dos/parks/griffithpk/>



Architecture



From the historic Olvera Street, Frank Lloyd Wright buildings dotting the hills or the wild contemporary designs of Gerry and Himmelbau in downtown, Los Angeles has some fascinating architecture to check out. For tours exploring these diverse buildings, check out the L.A. Conservancy.

<http://www.laconservancy.org/>

Nightlife

Whether you're looking for a relaxing night of arts and entertainment or a wild night on the town, Los Angeles has got you covered.

Movies

Hollywood is the movie capital of the world, so make sure you check out a few theaters here in L.A., but don't just go to the local multiplex. Consider catching a classic or independent film at one of Los Angeles's many historic theaters, such as the Egyptian Theater in Hollywood, the Aero and Nuart theaters on the west side, or the Silent Movie Theater and New Beverly in Hollywood. And if you want to watch a new movie, see it in style at an Arclight theater.



Egyptian & Aero: <http://www.americancinematheque.com/>

Nuart: <http://www.landmarktheatres.com/market/losangeles/nuarttheatre.htm>

Silent Movie Theater: <http://www.cinefamily.org/>

New Beverly: <http://www.newbevcinema.com/>

Arclight: <https://www.arclightcinemas.com/ArcLight/faces/Home.jsp>

Theater & Live Music

If you prefer theater or concerts, there's plenty of that as well. The Music Center, as well as the Disney Concert Hall, offers larger operas, musicals and plays in the Ahmanson Theater, Mark Taper Forum and Kirk Douglas Theater. The Hollywood Bowl is an amazing place to catch a concert, and the Pantages is a great place to watch a musical just off of Broadway. If you prefer smaller fare, catch an upcoming band at the Troubadour or Echo, where many famous musicians got their start.

Center Theater Group: <http://www.centertheatregroup.org/>

Disney Concert Hall: <http://www.laphil.com/>

Hollywood Bowl: <http://www.hollywoodbowl.com/>

Pantages: <http://www.pantages-theater.com/>

Troubadour: <http://www.troubadour.com/>

The Echo: <http://www.attheecho.com/>

Clubs and Bars

Since the hottest clubs are constantly changing, it's impossible to list them here, but if you're over 21 and want to spend a night out at a club or bar, these areas might help you find what you're looking for. (Please note: some clubs have 18+ nights, where individuals 18 -21 can get in. Please check a club's website before going.)

Hollywood

Los Angeles's biggest club area, Hollywood and West Hollywood are filled with clubs for every unique taste, musical or otherwise.

Sunset Strip: One of the most famous streets in Los Angeles, Sunset Blvd has bars and clubs throughout the city. But the infamous Sunset Strip, home to the Viper Room, Whiskey a Go Go and Roxy Theater, is like nowhere else.

Cahuenga Corridor: This street is home to a variety of clubs with different themes, so whether you want to have a drink while you get your nails done (Beauty Bar), listen to hard rock (Burgundy Room) or have a margarita under a velvet painting (Velvet Margarita), this area will have something for every taste.

Santa Monica Blvd: West of La Cienega, Santa Monica Blvd is referred to as 'Boys Town' for the large number of gay clubs. East of La Cienega, a number of ultra-hip bars and clubs attract more mixed crowds.

Los Feliz/Silverlake

A popular area for artists and musicians, Los Feliz and Silverlake are the homes of alternative and independent Angelenos.

Downtown

Once a dangerous place to hang out at night, Downtown Los Angeles has been changing in recent years, attracting a variety of club kids and artists alike.

Chinatown, Koreatown & Little Tokyo

If you're hoping for some late-night barbecue or fried rice after a wild night of karaoke, consider one of these neighborhoods near downtown.

CHAPTER II : EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

Australia

Embassy

1601 Massachusetts Ave
NW Washington DC 20036
(202) 797-3000

www.usa.embassy.gov.au

Nearest Consulate

Century Plaza Towers - 31st Floor
2029 Century Park East, Century City
Los Angeles CA 90067
(310) 277-1616

<http://www.losangeles.consulate.gov.au/losa/home.html>

Austria

Embassy

3524 International Court Northwest
Washington D.C., DC 20008
(202) 895-6700

www.austria.org

Nearest Consulate

11859 Wilshire Blvd # 501, Los Angeles, CA
90025-6621
(310) 444-9310

<http://www.bmeia.gv.at/en/embassy/los-angeles.html>

Belarus

Embassy

1619 New Hampshire Avenue Northwest
Washington D.C., DC 20009
(202) 986-1604

www.usa.belembassy.org/eng/consulate/

Belgium

Embassy

3330, Garfield Street N.W.
Washington D.C. 0008
(202) 333-6900

<http://www.diplobel.us/>

Nearest Consulate

6100 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1200
Los Angeles, CA 90048
(323) 857-1244

www.diplomatie.be/losangeles

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Embassy

2109 E Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20037
(202) 337-1500

<http://www.bhembassy.org/>

Botswana

Embassy

1531 New Hampshire Avenue Northwest
Washington D.C., DC 20036-1203
(202) 244-4990

<http://www.botswanaembassy.org/>

Brazil

Embassy

3006 Massachusetts Avenue Northwest
Washington , DC 20008-3634
(202) 238-2700

<http://www.brasilemb.org/>

Nearest Consulate

8484 Wilshire Blvd # 711
Beverly Hills, CA 90211-3235
(323) 651-2664

<http://www.brazilian-consulate.org/>

Bulgaria

Embassy

1621 22nd Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20008

Tel: (202) 387-0174;

Nearest Consulate

11766 Wilshire Blvd., suite 440
Los Angeles, CA 90025

(310) 478-6700

Canada

Embassy

501 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20001
Tel.: (202) 682-1740

<http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca>

Nearest Consulate

550 S Hope St, 9th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90071-2627
(213) 346-2700

Chile

Embassy

1732 Massachusetts Ave. NW.
Washington DC 20036
(202) 785-1746

<http://www.chile-usa.org/overview.htm>

Nearest Consulate

6100 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90048
(323) 933-3697

China

Embassy

3505, International Place, N.W.,
Washington D.C. 20008

<http://www.china-embassy.org/chn/>

Nearest Consulate

443 Shatto Place,
Los Angeles, CA 90020

<http://losangeles.china-consulate.org/eng/>

Costa Rica

Embassy

Address: 2112 S Street, NW - Washington, D.C. 20008

(202) 328-6628

<http://www.costarica-embassy.org/>

Nearest Consulate

1605 W Olympic Blvd # 400
Los Angeles, CA 90015-3836
(213) 380-6031

Czech Republic

Embassy

3900 Spring of Freedom Lane Northwest
Washington D.C., DC 20008-3897

(202) 274-9100

<http://www.mzv.cz/washington/>

Nearest Consulate

10990 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90024-3913
(310) 473-0889

Denmark

Embassy

3200 Whitehaven Street
Washington D.C., DC 20007

(202) 234-4300

<http://www.ambwashington.um.dk/en>

Nearest Consulate

10877 Wilshire Blvd # 1105
Los Angeles, CA 90024-4368
(310) 443-2090

<http://www.danishconsulate.org/>

Dominican Republic

Embassy

1715 22nd Street, NW
Washington DC 20008

(202) 332-6280

<http://www.domrep.org/>

Nearest Consulate

9001 Laurel Canyon Blv. Suite 204
Sun Valley, CA 91352
(510) 864-7777

http://www.domrep.org/consulates_us.html

Ecuador

Embassy

2535 15th Street Northwest
Washington D.C., DC 20009-4102

(202) 234-7200

<http://www.ecuador.org>

Nearest Consulate

8484 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 540
Beverly Hills, CA 90211
(323) 658-5146 / (323) 658-1068

Estonia

Embassy

2131 Massachusetts Av., NW
Washington, D.C. 20008 USA

tel. (1 202) 588-0101

<http://www.estemb.org/>

France

Embassy

4101 Reservoir Road Northwest
Washington D.C., DC 20007

(202) 944-6000

<http://ambafrance-us.org>

Nearest Consulate

10990 Wilshire boulevard, suite 300.
Los Angeles California USA CA 90024.

(310) 235-3200

<http://www.consulfrance-losangeles.org/>

Germany

Embassy

2300 M Street NW
Washington, DC 20037

(202) 298-4000

<http://www.germany.info/relaung/info/missions/embassy/embassy.html>

Nearest Consulate

6222 Wilshire Blvd #500
Los Angeles, CA 90048

(323) 930-2703

www.germany-info.org/losangeles

Ghana

Embassy

3512 International Drive Northwest
Washington D.C., DC 20008-3035

(202) 244-2594

<http://www.ghanaembassy.org/>

Guatemala

Embassy

2220 R Street, NW
Washington DC 20008

(202) 745-4952

<http://www.guatemala-embassy.org/>

Nearest Consulate

3540 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 100
Los Angeles, Ca 90010

(213) 365-9251

<http://www.consulaxgt.com/>

Hungary

Embassy

3910 Shoemaker Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20008

(202) 362-6730

<http://www.huembwas.org/>

Nearest Consulate

11766 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 410 Los Angeles, California 90025.

(310) 473-9344

India

Embassy

2107 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington DC 20008
(202) 939-7000

<http://www.indianembassy.org/>

Nearest Consulate

540 Arguello Boulevard
San Francisco, California 94118
(415) 668-0662; (415) 668-0683

<http://www.cgisf.org/>

Ireland

Embassy

2234 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington DC 20008
(202) 462-3939

<http://www.embassyofireland.org>

Nearest Consulate

751 Seadrift Drive
Huntington Beach, CA 92648-4163
(714) 658-9832

Italy

Embassy

3000 Whitehaven Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C., 20008
(202) 612-4400

http://www.ambwashingtondc.esteri.it/ambasciata_washington

Nearest Consulate

12400 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300
Los Angeles, CA 90025
(310) 820-0622

http://www.conslosangeles.esteri.it/Consolato_LosAngeles

Kazakhstan

Embassy

1401 16th Street, N.W.
Washington D.C. 20036
(202) 232-5488 ext 121, 126, 127
<http://www.kazakhembus.com>

Kenya

Embassy

2249, R. Street N.W.
Washington D.C. 20008
(202) 387-6101

<http://kenyaembassy.com>

Nearest Consulate

Park Mile Plaza
4801 Wilshire Boulevard
Mezzaine Floor

Los Angeles, CA 90010

(323) 939-2408

<http://www.kenyaembassy.com>

Korea, South

Embassy

2320 Massachusetts Ave. NW.
Washington, DC 20008
(202) 939-5663

<http://www.koreaembassyusa.org/>

Nearest Consulate

3243 Wilshire Blvd # 300
Los Angeles, CA 90005
(213) 385-9300
www.koreanconsulatela.org

Kyrgyzstan

Embassy

2360 Massachusetts Avenue
Washington, DC 20008
(202) 449-9822

<http://www.kgembassy.org>

Latvia

Embassy

2306 Massachusetts Avenue
NW, Washington, DC 20008, U.S.A.
(202) 328-2840

<http://www.latvia-usa.org/>

Nearest Consulate

3013 Palos Verdes Drive West
Palos Verdes Estates
Los Angeles, CA 90274
(310) 377-1784

Lithuania

Embassy

2622 16th Street NW
Washington, DC 20009
(202) 234-5860 ext. 130#

<http://www.ltembassyus.org/>

Macedonia

Embassy

2129 Wyoming Avenue NW
Washington DC 20008
(202) 667-0501

<http://http://www.macedonianembassy.org/contact.asp>

Mali

Embassy

2130 R Street, NW,
Washington DC 20008-1907
(202) 332-2249, 939-8950

<http://www.maliembassy.us>

Malta

Embassy

2017 Connecticut Avenue NW,
Washington DC 20008
(202) 462-3611

Nearest Consulate

5449 Endeavour Court
Moorpark, CA 93021
(805) 531-9683

Mexico

Embassy

1911 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington DC 20006
(202) 736-1000

<http://portal.sre.gob.mx/eua>

Nearest Consulate

2401 W. Sixth Street
Los Angeles, CA 90057
(213) 351-6800

Moldova

Embassy

2101 S Street NW
Washington D.C. 20008
(202) 667-1130

<http://www.turism.md/eng/embassy/17>

Netherlands

Embassy

4200 Linnean Avenue, NW,
Washington DC 20008 - USA
(202) 244-5300

<http://www.netherlands-embassy.org/homepage.asp>

Nearest Consulate

11766 Wilshire Blvd.,
Suite 1150
Los Angeles CA 90025 - USA
(310) 268-1598

New Zealand

Embassy

37 Observatory Circle NW,
Washington, DC 20008,
(202) 328-4800

<http://www.nzembassy.com/usa>

Nearest Consulate

2425 Olympic Boulevard,
Santa Monica, CA 90404,
(310) 566-6555
<http://www.nzcgl.com/new/index.php>

Peru

Embassy

1700 Massachusetts Avenue, NW,
Washington DC 20036
(202) 833 - 9860

<http://www.peruvianembassy.us/>

Poland

Embassy

2640 16th Street, NW,
Washington DC 20009
(202) 234-3800

<http://www.washington.polemb.net/>

Portugal

Embassy

2012 Massachusetts Ave NW
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 350-5400

<http://www.embassyportugal-us.org>

Romania

Embassy

1607-23rd Street NW
Washington DC 20008
(202) 332-4846

<http://washington.mae.ro/>

Nearest Consulate

11766 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 560
Los Angeles CA 90025
(310) 444-0043

http://www.consulateromania.net/index_en.php

Russia

Embassy

2640, Wisconsin Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20007
(202) 298-5700

<http://www.russianembassy.org>

Saudi Arabia

Embassy

601 New Hampshire Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20037 - USA
(202) 342-3800

<http://www.saudiembassy.net>

Nearest Consulate

2045 Sawtelle Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90025
(310) 479-6000

Serbia

Embassy

2134, Kalorama Road, N.W.
Washington
20008

(202) 332-0333

<http://www.serbiaambusa.org/>

Slovakia

Embassy

3523 International Court, NW
Washington DC, 20008
(202) 237-1054

<http://www.mzv.sk/washington>

Nearest Consulate

10940 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 2030 , CA
90024
California Los Angeles, U.S.A
(310) 209-1253

<http://www.mzv.sk/cglosangeles>

South Africa

Embassy

3051 Massachusetts Avenue, NW,
Washington DC 20008
(202) 232-4400

<http://saembassy.ogt11.com/>

Nearest Consulate

6300 Wilshire Boulevard
Suite 600
Los Angeles, CA 90048

(323) 651-0902

[http://www.link2southafrica.com/
Consulate.html](http://www.link2southafrica.com/Consulate.html)

Spain

Embassy

2375 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037
(202) 452-0100 / (202) 728-2340

<http://www.spainemb.org>

Nearest Consulate

5055 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 860
Los Angeles, CA 90036
(323) 938-0158

Switzerland

Embassy

2900 Cathedral Ave. NW
Washington DC 20008
(202) 745-7940

<http://www.swissemb.org/>

Nearest Consulate

11766 Wilshire Boulevard
Suite 1400
Los Angeles, CA 90025
(310) 575-1145

[http://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/home/
rep/nameri/vusa/cgla.html](http://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/home/rep/nameri/vusa/cgla.html)

Tanzania

Embassy

1232 22nd Street NW
Washington D.C 20037
(202) 884-1080

<http://www.tanzaniaembassy-us.org>

Thailand

Embassy

1024 Wisconsin Avenue
NW, Suite 401
Washington, DC 20007
(202) 944-3600

<http://www.thaiembdc.org/>

Nearest Consulate

611 North Larchmont Boulevard
2nd Floor, Los Angeles
California 90004
(323) 962-9574
<http://www.thai-la.net>

Trinidad and Tobago

Embassy

1708 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036
<http://www.ttembassy.org/>

Turkey

Embassy

2525 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20008
(202) 612-6700

<http://www.turkishembassy.org/>

Nearest Consulate

6300 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 2010
Los Angeles, CA 90048
(323) 655-8832

Ukraine

Embassy

3350 M Street N.W.,
Washington, DC 20007
(202) 333-0606

<http://www.mfa.gov.ua/usa/en/>

United Kingdom

Embassy

3100 Massachusetts Avenue
Washington, DC 20008
(202) 588-6500

<http://ukinusa.fco.gov.uk/en/>

Nearest Consulate

11766 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 1200
Los Angeles, CA 90025-6538
(310) 481-0031

[http://ukinusa.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/other-
locations/la/](http://ukinusa.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/other-locations/la/)

Uzbekistan

Embassy

1746 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036-1903
(202) 887-5300

<http://www.uzbekistan.org/>

Venezuela

Embassy

1099 30th St.
NW. Washington, D.C. 20007
(202) 342-6852

<http://www.venezuela-us.org>

Vietnam

Embassy

1233 20th St NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 861-0737

<http://www.vietnamembassy-usa.org>