

MetroLinkTrip

In early 2023, after 40 days and 40 nights of rain in Los Angeles, I decided to get out and see the environment. After all, there was SNOW on the mountains, GREEN vegetation everywhere, and WATER flowing in the rivers, storm drains, and puddles.

I did not want to drive around due to the wet conditions and mud left behind, so I decided to take that train trip around the local area that I have always wanted to do. Because the trains only operate with good frequency on Mondays through Fridays, we selected the off-Friday of March 31, 2023 for the trip.

Schedule: I got the All Lines Timetable and decided on the following carefully planned trip.

1. Leave home in Calabasas and get to Chatsworth to catch the Ventura County Line (yellow) at 8:22 AM. We actually got there and parked just in time to see the previous train head out at 7:59 AM. That was slightly shocking. There are two parking lots and the North Parking lot is the better choice for MetroLink service.
2. The train trip went to Los Angeles Union Station and arrived at 9:07 AM. MetroLink trains all have a bathroom on the first floor, but there are no bathrooms available at any station that we saw. There are three levels, the bottom, the middle on the sides, and the top. Seats are in pairs and some pairs have a table in front of them.
3. The big mystery was when we arrived at Union Station on Track 4 and could not find which track had the 9:38 AM train to San Bernardino Line (red). We went down to the tunnel connecting the tracks to the walkway to find that we needed to board on Track 6 that day.
4. The trip to San Bernardino was the most scenic ride of the day and is also the most frequently served MetroLink line. The train went east in the middle of the Interstate 10 freeway and then along the San Gabriel mountains, with a view of Mt. Wilson (TV towers), then Mt. Baldy (San Antonio), and finally wound up in San Bernardino with a view of Mt. San Geronimo. All were covered in snow above the 5000 foot (1524 meter) level. We got to Track 4 at 11:21 AM.
5. Although the train station was advertised as San Bernardino – Downtown, it appeared to be in the middle of nowhere. I did not see any building that looked like a station, nor anything that looked like a business of any kind. On the far to the east side of the rail yard, there was a small blue sign that said Arrow service. The little blue train with three articulated segments left at 11:31 AM from Track 2A, and it is about 250 meters further than where the MetroLink train stops, and at the front end of the track (where it stops), there is a crossover to Track 2. There is not much time to make that 10-minute connection to the Arrow service
6. That train goes to Redlands University and arrives at 11:53 AM. The first train that goes back to the San Bernardino – Downtown station leaves Redlands University at 12:26 PM and gets back at 12:49 PM. BEWARE: The train leaves University at 11:55 AM, goes to ESRI station, turns around and goes back to the University at 12:18 PM. BEWARE Number 2: In San Bernardino upon arriving back at 12:49, this is another 10-minute connection to the next train....
7. So now the question becomes where is that train that goes to Riverside at 12:59 PM? That is the MUST connection of the day. There are NO reasonable alternatives. That MetroLink train is on the Inland Empire to Orange County Line (pink) and it is leaving from Track 3 directly in front of the Arrow stop on Track 2A. The schedule says it takes 20 minutes to get to Riverside-Downtown at 1:19 PM. That train continues onward to Laguna Niguel at 2:39 PM. Depending

on landslides, it may go further, but the MetroLink Orange County Line (orange) service can get back to Union Station in Los Angeles from there at 4:06 PM if needed.

8. This schedule has about a two hour stop in Riverside, to even get to the parking lot is up an elevator, across a walkway over six tracks, and down the elevator to the parking lot. There are only three food machines there; where is the gourmet food truck when you need it? It is a very long way to any civilization from there, and the definition of civilization here is Subway or Jack in the Box (both about a quarter-mile or 400 meters away across a freeway to the west). Want something good to eat? Call for an Uber/Lyft/Taxi and use the Internet to find something. After all, this stop is a two hour wait; I had dreams of going to the Mission Inn, only 1100 meters away.
9. At least the next train on this plan leaves from directly in front of the parking lot on Track 1. That is the Riverside Line (purple). The only scheduled departure on this line in the afternoon/evening is at 3:10 PM. That train is scheduled to arrive at Union Station at 4:38 PM (maybe on Track 8). My guess is that this one will be early. The route goes through some very old, very dilapidated areas of town, but there some interesting stations and waiting areas.
10. By now, you should be used to the non-sensical plan for changing trains at Union Station. The usual program is for Antelope Valley (green) trains to leave from Track 3, and Ventura County (yellow) trains to leave from Track 4. The colors have no influence on reality. All MetroLink trains (except for the Arrow) look alike to my limited viewpoint. The first train back to Chatsworth leaves from Union on Track 4 at 4:29 PM. Yes, you read that right, minus 9 minutes to get to the next train. We failed. The one after that is at 5:10 PM. I tried to be cute about it and took the Antelope Valley train at 4:39 PM (we made the one-minute connection) and waited for the Ventura County train at Burbank-Downtown. Bad Idea, that station in Burbank is again isolated and windy. Although the Burbank Airport has a station on each of those lines, neither of those two stations are really close to the airport terminal or even each other. The one on the Ventura County line is better than the other one.
11. **The Link US project proposes the integration of new run-through tracks on an elevated rail yard to improve operational flexibility and expand capacity at Los Angeles Union Station (LAUS).** The Link US Project also envisions a new concourse for shorter wait times and a better transfer experience. May 24, 2022 — The Metro board approved \$13.8M to continue to design and engineer the planned \$2.75B Union Station run-through-tracks project. My comment: “Of course, there are the usual questions of schedule and cost.” In 1939, Union Station was built as a terminus for cross-country rail travel. It was not intended to be an exchange point for local rapid transit and commuter rail systems.
12. So, as of March 2023 I have been on every MetroLink line except the Perris Valley Line (blue). I have been on the tracks used by the Orange County (orange) line many times on Amtrak trips to San Diego. The plan is to take the Perris line to the end, go off to visit the Orange Empire Trolley Museum for the day, and then return.

<https://metrolinktrains.com/rider-info/general-info/maps/>