



Tour Name

New York Times Journeys - Tales and Tastes of Downtown Los Angeles

Tour City

Los Angeles

Tour Snapshot

Downtown Los Angeles is the birthplace of this metropolis, whose heritage of immigration is on display through food, the arts and architecture. Explore the home of the earliest Mexican settlers, and see how not just China, but other Asian nations have created a vast tapestry. On this exclusive tour inspired by The New York Times's "36 Hours" feature, get hands-on experience and in-depth exposure to a multicultural hub of the City of Angels.

Highlights

- Ride the Red Line metro to the beautifully restored Art Deco Union Station, now a dining and entertainment hub.
- See some of the fabulous murals honoring immigrants and local figures, including one hidden from view for decades.
- Explore the city's birthplace at El Pueblo de Los Angeles National Monument.
- Taste, see, smell and experience the cultural wonders of Mexican and Chinese communities.
- Make a wish at a historic Chinatown wishing well.

New York Times Exclusives

- *Behind-the-Scenes Access*: Meet a local Chinese guide who will translate conversations with other Chinese in this close-knit community.
- *Hands-on Element*: Learn about mole, a traditional sauce, based on spices and sometimes chocolate, a classic in Mexican cuisine, and about different tortillas, and make your own enchilada under the watchful eye of the family of the restaurant's owners.
- *Local Interactions*: Have a Chinese cookie and tea in an authentic Chinatown restaurant, and connect with the restaurant owners and servers with some basic Mandarin.

Inclusions: Mole workshop and tastings session, entrance to a temple in Chinatown, Chinese tea ceremony, pastry, metro ticket, food tasting in the market.

Exclusions: Gratuities for your guide

Schedule details

- Duration: 4 Hours
- Meeting point:
Angels Flight Railway Lower Station, 351 South Hill Street, Los Angeles, CA 90071. Your guide will be holding an Urban Adventures and New York Times Journeys sign.

Exact GPS: 34.051098,-118.249822

Google Maps: <https://goo.gl/maps/NnGMVnCuvhRvBUkM6>
- {label-what3words-location}
- Starting time: 10.00 AM
- Ending point:
Chinatown Seven Star Cavern Wishing Well within Chinatown Center Plaza

Full Itinerary

Meet at the bottom of the Angels Flight funicular railway in the center of the Historic Bunker Hill District. This famous funicular, declared a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument in 1962, was designed and financed by Americans but was largely built by the city's Asian immigrants. It opened in 1901 to take people up the short but steep slope.

The first settlers in the area were of course Native Americans, but Europeans founded a mission here in the late 1700s, and the first Mexican immigrants arrived soon after. By the 1850s, the area included French, freed African-American slaves, Germans and Chinese, among others. The Bunker Hill area was where the bankers lived, building grand Victorian houses from fortunes made in gold or oil. In 1917, the Grand Central Market opened, in part to serve this community. Today, with over 90 vendors, it offers a mix of traditional and new vendors who sell foodstuffs from bulk chiles and dried beans to smoked fish. Hear the personal stories from some of the people behind the produce. Explore the market, seeking new sights and tastes.

The Grand Central Market is on Broadway, a section of the world-famous Route 66. On the way to the Metro Red Line, pass several murals that offer a glimpse into the creativity of the city's residents and reflect their deep connection with cultures from all over the world. Murals have sprung up all over the city, reflecting the local people and their cultures.

Jump on the Metro Red Line to Union Station. Once the largest rail station in the West, this Art Deco gem with Spanish Colonial accents has been transformed into a shopping, eating and cultural center. Cross the street to the Plaza de Cultura y Artes and Olvera Street and head down to the Avila Adobe, the oldest adobe building in Los Angeles, built in 1818 by a successful rancher. The first families of pobladores, or settlers, arrived in 1781 from the Gulf of California to establish the pueblo that was to become the City of Los Angeles in this area, founding what became Olvera Street. Explore this historic house before continuing to a special viewing platform for a recently restored mural, "América Tropical." Painted in 1932 on the side of the Italian Hall by David Alfaro Siqueiros, one of Mexico's most prominent muralists, it is his only mural left in its original location and is available only for limited viewing hours. Its political theme, the imperialistic oppression of Native Americans and Latin Americans, was so upsetting that it was soon whitewashed (literally) and was restored only recently.

Take a break at a family-owned modern Mexican restaurant, a recent addition to the Olvera Street plaza after its previous location (listed on Jonathan Gold's Top 100 places to eat in L.A. for four years) burned down. The family's new concept focuses on food, art and culture, and they call themselves "interpreters of recipes created hundreds of years ago."

Tour the restaurant and learn the origin and traditions of mole, a ubiquitous Mexican sauce that can be based on fruit, spices, chocolate or all of the above. Alonso, the owner, will share the techniques on how to make their signature mole, a family tradition for generations. Taste several different versions with homemade tortillas and learn to pick out and appreciate the different ingredients. Then build your own enchiladas to enjoy with your favorite sauce. Get one of the family's mole recipes to take home so you can prepare this delicious sauce at home.

In the early 1860s, thousands of Chinese men, most from Guangdong province in southern China, were hired by the Central Pacific Railroad Company to work on the western portion of the first Transcontinental Railroad. Many of them settled in Los Angeles. The original Chinatown, developed in the late 19th century, was demolished to make room for Union Station, replaced by New Chinatown, which opened in 1938. Even today, new immigrants from China (and other Asian nations) often arrive first in Chinatown, and it remains a closed and authentic community, bound by traditions of language, food and culture. Walk through Chinatown, stopping at the Chinatown Central Plaza to experience an immigrant neighborhood in the midst of a renaissance. Learn about its history as a Chinese community as well as a haven for artists and galleries. Meet a local Chinese guide who will translate your local conversations and take you behind the scenes in Chinatown. Visit the Thien Hau Temple, a Taoist temple serving the Vietnamese. Learn about the ancient Chinese practice of Kau Chim, a fortune-telling ritual involving praying to a god and then casting a fortune with bamboo sticks. After weaving through the backstreets of Chinatown with your neighborhood guide, take a tea break at an authentic Chinatown tea house; your guide can teach you a few words of Mandarin so you can order a cookie and tea on your own.

End the tour at Chinatown's Seven Star Cavern Wishing Well, where generations of immigrants and their families have asked for health, wealth and other blessings. Built in 1938, this is not a traditional hole in the ground: It's a multicolored, kitschy piece of street art with target areas labeled "Lotto," "Beauty," "Vacation" and the like, so you can aim your coins for your desires. If you want to continue exploring the neighborhood, breweries, restaurants, bars and shops abound nearby and your guides can point you in the right direction.

New York Times Reading List:

- *Asian-American Cuisine's Rise, and Triumph* (<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/10/t-magazine/asian-american-cuisine.html>)
- *6 Standout Restaurants in Los Angeles Strip Malls* (<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/20/travel/standout-restaurants-strip-malls-los-angeles-california.html>)
- *Los Angeles Through the Centuries, Glimpsed by Kerouac, de Beauvoir, Waugh and Others* (<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/26/books/review-dear-los-angeles-david-kipen.html>)
- *The New Punks of Los Angeles: In the City's Outlying Areas, Latino Teenagers Are Shaping a New Music Scene* (<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/03/style/new-punks-los-angeles.html>)
- *Arts in America; A New Life for Revolutionary Art* (<https://www.nytimes.com/2002/10/29/arts/arts-in-america-a-new-life-for-revolutionary-art.html>)
- *The New Age of Traditional Mexican Mole* (<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/23/t-magazine/food/mole-mexico-chefs.html>)

Additional information

Inclusions: Mole workshop and tastings session, entrance to a temple in Chinatown, Chinese tea ceremony, pastry, metro ticket, food tasting in the market.

Exclusions: Gratuities for your guide

Your Trip: For your Urban Adventure you will be in a small group of a maximum of 12 people.

Confirmation of booking: If you have your voucher, your booking is confirmed. We'll see you at the start point. Get in touch if you have any concerns or require more information via the email address or phone number (business hours only) on your voucher.

Child Policy: This is a child-friendly tour. Children between the ages of 6 and 11 inclusively are permitted on this tour at the rate listed above. Please select 'child' above when booking. Children under the age of 6 are permitted to join this tour free of charge. Please inform us at the time of booking if you'll be bringing a child under the age of 6. You can do so in the special request box on the checkout page.

Dietary Notes

We can accommodate vegetarians and other dietary restrictions. Please notify us in advance if you have any dietary requests. You can do so in the 'Additional information' box at checkout, or by emailing us at info@losangelesurbanadventures.com

Local contact

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