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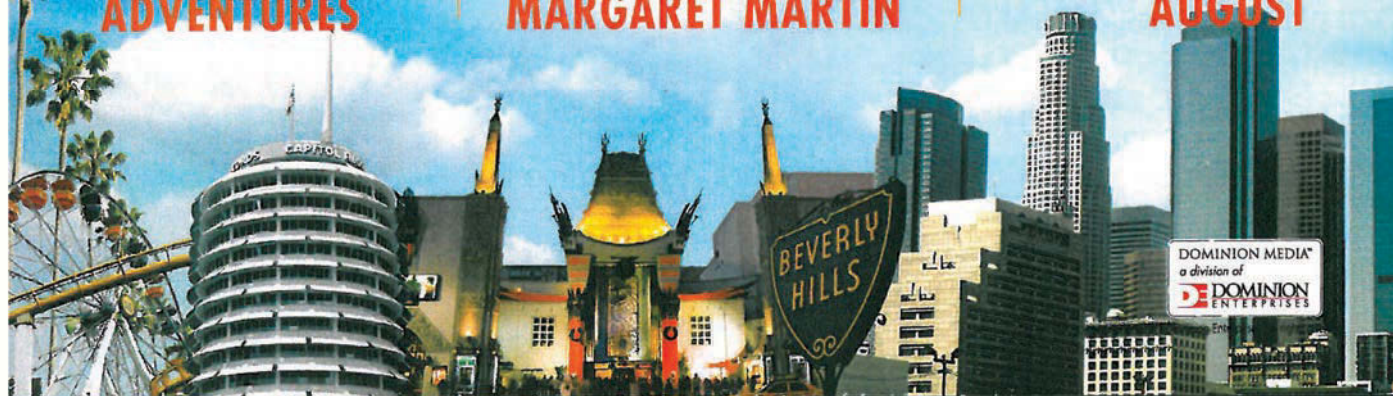
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# Best of 2011

LET'S GO:  
FAMILY HIKEING  
AND BIKING  
ADVENTURES

Q&A:  
THE HARMONY  
PROJECT'S  
MARGARET MARTIN

CALENDAR:  
DON'T-MISS  
OUTINGS FOR  
AUGUST



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ENTERPRISES



by Mimi Slawoff

## History and Culture On Foot

### Hiking and Biking Are Great Ways to Explore L.A.

There are many ways to explore the greater L.A. area, but none better than walking or biking. On foot or peddling along a path, you can see a lighthouse close up, feel the ocean breeze, snap photos and grab a bite to eat at your own pace. Here are some historical and cultural sites that make great people-powered outings.



#### Historical Santa Monica and Venice Beach

Soak up sun, culture and history while peddling on bike paths and alleyways in Santa Monica and Venice with Legends Beach Bike Tours (11 a.m.-4 p.m. daily, [www.perry-scape.com/tour](http://www.perry-scape.com/tour)). This leisurely paced, family-friendly bike tour makes frequent stops as your guide shares points of interest.

Bob Street, a tour guide and father of three who grew up in Santa Monica, chats about the area's history during the approximately two-hour ride. Tours typically start at Blazing Saddles bike rentals on the Santa Monica Pier. Included in the \$35 per person rate are bikes, helmets, children's bike seats or carts, water and bike locks. Guides communicate with riders via headsets.

See where Route 66 ends at the historic pier (also the site of many movies), then travel north on the bike path to North Beach and the Marion Davies estate, a former

splash in the pool and play on the beach.

Backtrack to the pier's beach level and hear stories about surf and skate culture before biking to the famous Venice canals built by founder Abbot Kinney.

Tours can be customized to include shopping and dining stops. After the tour, you're welcome to keep riding on your own for a couple of hours before returning the bikes.

#### Neighborhood Hopping With the L.A. Conservancy

Go walking in L.A. with a Los Angeles Conservancy tour (\$10 adults, \$5 ages 6-12; 213-623-2489, [www.laconservancy.org](http://www.laconservancy.org)). Park near Angel's Flight (on Hill Street between 3rd and 4th streets) and they'll validate your \$5 ticket, then leave your car behind for an hour or two.

The organization, which conducts several public walking tours throughout L.A.'s historic neighborhoods, customizes its regular two-and-a-half-hour outings for families upon request. Advance notice and a minimum of eight people are required to set up a family tour any day of the week. If your kids are old enough to enjoy the standard tours, feel free to join a scheduled group.

The Union Station Tour explores the 1939-era station's history and architecture at 10 a.m. on the third Saturday of every month. For families, the tour is shortened to about an hour. Although the tour does not include boarding a train, tour guides point out architecture, textures and colors.

The Historic Downtown tour explores L.A.'s historical and cultural landmarks around Pershing Square at 10 a.m. Saturdays. Families can customize this tour to see the highlights, such as Angel's Flight (a short railway), Grand Central Market (a great place to try ethnic food) and the Bradbury Building. Bring a sack lunch for a picnic, buy a meal at Grand Central Market or walk to the historic Clifton's Cafeteria.



**Tour bike-friendly Long Beach, top, or L.A.'s historic Union Station.**

playground for the rich and famous. Today, the mansion is the Annenberg Community Beach House, where visitors can pay to

#### Wheel Fun In Long Beach

On a mission to become the top bicy-



clinging city in America, this seaside community is off to a running start with sharrows (green-painted bicycle lanes) and a network of interconnected urban and waterfront bike paths. Long Beach also recently unveiled a downtown Bike Station, which provides bike rentals, repair and storage. In the near future, look for self-serve, bike-sharing kiosks that allow riders to scan credit cards to rent and return bikes from one location to another.

In the meantime, a good starting point for families is the Shoreline Pedestrian/Bicycle Path that follows the beach and waterfront between Shoreline Village and Alamitos Bay. If you're bringing your own bikes, you can pick up the trail almost anywhere.

One option is to park in the pay lot near Lions Lighthouse, perched on a bluff with 360-degree ocean and city views. You'll see the Queen Mary, Rainbow Harbor, the downtown skyline – and on a clear day, Catalina Island.

You can also see what appear to be four islands. These are actually camouflaged oil derricks that are part of Long Beach's THUMS (Texaco, Humble, Union, Mobile and Shell) project. The islands are named after Grissom, White, Chaffey and Freeman – four astronauts who died in training accidents.

To rent bikes or surreys (four-person peddle carts), park in Shoreline Village, a popular shopping and dining area. Pick up lunch and peddle to the beach to watch kite surfers and sailboats. Or head toward the marina and ride to Rainbow Harbor, aglitter with tall ships.

If you get tired during the day, catch the AquaLink water taxi, a 68-foot catamaran accessible from the Long Beach Aquarium, Queen Mary, Belmont Pier and Alamitos Bay Landing. \$5 per person (OK to bring bikes if there's space). For AquaLink schedule, visit [www.lbtransit.org](http://www.lbtransit.org). For general information, go to [www.visitlongbeach.com](http://www.visitlongbeach.com).

Let's Go columnist Mimi Slawoff is a Valencia-based writer and mother of three.



A leisurely bike tour of Santa Monica and Venice makes frequent stops at points of interest.

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anyway?

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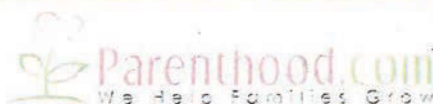
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