



CICLAVIA

A NEIGHBORHOOD GUIDE TO
CULVER CITY MEETS VENICE

with contributions from 826LA student writers

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City of Los Angeles



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Written by **Andrea Richards**

Designed by **Colleen Corcoran and Tiffanie Tran**

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COMING SOON ON OCTOBER 18, 2015
CicLAvia—Heart of LA

WELCOME TO CICLAVIA Today's route takes us from the northern tip of vibrant downtown Culver City through the community of Mar Vista to Venice and the sparkling Pacific Ocean—a perfect route for a summer day where you can enhance your CicLAvia experience with a swim in the ocean and enjoy the SoCal beach scene. The neighborhoods you'll pass through today are but three of the 23 that make up the region dubbed LA's "Westside," a place, like the rest of LA, of great diversity, rich lore and constant change.

But one aspect that the area is famous for will not be in effect today: automobile traffic. As anyone who either lives on the Westside or commutes here knows, the traffic is gnarly. Two of Metro's most eagerly awaited projects, the extensions of the Purple Line subway and the Expo Line rail, will ease congestion by connecting West Los Angeles and Santa Monica to the region's growing transit network. It's a move that will improve mobility for everyone throughout Los Angeles County.

To create this particular CicLAvia neighborhood guide we had some very special help. We partnered with 826LA to run a workshop at their Mar Vista location that brought together

local kids and volunteers from 826LA and CicLAvia so that we could hear firsthand about institutions and places that matter most to the young people who live here. This workshop was a fantastic (and fun) opportunity to help these young writers hone their literary skills while at the same time learning from them and sharing our stories. We are proud to publish some of these students' creative work here and grateful to the students, their parents and 826LA for this great opportunity. Thank you for your contributions—they are an invaluable part of this project.

As usual, we also had the help of several local historians who volunteered their expertise to help us maintain accuracy and deepen our appreciation for the dynamic past of the area. We were lucky to have the input of Culver City's City Historian Julie Lugo Cerra, who traveled our route several times, pointing out significant sites of interest along the way. Her work on the official Culver City website is a treasure trove of local history. Jonathan Kaplan, of Vintage Venice Tours, practically took us backwards in a time machine on his fantastic walking tour of Venice, and his feedback has been crucial. If you are interested in exploring Venice, from "reel to real," spend time with him.

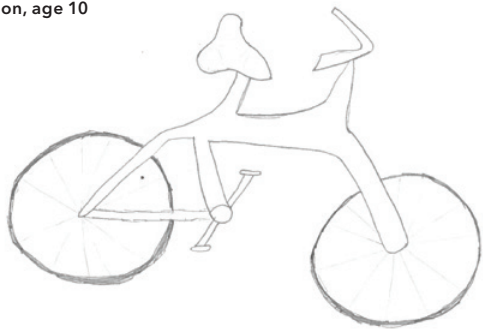


CicLAvia transforms LA's streets into a safe, fun, car-free space for walking, bicycling, skating, jogging and seeing the city in a whole new way.

Ray, age 10



Jason, age 10



CULVER CITY 6

MAR VISTA 32

VENICE 40

NEIGHBORHOOD EXTRAS—LEGEND



CULINARY LA



INSTAGRAM SPOTS



SEEN IT: FILM LOCATIONS



LITERARY LA



SING IT

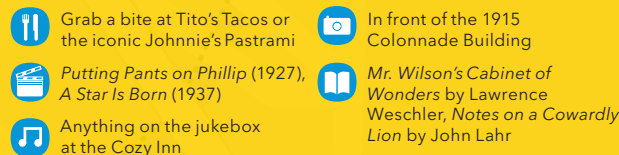
View of Culver Blvd.
looking west, 1929
Courtesy of the California
Historical Society Collection,
USC Digital Library



CULVER CITY The land that became Culver City was home to a nearby community of native Tongva people as well as masses of resident and migratory birds and the great, seasonal Ballona Creek, which until a flood in 1825 actually linked to the Los Angeles River. In fact, it was on the banks of Ballona Creek that Harry Culver found Thomas Ince filming a western and convinced the silent-era filmmaker to move his studio to Culver's new development.

Culver, who had worked for real estate developer Isaac N. Van Nuys (founder of Van Nuys), pinpointed a spot that was served by three rail lines and situated perfectly between downtown Los Angeles and Abbot Kinney's resort of Venice to build his own dream city. With his Culver Investment Company, he transformed barley fields located on what had once been Rancho La Ballona and Rincon de los Bueyes into "the Heart of Screenland." He convinced Ince to move his production studios to his new city; Ince would eventually build two different studios in the area, both of which went on to house major players during Hollywood's Golden Era. Pioneering producer Hal Roach built a third major motion picture "plant" as well, which operated from 1919 until 1963.

What started as a town of just over 500 people is today transformed into one of the Westside's most diverse communities. Since its origin, Culver City has grown by more than forty annexations and continues to be an important center for the entertainment industry. Plus, a revitalization of the downtown area along with the development of the Culver City Arts District introduced art galleries, restaurants and other cultural institutions, making it a cutting-edge, pedestrian-friendly scene.



1 Ballona Creek Bike Path

Entrance at Syd Kronenthal Park (National Blvd.)

Though it's not officially on today's route, how could we start a tour of Culver City without mentioning this wonderful 8-mile bike path that fans claim is among the most beautiful rides in LA? Maintained by the county of Los Angeles and the cities of LA and Culver City, it runs alongside the channelized Ballona Creek from here to Marina del Rey, where you can travel to both the Ballona Lagoon and the Venice canals. It also links up to the **Marvin Braude Bike Trail**, which travels through Santa Monica and the Palisades or down to Redondo.

2 Helms Bakery

8800 Venice Blvd.

The historic 1931 Art Deco building that was once the family-owned and operated Helms Bakery is now the centerpiece of a busy retail and restaurant district. Located just a block east from the eastern end of today's route, the Helms Bakery operated from 1931 to 1969 and was an important industrial bakery in LA. Opened during the Depression, the bakery supplied many jobs; instead of being sold in stores, fresh-baked bread was delivered "Daily at Your Door" (as the slogan went) across the Southland. Helms Bakery also supplied food for the nearby Olympic Village during the 1932 summer games.

Angie, age 8

My Neiaighborhood

1. Ballona creek is special because of the beautiful & fashanista birds. It's beautiful gleam of sunshine touches the lake. One last thing about this place, I explain our emotion of happiness. Fashista birds is a word I made that means birds that catch they're prey in different ways. Many times I have been to this place I have learned something new.



3 Frank Sebastian's Cotton Club

(site of) 6500 W. Washington Blvd.

What today is part of the culinary store Surfas was once the site of a famous nightclub where both Louis Armstrong and Lionel Hampton played. Opened in 1926 by entertainment entrepreneur Frank Sebastian, who ran Sebastian's Café in Venice as well as several other establishments, the club featured valet parking, full orchestras and three dance floors. It had no relation to the New York club of the same name. The building that housed it burned in the 1950s.

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4 Culver City Metro Station

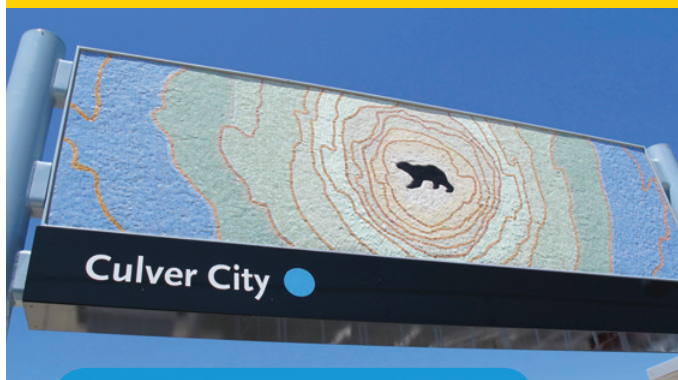
8807 W. Washington Blvd.

This elevated light-rail station services Metro's Exposition Line and connects the Westside by rail to Downtown LA, Pasadena, San Fernando Valley, South Bay and Long Beach. Opened in 2012, it's the most western station currently in operation, although that will soon change when "Phase 2" of the line's expansion is finished, which will connect this station all the way to Santa Monica. The site of this station has long served rail lines; in the early 1900s it was a junction point for the Venice Short Line until the closure of the Venice line in 1950.



3. FRANK SEBASTIAN'S COTTON CLUB

Courtesy of Los Angeles Public Library Photo Collection



4. CULVER CITY STATION, Detail of Unknowable Origins, Tom LaDuke, artist. *Courtesy of Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro).*



5. HAL ROACH STUDIOS, 1921

Courtesy of Los Angeles Public Library
Photo Collection

5 Hal Roach Studios

(site of) 8822 W. Washington Blvd.

From 1919 until 1963, this site was a film studio that was nicknamed the “Laugh Factory to the World” for the number of great comedies made here. Founded by producer Hal Roach, eventually the studio comprised 55 buildings on nearly 15 acres of land and produced some 50 comedies a year, most memorable among them starring *Our Gang*, Harold Lloyd and Laurel & Hardy. During WWII, the studio functioned as “Fort Roach,” and produced military training films starring actors such as Ronald Reagan and Alan Ladd. Today, all that remains to commemorate this birthplace of comedy is a marker placed by the Sons of the Desert, the official International Laurel & Hardy Society.



6. IVY SUBSTATION

Via Wikipedia Commons

6 Ivy Substation

9070 Venice Blvd.

Now a 99-seat theatre leased by the esteemed Actors’ Gang company, this building was constructed in 1907 by the Los Angeles Pacific Railroad (later Pacific Electric) as a power station for electric rail, specifically powering the “Balloon Route” line that brought red cars from Downtown LA to the beach resorts. By 1954, the historic Mission Revival style building was abandoned due to the end of rail service; thankfully it was saved from demolition by historians and preservationists, who had it placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1981.

7 The Culver Studios

9336 W. Washington Blvd.

This is the second major film studio in Culver City to be built by silent-era director Thomas Ince (a nearby street, Ince Blvd., bears his name), who after establishing his first motion picture studio in the area built his second Culver City one in 1918. Over the years, it's been known as DeMille Studios, RKO, RKO-Pathé, Selznick, Desilu, Culver City Studios, Laird International Studios and most recently The Culver Studios. Past owners include Howard Hughes and Joseph Kennedy. *Citizen Kane*, *Gone with the Wind* and *E.T.* are among the many classic films shot here on the 40-acre backlot, which was—in typical industry fashion—exaggerated beyond its actual size of only 29 acres.

.....

8 Museum of Jurassic Technology

9341 Venice Blvd.

Just off today's route in the Palms district is this gem of a museum, a true cabinet of curiosities that features unlikely exhibitions such as a gallery of oil portraits devoted to cosmonaut dogs and another of intricate carvings made in fruit stones. Founded in 1988 by David and Diana Wilson, this enigmatic museum inspires wonder and awe, and even offers snacks at its Tula Tea Room.

8. MUSEUM OF JURASSIC TECHNOLOGY

Fairly Safely Venture: String Figures and their Venerable Collectors *Via Wikipedia Commons*





9. CULVER HOTEL, 1938

Courtesy of Los Angeles Public Library Photo Collection

9 Culver Hotel

9400 Culver Blvd.

This six-story building was designed by the LA firm Curlett and Beelman (Park Plaza Hotel, the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel) and opened as the Hotel Hunt in 1924. Owned by city founder Harry Culver, who had his office on the second floor, it was at the time the tallest structure between downtown Los Angeles and Venice. Given its proximity to the studios, many stars maintained part-time residences here, including Clark Gable, Joan Crawford, Greta Garbo and Ronald Reagan, but the hotel's most renowned guests were the actors who portrayed the munchkins when *The Wizard of Oz* was filmed nearby in the 1930s.

10 Washington Building

9720-9730 W. Washington Blvd.

Built in 1926, this landmark Beaux Arts building designed by Arthur D. Scholz and Orville L. Clark (the latter also designed Culver City's 1928 City Hall and the fire station next door) is nicknamed "The Flatiron Building" for its triangle shape—though it's a good deal smaller than the NYC structure. It was commissioned by developer Charles E. Lindblade, one of Harry Culver's business associates. In its illustrious past, the building housed a post office, the Draft Board during WWII and the MGM Fan Club offices.

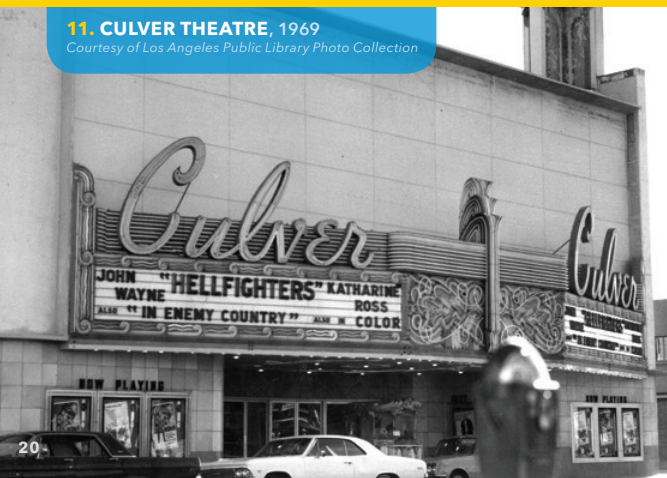
11 Kirk Douglas Theatre (Culver Theatre)

9820 W. Washington Blvd.

A former movie palace, this beautiful Streamline Moderne theatre, built in 1947, was originally the Culver Theatre. After an extensive restoration project supported by the Culver City Redevelopment Agency and Kirk and Anne Douglas, the theatre was reopened in 2004 as part of LA's Center Theatre Group (the Ahmanson, Mark Taper Forum).

11. CULVER THEATRE, 1969

Courtesy of Los Angeles Public Library Photo Collection



The Library, Nadia, Age 12



Library.
As you walk into the library, something feels like the place is cozy with a cafe smell. Mostly it smells like burnt toast but it doesn't really matter. I think > Right? I dunno. Well then, back to what I was talking about. The area is filled with many books and cds in the back that no one body knows about it. Depending where you stand it can be quiet or full of sound. No matter what my book can fall down into a sleeping trance.





12. MGM STUDIOS, 1951

Courtesy of Los Angeles Public Library Photo Collection

12 Sony Pictures Studios

*W. Washington Blvd. from Hughes Ave.
to Overland Ave.*

To some degree, the golden era of Hollywood filmmaking happened here, not in Hollywood. That's because of all the great productions from the peak of the studio era that were made here, the home of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) from 1924 to 1986. Originally founded by motion-picture pioneer Thomas Ince as the Ince/Triangle Studios in 1915, this was the first film studio built in Culver City. Historic buildings include the 1915 **Colonnade**, which still faces Washington Blvd. today and was the original entrance to Ince's new studio complex. After Ince moved on the build what is now the **Culver Studios**, this studio was eventually sold to Samuel Goldwyn, the "G" in MGM. During the MGM era, more than 50 films a year were shot here, including the great Technicolor musicals for which MGM is famous, and the studio grew to encompass six working lots of more than 180 acres. It was a true city within a city with its own police and fire departments, post office and the landmark 16,000-gallon water tower that still hovers above the studio today. During the 1970s, the once grand complex was slowly dismantled, its backlots razed for housing developments. But many of the beautiful buildings from that glorious MGM era remain. In 1990, the Sony Corporation purchased the remaining studio, restoring its historic properties and turning it into a state-of-the-art facility for film and television production.

13 St. Augustine Church

10153 W. Washington Blvd.

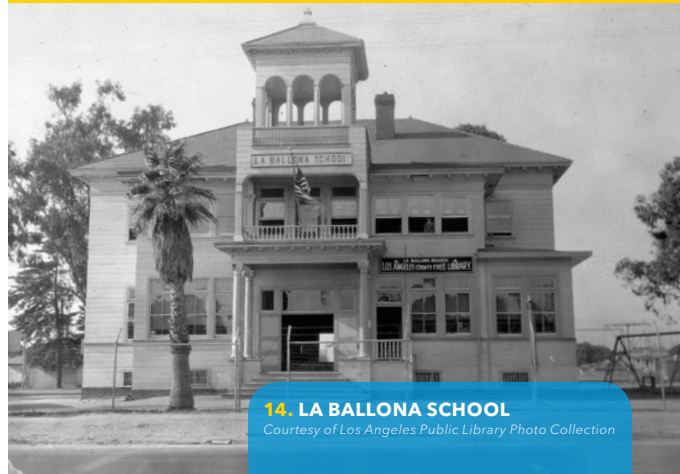
Though the Gothic structure you see today was built in the 1950s, this church has served the area since 1883, when Culver City was still known as La Ballona Valley. A small wood-frame building served as the first church on the site, which was expanded in 1922, and the adjoining school was established four years later. Located across the street from what became MGM Studios, the congregation had close ties with their neighbors in the entertainment business throughout filmdom's golden era; a priest from the church acted as a technical advisor at the studio, and the studio helped with the parish's annual barbecue fundraiser.



14 La Ballona Elementary School

10915 W. Washington Blvd.

Established when the land beneath its small, wood-framed structure was still part of the Rancho La Ballona in 1865, this is the first school built in what would eventually become Culver City. At the time, the school year was only seven months so the children could tend to their agricultural work on the ranchos. Named for the rancho, La Ballona Elementary is one of the oldest schools in Los Angeles County. Since 1947, it has been part of the Culver City School District (CCSD).



15 King Fahad Mosque

10980 W. Washington Blvd.

As you ride down the boulevard, no doubt you will note the beautiful 70-foot minaret decorated with Turkish tiles and gold leaf that is part of this important mosque. Built in 1996 thanks to donations from the Saudi king (the building bears his name) and his son, the mosque was inaugurated in 1998 for 2,000 worshippers. Many members of Los Angeles' Muslim community live nearby, some in the area of Westwood that is now called "Tehrangelles" since it hosts the largest community of Iranians outside of Iran.



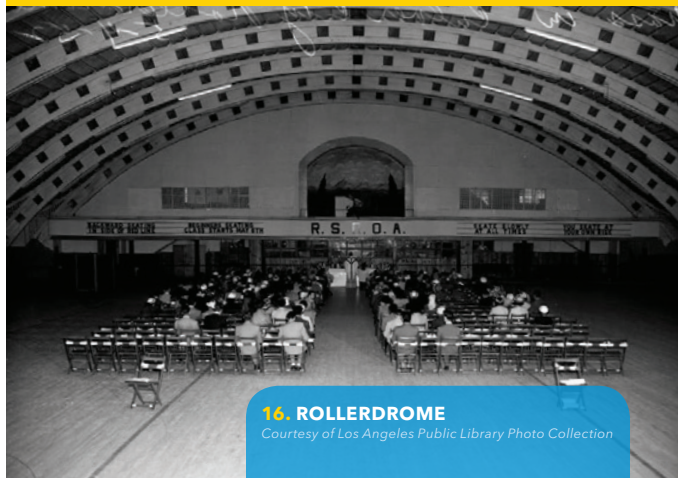
15. KING FAHAD MOSQUE

Via Wikipedia Commons

16 Tellefson Park (site of the Rollerdrome)

11105 W. Washington Pl.

This 1.5-acre park was once the site of one of Culver City's premiere family attractions—a wooden rollerskating rink contained in a gorgeous parabola-shaped building that was opened in 1928. Sadly torn down in 1970, the Rollerdrome hosted kids' birthday parties and "couple skates." According to Culver City historian Julie Lugo Cerra, "suitable dress for the Rollerdrome included skirts and blouses for the girls, and slacks and pants for the boys." And in the later years when girls could wear pants, it wasn't jeans they spun around in but "pantsuits."



16. ROLLERDROME

Courtesy of Los Angeles Public Library Photo Collection

Menchie's, Kaiha, age 11

About Menchie's

Menchie's IS a good place to start and visit with your friends and hang out on that day in the summer time or in the wintertime. And when you start to learn I'll play I like this place because you could play hang man on chalk board and draw and you could probably socialize there. And soon as you get inside you could tell the stuff.



The Beach, Angie, age 8



The Library, Angie, age 8



**CULVER CITY
MEETS VENICE – 6 miles**1 mile 

CicLAvia Route

Ruta de CicLAvia

Crossing Points for Cars

Puntos de cruce para carros

Pedestrian Zone

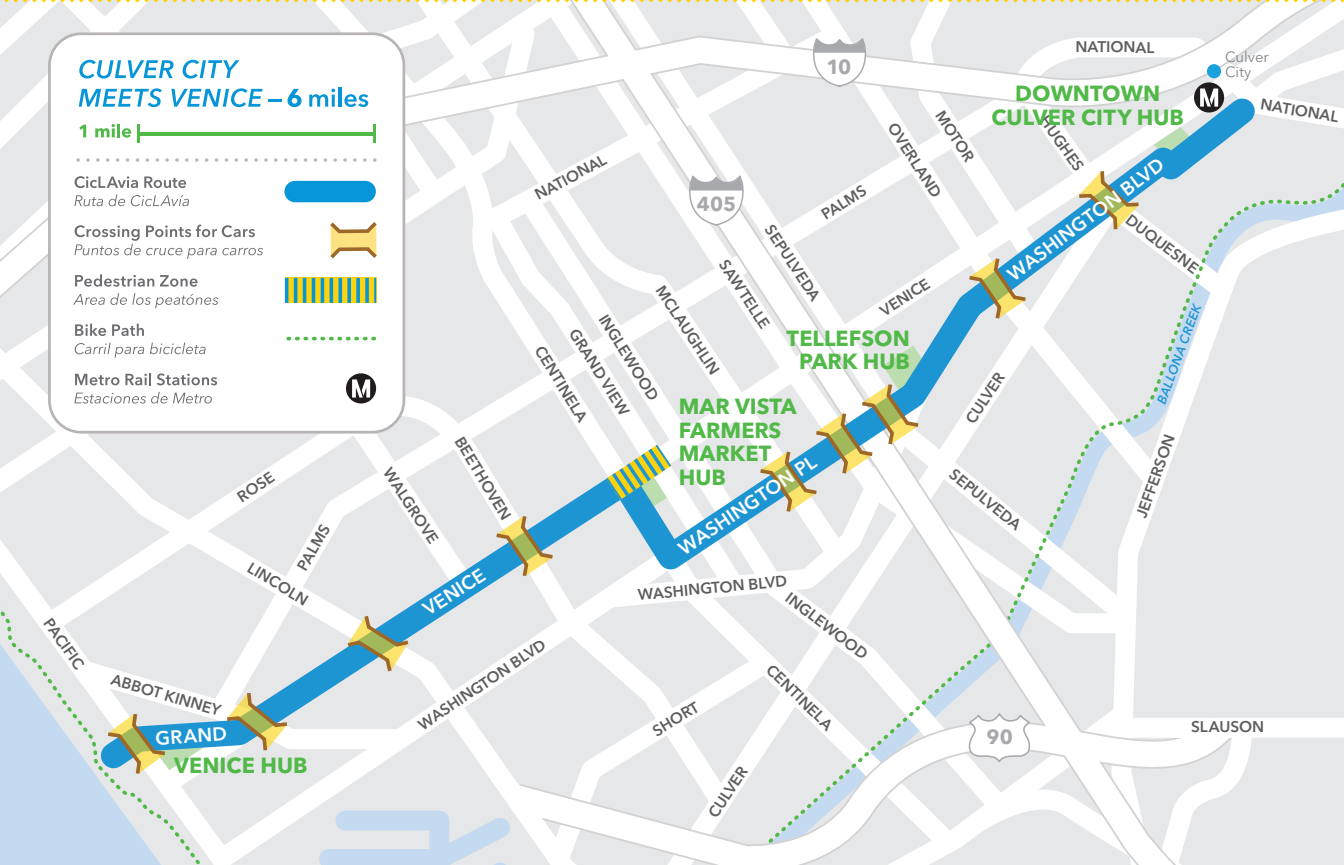
Area de los peatones

Bike Path

Carril para bicicleta

Metro Rail Stations

Estaciones de Metro



**Culver City Kennel Club,
c. 1932**

*Courtesy of Los Angeles Public
Library Photo Collection*



MAR VISTA means “ocean view,” and that’s exactly what the early residents of this community, then called Ocean Park Heights, had—close proximity to Abbot Kinney’s first development and Venice precursor, Ocean Park, and a view of the Pacific from the hills that today make up the Mar Vista Hill neighborhood. The first tract of homes was built here in 1904 along the Venice Short Line railroad tracks. The residential community, which included a significant Mormon population, changed its name to Mar Vista in 1924; it voted to become annexed by the City of Los Angeles in 1927. By then residential development had moved along Venice Blvd., and much of the surrounding area was agricultural, the fertile land an ideal place for growing lima beans. During the 1930s, Mar Vista was known as the “Lima Bean Belt of the Nation.”

But all that changed with the growth of the aerospace industry nearby—both Douglas and Hughes had plants bordering the area, and their workers needed places to live. In the 1940s remaining farmland was turned into housing tracts; many of these were single-family homes created by real estate developer Paul Trousdale (best known for his later development in Beverly Hills). But in 1948, a young LA architect

who had studied under Rudolph Schindler and Richard Neutra built 52 “Modernique” homes that married forward-looking design with affordable prices. Today known as the Mar Vista Tract, Gregory Ain’s development became LA’s first Historic Preservation Overlay Zone of post-war homes and is, according to the LA Conservancy, “an outstanding embodiment of the architect’s philosophy that modern architecture makes for better living and should be available to everyone.”

Along with low-slung, single-family homes, another significant architectural design you’ll see in Mar Vista are garden apartment buildings, multi-family residential communities characterized by a high ratio of open space to buildings; most were built between the late 1930s until the mid-1950s. The publicly owned Mar Vista Gardens is the most famous of such structures. Designed by architect Albert Criz, the 1954 site includes 601 apartment units in 62 buildings, along with a gymnasium, community center and athletic fields. While not on our route today, Mar Vista Gardens is visible from the Ballona Creek Bike Path.



Grab a snack at Mitsuwa



Grease (1978), *Ruthless People* (1986), *Matchstick Men* (2003)



“Culver Palms” by Everclear



Smacking gum in front of Rydell High (aka Venice High School)



Our Mascot Means Brave and Courage, Published by 826LA

17 Bikerowave

12255 Venice Blvd.

You'll find this volunteer-run, community bicycle repair shop on today's route—convenient if your steed needs a little tune-up along the way. Like other bike collectives (Bicycle Kitchen, Bike Oven, Valley Bikery), the good folks here want to empower cyclists with basic bicycle repair knowledge and to help connect individuals with the larger Westside cycling community. It's a mission we can certainly support.

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18 Mitsuwa Marketplace

3760 S. Centinela Ave.

This branch of the U.S.'s largest Japanese supermarket chain includes many restaurants and a Kinokuniya bookstore. Representative of the large Japanese American population that has historically lived nearby in what is now officially called Sawtelle Japantown (casually referred to as Sawtelle or Little Osaka), Mitsuwa is one of many shops catering to the area's diverse community. For well over a century, Japanese Americans made their homes just northeast of here, establishing a vital cultural center. Many of these early residents later saw their families interned during World War II. Today, Sawtelle Japantown—named for Sawtelle Blvd.—remains a hub for Japanese American owned businesses and services.

19 826LA

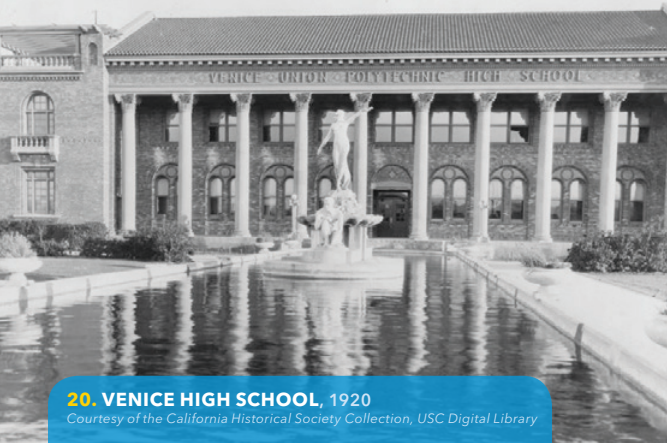
12515 Venice Blvd.

Founded in 2005, 826LA is one of several chapters of the national literary nonprofit founded by writer Dave Eggers that is dedicated to supporting young people (ages 6 to 18) with their creative and expository writing skills. Services at the center include after-school tutoring, writing workshops and the creation of many student publications. There's also a retail shop at this location that specializes in Time Travel equipment (for real!). We are proud to feature some of the work of 826LA students in this guide.

Jason

Junior Lifeguards, or JG's, is a really fun, summer class meant to teach kids how to be a lifeguard. JG's takes place at the beach. The coaches are lifeguards. This is an opportunity to make new friends. You will learn to protect your self and protect others. One way to protect your self is stingray shuffle. That is when you shuffle your feet in the water, scaring away the stingrays. One way to protect others is by learning how to move fast in the water and how to react quickly when you spot a victim. See you there!

JG's, Jason, age 10



20. VENICE HIGH SCHOOL, 1920

Courtesy of the California Historical Society Collection, USC Digital Library

20 Venice High School

13000 Venice Blvd.

Established in 1911 as the Venice Union Polytechnic High School, the school was originally located two blocks from the beach in the Kinney Company's old Lagoon Bathhouse. It moved to this 29-acre site, and many of the Art Deco buildings visible today date to the 1930s, when part of the school was rebuilt after the 1933 Long Beach earthquake. The campus was long known for the striking (and some say risqué) statue of a woman in front of the Administration Building that was created by Art Department head Harry Weinbrenner in 1915; today the statue is in storage for safekeeping. The model for this statue was a student who later became movie star Myrna Loy. A popular film location, the school is also recognizable to fans of the movie *Grease*.



21. CULVER CITY KENNEL CLUB, c. 1932

Courtesy of Los Angeles Public Library Photo Collection

21 Culver City Kennel Club

(site of) 13463 W. Washington Blvd.

While today this site is a Costco, it once was one of two famous racetracks built in Culver City (this is West Culver, officially). Originally built in 1932 for greyhound races, it closed in 1934 and was reborn as the Culver City Stadium, appearing in many racing films thanks to its proximity to nearby film studios. Motorcycles, "midget" cars, and jalopies raced on the figure-8 track here until 1954, when the property was sold to Douglas Aircraft, which built a plant, also gone, on the site.

Venice, c. 1986
Courtesy of Los Angeles Public
Library Photo Collection

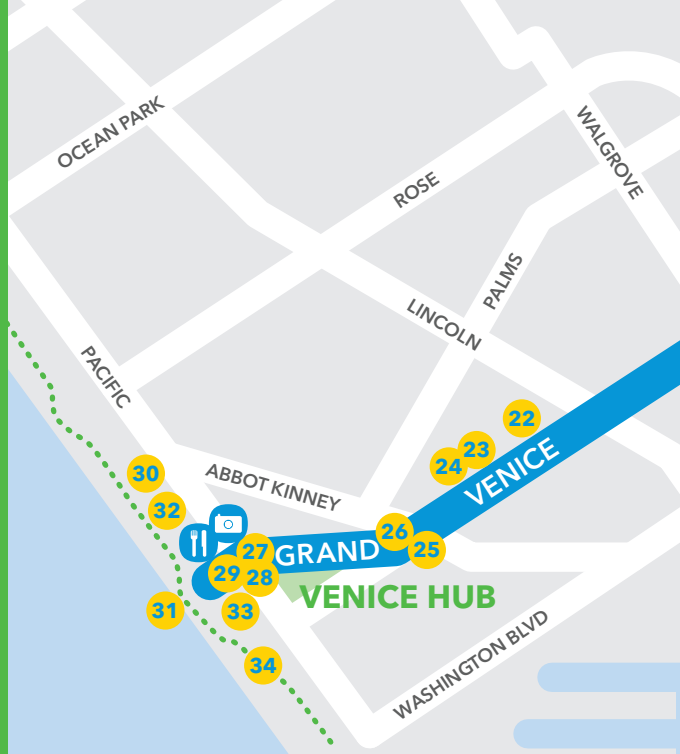


VENICE When people think of Los Angeles, it's often Venice that comes to mind—the beach, the “boardwalk,” the parade of palm trees, pantomimes and panhandlers. It's where so much that is quintessentially SoCal culture was born, or at the very least well nurtured—from skateboarding and surfing to bodybuilding and roller-skating. Over the decades, it's been home to a steady stream of dreamers, beatniks and bohemians, along with the everyday citizens of LA, all here to soak up the sun, check out the attractions or gain inspiration from the mix of urban grit and sea air.

The romance of Venice starts with Abbot Kinney, a renaissance man, tobacco millionaire and real-estate speculator with a vision: he wanted to create a cultural mecca of the West, part Coney Island, part Chautauqua. His Venetian fantasy included diverting water from the Pacific to fill an elaborate series of canals, which functioned as the city's transportation system. Before he built his canals, the world-class entertainment pier and the famed midway, people called the plans “Kinney's Folly.” But when Venice of America opened on July 4, 1905, it was literally a splashing success—a seaside resort like no other.

But the 1920s were rough. Prohibition affected the resort's tax revenue (although it inspired bootleggers who kept the hotels along Ocean Front Walk well supplied), and Abbot Kinney died, leaving his son to run the Kinney Company. In 1926, consolidation of Venice with Los Angeles hastened the end of Venice of America. In 1929, the city decided to fill in the original canals, paving the waterways for automobiles. LA's "blue laws" eliminated dancing on Sunday, and gambling and tourism declined. The discovery of oil in 1929 brought in oil derricks that ruined the idyllic landscape. The Kinney Company went bankrupt, the pier closed in 1946 and Pacific Electric ended service on the Venice Short Line in the 1950s.

Still, today Venice is Southern California's most popular tourist attraction after Disneyland; people flock to Ocean Front Walk, the beach and the small set of still-remaining canals (known as the "Railroad" canals, they were built after Kinney's). Recently, major tech companies have been moving into "Silicon Beach," including Google, who set up shop in the Frank Gehry-designed Binoculars Building. Once again Venice is in transition between the old and the new.



Check out the historic ephemera at Danny's



It (1927), *Roller Boogie* (1979), *Dogtown and Z-Boys* (2002)



"The End" by the Doors, "Venice Queen" by Red Hot Chili Peppers



Beneath the Venice sign that spans across Windward Ave.



Death Is a Lonely Business by Ray Bradbury, *The Holy Barbarians* by Lawrence Lipton

22 First Lutheran Church of Venice

815 Venice Blvd.

This Spanish-style church and its adjacent school have been part of the Venice community for more than 60 years. The mural located on the building's steeple, "Jesus Roller-Skating with Friends at Venice Beach," created by artist-monk Father Maur van Doorslaer, depicts the Christian leader participating in one of the area's most iconic sports.

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23 Venice Division Police Station/Social Public Art Resource Center

685 Venice Blvd.

Formerly the Venice Division of the Los Angeles Police Department, this Art Deco building was an active jail from 1929 until the early 1970s. The colorful murals on its façade attest to its new owners, the nonprofit Social Public Art Resource Center (SPARC), who "liberated the space for the arts" in 1977. Founded by artists and activists who were inspired by the Chicano Art movement, today the building houses SPARC's Mural Resource and Education Center, a gallery, creative spaces, the UCLA/SPARC Cesar Chavez Digital Mural Lab, the Judy Baca Archive and the Minna Agins Collection.

24 City Hall/Beyond Baroque

681 Venice Blvd.

Venice's original City Hall has also transformed from its government function into an important arts center. When it was first built as the city's civic center, it was so far away from the action (Abbot Kinney's seaside resort) that citizens dubbed it "Tokio City Hall." In 1968, the literary nonprofit that nursed both the Venice Beats and the 1970s punk movement moved in, offering a variety of programs including readings, workshops and community events. The space houses a bookstore with the largest collection of new poetry books anywhere and an archive of more than 40,000 books that chronicle the history of poetry in Los Angeles.



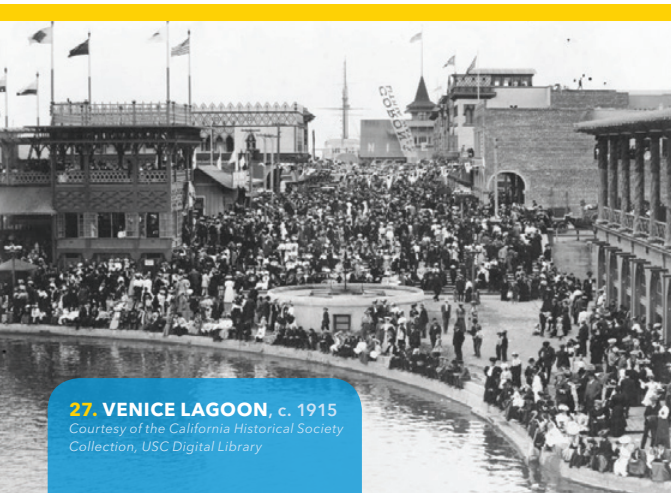
24. VENICE CITY HALL

Courtesy of the California Historical Society Collection, USC Digital Library

25 Venice of America Centennial Park

500 S. Venice Blvd.

This seemingly unremarkable park commemorates the centennial of the founding of Abbot Kinney's city-by-the-sea. Plans are in place for the park to become a much more inspiring place—the nonprofit Venice Heritage Foundation hopes to open a Venice Heritage Museum here, to be housed in a renovated 1905 Pacific Electric Red Trolley Car, like those that once ran on Venice Blvd. on the famed Venice Short Line route from Downtown Los Angeles.



27. VENICE LAGOON, c. 1915
Courtesy of the California Historical Society
Collection, USC Digital Library

26 Villa City

(site of) Grand Blvd. before Windward Circle

Modest vacation homes once lined the banks of what was then the Grand Canal, housing working-class visitors in tent-like structures. Though Kinney sold many residential lots in his resort at top dollar, he also made sure to include more affordable housing options so that the city's attractions were available to all—he called them “Venetian Villas,” but to most this collection of rustic rentals was “Tent City.” The tents were replaced with small bungalows around 1907, a few of which remain today.

27 Venice Lagoon *(site of)*

Intersection of Main St., Grand Blvd. & Windward Ave.

Once upon a time, the site of this traffic circle was completely under water; this was the centerpiece of Venice of America's canal system, the “Grand Lagoon” that connected the small canals in the residential area and then emptied directly into the sea via the Grand Canal. The great saltwater lagoon where all these canals converged was the heart of Abbot Kinney's resort, where visitors could rent gondolas, go for a swim at the Lagoon Bathhouse, or watch a diving show from the 2,000-seat amphitheater. Two other attractions along the Lagoon and the Grand Canal were the Midway Plaisance, a collection of exotica that included the Streets of Cairo, a Chicken Farm and the Race Through the Clouds roller coaster, built in 1911.

28 Venice Post Office

1601 Main St.

Scaffolding and ongoing construction make it hard to see this beautiful 1939 building that served as a post office until 2011. The WPA-built structure houses a mural by modernist painter Edward Biberman entitled "Abbot Kinney and the Story of Venice," which depicts the city founder and the fanciful city he helped to create. In 2012, film producer and preservationist Joel Silver purchased the building with plans for adaptive reuse; he funded conservation of the mural as well, which remains the property of the U.S. Postal Service.

29 Windward Ave. Commercial District

Windward Ave. from Pacific Ave. to Speedway

This is the original commercial area of Kinney's Venice of America development, featuring the Mediterranean Revival buildings and the Venetian-style arcades, constructed from 1905 until about 1928. The iconic colonnade—more than 100 years old—spanning Windward, Pacific and Market Avenues is composed of Corinthian columns, some of which still include the original sculptures by Felix Peano. The 1905 St. Charles Hotel (19 E. Windward Ave.) features two Rip Cronk murals on it, including his parody of Botticelli on the building's west side. The Townhouse (52 Windward Ave.) is Venice's oldest bar, and was an active speakeasy during Prohibition.

Venice Pier, Cleo, age 10

I like the Southern Venice Pier (Beach) because theres so many things to do at the Beach. When I go to the beach I like to go boogie boarding at the beach because the waves go fast and it's fun. I also like to go to the beach because listening to the waves and seeing the Ocean is calming and the warm sand feels good. The Ocean smells good like Sugar because it's Salty and the smell makes you tired and drowsy.



30 Ocean Front Walk

From Rose Ave. to Washington Blvd.

By far the most famous of Venice's attractions, the "boardwalk," as it is often erroneously called—it's paved, not wood—embodies the funky beach vibe Venice is known for—here is the street carnival that is Southern California's second most popular tourist attraction (only Disneyland can beat it). As the National Trust for Historic Preservation calls it, "a dizzying array of the bizarre and beguiling—vendors, street performers, exhibitionists, transients, and the people who come to watch it all unfold." We call it crazy fun, and love it or hate it, it's a quintessential part of Venice.

30. OCEAN FRONT WALK, c. 1930

Courtesy of Los Angeles Public Library Photo Collection



31 Venice Breakwater (site of Abbot Kinney Pier)

End of Windward Ave.

This line of rocks just off shore is among the last remnants of the original Venice of America. The first private breakwater in the U.S., it was built in 1905 to protect the Kinney Company's massive amusement pier, which had already been damaged by heavy breakers just a year after its original construction. Costing \$100,000 at the time, the sea wall protected the Kinney Pier and its many structures (including a bathhouse, an auditorium, an aquarium, numerous rides and roller coasters, and the famous Ship Café) until the pier's destruction in 1920, when a fire burned the entire structure. Today, the breakwater is a famous surfing spot.

32 Sidewalk Café & Small World Books

1401 Ocean Front Walk

A Venice Beach landmark, this building (a café and bookstore since 1976) once housed artist studios that often served as the crash pad of the Beat poets. The building itself dates back to Abbot Kinney's original resort, though only the first floor of the planned four stories was constructed. For a while it was a bingo parlor owned by the Harrah family, who later went on to bigger gambling operations in Las Vegas.

33 Muscle Beach Venice

1800 Ocean Front Walk

The famed birthplace of the fitness movement, the original Muscle Beach was established in 1933 just south of the Santa Monica Pier. Seventeen years later when that location closed, the action moved to the weight pin here, constructed in 1952. Legendary bodybuilders such as Dave Draper, Arnold Schwarzenegger and Chet Yorton trained on the beach and in 1965 Joe Gold, the "father of the fitness craze," opened his first Gold's Gym nearby. From the beginning Venice was synonymous with sport; even Abbot Kinney was an exercise enthusiast. The city also boasts other world-famous sports facilities along Ocean Front Walk, including legendary basketball courts, the Skate Dancing Plaza and a skate park.

34 Marvin Braude Bike Trail (The Bike Path/The Strand)

Will Rogers State Beach to Torrance County Beach

How fitting that today's route connects not only to the shimmering sea, but also a to 22-mile bike path that runs along the Pacific Coast from the Pacific Palisades to Torrance. Named for Marvin Braude, the long-time City Council member from the 11th District who was an avid cyclist and champion for alternative transportation, the paved path was opened in 1989 despite opposition by beachfront homeowners who weren't keen to share the expansive views.

Muscle Beach, Ben, age 8

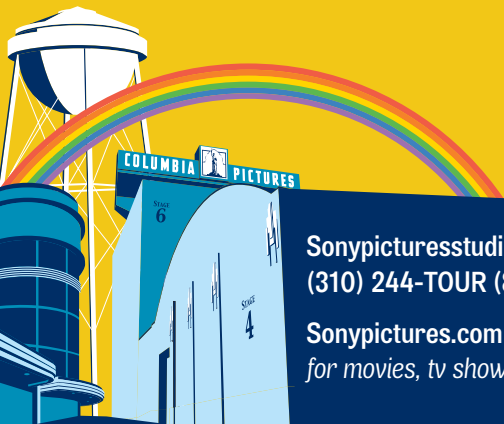
Muscle Beach
Muscle beach has obstacles that makes
you exercise. It is in Venice. One obstacle is
monkey bars. On monkey bars you exercise arms. Balance
beams helps your balance. The rocks you use to help you
ordination. The swings help your arms and legs. The
ropes help your arms and balance. Everybody goes
to muscle beach because it helps your strength and your
balance. See you there!!

Ben (Benjamin)
ga min



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Put 'em together and X marks the spot. Nick Christensen triangulates his position in the Caroline Islands. **RICHARD KOTCH** © 2015 Patagonia, Inc.



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