

# TRAVEL

# SUN, SAND AND SANTA MONICA

Best explored by bike, this resort town offers a lavish lifestyle perfect for a weekend beach escape.

By Allison Hata



Santa Monica Pier

## SUMMER IN SANTA MONICA

TWILIGHT CONCERT SERIES  
JULY 7 – SEPT. 12;  
[SANTAMONICAPIER.ORG](http://SANTAMONICAPIER.ORG)

CINEMA ON THE STREET  
JULY 12 – 26;  
[SANTAMONICA.COM](http://SANTAMONICA.COM)

FIG FARM DINNER  
AUG. 21;  
[FIGSANTAMONICA.COM](http://FIGSANTAMONICA.COM)

## STAY

With a Cape Cod-style exterior and up-close ocean views, Shutters on the Beach is the definition of Santa Monica sophistication ([shuttersonthebeach.com](http://shuttersonthebeach.com)). The hotel, celebrating its 20th year in 2013, offers all the charm of a bed and breakfast with the elegance of a luxury resort. The 186 guest rooms and 12 suites come equipped with an array of extras, including sliding shuttered doors opening up to balconies, a curated selection of books and publications for leisure reading, and a deluxe bathroom with oversized whirlpool tubs. On the third floor, a terrace pool offers ocean views with plenty of



Shutters on the Beach

lounge chairs and private cabana spaces for relaxing away from the busy beach scene. Other on-site indulgences include One the Spa, where guests can

escape with organic body treatments and facials in one of six treatment rooms. Two restaurants provide diners with coastal views: One Pico (a fine dining experience) and Coast Beach Café and Bar (relaxed comfort food). For guests ready to venture out of the hotel, a concierge is stationed at the lobby to assist with restaurant reservations, entertainment, transportation and more.

Because Santa Monica has an ever-growing coastal appeal, however, the accommodation options are seemingly endless. If Shutters on the Beach isn't your cup of tea, book a stay with the ultra-glamorous Viceroy Santa Monica, located on the other side

TOP LEFT: R. LANDAU, BELOW: COURTESY OF SHUTTERS ON THE BEACH



Surf and turf from Boa Steakhouse

of Pico Boulevard, where you'll enjoy ocean views and an old-Hollywood vibe ([viceroysandresorts.com](http://viceroysandresorts.com)). For those who thrive being close to the downtown scene, try The Huntley Hotel, a trendy-chic property located just blocks from Third Street Promenade where you'll find lively entertainment on the street amidst a cluster of fun and eclectic shops ([thehuntleyhotel.com](http://thehuntleyhotel.com)).

## DINE

Sunday brunch is a staple in Santa Monica, and no brunch is complete without free-flowing mimosas. Sonoma Wine Garden's outdoor patio tops the list of the best brunch spots in town—nothing beats sipping glass after glass of Champagne flavored with fresh orange juice, peach puree, elderflower syrup or pomegranate juice ([sonomawinegarden.com](http://sonomawinegarden.com)). On the menu, classic favorites like salmon Benedict and garden frittatas please traditionalists, while blueberry blintzes and candy striped beets tickle the taste buds of other diners.

The libations continue to flow at bars and restaurants during the city's "happiest hour." Discounted happy hour menus draw visitors into establishments like Sushi Roku on Ocean Avenue, where Japanese favorites like California rolls and spicy tuna can be washed down with a hot sake and cold Sapporo beer, all under \$5 each ([sushiroku.com](http://sushiroku.com)). Closer to the ocean, Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel offers a happy hour menu at its Papillon Bar, where everything from house-blended cocktails and sangria to duck taquitos and firecracker shrimp are only \$6.60 each ([loewshotels.com](http://loewshotels.com)).

To finish off a day's dining adventures, sit

down for an elegant pairing of surf and turf at Boa Steakhouse. On a warm night, request a table on the patio and dive into a generous portion of steak, like a 40-day dry-aged New York Strip or the tender filet mignon topped with savory herbed butter over a bed of Brussels sprout hash. As the menu suggests, "any turf can surf" with an accompaniment of lobster, crab legs, sea scallops or prawns ([boasteak.com](http://boasteak.com)).



## PLAY

Any local will tell you that the best—and only—way to explore Santa Monica is by bike. Along Ocean Front Walk, bike rental shops abound and it's difficult to narrow down the choices. For convenience and peace of mind, multiple Perry's ([perryscafe.com](http://perryscafe.com)) locations along the beach provide an easy grab-and-go solution, offering a selection of cruisers, mountain bikes and tandems as well as the option to service your bike at any of the four shops. Rent a bike for the day (or the hour) and set off to explore the town. If you're feeling bold, brave the LA traffic and venture up to Montana Avenue, a picturesque street full of women's boutiques, cafes and spas where you may find yourself window shopping next to your favorite celebrity.

Beginning cyclists, fear not—the famed South Bay Bicycle Trail is an easy ride for the less experienced. The path stretches for 22 miles along the LA coast (south to Torrance and north to Malibu), with the 8.5 miles in Santa Monica taking you past sights like the Annenberg Beach Community House, a restored landmark that features a public pool facility, an enclosed picnic area and a special water playground for kids. The path also winds underneath the iconic Santa Monica Pier, home to the kid-friendly Paradise Park. A trip to Santa Monica isn't complete without a ride on the Ferris wheel, which sweeps you up into the sky for a breathtaking view of ocean, mountains and sand. **LBM**



Bicycles provide the perfect transportation in Santa Monica.