

Big Cities by RV

By Jaimie Hall Bruzenak.



Last week George and I ventured into downtown Los Angeles to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) to see the traveling King Tut exhibit, Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of Pharaohs. Gilded statuettes, exquisite jewelry, and a dagger hidden in his mummy wrappings are among the more than 130 treasures on display. Later they will move to Ft. Lauderdale, Chicago, and then Philadelphia.

Many RVers shudder at the thought of driving in downtown Los Angeles or other large cities, and with good reason. Traffic can be horrendous and parking an RV a nightmare. Yet cities like L.A. have cultural attractions that smaller towns don't have. Treasures from King Tut's tomb were last displayed in the U.S. in 1979. Who knows when these or comparable treasures will be made available here again?



At the King Tut exhibition we heard people exclaiming over another traveling exhibit-Body Sabre tooth tigers at entrance of Page Museum in L.A.Worlds. Check the schedule to see where they are touring now. Using "plastination," a new way of preserving actual bodies, the exhibits contain authentic specimens of human anatomy- individual organs, transparent vertical and horizontal slices of the body, and 25 whole-body plastinates. You get a 3-D perspective of human bodies like no other. (Update: George and I saw Body Worlds in Minneapolis in 2006. It was awesome! We highly recommend it.)

Many metropolitan areas have excellent museums and art galleries with outstanding permanent exhibitions. Next door to LACMA are the La Brea Tar Pits and the Page Museum, with fossilized remains of animals trapped in the asphaltic pits from 40,000 to 10,000 years ago.

PLANNING YOUR VISIT

How can RVers take advantage of these cultural offerings without taking your large RV downtown? Before going, develop a plan.

Base of operations: Find an RV park or large parking lot in a less congested area. A friend or relative may offer parking. I parked my camper at my sister's house near Pasadena.

If a subway or trolley line goes near the attraction, locate an RV park further out on the line. For example, in San Diego, the trolley line extends to nearby towns like Chula Vista and La Mesa where RV parks are a short drive from the line. When we wanted to see New Orleans for the day, Bill and I parked our motorhome at a Wal-Mart off I-10 and drove our Jeep into town.



Transportation: Take your tow or towed vehicle instead of your RV. Check into mass transit. A bus, trolley or subway line may go near the facility. My sister loaned me her car so I wouldn't have to take the camper. In San Diego we've used the trolley.

Downtown parking: Check the facility's Web site or give them a call. If you are driving a large vehicle, parking garages might not work. LACMA had outside parking for \$5 at the museum.

Timing: Time your visit to miss rush hour traffic. Since our tickets were for 2 p.m. we had dinner afterwards, not leaving until 7:30 p.m. to avoid heavy traffic.

Route: Use a mapping program to help plan your route. Check your proposed route with a local. My sister said our route went through city streets; staying on freeways would be longer but less of a hassle.

Don't miss exciting cultural offerings because you are traveling in an RV. A little planning can make your day a fun adventure, taking advantage of the good things a city has to offer while avoiding the bad.

RESOURCES

King Tut tours

Body Worlds tours

Page Museum and La Brea Tar Pits

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