



San Diego Area

There's a certain arrogance that comes with living on the SoCal coast, a breezy confidence that springs from the assumption that your life is just, well, *better* than everyone else's. No offense, bro. It just is. But as far as coastal snobs go, San Diegans are the ones we like the most. Whether it's a battle-tested docent sharing stories on the USS *Midway*, a La Jolla mom spilling secrets about kid-friendly beach spots, or a no-worries surf diva helping you catch a wave, folks here are a little more willing to share the good life than in counties further north. Heck, even the bouncers at the Gaslamp Quarter's 'velvet rope' clubs will give you the time of day – even if they won't let you in.

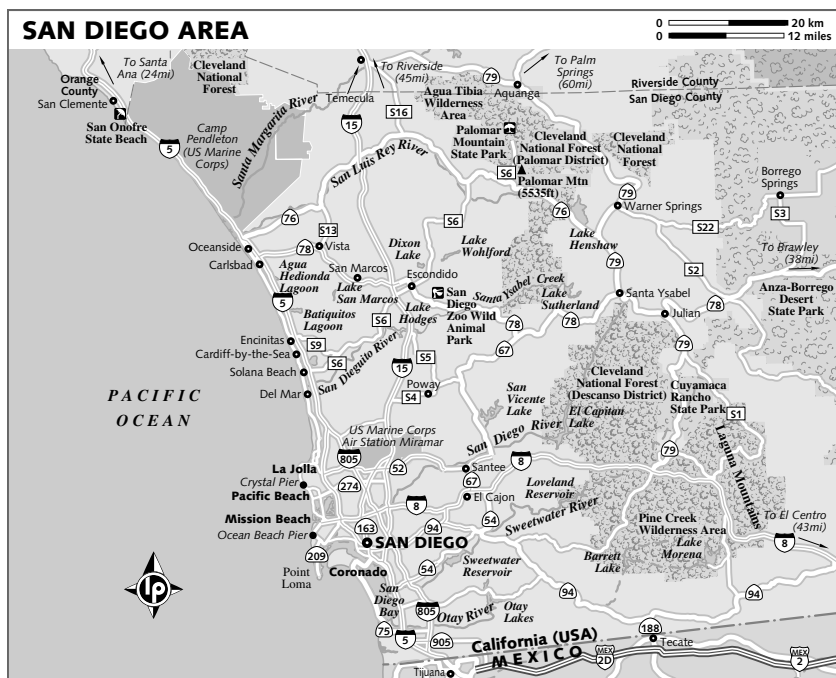
Stick around a day or two, and you'll feel a spring in your step, too. The only problem? With 70 miles of coastline, a near-perfect climate and loads of outdoor distractions, it's tough to decide where to start. Maritime history buffs can stroll the tall ships docked on the Embarcadero. Bikers and bladers can cop a suntan while gliding down Ocean Front Walk. Kayakers, scuba divers and tide-poolers can get their kicks in the coves and caves of La Jolla. And that's without mentioning the surf spots – from newbie-friendly shores to pro-only breaks stretching from Oceanside south to Imperial Beach.

Away from the surf, a re-energized Gaslamp Quarter is drawing stylish crowds with rooftop bars, hipster hotels, and baseball games with the Padres. Pandas, lions and killer whales wile away the day at world-famous zoos and marine habitats, while museums and gardens await exploration at the world's largest urban park. Horse races, New Age retreats and a theme park constructed from joinable blocks are only a short train ride north.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Soothing Stroll** Wandering the museums and gardens at Balboa Park (p607).
- **Roof with a View** Sipping a martini on a rooftop bar in the Gaslamp Quarter (p603).
- **History Time** Wandering the 4-acre flight deck on the USS *Midway* at the Embarcadero (p607).
- **Animal Instincts** Coming face-to-face with the King of the Jungle at the San Diego's Zoo Wild Animal Park (p613) .
- **Water Sports** Kayaking to sea caves along the coast of La Jolla Cove (p626 and learning to surf off La Jolla shores (p625).
- **Serenity Now** Soaking up rays and ocean views from the Babcock & Story patio at the Hotel del Coronado (p616).
- **Chow's Up** Chowing down on fish tacos and juicy burgers in Ocean Beach (p633).





SAN DIEGO

pop 1.26 million

Most Americans work all year for a two-week vacation. San Diegans will tell you they work all week for a two-day vacation. And it's easy to see why. With a world-renowned zoo, eye-catching architecture, diverse museums, breezy rooftop lounges, and gorgeous beaches all within city limits (and a 15-mile drive) packing a holiday into 48 hours is a breeze.

FAST FACTS

Population 1.26 million

Average temp low/high Jan 48/65°F, Jul 65/76°F

Downtown San Diego to La Jolla 13 miles, 15 to 30 minutes

San Diego to Tijuana 18 miles, 30 minutes

San Diego to Julian 62 miles, 1½ hours

San Diego to Disneyland 94 miles, 1½ to two hours

San Diego to Los Angeles 120 miles, two to three hours

HISTORY

Evidence of human habitation in the region dates back to 18,000 BC. By the time the Spanish explorer Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo sailed into San Diego Bay in 1542 – the first European to do so – the region was divided peaceably between the Kumeyaay and Luisenō/Juanenō peoples. Their way of life continued undisturbed until Junipero Serra and Gaspar de Portolá arrived in 1769. They founded a mission and a military fort on the hill now known as the Presidio, making it the first permanent European settlement in California.

When the United States took California from Mexico in the 1840s, San Diego remained little more than a ramshackle village. But William Heath Davis, a San Francisco property speculator, knew there was a fortune to be made. In the 1850s, he bought 160 acres of bayfront property and erected prefabricated houses, a wharf and warehouses. 'Davis' Folly' eventually went bust, but only because he was ahead of his time. A decade later, another San Francisco speculator, Alonzo E Horton, snapped up almost 1000 waterfront acres and