

TRAVEL

Hook up with a good time in Pasadena

By Helen Anders
AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF
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It's official: the Longhorns are headed for the Bowl Championship Series' title game on Jan. 7. If you're among the herd headed for Pasadena, Calif., you'll want to get your plans nailed down.

Flights are getting scarcer, though at press time there still seemed to be decent fares to Los Angeles for those willing to be creative. For example, fly into Los Angeles International Airport on Alaska Airline on Jan. 6 and back on US Airways on Jan. 9 for \$365 round trip on Orbitz.com. But tickets were going fast. Southwest and JetBlue each added a flight to Los Angeles airports, but those airlines are the most expensive way to get out there. JetBlue's Long Beach round trip Jan. 6-9 is \$869. Southwest's for the same dates is \$774 into Burbank and nearly sold out. (All of Southwest's flights into Los Angeles International on Jan. 6 and 7 are full.)

If you don't already have a hotel booked in Pasadena, your choices near the game site are slim and expensive. At press time, you could book (and pre-pay, nonrefundable) \$1,190 for a three-night stay starting Jan. 6 at the Holiday Inn Express. The same stay at the Super 8 Pasadena is \$1,047. Most hotels near the Rose Bowl are booked solid. The good news is that the Los Angeles area is so full of hotels that you're certain to find a place to lay your head.

Planning to eat in Pasadena? Local favorites include Green Street Tavern (69 W. Green St., great wine bar), Gale's (452 S. Fair Oaks Ave., Italian), Derek's Bistro (183 E. Glenarm St., upscale Cali), Caf? Santorini (70 W. Union St., Mediterranean with great ambience), Sushi Roku (33 Miller Alley), Elements Kitchen (107 S. Fair Oaks Ave.; it's small, but the comfort food's awesome), Stoney Point (1460 W Colorado Blvd., romantic spot on the old Colorado Street bridge), Russell's (30 N. Fair Oaks Ave., old-fashioned diner) and La Grande Orange (260 S. Raymond Ave., a little bit of everything in an old train depot).

For breakfast, everybody goes to Marston's, 151 E. Walnut St. And because everybody does, you need to get there early. Order the corn flake-coated French toast. An alternative for Sunday jazz brunch: Redwhite+bluezz, 70 S. Raymond Ave.

Best burger: Jakes Caf? & Billiards, 38 W. Colorado Blvd. Best beer: Lucky Baldwin's Pub, 17 S. Raymond Ave. in Old Town. By the way, the first 90 minutes of parking are free in Old Town garages. Pretty cool.

Need help getting to the stadium? For information on how to get to the Rose Bowl by light rail or shuttle, go to www.tournamentofroses.com/rosebowlgame/gametransportation.asp. If you're taking a taxi, have it drop you on Holly Street between Fair Oaks Avenue and Arroyo Parkway. If the taxi enters Rose Bowl property, you're out \$40 for parking.

If you're still around Pasadena on Sunday, there'll be a flea market on the Rose Bowl grounds. It's there every second Sunday of the month. More information: www.rgcsHOWS.com.

If you have time to tool around, this city has great architecture to gawk at, from Old Pasadena's Moorish Colonial Castle Green to craftsman homes. Bungalow Heaven is a huge collection of homes built from 1900 to the 1930s roughly bounded by Washington and Orange Grove boulevards and Holiston and North Lake avenues. And don't fail to drive by City Hall (100 N. Garfield) at night, when it's beautifully lighted.

I know you aren't going to Pasadena for museums, but if you have the spare time, you will love the Norton Simon Museum (411 W. Colorado Blvd. 626-449-6840, www.nortonsimon.org). The pastoral sculpture garden alone is worth a visit. The museum's emphasis is 14th through 19th centuries, but it has a little of everything. Admission: adults \$8, 62 and older \$4; 17 and younger, free.

Finally, if you're a Gene Autry fan, drive about 10 miles west to Glendale and check out the Autry Museum of the American West (4700 Western Heritage Way. 323-667-2000, www.autrynationalcenter.org . It's all things Western: movies, sculptures, memorabilia, cultural history. Roy Rogers' bed spread lives there. Admission: adults \$7.50; 60 and older and students, \$5; ages 2-12, \$3.

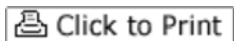
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