



ESCAPE IN LOS ANGELES

You want to skip town but don't have a full weekend to spare, let alone the fortitude to deal with voyaging several hours to get to your destination. You can still get away from it all right here in L.A.

➤ **GO COASTAL** Check into Santa Monica's beach-chic Hotel Oceana (310-393-0486 or hoteloceanasantamonica.com; \$385-\$710). It's like Shutters, but cooler. The recently renovated rooms are spacious, the TVs plasma, and the ocean views worth every penny. Yet it's the little things like L'Occitane bath products, Ground Work java for the in-room coffeemaker, and sumptuous white bed linens that'll win you over.

➤ **KEEP IT PARKED** You can't separate yourself from the city if you're stuck in the gridlock we all know so well. Better to leave the car with the valet. The hotel is close to Montana and the 3rd Street Promenade, which means you can hoof it just as you would in any other city. If you've got legs for it, roam the bluffs, too. It's a different town when you slip into the mind-set of a visitor.

➤ **RESERVE A TABLE** A quarter mile from the hotel (go a block north and turn right) you'll find Locanda Portofino (310-394-2070 or locandaportofino.com). Never mind the minimal location. It's a charmer with Italian waiters, candlelight, and a terrific special of tagliatelle in osso buco sauce with tiny, light veal meatballs. Or venture south to Joe Miller's rustic little tapas spot, Bar Pintxo (310-458-2012), on Santa Monica Boulevard.

➤ **RESTART** Have breakfast in the hotel's guests-only lounge. You'll be glad you paid the extra dollars for the buffet, which offers the likes of salmon cured in salt, sugar, dill, and tequila.

➤ **BE KNEADED** Book a massage at the simple but lovely Petite Spa (310-393-3105 or petitespa.net). No sauna or cucumber water, just talented staff. For something more DIY, have the concierge direct you to the Santa Monica steps, where you'll tromp down the 189 stairs and hang a left at the bottom near the tunnel to the beach. Dip your toes in the surf and make a mental note to get away like this more often.