

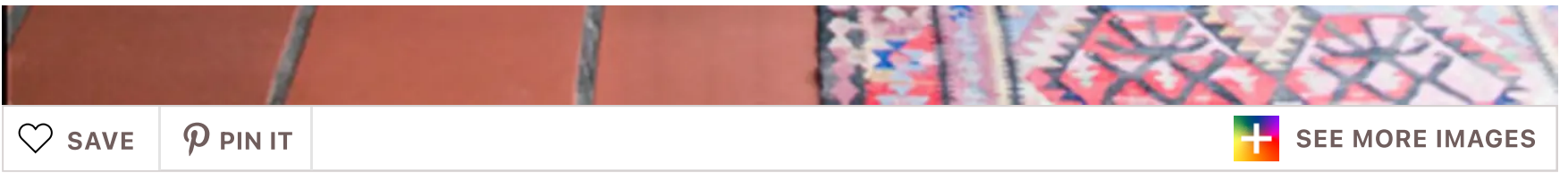
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A Survival Guide to Life in Los Angeles: 10 Things You Need To Know

by ABBY STONE published AUG 13, 2014

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(Image credit: Leela Cyd)

If you're thinking of moving to or even visiting L.A., the first thing you need to know about Los Angeles is that it's *not* New York. Or Paris or London or Tokyo or Sydney or any other city in the world. Throw out your expectations of how a major metropolis should be organized. Those rules don't apply here.

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So without further ado, here are ten things you should know about Los Angeles:

1. Embrace the car: Sure you can take the bus or ride your bike, but like it or not, Los Angeles is built for cars — it's big and the roads are wide. *Cons:* With so much time spent behind the wheel, it's not unusual for people to multitask: Shave, put on makeup, change clothes, brush their teeth...remember that scene in "Sideways" in which Paul Giamatti reads the paper while he's driving up the coast? It would be funnier if it weren't so true; people don't always have their full attention on the road. *Pros:* Your car is a giant purse. Even people who keep nothing in their cars have a yoga mat stashed in the trunk.

2. You need to know someone: Unlike New York where everything's right out in the open, LA is a secret city. (Though if you really don't know anyone, radio station KCRW, and The LA Weekly, Angeleno and LA Magazine are some resources to get you started). *Cons:* That ugly strip mall may be the site of the world's greatest restaurant, but unless someone takes you there, you'll never know. *Pros:* It's a city of constant discovery.

3. NY is a dinner reservation town, LA is a dinner party town: I think it was Michael S. Smith who said that, and he's right. Maybe it's because the homes are bigger here. It's not unusual to be asked to someone's home. *Cons:* At some point you're going to have to reciprocate, and that means inviting people over to your house. Eeek! Time to take the one of the Apartment Therapy Cures! *Pros:* You get to see a lot of amazing homes, and I love seeing people in their home environment.

4. A full tank of gas and a fridge full of groceries will you get through the week: Since you're not walking past stores, coffee shops and newstands, but hurling past them at 40 mph, that money in your pocket will stay in your pocket. *Cons:* You miss a lot of the spontaneity that comes from living in a walking city. *Pros:* A savings account.

5. However much of a fashionista you are, your wardrobe will get much more casual: Jeans are a uniform here, as are sweats. Maybe it's the indoor/outdoor living, but I know I'm not the only one who's walked outside — or gone to the grocery store — in their pajamas. *Cons:* You'll become a person who wears jeans everywhere. *Pros:* You'll own a lot of suede, and your shoes will last for years.

6. The flea markets are better here. We have one every week! (Here are some hints on how to do [the Rosebowl](#).) *Cons:* That money you've been saving? You'll spend it on knickknacks. *Pros:* You'll score some amazing finds, especially if you love midcentury modern. We also have great thrift shops, especially if you venture outside LA.

7. The produce is amazing: Everything is bigger, brighter, juicier and sweeter. And there's a farmer's market somewhere in LA every day of the week! (The biggest and most well-known ones are Santa Monica on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday and Hollywood on Sunday). *Cons:* You'll spend way more money at the farmer's market than you were intending to. *Pros:* You're eating a lot more fruits and vegetables.

8. Yes, you will talk about how you got there: That SNL skit, *The Californians*, is true: the first few minutes of any gathering will invariably involve a discussion about how you got there, how much traffic there was and how long it took you. *Pros:* You'll learn about secret routes. *Cons:* People who don't live here will think you're crazy.

9. Your day will start at 6 and end at 10. Whether the excuse is exercise, an early set call or a love of breakfast, LA's a morning town. *Pros:* The light is beautiful, and it's a great time to go running. *Cons:* Don't arrive at a New Year's party after midnight or you'll find everyone's gone home.

(Image: Leela Cyd Ross / Green Style: Surfboards as Art)

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