

Top 10 Italian Experiences in (Greater) L.A.



#1 The **Italian American Museum of Los Angeles (IAMLA)** is located in the Italian Hall, the oldest remaining building from **L.A.'s historic little Italy**. The **IAMLA** features interactive exhibitions and programming that explore the history of Italians in the region, which predates California's statehood. Not to be missed is the Museum's annual **Taste of Italy** in October, which features over 40 of the region's best Italian restaurants, dozens of wineries, live entertainment and more! www.italianhall.org

#2 During a 34-year period Italian immigrant laborer **Sabato Rodia** constructed 17 interconnected structures using entirely recycled objects. Known today as the **Watts Towers**, Rodia's creations are a historic-cultural landmark and cannot be missed! www.wattstowers.us



#3 A visit to the 97-year old **San Antonio Winery** takes you back to the time when Los Angeles boasted over 100 wineries and was the wine capital of the state. Offering daily tastings and tours, an extensive wine shop, scrumptious food and private event space, the San Antonio Winery is today the only winery that remains in Los Angeles and is *your urban winery*. www.sanantoniowinery.com

#4 **St. Peter's Italian Church**, established in 1904 and located on North Broadway on the edge of Chinatown (once the heart of L.A.'s Italian neighborhood), offers Masses in Italian and presents dozens of colorful celebrations, most of which are dedicated to the patron saints of the towns where Italian Angelenos originally hailed. The feasts of Saint Joseph, in March, and Santa Lucia, in December, are among the largest. www.stpeterschurchla.org

#5 *Tosca*, *Rigoletto*, and *Don Giovanni* are a few of the world-class Italian operas that the **L.A. Opera** has presented in recent years. Whether you are looking for an elegant evening on the town or an opportunity to share the magic of opera with your family, school, or community group, the L.A. Opera offers something for everyone, including free and discounted tickets for qualifying groups through its *Community Circle* program.



#6 **Rudolf Valentino** was born in Puglia, Italy, and immigrated to the United States in 1913. He achieved superstardom status in the early motion picture industry and is considered one of Hollywood's first heartthrobs. When he died suddenly at the young age of 31, an estimated 100,000 people attended his funeral. Visit Valentino's grave at **Hollywood Forever Cemetery** in the Cathedral Mausoleum, Crypt #1205. www.hollywoodforever.com

#7 Following the United States' entry into WWII, 600,000 Italians living in the U.S. who had not obtained citizenship were branded "**enemy aliens**." Enemy aliens were subject to arrest, forced relocation, curfew, property seizure, travel restrictions, and internment. In Los Angeles, Italian internees were held at the **Tuna Canyon Detention Station** in the Sunland-Tujunga area alongside Japanese, Germans, and other prisoners. Nothing remains of the detention facility today, but a portion of the site, which is home to a golf course, was recently declared a Historic-Cultural Landmark by the City of Los Angeles. Follow Tuna Canyon Detention Station on Facebook for more information.

#8 Authentic Italian **pizza** is not frozen, nor is it made in a hut. Learn to make the real thing with Associazione Verace Pizza Napoletana, an organization founded 30 years ago in Naples, Italy, to promote the art and tradition of authentic Neapolitan pizza (cooked at 900 degrees!). The Association offers classes ranging from one day to five. <http://americas.pizzanapoletana.org/>. After you have mastered the art of pizza making, celebrate with real Italian **gelato**. We're not talking the stuff that



comes from mixes, either. Try Bulgarini Gelato (Culver City or Altadena), Grom (Malibu), and Gelato Bar (Los Feliz).

#9 *Parli italiano?* Interested in learning to speak Italian or improving your Italian skills?

Fondazione Italia, a non-profit organization, offers classes for children and adults throughout Southern California and provides a special discount for IAMLA members! The Italian Cultural Institute of Los Angeles, located in Westwood, also offers Italian classes ranging from elementary to advanced. www.italianfoundation.org or www.iiclosangeles.esteri.it



#10 Explore **Italian art and architecture** in Los Angeles! The J. Paul Getty Museum, Getty Villa, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Huntington Library boast impressive Italian art collections. Also worth visiting are the Venice Canals; Rico LeBrun's *Genesis* mural at Pomona College; Leo Politi's *The Blessing of the Animals* mural at El Pueblo Historical Monument; Giovanni Battista Smeraldi's murals at the Biltmore Hotel (the Los Angeles Conservancy offers weekly tours – reservations required – www.laconservancy.org); and the San Secondo D'Asti Church (what little remains of Secondo Guasti's utopic village and vineyard) in Ontario, California. That's just the tip of the iceberg, however! To learn more about Italian events, history and other topics of interest, join the IAMLA's mailing list. www.italianhall.org/contact

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