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Gwyneth Paltrow's guide to Los Angeles

Gwyneth Paltrow, the actress and creative director of goop, reveals her favourite Los Angeles haunts following the launch of her new city guides app.

BY GWYNETH PALTROW
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I was born in Los Angeles and my early childhood is imprinted in my brain: the memory of palm trees and the city's specific light, harsh yet diffused at once – which I know doesn't make sense. I remember my dad [the late director Bruce Paltrow] driving me around to meetings when he was trying to get his career going.

To me LA is all about being outside. I have great memories of being little in California. Our house in Santa Monica had a pool, a tree house and pomegranate trees in the garden. Whenever I'm in the city I feel my brain works less hard. I'm not noticing everything everywhere because it's all so familiar, whereas in London I'm constantly aware of everything – such as the blue plaques – because it's still so foreign to me, even though I've lived there for 10 years. Los Angeles has the quality of home. I find it deeply tranquil. It's my roots. But I've had a love-hate affair with the city over the years. It was

Gwyneth Paltrow AFT/Getty Images

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city to discover yourself, because it is so spread out that you never quite know where you are supposed to be. But now, having a job and a family, it is fantastic.

My idea for the goop [city guides app](#), which covers not just LA but New York and London too, came about because I've always been the person my friends call to find out where they should go in a city – for anything, right down to a good bikini wax. Because I'm so curious, wherever I travel I'm always pounding the pavement, asking locals a million questions. In fact, I originally started [goop](#), my website, as a database for my friends. It's such a big part of who I am and the app came out of that. There's so much information out there that it's nice to have someone whose taste you trust.

I always find that the hotel concierge in a particular city will recommend a restaurant that they say is great and in fact it's terrible, so you waste your money. The recommendations on my app come directly from me, so they have to be good. You'll find out about the best restaurants that really are tried and tested, and places you wouldn't necessarily find on your own, but which a local would know. We designed the city guides app to be like a bookshelf, and I am effectively a curator sharing my experiences with you.

Los Angeles isn't considered one of the world's great cities, but I think it's like a best-kept secret. If you know where to go, a holiday in LA can be a very cool experience. Here are some of my personal picks from the app.

My jet lag cure

As soon as I arrive in LA after a long flight, I head to the Be Hive of Healing ([behiveofhealing.com](#)), a holistic healing centre in Santa Monica, to see Dr Habib Sadeghi, the founder. He gives me an IV [intravenous therapy] full of vitamins, which is incredible. The lymphatic massage treatment helps with jet lag, too: they wrap you in a blanket and you sweat out impurities. Dr Sadeghi has also changed my life in terms of allergy testing and food.

My big breakfast

I usually make breakfast for the family at the weekend, but when I do go out, one of my favourite places is Hal's Bar & Grill ([halsbarandgrill.com](#)) on Abbot Kinney Boulevard in Venice. Its eggs Benedict is delicious, and it also has nightly jazz. The Hotel Bel-Air ([hotelbelair.com](#)) has a really good brunch; you sit outside, which is lovely. Huckleberry ([huckleberrycafe.com](#)) in Santa Monica is fantastic for breakfast, especially on Sundays.

But for the best coffee and muffins, go to Caffè Luxxe ([caffeluxxe.com](#)). I also love Peet's coffee ([peets.com](#)), which is a West Coast thing.

A post-breakfast workout

If you want to work out after breakfast, there's a lot of yoga in LA. I like YogaWorks ([yogaworks.com](#)) on Montana Avenue in Santa Monica. There are other branches throughout the city. People are obsessed with Maha Yoga ([mahayoga.com](#)), in Brentwood, where they blast rock music as you exercise.

In California, I like to take advantage of the outdoors. You can run up and down the Santa Monica Steps, on a steep hillside close to the beach. Or you can hike in the Santa Monica Mountains, which I love. I walk for miles, admiring the views – you don't feel as though you are in LA.

Closer to the ocean is the Will Rogers State Historic Park, off Sunset Boulevard, which is beautiful. Friends of mine who live inland, on the East



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For an indoor workout, I go to the new studio of Tracy Anderson (tracyandersonmethod.com), in Brentwood, of which I am a part-owner. Her method is miraculous. She has changed my body and my life. She has a variety of cardio and “band cardio” classes [working with resistance bands that hang from the ceiling]. There’s also a blow-dry bar in the studio if you want to get your hair done quickly. LA has a lot of blow-dry bars.

A dose of retail therapy

There’s great shopping all over LA. For beautiful artisan pottery that makes a great gift, I love Heath Ceramics (heathceramics.com). Just One Eye (justoneeye.com) has one-of-a-kind clothing, art and jewellery. A great thing to do on Saturday morning is go to a farmers’ market. If you’re not from a warm climate, you will find the abundance of fruit and vegetables astonishing. It’s such fun just to walk along the stalls and see the colours and all the produce – the huge yellow sunflowers and the bright, sweet California strawberries. They are like sugar.

Absorb some culture

The idea that LA isn’t cultural is untrue; the culture just comes in a different package. If you’re looking for 400-year-old buildings, obviously it’s not the place to go. LA is not about stepping back in time; it’s about “Where are we now?” Its real strengths are contemporary art, architecture and food. You can’t go wrong with a weekend visit to MOCA (moca.org), the Museum of Contemporary Art, which is current and has a good vibe, great exhibitions and a cool kids’ area where they can do art and play. At Bergamot Station (bergamotstation.com), in an old railway station, you can explore a variety of contemporary art galleries.

My lunchtime haunts

Some people like to go to The Ivy, order its famous chopped salad and watch the celebrities. I prefer a turkey burger at Ammo (ammocafe.com) in Hollywood. I also love Bouchon (bouchonbistro.com), in Beverly Hills, where I have oysters and French fries, or chicken.

With the family I go to Brentwood Country Mart (brentwoodcountrymart.com), where you can also find great clothing and books. Frida Taquería has delicious Mexican food, but everyone in my family loves Reddi Chick, which has been there since I was born; I used to go as a child. You sit outside in the courtyard eating the best rotisserie chicken and chips – a classic LA thing to do. For dessert, Sweet Rose Creamery has superb ice cream.

One other place I go whenever I am in Los Angeles is Sushi Park, at 8539 West Sunset Boulevard, for Japanese food. It’s not fancy, but it’s amazing. I just eat whatever they serve me.

My kind of neighbourhood

If you want to get a real sense of LA, stroll along Abbot Kinney Boulevard in Venice. You can park and walk and feel like you are steeped in a neighbourhood and a culture. The food is wonderful, the clothes shops are amazing and unusual, it’s alive and it’s not touristy. There’s lots of really interesting stuff. I love the pizzas at Gjelina (gjelina.com), one of the best restaurants in LA – my mouth is watering just thinking about them – and there’s a great bar called The Other Room (theotherroom.com). Heist (shopheist.com) is a cool clothing store with a chilled Venice vibe.

cafés. I love a little place there called Forage (foragela.com), which is really nice and unusual. People bring in home-grown vegetables and trade them for meals, and they serve grass-fed burgers. I like meeting friends for lunch there and it's not hugely expensive.

Take me to the beach

If you want to go to the beach at the weekend, you have to get out of the city. I like the County Line Beach (beachcalifornia.com/county-line-beach-ventura.html), which is past Malibu, on the border of LA and Ventura counties. It's a big surf spot, beautiful and off the beaten track.

Eating out, with the children...

We love The Ivy At The Shore (theivyrestaurants.com) which has delicious pizzas and guacamole with hot home-made tortillas. It has really child-friendly food as well as good grown-up choices: I always have crab cakes and onion rings.

...And without

I love [Providence](#), which is right by Paramount Studios and has incredible seafood. We eat in a quiet room and the food is delicious: American with a French influence. I took a friend there recently for her birthday.

For a romantic dinner with Chris [Martin, her husband] we keep it casual, so the setting doesn't have to be romantic. We love Giorgio's, Il Ristorante di Giorgio Baldi (giorgiobaldi.us), which has been there since I was little and has simple dishes made with high-quality ingredients. Its corn ravioli with truffle sauce is beyond crazy; I could eat platefuls of it. Oh my God, it is so good. Yes, I eat pasta all the time – but I work out all the time too!

My big night out

I don't do nightlife in LA. I don't go out dancing much, but when I do, the Chateau Marmont (chateaumarmont.com) at night is fun. There's a great dinner and bar scene at the hotel.

I love to hear music in LA and I always find out what's on at the Hollywood Bowl (hollywoodbowl.com). You sit outside and listen to the music in the beautiful amphitheatre which is completely open to the sky. It's such a special experience; they'll have all kinds of concerts, from Radiohead to a classical symphony. You make your own picnic or pick up a picnic basket from somewhere like Joan's on Third (joansonthird.com) and bring a bottle of wine. To me, that epitomises Los Angeles culture.

Where to stay

My favourite hotel in Los Angeles is Shutters on the Beach (shuttersonthebeach.com) in Santa Monica. I have a house in LA but that's where I love to stay – and where I send my friends. It's beautiful, cosy and not too modern. The beds are really comfortable and you have a great view of the ocean. You know you're in California when you stay there.

Anyone who loves music will like the Chateau Marmont (chateaumarmont.com) in West Hollywood. That's where music industry people stay. It is kind of ramshackle and falling apart, which is part of its charm. People who love it really love it.

How to look good

Karyn Grossman (grossmandermatology.com) is my number one beauty recommendation. She did a Thermage laser treatment on me that took five

Los Angeles has some of the best hairdressers in the world. Chris McMillan in Beverly Hills has done Jennifer Aniston's hair forever. I go to Tracey Cunningham, who does my colour, too. She is my girl. Her place is called Méche (mechesalonla.com).

I also highly recommend Sonya Dakar (sonyadakar.com), my crazy Israeli facial lady. I always feel really good after seeing her. She's just magic – and a full-on human being, a real ball-buster.

As told to Elaine Lipworth

To download the goop City Guides app for Los Angeles, London and New York (£2.49), see goop.com/apps

This feature originally appeared in the summer 2013 issue of Ultratravel, The Telegraph's luxury-travel magazine. Catch up on previous issues [here](#)

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