

Suggestions for further reading

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**Daily Life in
Early Los Angeles
A Self-Guided
Bicycle Tour**

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Los Angeles
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&
Picturing Mexican
America**

**Written by
Marissa López &
Gabriela Valenzuela**



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Find an audio guide at soundcloud.com/user-488851876 or search for Picturing Mexican America on Spotify for a guide and a curated playlist of LA Latinx music.

BIKE ROUTE: START HERE

Start Union Station:

Exit Alameda St. (West Entrance)
Turn **R** on Alameda
Turn **L** into LA State Historic Park
Main entrance is left just past Chinatown Metro

Stop 1: LA State Historic Park .9 mi (4:35 in audio)

Los Angeles State Historic Park is a California State Park built on the site of the Southern Pacific's River Station. It's home to a 5-ft section of the Zanja Madre, the original irrigation canal that brought water to the city. You can see an exposed segment along the far bank. Spanish settlers and native workers began building the zanja madre in the late 18th century, making it LA's very first public works project.

Turn **R** on Spring St.
Turn **R** on Bruno St. at Oriel Wine Bar just past Chinatown Metro Stop
Turn **L** on Spring St.
Turn **R** on Ord
Turn **L** on New High
Turn **L** on Temple
Turn **L** on Main St.* (left lane bike path) Pull over onto the sidewalk in front of the U.S. Courthouse

Stop 2 & 3: Fletcher Bowron Square and U.S Courthouse 2.2 mi (6:40 and 13:35 in audio)

The Spring St. Courthouse (photo above, courtesy LA Public Library) is the site of a former market for indigenous labor. In the 1850s, the police brought Native Californians here who were unable to post bail or pay fines after being arrested. Vineyards, businesses, and private individuals looking for help would rent native labor for the week, paying two-thirds of their salary to the city and one third to the worker.

BIKE ROUTE: CONTINUED PAGE 2

The Bella Union, a pretty decent hotel where people went to have an old-fashioned, Wild West time, opened in 1849. It also housed The Los Angeles Star, LA's first newspaper, which had a Spanish-language section called La Estrella.

Walk your bike towards the stairs at Fletcher Bowron Square and over the pedestrian bridge to the other side of Temple St.

Turn **R** on Temple (East)
Turn **R** on Los Angeles*
Turn **R** on 2nd St.- Pull over onto the shoulder just past Spring St.

Stop 4: LA Times Building 2.5 mi (22:05 in audio)

Throughout the 1850s the pages of the Los Angeles Star were peppered with ads and articles about various circuses. The most highly advertised was the Lee Circus and Hippodrome, which showed originally in a small tent right here, at the present site of the LA Times Building.

Turn **L** on 1st Street
Turn **R** on Grand
Turn **R** on Cesar Chavez
Turn **R** on Hill Place (look for Hill St. South signs easy to miss side street parallel to Cesar Chavez)
Turn **R** onto Hill St. and pull into the Memorial on your immediate right

Stop 5: Fort Moore Pioneer Memorial 4.0 mi (26:43 in audio)

On January 12, 1847, two days after US troops occupied LA during the Mexican American War, American soldiers started building an adobe fort here. The Mormon Battalion finished the fort and dedicated it on July 4.

Use the Pedestrian Crosswalk at the end of the Memorial to cross Hill St. to the Northbound side.
Take **L** on Hill St. (North)
Take **R** on Ord St.
Take **R** on Broadway and pull over on your right just under the dragon archway

Stop 6: Chinatown Gateway Memorial 4.2 mi (36:34 in audio)

LA's original Chinatown was cleared to make way for Union Station in the 1930s. Our current Chinatown used to be called Sonoratown (photo next page, courtesy LA Public Library) named for the influx of Mexican miners who settled here during the Gold Rush.

Continue on Broadway (South)
Turn **L** on Temple
Turn **R** on Spring* (Continue onto Main Street)
Turn **R** on 11th St*
Turn **L** on Figueroa* - use protected bike lane
Turn **R** into Exposition Park

BIKE ROUTE: CONTINUED PAGE 3

Stop 7: Exposition Park 8.9 mi (48:32 in audio)

Horses, dogs, and camels raced here at what used to be called "Agricultural Park." The Park also hosted LA's first bicycle and car races and took advantage of being just outside LA city limits, thus beyond the law's reach. Gambling and prostitution might have been banned in LA but they flourished here, nurtured by a busy saloon underneath the grandstand and a hotel in the middle of the park.

Leaving the entrance you arrived
Take **L** on Figueroa St.*
Take **R** on 37th St.
Take **L** on Grand*
Take **R** on 18th St. (get into far left lane)
Take **L** on Olive*
Take **R** on 7th* St.
Take **L** on Main* St.
Turn **R** on Aliso St. (get into far left lane) Get onto left sidewalk at the Los Angeles St. intersection

Stop 8: Gateway to LA Public Art 13.6 mi (57:40 in audio)

This stretch of Los Angeles St. north of Arcadia was called Calle de los Negros and was, in the mid-to-late 19th century, LA's red light district. In 1871 one of the US' worst race riots took place at the northern end of this street when a mob of Angelenos carrying guns, knives, and ropes looted homes and businesses, lynching 19 Chinese.

Turn **R** onto Los Angeles
Turn **L** on Arcadia
Turn **R** on Main* St. -Pull onto sidewalk after intersection

Stop 9: Abel Stearns House 13.7 mi (1:04:18 in audio)

Abel Stearns, one of LA's wealthiest residents lived here with his wife Arcadia after they were married in 1841. The rich and powerful were well entertained at the Stearns' house, hobnobbing at exclusive parties where Mexicans and Yankees could do business and build alliances.

Turn **R** on Main St.*
Turn **R** into El Pueblo de Los Angeles. Walk past gazebo
Turn **L** on Los Angeles St.
Continue Straight and arrive back Union Station 14 mi

