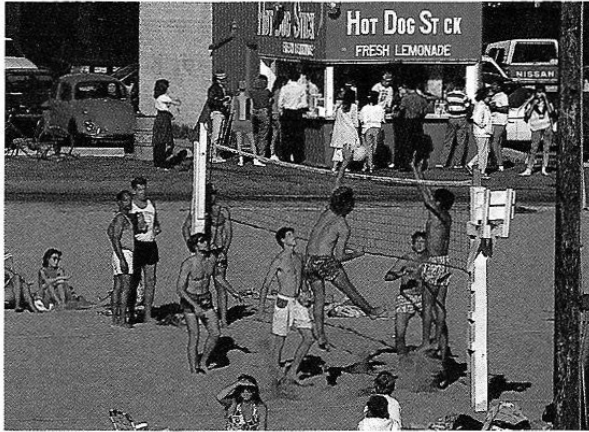


Spotlight on the USA

Los Angeles

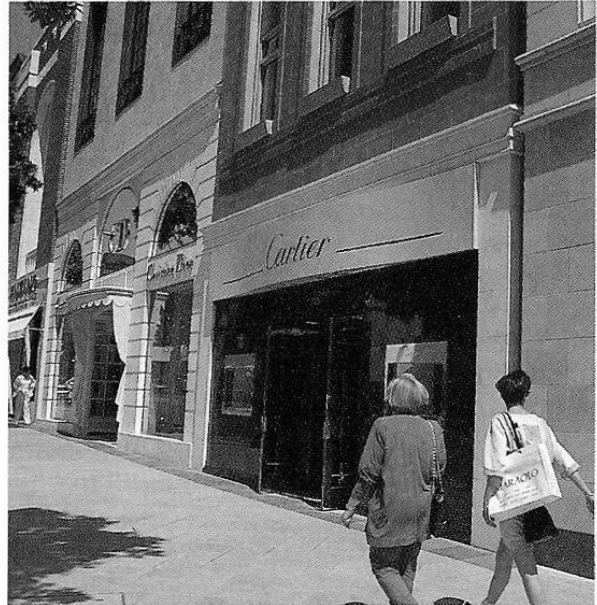


Volleyball at the beach

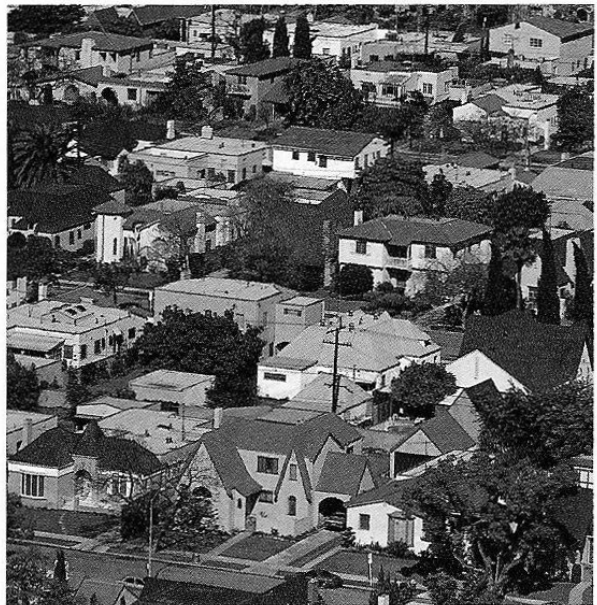
If, as was said earlier, California is like the United States only more so, then surely Los Angeles is like California only more so. The images most people have when they think of California best fit Los Angeles and the surrounding area.

The Los Angeles area has many beaches, with surfers, volleyball players, and people getting tan. The Los Angeles area is also the center of the movie industry and home to many movie stars. Los Angeles has money and glamour; the Beverly Hills neighborhood, for example, is famous for its mansions and high-priced shops.

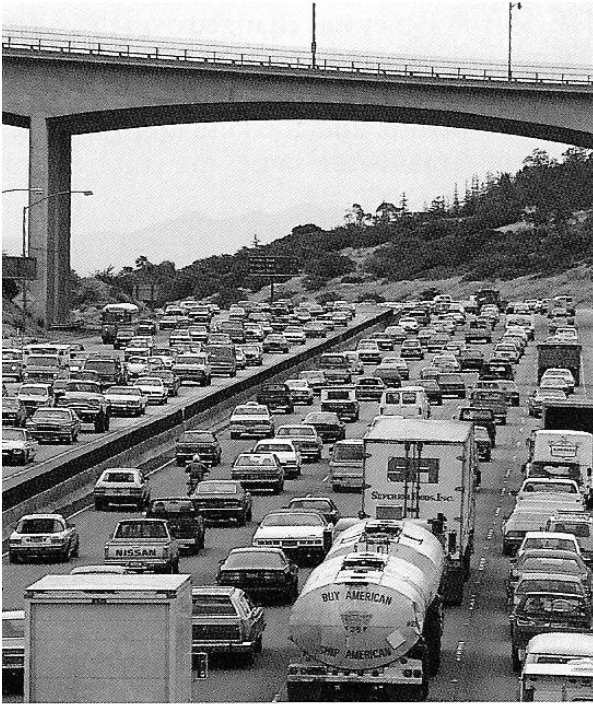
One thing that Los Angeles seems *not* to have is a city. Actually, there is a downtown area, but since the 1950s Los Angeles has grown greatly—and it's not grown upward, but grown outward. Los Angeles's "suburbs" are not really suburbs: They not only have houses but also many businesses and offices, and they tend to develop suburbs of their own. So Los Angeles keeps growing, spreading out into farmland and even desert.



Shopping in Beverly Hills



Sprawling suburbs



Rush hour on the freeway in L.A.

As distances have increased in Los Angeles, so has the importance of the car. It has often been said that Angelenos have a love affair with the car. Recently, however, that

love is mixed with a little hate. Los Angeles has four of the five busiest highways in North America. Some days, "rush hour" continues almost unbroken from 7:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. Trips, whether to work or to the beach, require planning; one strategy, for example, is to leave for work at four in the morning! Not surprisingly, car phones and, more recently, car fax machines sell well in Los Angeles.

Even if cars don't move quickly in Los Angeles, just about everything else does. Los Angeles is a city of fads and trends. Clubs, restaurants, shops, and styles have been known to appear and disappear overnight or, more precisely, in four quick steps: They are discovered by a few; they are discovered by many; everyone knows about them; they're gone!

This need to be new and different means that whatever you can think of probably exists in L.A. Take juice bars, places that serve fresh juice. One juice bar specializes in weird combinations (for example, apple, garlic, tomato, beet, and ginger all mixed together). Another is also a hair salon; you can drink the same combination that's being used to shampoo your hair!



Angelenos love discovering new restaurants.

Los Angeles's growth is supported by its diverse economy. Los Angeles is a center, not only for entertainment and tourism, but also for manufacturing, business and finance, aerospace, oil, and trade. Its ports now handle more cargo than New York. The growth of trade is largely the result of the strong economies in Asia. Asian companies have also invested heavily in Los Angeles; three-fourths of downtown L.A. is foreign owned, much of it by Japanese.

Los Angeles faces some serious problems. With so much traffic, Los Angeles has the dirtiest air in the United States; all too often the sunshine is hidden by smog. Crime and violence are also major problems. Police say there are at least 500 gangs in Los Angeles. Violence among gang members, who are usually teenagers, has grown with the spread of drugs and drug money. Experts emphasize that the problems must be solved if Los Angeles is to maintain the Southern Californian lifestyle for which it's so famous.

Source: Falk, Randee. Spotlight on the USA. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. S. 161-163.