

Top 3 Things to Do in Los Angeles on a Budget

By Ryan Paul James

You can blame David Beckham for this article.

Being a father of two small kids in Los Angeles can get real expensive fast. I'm always trying to find fun inexpensive things to do with my kids.

The first fun adventure I discovered was Travel Town in Griffith Park. It's totally free and my kids love trains. In fact we created a "Train Day" where once a month, we would go to Travel Town and then go to lunch at Carney's, a burger joint on a train!



Photography by [Alasdair McLellan](#)

On one of our "Train Days" we were eating lunch at the Carney's location in West Hollywood. I had ordered the food and went back to my table to wait. A young father walked in with his daughter. He was wearing sunglasses and got in line to order his food. When he was finished, he and his young daughter sat at the table next to us. My son was playing with his train toy, when his daughter yelled "Look daddy - Thomas the Train!" That provoked a conversation between the fathers and I suggested that if he's looking for a cheap day of fun, go to Travel Town. I then suggested some other cheap things to do. His number was then called and he got up to get his food.

On his way back, he took off his sunglasses and it was - you guessed it - DAVID BECKHAM. From that moment on, he was bombarded by others for pictures and autographs. Since I'm also in the entertainment business, I just can't bring myself to ask for a picture or an autograph.

My kids and I finished our lunch and as we were leaving, I heard David say, "Thanks Ryan." I turned back and waved goodbye to David and left. When I got back to the car, I realized that I just suggested cheap things to do with your kids to a multi-millionaire!

If you're looking for fun things to do on a budget with your kids in L.A., no matter how rich you are, here are some ideas.

1. Runyon Canyon



Three different hiking trails at various degrees of difficulty, plus amazing views of L.A. and Hollywood. There is a very easy path if you're with your kids. This is one of the most popular hiking destinations. It's also a good place, besides Carneys, to spot some of your favorite celebrities. The cost to take an amazing scenic hike and maybe meet Jennifer Aniston? - FREE.

2. Santa Monica Pier

Santa Monica Pier is an iconic staple for Los Angeles. The pier has an actual amusement park, Pacific Park, built on the pier, jetting out over the Pacific Ocean. This park has everything your average state fair has: rides, fair food and games. Attractions are priced individually anywhere from \$6-\$12 a ride. Or, you can save money by purchasing the unlimited day pass for \$42 (ages 8 & over) or \$22 (ages 7 & below). It's definitely cheaper than Disneyland or Universal Studios and the lines aren't nearly as long.



3. The Getty



The Getty is an amazing \$1.3 billion art museum. If you're looking for an escape and want to feel like you're overseas, this is a definite location to check out. It's beloved not only for its collection of art but also the architecture and beautiful gardens. The museum features pre-20th-century European paintings, sculpture, and decorative art. One would think that you would have to pay a lot for such amazing attractions but it's totally free. All you have to pay for is parking which is just \$20.

So if you are planning a trip to Los Angeles or live here and you're looking for inexpensive things to do, check out these four locations and save money at the same time. Take it from me and maybe David Beckham.