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Los Angeles

where[®]

L.A. ON A BUDGET

DO, SEE AND TASTE
WITHOUT BREAKING THE BANK
(PLUS SPLURGES THAT
YOU DESERVE)

THE TOP
FOOD TRUCKS

LADY GAGA
AT STAPLES
CENTER

LANVIN AND
BADGLEY
MISCHKA



Caviar-topped blinis from Petrossian on Robertson Boulevard

THE URGE TO SPLURGE

While there's something to be said for watching our wallets, there are also those occasions when we simply want to spoil ourselves. So if you're intent on splurging, why not...

...Indulge in a tasting menu of caviars or truffles?

A duo of L.A. restaurants have composed tasting menus around two of the culinary world's most prized dishes. Petrossian (p. 64), known for its high-quality smoked fishes and range of caviar and roe delicacies, serves a fish egg feast at its Beverly Hills restaurant. The meal, \$125, is four courses of caviar goodness capped off with a smooth vanilla panna cotta dotted with faux caviar, actually espresso tapioca. At Bistro LQ (p. 64), an intimate French restaurant on L.A.'s Beverly Boulevard, the exalted ingredient is truffles, and a staggering 19-course menu pays homage to the richly fragrant and flavorful mushrooms. Ordering the menu requires a \$25 deposit with reservation—five days in advance is recommended—and the meal ranges from \$200 to \$230.

...Partake in a caviar massage?

Is feasting on caviar not rich enough for you? The Beverly Hills Hotel Spa by La Prairie (9641 Sunset Blvd., Beverly Hills, 310.276.2251) allows you to smother yourself in the stuff with its Caviar Massage. For \$215 an hour, you get a rubdown with La Prairie's Skin Caviar complex, which contains extracts from the protein-rich sturgeon egg. There's also the Caviar Intensive Eye Lift Treatment, \$100 for 15 minutes when added on to a facial, or the Caviar Firming Facial, \$300 for 90 minutes.

...Embark on a breathtaking helicopter tour?

Of the scenic tours offered in L.A., none is as all-encompassing as a flight with Los Angeles Helicopters (p. 96). Its amiable and informative pilots whisk you across the L.A. horizon to destinations such as the Temecula wine country and Santa Catalina Island, or

do a scenic sweep from Santa Monica Bay to downtown or Long Beach to Palos Verdes. Tours cost between 163 to \$463 for adults. You might not be joining the jet set, but you'll be darn close.

...Shop at some of the world's most exclusive locales?

Ready to drop some serious dime? It doesn't get more serious than the granddaddy of luxury shopping streets, the one and only Rodeo Drive (p. 27). Moneyed bohemians head to Missoni, Francophiles get très chic at Lanvin and Chanel, jewelry lovers finger gems at at Two Rodeo's Tiffany & Co. and Mikimoto, and glamazons find gowns at Valentino and Versace. Everyone gawks.

...Taste vodka while donning a faux-fur coat?

At Nic's Beverly Hills (p. 62), the main attraction is the VodBox in back, a walk-in freezer filled with lockers carrying top-shelf vodkas. Patrons are outfitted in faux fur coats and hats before stepping into the frigid room, where a vodka sommelier prepares a selection of liquors. A flight is a mere \$21; bottle service, \$250. Reservations are recommended. You might finish with service from the VodKart, which offers the restaurant's finest vodkas. A server concocts your martinis table-side on a cool Lucite cart, which also conveniently chills the alcohol.

...Cruise up the coast in a sports car?

You know the Bentley that, for some strange reason, never showed up under the Christmas tree? Or that cherry-red Porsche that seduced you from the pages of auto mags? If you haven't scraped together a down payment for one of these beauties, you can rent one at Beverly Hills Rent-a-Car (p. 95), which specializes in sports cars and luxury sedans. Take it on a cruise up Pacific Coast Highway and feel the wind whipping through your hair on the winding road. 🍷