Little Tokyo Culinary and Historical Tour

This research guide is designed to support the September 18th, 2010 Visions and Voices event, Little Tokyo Culinary and Historical Tour. Please use this guide to find further information on the topic and the event.

First Street, 1910

Los Angeles has long had one of the largest populations of Japanese outside of Japan. The first Japanese restaurant in the area of what was to become Little Tokyo opened in 1885, just off 1st Street, at a time when USC itself occupied a handful of buildings at the southern edge of town. By the 1920s, it had become the economic and cultural center for Japanese Americans. The relocation trauma of World War II dealt a heavy blow to the community and, despite its postwar resuscitation, Little Tokyo has never regained the dominant position it once held. Even so, it remains as one of the city's most enduring ethnic neighborhoods and continues to claim its place as the cultural center for Japanese Americans in Southern California.

Map of Little Tokyo, 1941

Source: 南加州日本人七十年史
Minami Kashū Nihonjin nanajūnenshi (1960)
call number: (East Asian) F870.J3M563 1960

Nisei Week Grand Parade, August 15, 2010

Click here for parade highlights video.
This research guide is designed to support the September 18th, 2010 Visions and Voices event, Little Tokyo Culinary and Historical Tour. Please use this guide to find further information on the topic and the event.

Last Updated: Aug 19, 2011
URL: http://libguides.usc.edu/littletokyo

Sources on the Web
USC’s Japanese American Relocation Digital Archive (JARDA) includes 222 photographs, part of the Online Archive of California's JARDA project.

Rafu Shimpo is the "newspaper of record" for Los Angeles' Japanese community.

Little Tokyo Historical Background
Bibliography of Resources / Michael Several (1998).

Book Search
Search USC's Homer Catalog:

Try searching for "Japanese Americans California Los Angeles" or "Little Tokyo"

History
Japanese American celebration and conflict: a history of ethnic identity and festival, 1934-1990 - Kurashige, Lon
Call Number: (Doheny) F869.L89J338 2002
ISBN: 0520227425

The battle for Los Angeles: racial ideology and World War II - Leonard, Kevin Allen
Call Number: (Doheny) F869.L89A2535 2006
ISBN: 0826340474
See especially these chapters
"While We Are at War with their Race": Pearl Harbor, "Race", and Japanese Americans

-and-
"The Long Day of the Jap-baiter in California Politics Appears to Have Ended": Japanese Americans and "Race" in Los Angeles, 1943-1945

Art & Literature
Asian American Art 1850-1970 - Chang, Gordon H.
Call Number: (AFA) N6538.A83A835 2008
ISBN: 9780804757515
See chapter by Karin Higa: "Hidden in Plain Sight: Little Tokyo Between the Wars"

Death in Little Tokyo - Furutani, Dale
Call Number: (Doheny) PS3556.U778D43 1996
ISBN: 0312145802
Mystery set in Little Tokyo

Little Tokyo opportunities inventory - Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles
Call Number: (AFA) HT177.L7C67 1994

© University of Southern California
Little Tokyo Culinary and Historical Tour

This research guide is designed to support the September 18th, 2010 Visions and Voices event, Little Tokyo Culinary and Historical Tour. Please use this guide to find further information on the topic and the event.

Last Updated: Aug 19, 2011  URL: http://libguides.usc.edu/littletokyo  Print Guide  Email Alerts

Places - Little Tokyo Culinary and Historical Tour

Japanese American National Museum (link)

East West Players (link)

Views of Little Tokyo

Photo by Ruth Wallach

Public Art Works in Little Tokyo, Los Angeles / website by Ruth Wallach, Head, Architecture and Fine Arts Library

Comments (0)

Geffin Contemporary at MOCA (link)

An extension of the Museum of Contemporary Art.

Japanese American Cultural & Community Center (link)

© University of Southern California
Eating in Little Tokyo

Aside from language, food is probably the strongest means for preserving culture among Japanese Americans and for the rest of us to appreciate Japanese culture. Many people continue to return to Little Tokyo to eat, often at a favorite restaurant or to taste once more a favorite dish. The late actor Richard Mulligan ("Soap") was such a loyal customer at Aoi that his photo is still enshrined on the restaurant’s wall, ten years after his death. There is a wide range of choices and pricings, so whether you are craving the otoro soba at Suehiro’s, sushi from any number of restaurants, vegan fare at Shojin, the only thing going on at the Shabu Shabu House, pork katsudon from Koraku, or pizza from one of the gourmet food trucks that now frequent 2nd Street, there is always a reason to come back to Little Tokyo.

Add your favorite here, as a comment:

Comments (0)
One easy and inexpensive way to get from campus to Little Tokyo is the LA DOT (Department of Transportation) Dash network. If you are traveling on weekdays during work hours (6am - 6:30pm), it will only cost you $0.35 each way. Take the Route F Dash up Figueroa (ask for a transfer) and transfer to a Route A Dash. It's a nice way to tour downtown. For routes, fare structure and scheduling, go to the LA DOT Dash website.

By Car

Of course, there is always the option to drive to Little Tokyo. From campus, you can drive north on Figueroa Street and turn right on either 2nd or 1st Street, then look for parking once you have passed Los Angeles Street. Parking can be expensive, but if you go to the mall parking lot at 4th and Central and buy something, you could get your parking validated.