

Bloomberg Pursuits



Fifteen Years in the Making, How Downtown L.A. Finally Arrived

Photographer: Weston Frank Lee

Where to eat, sleep, and shop in the city's most exciting new neighborhood.

by **Mary Holland** January 5, 2018

"When I was growing up, I would tell people to get out of Downtown L.A. by 6 or 7 p.m.—it wasn't safe," my Uber driver told me as we wrapped around the Hollywood Freeway before making a turn onto West 4th Street. I looked down at my watch. It was about 7 p.m., and I was heading into the once- verboten neighborhood—now the city's nexus for great restaurants and hip hotels.

The emergence of Downtown Los Angeles, dubbed DTLA, is no news flash: The area has been on the rise since the late 1990s. But that was the start of a long uphill climb. By 2009, it had already undergone the transition from bleak badlands to vibrant cultural mecca, thanks to early pioneers like the L.A. Live entertainment complex and the Standard Hotel. Since then, a slew of new hotels, restaurants, and museums have joined, and the neighborhood is showing no sign of slowing down.

This past year, cultural and lifestyle developments Row DTLA and City Market South opened up—bringing with them a string of restaurants and indie shops, and warranting the city a slot on our annual "Where to Go" list of hot travel destinations. In September, the Institute of Contemporary Art relocated from Santa Monica to Downtown. And a shopping complex in the Arts District, *At Mateo*, is in the final stages of development—proving that DTLA has yet to peak.



A guest room at the Freehand, a high-end hostel (with mostly private rooms). Photographer: Adrian Gaut

Where to Eat and Sleep in DTLA

Freehand: A bright hotel and hostel (there are a few bunk rooms available) that has a distinctive easygoing California sensibility.