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12 Unexpected History Trips

From retro Palm Springs to Newport mansions, history is everywhere you look. Below are 12 ways to experience our geeky, gaudy, mystical, majestic, tough and tragic roots.

Palm Springs, Calif.

Live Like Frank



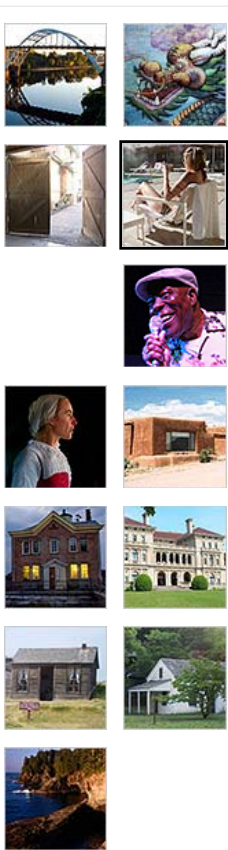
Stephanie Diani for The New York Times

At the Orbit In pool.

If the mere mention of Frank, Sammy and Dean still sends your nostalgic heart aflutter, set your sights on [Palm Springs](#), where the head Rat Packer, Sinatra, held court for much of his life. Sinatra moved here in the 1940s, along with other celebrities seeking a convenient, fun-in-the-sun retreat from Hollywood. Originally founded by Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall, the Rat Pack eventually became synonymous with Sinatra and his cronies, who reveled at places like Melvyn's — an old-school restaurant and lounge at the **Ingleside Inn**, where there's still music and dancing at the piano bar every night (200 West Ramon Road; 760-325-2323) — and cavorted by the pool at the glamorous **Riviera Resort and Spa**, where some original rooms have marble-clad bathrooms and funky zebra-wood accents (1600 North Indian Canyon Drive; 760-327-8311; [psriviera.com](#); king rooms from \$83).

Pick up a map of celebrity homes at the **Palm Springs Visitors Center** (2901 North Palm Canyon Drive; 760-778-8418), housed in the former Tramway "flying wedge" gas station designed by the architect Albert Frey, and track down Sinatra's desert estate, **Twin Palms** ([sinatrahouse.com](#)). The four-bedroom, seven-bathroom home features a piano-shaped pool, a pool house and cabanas. It's available for \$2,600 a night with a three-night minimum (butler and concierge service included); short-term stays can be booked through Beau Monde Villas (877-318-2090).

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For the rest of us mere mortals, the Modernist-themed **Orbit In** (562 West Arenas Road; 760-323-3585; orbitin.com; doubles from \$119) does a fine job conjuring up a little midcentury magic with poolside Orbitinis and furnishings by masters like Eames and Noguchi. And on your way out of Palm Springs, stop in the city of Palm Desert and take a stroll along El Paseo, known as “the Rodeo Drive of Palm Springs,” where stars like Ginger Rogers and Elizabeth Taylor did their shopping.

— BONNIE TSUI

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