

# SELF-GUIDED WALKS

## COASTAL WARMTH. L.A. COOL.



MARINA DEL REY  
CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU



| MAP LEGEND         |   |
|--------------------|---|
| HOTELS             |   |
| 1                  | Best Western Jamaica Bay Inn              |
| 2                  | Foghorn Harbor Inn                        |
| 3                  | Marina del Rey Hotel                      |
| 4                  | Marina del Rey Marriott                   |
| 5                  | Marina International Hotels and Bungalows |
| 6                  | The Ritz-Carlton Marina del Rey Hotel     |
| Restrooms          |   |
| P                  | Parking                                   |
| Parks              |   |
| Bicycle Trail      |   |
| Venice Canals      |   |
| Information Center |   |
| Shopping           |   |

Map not to scale

| SELF-GUIDED WALKS LEGEND |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| Start                    | End  |
| S                        | E The Heart of the Marina Workout Walk           |
| S                        | E Burton Chace Park and LA's Small Vessel Harbor |
| S                        | E The Marina Peninsula                           |
| S                        | E Fisherman's Village to Ballona Creek Bridge    |
| S                        | E Abbot Kinney Boulevard                         |
| S                        | E Venice Canals Walkways                         |

# MARINA DEL REY

COASTAL WARMTH. L.A. COOL.



## A VERY HUMAN REFUGE

When you're traveling to Los Angeles, you may very well be surprised to find an entire oceanside basin of tranquility at a serene remove from the greater city.

It's Marina del Rey and it's your refuge from the urban wildness surrounding it.

It's also a refuge – in its vast stretches of protected wetlands – for numerous bird species including great blue heron and egrets. And it's further a refuge for those questing souls who venture out to sea. Its yachting harbor is among the largest in the country and home to over 5,000 vessels; salty gaff-riggers to glistening, computerized pleasure craft.

Dining, shopping and splendid waterfront hotels abound in the Marina. **But perhaps the greatest abundance you'll**

**find here is the opportunity to leisurely explore the local delights without resorting to the automobile.**

An intricate network of strolling trails, bike paths, canals and protected waterways allow you to take in the beaches, stunning houses, parks and gardens – even an endearing New England-style fishing village! – all while feeling alive to the tang of the Pacific breezes.

This is the way to best enjoy your Los Angeles adventures. Within a tranquil enclave surrounded by the sea. In unhurried explorations of the city's most gentle environment. And by self-propelled immersions in this very human refuge.

The following pathways are offered to give you choices for your Marina meanderings, be you salty-dogs, parents with young children, naturalists or frenzied shoppers. **Relax, breathe in the ocean air and – above all else! - enjoy.**

---

**About the writer:** *David Peevers*, author, photographer, and adventurer, has contributed to many guidebooks and publications over the years. His work has been featured in Lonely Planet guidebooks, Los Angeles Times, San Francisco Chronicle, Conde Nast, and others.  
**E-mail:** [peeversla@aol.com](mailto:peeversla@aol.com).



COASTAL WARMTH. L.A. COOL.



# MARINA DEL REY

## THE HEART OF THE MARINA WORKOUT WALK

Lots of Yachts and a Spot for Tots

*This one's a definite workout, in every way. So you may want to head with your wee ones straight to our starting point, Mothers Beach, spread out a blanket and await the return of your 'conquering heroes'. You'll find the beach just across Admiralty Way from the imposing Marina del Rey Marriott. There's a huge parking lot here with rates of \$ 6.00 in summer and \$ 3.00 in winter.*

**Marina Beach, also known as Mother's Beach,** is a lovely sand crescent of about 250 meters where the protected, shallow waters are absolutely warm and tranquil. It's watched over by the most colorfully painted lifeguard tower you're likely ever to see and provides great views of the gleaming pleasure yachts at anchor just across the way. It's a fun place for volleyball or family picnics which you can whip together in the nearby market.

But now, let's explore a real marina and work up a real sweat!

Head left from Marina Beach along the paved biking and walking path. In just two minutes you'll turn right on Palawan Way and enter the world of ships. First up is

a beached fleet of enormous outrigger racing canoes (marinaoutrigger.org) and as you continue along Palawan, you're on the designated **Waterfront Walk**. Soon you'll be surrounded by the forest of masts and rigging of the wind-jammers who ply the waters of California – and beyond. Their halyards, slapping in the stiff breeze, sound like a million wind-chimes.

After about 400 meters – passing a fleet of enormous power yachts – you'll come to the exclusive **Del Rey Yacht Club**. You continue on towards the left and head for the really huge, gleaming vessels of the **FantaSea Yacht Club**.

Congratulations! You've just circumnambulated the entire Palawan Way jetty that symbolizes California's reverential history with the sea.

You'll now turn right and head towards the large white building with the bell tower and continue on Waterfront Walk past yet another armada of the fleet. Watch the sterns of the ships for names that give you clues to the nature of their captains: 'Yeah Baby!', 'Hot Flash' and 'Clouseau' among them.

After a good half mile you come to the end of the Walkway. You can turn left here on Admiralty Way to enter the

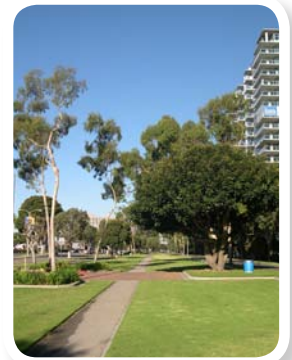


**Turf-Pounders:** An hour and a half, non-stop

**Pleasure-Puppies:** Head straight for Mothers Beach and plop

home stretch or go right to prolong your hike through the pleasing greenery of **Yvonne B. Burke Park**. Maybe it's time for a brief respite with cold drinks at one of the nearby waterfront restaurants? But if you're still feeling frisky, cross over Admiralty and head left along the narrow strip of greenery here. This is where you can take a stab at the **Parcourse Fitness Circuit** where signs challenge you to perform a series of intricate exercises over the next few hundred meters.

After your workout (like you needed it?) you'll pick up the adjoining walking and biking path and head for home. You'll soon be walking beneath a canopy of old pines and past nesting egrets who make their home here in a narrow lagoon. You'll then walk the last, longish third of a kilometer along Washington Blvd, passing small eateries and shops lining the sidewalk. And then – finally! – you'll walk left on Via Marina and arrive safe and sound back at Mothers Beach. And we're willing to bet that the idea of a quick dip in the ocean never looked quite so good...





COASTAL WARMTH. L.A. COOL.



# MARINA DEL REY

## BURTON CHACE PARK AND LA'S SMALL VESSEL HARBOR

Kids, Kites, Concerts

*Okay, this one's a shorty and you could jog the entire route in about seven minutes. But just cool your jets and adjust to that lollygagging seaside rhythm. Here you stroll, promenade or park yourselves beneath welcoming shade trees. But there's also an opportunity to launch yourselves out an aquatic adventure of the first order. Ready?*

We'll kick off right at the **Visitors Center** on the corner of Mindanao Way and Admiralty Way where you can park in the adjoining lot for \$5 bucks, year round. Be sure to check with the friendly staff at the Center what's on offer that day in terms of music: Egyptian Orchestral to hot Latin jazz. From the Visitor Center parking lot, we'll cross Mindanao here heading north and, after 50 meters, take a left at the public phone booth. Within a few strides you'll enter the forest of masts that is the **Marina's Small Vessel Harbor**. Here you'll espy funky live-aboards, sport fishing craft and even some experimental



vessels that defy description; after about 400 meters you come to the **Santa Monica Windjammers Yacht Club** and then – immediately – **Burton Chace Park**. You arrive at the northward corner of the jetty at the imposing bronze sculpture of 'The Helmsman' whose expressive face stares intensely out to sea, preparing to grapple with any future challenges. From here you'll have a 270 degree view of the entire Marina. Immediately to your left you'll see the tiny pergolas atop a small green hillock. Traipse upward and walk across a covered walkway to the second pergola. Then you simply follow gravity – past families and sun worshippers – to the very SW corner of the jetty. Here you'll make a left and after 100 meters you'll come to the **WaterBus Dock** where everyone jumps aboard these completely stable and fun vessels – only on summer weekends and holidays - to see the entire Marina. Hey! It's a \$1 buck a person! And it might take you about 45 minutes to an hour – providing you never get off for further explorations.



**Turf-Pounders:** 20 minutes

**Pleasure-Puppies:** One hour, not including picnics and kite flying

From the WaterBus dock you'll see great covered picnic facilities with permanent BBQ facilities and great greenery for flipping Frisbees or flying kites in the guaranteed winds from the Pacific. There's a lovely little café here serving items you may have forgotten for your picnic. Adjoining this is the Park and Visitors Dock Office with its small display of historic photos and info kiosk.

Walk south of the Park – bearing left – and you're back on the bike path which you'll follow along a short fenced-in area to Mindanao Way. You just go right here and in another 300 meters you're back to your car, as if you really needed one to begin with!



Throughout summer months Burton Chace Park is one of the most brilliant stages for free music concerts in all of Los Angeles, on weekends. Please stop by the Visitors Center (or visit our website: [www.VisitMarina.com](http://www.VisitMarina.com) to learn about the music that's happening on any Saturday or Sunday. You'll be very happy that you did...

COASTAL WARMTH. L.A. COOL.



# MARINA DEL REY

## THE MARINA PENINSULA

Your 'Balcony' Over Ships, Canals and Splendid Homes

*It may be the size of a postage stamp, but the **Aubrey Austin Park** has just about the best view over Marina del Rey's complexities as you could wish for. Grab a bench here beneath some serious shade trees and watch the ebb and flow of vessels of all sorts heading out to – or just returning from – all sorts of adventures.*

Head towards the sea along the **North Jetty Promenade** and after a hundred meters you'll espy the Grand Canal delivering its good salt water into the **Venice Canals** system. There's a lovely little footpath leading you past stately homes here but we'll continue west – for the moment – to head towards the sea, following the blue metal railings for about one sixth of a kilometer. You're walking right down the Marina's channel to the Pacific. And soon you'll arrive at 'land's end' on the narrow jetty that presents you with the massive breakwater which protects the entire harbor. Look over your shoulder here and drink in the vastness of California's beaches. EXTRAORDINARY, REALLY, WHEN YOU CONSIDER THE BREADTH AND LENGTH OF THEM.

Okay. Contemplation over. So double back and look right. There you'll see the precariously hanging community of **Playa del Rey** – just to the south - above the aquatic traffic. When you once again reach beach homes, head immediately north on **Ocean Front Walk** to fall in love with SoCal beachfront architecture, up-close. These multi-million dollar vertical

estates are as opulent and individualistic as you're likely to find anywhere. Their neo-Baroque and Italian 'palazzo' aspects are distinct statements about their owners.

You could walk all the way to Malibu from here, but why bother? When you reach Topsail St, turn inland to Pacific Avenue and then turn left. Here you'll discover the ornate homes along the Grand Canal with their stunning designs, landscapes and floral displays. **A TIP:** *The views are best when the sun is low in the sky and the colors really 'pop'.* Some of the homes here look ready for visiting royals; others look ready for lift-off! After another quarter mile you come to Lighthouse St and its famous '**Venetian**' bridge. Stop



**Turf-Pounders:** One hour

**Pleasure-Puppies:** Two hours

*(tanning and swimming sessions not included!)*



in the middle of the bridge and look south. You'll see all the stunning homes amplifying their beauty in reflections in the canal; a true 'Kodak moment'.

Immediately after the bridge turn right and tread the footpath beneath the homes' facades for close-ups of gardens and design elements. You're heading back to the park. But for a cooler walk, continue inland at the bridge through a lovely little garden and turn right on Via Dolce. Make an immediate left on Tahiti Way to Via Marina and its fleet of ships. Cross the street, turn right and in another ten minutes of brisk walking, you're right back in your favorite little park by the sea, watching for those 'red sails in the sunset'.



COASTAL WARMTH. L.A. COOL.



# MARINA DEL REY

## FISHERMAN'S VILLAGE TO BALLONA CREEK BRIDGE

Wild Things, Wetlands and Sunset Dinner

### *Do not forget your camera!*

*Fisherman's Village is the commercial boating hub of the Marina and maintains its seaside charm with a colorful row of Cape Cod facades. It's anchored by its authentic-looking lighthouse and presents you with every option you could ever want to be on, in or under the water. On summer weekends and holidays you can catch the WaterBus here for \$ 1 buck or steam out to Catalina Island for the day aboard giant, stable catamarans. You can paddle or sail the entire Marina from here or explore it in a power boat. Dining in the restaurants – seafood fusion, Mexican or Italian – is excellent and the Happy Hours and weekend brunches are legendary. They're perfect for a sensuous sunset dinner as the yachts sail serenely by. But that comes later. For now, let's hit the trail...*

At the oceanside end of the shops you'll come to a restaurant with tropical gardens where you turn left and then quickly right on Fiji Way. After 200 meters you cross the street to the Bike Trail, which you already know quite well since you biked it all the way to Malibu only yesterday, right? YOU ARE NOW ENTERING YET ANOTHER OF THE 'MINI-WORLDS'



### THAT MAKE UP THE MARINA.

Walk another 200 meters, keeping an eye out to the left where you're virtually assured of spotting some resident Great Blue Herons at rest. And maybe even some 'LBJ's'; bird-watcher lingo for 'little brown jobs'. You then come to **Ballona Creek** and head towards the Pacific. Across the way you'll spot about a quarter kilometer of colorful paintings by the university rowing teams who train here. Beyond them lie the internationally famous **Ballona Wetlands**, [see sidebar] a truly extraordinary wildlife sanctuary. You'll soon come to the **UCLA Marina Aquatic Center** where you'll be bounded on the right by the Marina's main channel filled with gorgeous boating traffic. If you walk fairly briskly, you can just about keep up



**Turf-Pounders:** Half an hour  
**Pleasure-Puppies:** A good solid hour

with the furiously tacking sailboats as they make their way out to sea.

It's now about a half kilometer (or 'klams', as they're known locally) out to the **Ballona Creek Bridge**. You can continue on straight when you get there to the end of the jetty where you'll share, with fishermen, the grand view out to **Catalina Island**. Cross the bridge and you'll quickly enter the very beach-y hamlet of Playa del Rey with its excellent white sand shore. But do turn left on the gravelly path along the Creek and you'll quickly arrive at the first of the Wetlands lagoons with their incredible populations of snowy egrets, terns, ducks and pelicans. Another 200 meters and you'll come – alas! – to a fence where your further egress to the egrets is blocked. But if you continue on straight after the Bridge, you'll quickly arrive at a small and lovely little family park where you can picnic – right up close – in the home of feathered friends.

Now we'll just retrace our Bike Path steps back to Fisherman's Village where you'll have astonishing views of the Marina, the looming towers of Century City and the natural splendor of the Santa Monica Mountains. Did we say this before? *Do not forget your camera!*

The Ballona Creek Wetlands are actually a teeming, thriving laboratory of what's possible when wealth and wilderness collide. It is possible for developers and enviros to come to an accommodation and the Wetlands are a testament to this. They're a splendid tract of land, in its wild state, which is home to countless egrets, herons, ducks and some other rarely spotted species. The Wetlands are best explored, and appreciated, on guided tours with conservationist folks along a network of footpaths and viewing platforms. Your Marina Visitors Center is absolutely the best place to hook you up with all the info you'll need to shake a tail feather with the 'Wild Things'

COASTAL WARMTH. L.A. COOL.



# MARINA DEL REY

## ABBOT KINNEY BOULEVARD

A Departure From City Life



**Turf-Pounders:** 30 minutes

**Pleasure-Puppies:** 2 to 3 hours

*You may well be surprised, when strolling along Abbot Kinney, to find yourself humming a refrain from a French chanson. The street is breezy, floral, feminine, unhurried and absolutely artistic. IF LOS ANGELES HAD A RIVE GAUCHE, THIS IT WOULD BE. It's truly one of the most human-scale passages in the city.*

The restaurants, cafes and bars here tend to be smallish, choice and uncrowded. Chain stores simply don't exist and the variety you'll encounter along AK – in the shop windows, secret gardens and petite galleries – is astonishing in so small a place. You might make your way to one bar where you'll find that genuine Raymond Chandler grit while another presents you with Blade Runner future-chic. Herbalists and Thai masseurs compete for your attention with Southside Chicago rib joints. You can have your doggie groomed to pedigree standards or deck yourself out in straw Sinatra hats, outrageous plaids, or top-of-the-line designer jeans, boots and floral dresses that wouldn't be out of place on the Champs Elysses.

Storefronts along AK are welcoming and as distinctive as the wares they present. Architecture here is diminutive with styles running from 'Cape Cod Cabin' to Cubist. The colors everywhere run towards the pastel – even in the native plant sidewalk gardens – and trellises are casually draped with morning glories. Provencal accents



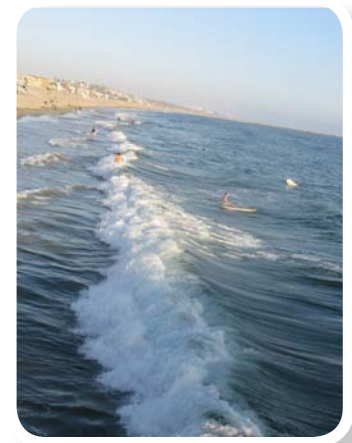
just seem to be wherever you look, even in the strolling fashionistas, blithely unaware of their own beauty.

But lest you think AK is a 'Moveable Feast' only for the eye, the culinary scene here can be sublime. Excellent native Mexican, California fusion, French, superb pizza and organic wines. And here, if you are lucky, you'll encounter the single best hamburger in all of California. Hint: What's the capital of Puerto Rico? The burger is served – believe it or not! – on a pretzel bun.

Unless you're determined to power-shop or power-lunch, you'll do well to adapt a leisurely pace as you explore AK. Mornings are best begun with a steaming latte al fresco while people watching and evenings can best be prolonged in the romantic restaurant you discovered just that very morning.

At the western terminus of AK, it's about a two minute walk to the Boardwalk of Venice Beach with its body-builders, thronging zoo-munity and the Pacific. But the Pacific is already doing its level best – with its constant breezes – to keep you cool and at a lovely remove from the chaos of Los Angeles. Abbot Kinney, after all, was a man who envisioned and built a city

of canals by the sea that he was to call Venice; a world apart from daily realities. It's only fitting that this lovely, protected enclave should be named after a man with such a pure and unfailing vision of what we humans truly need.





COASTAL WARMTH. L.A. COOL.



# MARINA DEL REY

## VENICE CANALS WALKWAYS

Gorgeous Gardens and Ducks Deluxe!



**Turf-Pounders:** 45 minutes

**Pleasure-Puppies:** 2 to 3 hours

*You're about to enter a watery, wealthy world of showpiece architecture, diminutive wooden bridges and extraordinary gardens. And they're all enhanced by the last remaining network of canals built over 100 years ago as a fantastical retreat from city life. You'll enter this Los Angeles 'parallel world' at the Oceanside terminus of Washington Blvd where signs – or friendly merchants – will point you two blocks East to the 'Grand Canal' which then leads north.*

*Scant years ago the Canals were a disaster because of neglect. Today, they're the exclusive domain of the wealthy and creative types residing in multi-million dollar homes. Balconies are festooned with bougainvillea, Birds of Paradise and climbing roses. Everywhere are brilliant splashes of color in the plants, sculpture gardens and tiny rowboats. Just bear in mind that you'll keep heading north, always, in this luxury labyrinth until you come to Venice Boulevard.*



When you enter, head north along the Grand Canal and turn right, after 300 meters, at the first intersecting canal. Your first left takes you over a tiny wooden bridge to the other side. You can go inland from here to explore all the houses that have grown evermore opulent over the years. But we'll just keep heading north for now. Regardless of what you decide, you won't get lost.

You're going to encounter Tibetan prayer flags adorning garden gazebos, mansions running from 'Cape Cod Manor House' to 'Italian neo-Renaissance'. And if you're in the company of wee people, make a stop at this great little park on **Linnie**

**Canal** where they'll love the slides, swings and a white sand 'beach'. BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY, A PART OF THIS 'PARKLETTE' IS ACTUALLY AN AQUATIC REFUGE FOR FAMILIES OF NATIVE DUCKS AND YOUR YOUNG ONES WILL SHRIEK WITH GLEE AT BEING THIS CLOSE TO THEM.

When you've seen enough of this aquatic 'garden of delights', make your way to Venice Blvd and turn left, crossing Pacific Avenue. You'll quickly reach **Ocean Front Walk** with its tony beach houses and

genormous palms performing their slow hulas in the sea breezes. Turn left and you'll see Venice Pier, your next stop after an easy 15 minute stroll. It's a looong pier, but don't miss out on walking above the waves barreling in from the Pacific and gleaning fantastic views of the entire Santa Monica Bay



and the near-mythic Catalina Island.

Now you simply meander back to Washington Blvd and into a clammering cluster of SoCal Beach Culture at its finest. Time to score a perfect Hawaiian shirt or a tropic-hued sarong. Or maybe you'll just hunker down for a cold one in a 'spit-and-sawdust' bar or choose instead to watch the sunset blazing away, from a patio, over seafood pasta al dente. You've just traversed one of LA's most magical neighborhoods and you definitely deserve to 'top it off'.