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ON THE WEB

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JOURNEYS; 36 Hours | Long Beach, Calif.

By NICK MADIGAN

ANYONE not paying attention might reasonably imagine Long Beach to be a mere outpost of Los Angeles, a place of cranes, container ships and tooting tugboats. But quite apart from the bustling industrial harbor, one of the nation's largest, and its dockside attraction, the Queen Mary, above, Long Beach is cultivating a reputation as an appealing, modern city, with an impeccably clean downtown, cafes, restaurants and a growing arts district. It's also promoting its history, which includes the opening in 1913 of one of the first movie studios in California, a transformative earthquake in 1933 and the only flight -- for a few hundred yards, skimming the surface of the bay -- of the largest seaplane ever built, Howard Hughes's Spruce Goose, in 1947. NICK MADIGAN

Friday

6:30 p.m.

1. Ireland West

Start a busy weekend slowly by admiring the serenity of a perfectly poured pint of Guinness at the Auld Dubliner Irish Pub and Restaurant (71 South Pine Avenue, 562-437-8300), a replica of a rural cottage pub. David Copley, the publican, will talk you into trying a salmon boxty, a traditional potato pancake with salmon (\$13.95), or the beef stew (\$11.95), whose recipe Mr. Copley says he stole from his mother back in Limerick.

8 p.m.

2. Pouring Music

Walk up the hill toward the noise. On most nights, a four-block stretch of Pine Avenue downtown becomes something of a moveable feast, with a variety of live music -- Cuban, jazz, blues, flamenco -- from places like the Madison (102 Pine Avenue, 562-628-8866), Smooth's Sports Grille (144 Pine Avenue, 562-437-7700), New York Bryan's (213 Pine Avenue, 562-437-1234) and Alegria Cocina Latina, above, (115 Pine Avenue, 562-436-3388). Most places have no cover charge. For a nightcap, head to the Sky Room, atop what used to be the Breakers Hotel and is now a retirement community (40 South Locust Avenue, 562-983-2703). You'll catch a 360-degree view of the city, accompanied by jazz or salsa. In the Sky Room's chic early days in the 1930's and 40's, Cary Grant, Merle Oberon and other stars took to the floor. Care for a dance?

Saturday

9 a.m.

3. An Indoor Ocean