

Is the wind blowing west?



New York will always—always, we say!—be the best city in the world. But is L.A. starting to challenge the throne? By Eve Barlow

WE ALL KNOW that NYC is the Big Apple of everyone's eye. This is the place where the sky is truly the limit and the buildings take you as high as you want to fly. Even the cheapest slice of pizza is better in New York. From the Bronx to Brooklyn, there are opportunities, haphazard dalliances, unforgettable experiences and—until now—the smug knowledge that we are so much better than L.A.

In the past few years, proud Gothamites—dare we say *cool* Gothamites—have been ditching our coast for the warmer, spacier, hipper climes of Los Angeles. In the music world alone, Karen O, Matt Berninger from the National, Kevin Morby and Vivian Girls'

Katy Goodman have all recently made the move. So the question must be asked: What do L.A.'s kale smoothies have that NYC's espressos lack? No place does life like New York, New York, right? *Right?*

In 2014 I quit my job, flew from London straight over the so-called capital of the world and woke up in Hollywood. I needed a change. New York versus L.A. came down to a gut instinct that I'd rather die than wake up in NYC without a job. For some reason I didn't have the same worries about L.A., and I'm not alone. Harlem-born Moby, who left his lower Manhattan apartment in 2010 after decades in the city, wrote in the *Guardian*, "I left New

York for L.A. because creativity requires the freedom to fail." Moby was the goddamned mayor of the Lower East Side in the early aughts, and that dude peaced out. Novelist Jonathan Lethem, arguably the father of the Brooklyn lit scene (he was not only raised there, he *literally* wrote the book on the borough, *Motherless Brooklyn*), decamped for SoCal the same year. "I do love New York," he told the *Los Angeles Times*, "but it's also unbearable to me in some ways." These guys *were* New York—and they were early adopters. Now, more and more, they feel like familiar stories.

Perhaps it's because the artist's life is affordable—or at least more affordable—on

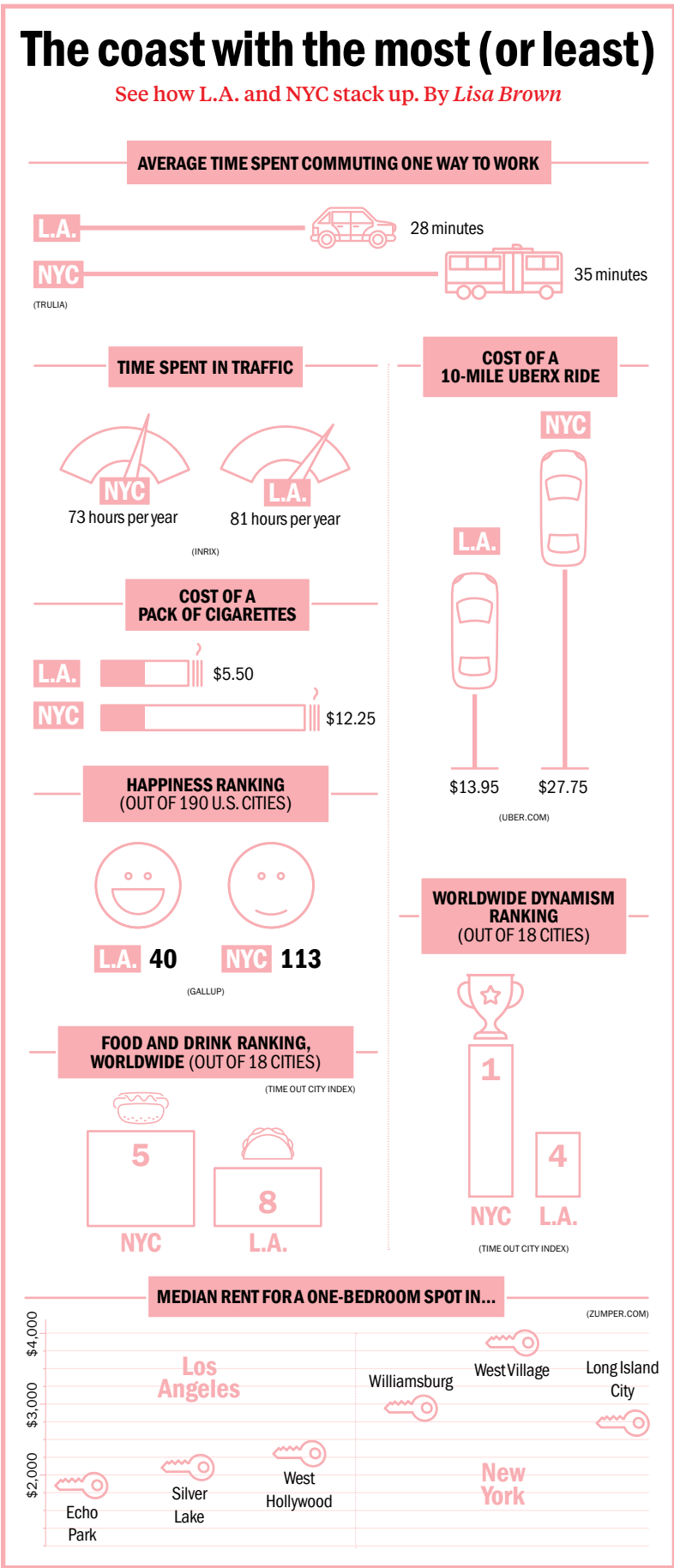
the Left Coast, particularly on the regenerated Eastside where rooms can typically go for just over \$700 per month. That's a price New Yorkers would willingly pay for a rat's nest 12 blocks from the nearest subway (but they can't, because those rooms are now \$1,500). And thanks to Uber, the sprawl of L.A. no longer hinders creatives hoping to collaborate (or urban explorers looking to neighborhood hop)—that is, Los Angeles is now a little bit more like New York.

L.A.'s downtown and Arts District are booming. More than 50 galleries have opened, fashion is moving West (Saint

Laurent is setting up here direct from Paris, without an NYC pit stop), and the music industry is making the jump: Case in point, after 63 years in New York, Epic Records moved 75 percent of its office to West Coast digs at the end of 2016 because of the "convenience and...advantage" of being in Los Angeles, according to Epic CEO L.A. Reid.

Which is why we decided to see for ourselves what's going on in L.A.—a city New Yorkers have ruthlessly and (let's be honest) accurately mocked for decades—by sending staffers from our NYC and Los Angeles offices to check out each other's scenes and report back.

PHOTOGRAPH: SHUTTERSTOCK





If New York is the city that never sleeps, L.A. is the city that's so enviably well rested, it's annoying.

Also, there's how Angelenos walk (when they walk). When I stroll from a parking garage to *Time Out Los Angeles's* offices the following morning for my first day of work, it feels like a zombie apocalypse, with a few people waiting for a walk signal when there are literally no moving vehicles in sight. It feels kind of like a *Sims* version of a city and everything about this situation—not jaywalking or moving at the speed of a jog or having to maneuver past a group walking three-wide so you don't miss your morning meeting—is so unlike my usual trek to Times Square, I can't even.

That night, I meet up with my friend Jess, who is a 15-minute walk away. She's shocked I'm going to actually use my feet to travel, which throws me, as walking 30 minutes to get somewhere in Brooklyn is my MO. But

en route, I understand her point. Winding through the hills is equally relaxing (there are some lovely Victorian-style homes I dream of buying) and creepy (why is that shadowy figure outside the convenience store staring at me?).

Then there's *Time Out Los Angeles's* Silicon Valley-esque lounge area, which plays indie tracks, has a vintage watercooler filled with fresh strawberries and slices of watermelon, a bar with craft brews and artisanal coffee, and—get this—a wellness room, whatever the fuck that means. It also seems like everybody I meet is at a 3

on the intensity scale, whereas New Yorkers are perpetually burying the needle past 10. At rocker den Little Joy, I ask a dude I've just met what he does. "Nothing really," he says, eventually admitting that he bartends sometimes. "L.A. makes you lazy," he adds. That's something I hear a lot while I'm here.

The following morning at minimalist café Eightfold Coffee, *Time Out Los Angeles* editor Kate Wertheimer, who spent two years in NYC before decamping to L.A. six years ago, tells me, "When I first moved here, everyone seemed kind of lazy, and I missed the drive that I'd felt all the time in New York," but she does say that Angelenos seemed to have gained a bit of ambition recently. (Whether that's her imagination or due to the influx of East Coasters is up for debate.) If New York is the city that never sleeps, L.A. is the city that's so enviably well rested, it's annoying.

But it's a fish-out-of-water annoyance I eventually learn to dig and embrace. Over the course of the seven days I'm here, the differences with NYC soften and feel less odd, and I let that chillness seep in. In fact, more than any of the haunts I love (red-light-drenched tiki joint Good Luck Bar, no-frills, worth-the-hour-wait noodle spot Silver Lake Ramen, those trillion taco trucks I visit), it's the feeling I got while running on a footpath in Elysian Park—where your backdrop is a twinkling skyline facing one way, a verdant cluster of hills facing the other—that I know I'll remember and could probably use a bit more of in my life.

On my last day, I awaken in a Zen-like state and look at my phone. It's 8am. My flight leaves in two hours. Fuck me. ■ *Tim Lowery*

PHOTOGRAPH: ROZETTE FARGO; ILLUSTRATION: JOHN DEVOLLE



L.A. → NYC

I ALWAYS THOUGHT I would live in New York. For someone who wanted nothing more than to work in print, it seemed like a natural move after finishing college in Boston. That didn't happen, but to be honest, it's been a while since I've seriously considered moving there. It's not that living in Los Angeles for the past five years has made me soft—I don't fear the cold or have claustrophobia, I just enjoy perfect weather and personal space. Outside my Echo Park apartment, a line of palm trees greets me every morning, a quick walk lands me at the idyllic Echo Park Lake, and avocados on my tacos are a given, not a bonus. But the prospect of living in the city has always been a tempting one, like a tree branch I had chosen not to climb. When Tim and I decided to swap lives, I was curious to see where that branch would take me.

Tim lives at the top of a four-story walk-up in Greenpoint with two roommates. I live in a one-bedroom bungalow by myself. (Yep—in

PHOTOGRAPHS: KYLIE DORRISZ; ILLUSTRATION: JOHN DEVOLLE



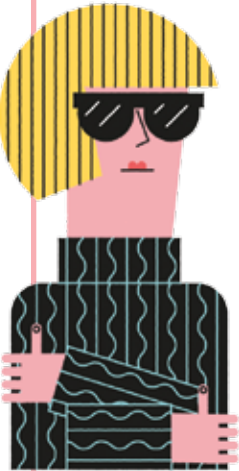
L.A., it's possible to roll solo without depleting your savings.) Still, I was excited about dwelling with roommates for a week to see if I could still coexist with other humans. Walter and his girlfriend, Laurie, are wonderful—kind and friendly, they humor me when I ask if it's possible to walk to the nearby pizzeria Paulie Gee's or if I should take a Lyft. "You can

walk everywhere," says Walter, a bit confused by my question. Touché.

There are challenges that come with having roommates—one night, the two debate the definition of *polenta*, and despite being in the next room, I feel like I'm unwillingly in the middle of their conversation—but sharing a pad isn't as existentially confusing as the New

Where's the beef?

Take a look back at highlights in our long-standing feud with L.A. By *Drew Toal*



1957

The Dodgers' move to Los Angeles—which broke many Brooklyn hearts and destroyed Ebbets Field—is an event some still consider the end of a golden era for baseball.

1965

While the Beach Boys' Brian Wilson is willing to admit the East Coast girls "are hip" in his famed "California Girls," the songwriter insists they should all be Californian. After all, "The West Coast has the sunshine, and the girls all get so tanned."

1976

The now iconic "View of the World from 9th Avenue" graces the cover of *The New Yorker*, showing Gotham as the center of the world—and L.A. as only a footnote. Sorry, not sorry.



1977

Annie Hall arrives, taking down La-La Land with quips that L.A. is clean "because they don't throw their garbage away; they turn it into television shows" and noting that the city's "only cultural advantage is being able to make a right turn on a red light."

1983

Randy Newman releases "I Love L.A.," in which he says he hates New York City because "it's cold and it's damp." But a deeper reading of the lyrics suggests Newman isn't necessarily a huge fan of L.A.'s glitz and economic disparity.

Mid-'90s

Hip-hop was born in New York in the '70s, but by the late '80s, California rappers had taken over. Feuds ensued. The West Coast vs. East Coast rivalry culminates with the shootings that kill Tupac Shakur and, six months later, Biggie Smalls.

2002

On David Cross's Grammy-nominated comedy album *Shut Up, You Fucking Baby!*, the East Village denizen blasts L.A., claiming the "best slash worst slash best again part of Hollywood is the nonstop parade of delusion."

2012

Quintessentially New York show *Saturday Night Live* sends up blond L.A. types' penchant for giving highway directions and the vain love of their own reflections with "The Californians." Because really, what else do Angelenos do but drive?

2014


The Church of Scientology—long equated with the glitz of Hollywood due to its lavish Celebrity Centre—opens a multimillion dollar center in East Harlem, pissing off throngs of skeptics. (Somehow the church's previous two sites escaped New Yorkers' notice.)

2014

For the first time ever, New York overtakes L.A. in the creation of television pilots thanks mainly to friendlier tax breaks, with series like *Broad City*, *The Americans* and *Master of None*. It's only a matter of time before NYC wins the Emmy race, too.



Erin's NYC to-do list



1. Upstream a cab

What kind of asshole does this? When Tim challenges me to be a complete dick to a stranger and steal someone's cab out from under them, I think, Rude. But in the spirit of embracing my temporary New Yorker, I walk out of work one day, pick my target, head upstream and gingerly put out my hand—then promptly speed-walk away. Nope, can't do it!

2. Go on an all-night bender

I call on a group of college friends for this task, and we assemble, like some sort of floundering superhero squad on a boozy mission to see the sunrise. We start at Sláinte and work our way through the East Village, one gin and tonic at a time, but by 3am, I'm ready to face-plant into bed. Also: Is it normal to wait 45 minutes for a subway at this hour?

3. Gorge on late-night food from a bodega

Uh, can we get a God Bless USA Deli in L.A.? I stop at the 24-hour spot after my bender, and it has everything I could possibly want, including a bomb falafel sandwich that I slur my way through ordering. I take it up to Tim's rooftop and, swaying unsteadily, promptly inhale it while ogling the skyline.

York subway system. Tim's apartment is near the Nassau Avenue G-train stop, and each day's like a choose-your-own-adventure catastrophe. One morning, I go uptown instead of downtown, because what the hell does downtown mean when it is, in fact, uptown from you? (Don't laugh.) I seem to exit the Times Square station from a different stairwell each day—once, inexplicably, I get shuffled into an underground tunnel and end up at Grand Central Terminal. Another time I take the F to the G, thinking I'm going to connect at Court Square and instead end up near Prospect Park. Yes, the traffic in L.A. during rush hour can rival the ninth circle of hell, but you are in control of your car, existing in your own quiet world and listening to some of the best radio stations in the country (shout out to 93.5 KDAY) while driving down idyllic palm-tree-riddled streets.

Is this a way of life that just requires getting used to? I meet up with Tim's friend Trixie at Ramona, a sleek cocktail bar where we talk about making the cross-country jump. She moved to NYC from L.A. two years ago to be with her boyfriend. Trixie misses California's laid-back lifestyle, telling me that New Yorkers don't mentally take care of themselves in the way that Angelenos do, but she's also charmed with her life in Brooklyn. "You really just have to sacrifice some things—living in a shoebox, winter, always

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hearing your neighbors—for other things, like great restaurants," she says.

I get that. Throughout the week, I feel like some of the best eateries and drinkeries on the planet are waiting for me to discover them. Los Angeles has an incredible food scene, but it's also a city big on trends and destination dining—more often than not, we'll drive



across town for a raved-about sushi spot rather than wander into an unknown Cuban place around the corner. In NYC, I walk into Dutch Kills to meet friends for a drink one night and walk out having a new favorite bar. I eat phenomenal doughnuts from Peter Pan Donut & Pastry Shop almost every morning and have an unforgettable meal at D.O.C. Wine Bar, a Sardinian restaurant with low ceilings and an old-school vibe that's hard to find in L.A. Going out by yourself—to dinner, to drinks, for a show—also seems to be easier in New York, and when I find myself at



Goldie's for a beer, I end up talking movies and pounding frozen penicillins with some new friends for the rest of the night.

Still, by the end of the week, I'm ready to return to my life of sprawl and warm weather, tacos and hiking. New York is a frenetic playground, and while that's an exciting factor to consider when moving, the city also makes it hard to take a deep breath. "New York City is like boot camp for life," says Trixie. Maybe I'm just more into Pilates. And I'm okay with that. ■ *Erin Kuschner*



PHOTOGRAPH: KYLE DOROSZ; ILLUSTRATION: JOHN DEVOLLE

Den of thieves

You copping our style, bro? Here are just a few NYC institutions that have made their way to L.A. By *Erin Kuschner*

Artist & Fleas

Popping up in both downtown L.A. and Venice twice a month, New York's Artists & Fleas market landed out west in 2014, featuring vendors that appeal to both moonstone-wearing Westsiders and pocket-square-donning Eastsiders. L.A.'s Artists & Fleas outposts are outside year-round, because sunshine. → 740 E 3rd St (artistsandfleas.com) • 1010 Abbot Kinney Blvd

Mast Brothers

Brooklyn chocolatier Mast Brothers made the cross-country leap in May, landing, of course, in an ultrahip warehouse in the Arts District. As a

Shake Shack

If it weren't for L.A.'s undying devotion to In-N-Out Burger, a West Coast branch of Shake Shack probably would have arrived in La-La Land sooner. When it finally opened in West Hollywood last March, the battle between Double-Doubles and Shack Stacks began. There are now three Shake Shack branches in L.A.—and to their credit, none has installed a drive-through yet, keeping the NYC vibe. → 8520 Santa Monica Blvd, West Hollywood

Smorgasburg

This could very well be L.A.'s greatest heist from the East Coast. The Brooklyn market landed in L.A.'s Arts District over the summer, and it immediately drew in an exciting roster of food, drink and clothing vendors looking to test out their concepts

Upright Citizens Brigade Theatre

Amy Poehler & Co.'s Chicago troupe was so successful when it made the leap to NYC in 1996, it was able to open its own theater just three years later, subsequently introducing Ed Helms, Rob Riggle, Kate McKinnon and too many other stars to count. The UCB didn't make the jump to the Left Coast until 2005, opening not one but two branches: First its space on Franklin Avenue, and then Sunset Boulevard's newer, more gussied-up location. The Franklin Avenue location has produced some quality alums, like Scott Aukerman, who took his live *Comedy Bang! Bang!* show all the way to the airwaves. → 5919 Franklin Ave (323-908-8702, losangeles.uctheatre.com) • 5419 W Sunset Blvd

Smorgasburg

(323-488-3010) • 6201 Hollywood Blvd (323-593-7763) • 252 S Brand Blvd, Glendale (818-858-1612) • shakeshack.com

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