

Sunset Boulevard, past the Hollywood sign, through the skyscrapers of the business district and across the top sporting venues.

While in LA we stayed at the gorgeous Hotel Oceana, just a short stroll from Santa

Monica Pier and its fabulous wide beach. The ocean front hotel was a bastion of luxury and we had to tear ourselves away each day to explore.

LA's biggest tourist attraction is Universal Studios and as far as we were concerned it included

VISIT CALIFORNIA

OUR HOLIDAY

Where: California

Cost: United Vacations (call 0844 499 5857 www.unitedvacations.co.uk) has 15-night California fly-drives from £3,380 per family of four, including two children aged two to 11. Price includes return scheduled flights from London Heathrow into San Francisco departing Los Angeles with United Airlines; free connecting

flights from eight UK regional airports, 15 nights' accommodation and 15 days' car rental.

Hotels: Monterey Bay Lodge – visit www.montereybaylodge.com; Ramada, Santa Barbara – log on to the website www.sbramada.com and Hotel Oceana, Santa Monica – for more details visit www.hoteloceana.com

(www.hollywoodskies.com) and Hollywood City Pass (www.citypass.com)

Holiday tip

Beat the queues with upgrades to front of line tickets at

Universal Studios. For more details, log on to www.universalstudioshollywood.com Disneyland's free fast-pass system gives queue-busting boarding times for popular rides. Log on to www.disneyland.com

Food and drink

Ocean front restaurants serve fabulous fresh fish. Wash it down with some chilled Californian Chardonnay. Local red wine varieties include Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir, Merlot and Zinfandel.

Climate check

It can be cool and windy along the coast.

Return visit?

Another stay at Santa Monica's Hotel Oceana would be nice.