

# San Diego

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## **Best Places to Eat**

- Cucina Urbana (p304)
- → Puesto at the Headquarters (p306)
- Urban Solace (p304)
- Fish 101 (p329)
- → Las Olas (p327)

## **Best Places to Stay**

- Hotel del Coronado (p300)
- US Grant Hotel (p299)
- Hotel Solamar (p297)
- Legoland Hotel (p331)
- Lodge at Torrey Pines (p321)

## Why Go?

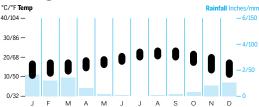
New York has its cabbie, Chicago its bluesman and Seattle its coffee-drinking boho. San Diego, meanwhile, has the valet guy in a polo shirt, khaki shorts and crisp new sneakers. With his perfectly tousled hair, great tan and gentle enthusiasm, he looks like he's on a perennial spring break, and when he wishes you welcome, he really means it.

This may sound pejorative, but our intention is the opposite. San Diego calls itself 'America's Finest City' and its breezy confidence and sunny countenance filter down even to folks you encounter every day on the street. It's the nation's eighth-largest city, yet we're hard-pressed to think of a place of any size that's more laid-back.

What's not to love? San Diego bursts with world-famous attractions for the entire family, including the zoo, Legoland, the museums of Balboa Park and SeaWorld, plus a bubbling downtown and beaches ranging from ritzy to raucous – and America's most perfect weather.

## When to Go

### San Diego



Jun-Aug High season; temperatures and hotel rates are highest Sep-Oct, Mar-May Shoulder seasons; moderate rates.

Nov-Feb Low season while most of America escapes the cold.

#### History

Evidence of human habitation in the region goes back to at least 18,000 BC, in the form of middens (ancient refuse heaps). When Spanish explorer Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo became the first European to sail into San Diego Bay in 1542, the region was divided peaceably between the native Kumeyaay and Luiseño/Juaneño peoples. Their way of life

continued undisturbed until Catholic missionary Father Junípero Serra and Gaspar de Portolá arrived in 1769. These newcomers founded the first permanent European settlement in California – a mission and fort on the hill now known as the Presidio.

When the United States took California from Mexico after the Mexican-American War of the 1840s, San Diego was little more



## San Diego Highlights

- Ocoing at koalas and pandering to pandas at the San Diego Zoo (p276)
- 2 Museum-hopping in Balboa Park (p281), then sampling fish tacos or the next great taste in Hillcrest and North Park (p285)
- 3 Sunning and skating

- seaside in **Pacific Beach** (p294)
- 4 Swilling margaritas in **Old Town** (p310)
- 5 Pub-crawling Downtown's **Gaslamp Quarter** (p308)
- 6 Cheering for Shamu at **SeaWorld** (p291)
- 7 Marveling at the history and architecture of the **Hotel del Coronado** (p289)
- 6 Hang gliding, kayaking or giving your credit card a workout in La Jolla (p317)
- Mingling with the hoi polloi at **Del Mar Racetrack** (p323)