

Pasadena: Stay, Play and Savor

Written by Melissa Larsen



Though summertime in Phoenix means flocking to the beaches of San Diego, we encourage you, this coming season, to try out the fun, family-friendly destination of Pasadena. Brimming with excellent food, arts and culture, gorgeous accommodations and the potential for a celeb sighting or two, Pasadena makes for a memory-making summer (or springtime) escape.



STAY: Located just minutes from downtown, [The Langham](#) is a landmark in Pasadena. Though it might be a five-star luxury resort, dripping with beautiful chandeliers, drop-dead gorgeous accommodations and palatial good looks, The Langham also boasts plenty of kid-friendly appeal. Via The Langham Huntington Kids Program, kiddos receive a special teddy bear backpack at check-in, filled with plenty of fun and goodies, and much more. The backpack, plus thoughtful touches like child-size bathrobes and slippers in the guest rooms, makes even the littlest guests feel special. The on-site swimming pool and Jacuzzi also allow for hours of fun for the entire family. And while the wee ones are swimming the day away, Mom and Dad can kick back on one of the surrounding loungers—close enough to keep an eye on the action in the pool but in total and complete comfort (especially when paired with a cocktail from The Hideaway pool bar). The Langham is brimming with plenty of dining options to fill whatever craving you might have: The Terrace offers a casual bistro-style menu for breakfast, lunch and dinner (we highly recommend the avocado toast or acai bowl for a healthful start the morning); The Royce dishes up USDA Prime cuts, Australian Wagyu and Japanese Kobe beef; and The Tap Room is a too-cool spot to lounge and enjoy hand-crafted cocktails, artisanal wines and craft beers.



Tip: For an extra charge of \$60 per person per day (kids are \$35), we recommend signing up for The Langham Club Lounge. Throughout the day, club guests enjoy concierge services, a computer with premium Internet access, a selection of newspapers and magazines and all-day refreshments. Plus, there are five food and beverage presentations throughout the day, including a delicious breakfast buffet, a regal high tea and a beautiful dessert spread.

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PLAY: There is never a dull moment in Pasadena, whether it is arts and culture, outdoor pursuits or kid-friendly activities that you prefer. [Kidspace Children's Museum](#) is a unique spot that combines all three. Children of all ages, from tots to tweens, and parents alike can enjoy an entire day of play at Kidspace. Kids take on science in the The Robert & Mary Galvin Physics Forest via hands-on activities like pulleys, ball launchers and more (Mom and Dad will have a great time trying their hand at these physics experiments as well). Inside the Roberts Pavilion, they can dig for fossils, research rocks, leaves and other natural items and explore a human-size ant hole. Outside, though, is where the most excitement happens, whether on the trike track or engaging in water play via an on-site creek (be sure to pack a suit, towel and water shoes for little explorers).

For a one-of-a-kind experience (that will certainly garner plenty of photos for your Instagram feed), enjoy an afternoon at [The Huntington Library, Art Collection, and Botanical Gardens](#) (pictured). If you are short on time or the weather is simply too gorgeous to spend time indoors, beeline it to the botanical gardens. Walk through 120 acres of flora and fauna, with the rose garden, Japanese garden and Chinese garden being favorites. The Helen and Peter Bing Children's Garden is not to be missed if you have tots in tow. They can walk through miniature doors, splash in water features, run under a rainbow tunnel and see topiary that has been groomed into animal shapes.



SAVOR: Are you craving ice cream or French fries? A hearty steak or a healthy seafood spread? Whatever you have a hankering for, Pasadena is filled with casual and fine-dining destinations to satisfy. [La Grande Orange Café](#) (pictured above) is a cool, quirky atmosphere dishing up fresh American cooking. The shorts ribs or salmon plates will satisfy a hearty appetite while kids can adore having more to choose from than just mac and cheese (the swordfish or chicken tacos on the awesome kids' menu are delicious). Come breakfast time, [Lincoln Pasadena](#) is what Instagram dreams are made of. The store/restaurant is in a hip industrial space that used to house a florist, and the pastry shelves are full of colorful scones, chocolate croissants and muffins. On the menu, diners find breakfast salads, granola and yogurt and incredible specials, like rose lattes and coconut pancakes with matcha cream. Plus, you can pick up unique candies, bags of lavender granola or hard-to-find baking supplies to bring home with you. One of Pasadena's newest restaurants, [Harlowe's French Dip](#) appears to be transported from Manhattan with his handsome good looks, dark woods and classy bar area. Harlowe's specializes in "dips" with the traditional beef dip being a favorite. For starters, try the out-of-this-world Caesar salad, shrimp cocktail or deviled eggs. With rooftop dining, full of twinkle lights and white table cloths, [Café Santorini](#) (pictured below) is a fine-dining dream. The restaurant specializes in Mediterranean fare with divine pizzas, seafood and pasta dishes (the green curry risotto with scallops and cioppino are musts for seafoodies).



TIP: Have a sweet tooth? Visit [Afters Ice Cream](#), the home of the milky bun (which is similar to a doughnut). Stuff a cone, cup or the highly recommended milky bun with homemade ice cream in flavors like cookie butter, strawberry cookie crunch and jasmine milk tea and crown it with sweet toppings. The line to order may be long, but an Afters Ice Cream creation is well worth the wait.