



Los Angeles, San Diego & Southern California



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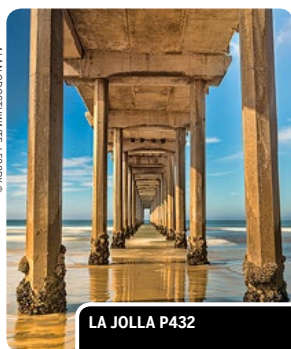
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Itineraries



2 WEEKS SoCal Classics

From the high-gloss drawcards of LA to SoCal's answer to the Galapagos Islands, this two-week jaunt offers a satisfying mix of big-hitters and lesser-known treasures.

Kick things off in **Los Angeles**, an extraordinary force of world-class art, architecture, food and nature. Next, hang with Mickey at Disneyland or allow a day of sybaritic downtime in **Laguna Beach** before hitting **San Diego** for fish tacos, surf and the cultural draws of Balboa Park. Leaving civilization behind, shoot northeast to starkly beautiful **Anza-Borrego Desert State Park**. Cruise around eerie **Salton Sea** and into **Joshua Tree National Park**, beckoning with its 'Wonderland of Rocks.' Squeeze in a day of poolside margaritas in mid-century-mecca **Palm Springs** before escaping to **Big Bear Lake** for hiking, biking, fishing and skiing. Wind west via the Rim of the World Scenic Byway to **Ventura** for a boat trip to the unique flora and fauna of the **Channel Islands National Park**, then head inland to arty **Ojai** to catch a 'pink moment' at sunset. Take a breather in seaside **Santa Barbara**, with its gorgeous Spanish-Mediterranean downtown, then stock up on Pinot Noir in **Santa Barbara Wine Country** before heading back to LA via star-studded **Malibu**.



Santa Barbara & Wine Country

Leave behind frantic LA for the pacific charms of Santa Barbara and its thirst-quenching vineyards. A sun-kissed Mediterranean climate earns this stretch of SoCal coast the nickname of ‘American Riviera,’ a title that’s honestly not too far off the mark.

If you’re craving a little solitude first, catch a ferry from Ventura to **Channel Islands National Park** and spend a day or two exploring ‘California’s Galapagos.’ Back on dry land, oceanfront **Ventura** has a walkable downtown, plum full of vintage shops, bars and cafes. Mountainous **Ojai** is an inland Shangri-la with stunning scenery, unbeatable spa experiences and vibes both spiritual and artistic.

It’s less than an hour’s drive from Ojai to Santa Barbara, but why rush? Once you hit the coast, drop by **Carpinteria** for a lazy afternoon chilling on the beach, browsing surf shacks and shops on its vintage main street, and chowing down tacos or a darn good burger paired with fries and a hand-mixed milkshake. Just up Hwy 101 lie **Summerland** and **Montecito**, more affluent Santa Barbara suburbs for antiques and boutique shoppers.

Ah, **Santa Barbara**. Strut down State St, with its sea of red-tile roofs, then climb to the top of the courthouse for bird’s-eye vistas. Down at Stearns Wharf, dig into a bowl of chowder on the pier. Refueled, join a pickup game of volleyball on East Beach or take your sweetheart to shamelessly romantic Butterfly Beach. Awaiting inland is Santa Barbara’s ‘Queen of the Missions,’ as are several petite museums, exploring everything from art to maritime and Spanish Colonial history. After dark, hit the buzzing restaurants, bars and wine-tasting rooms of Santa Barbara’s Funk Zone, down by the railroad tracks.

Take a scenic drive on San Marcos Pass Rd (Hwy 154) past **Los Padres National Forest** and **Cachuma Lake Recreation Area** up to Santa Barbara’s friendly, rolling wine country. Drive west to kitschy Danish **Solvang**, with its faux windmills and historical mission, then north to chichi **Los Olivos**, a Napa-style town punctuated with bistros, boutiques and wine-tasting rooms. Just out of town is the beginning of the gorgeous **Foxen Canyon Wine Trail**, which lazily winds along rural roads past wineries where you can swill and savor the region’s celebrated Pinot Noir, Syrah, Chardonnay and more.



Disneyland & Orange County

It's no secret: many of SoCal's most popular attractions are in Orange County, famed for its prime-time beaches, sunny skies and theme parks. But there's more to discover here, too, from high-tech museums to historic Spanish missions.

It will leave the kids thrilled and you exhausted, but there's no question that a trip to Disneyland is a quintessential SoCal experience. Skip down Main Street, USA or dive into **Disney California Adventure Park** next door. Then head to nearby **Knott's Berry Farm**, America's oldest theme park, which pairs Old Western cowboy themes with futuristic roller-coasters. If it's too darn hot, slip into your swimsuit and cool off at **Knott's Soak City Orange County** water park.

Just so you don't think SoCal is all about theme-park thrills, drop by the interactive **Discovery Cube** in Santa Ana, where the whole family can virtually experience the shake, rattle 'n' roll of a 6.4-magnitude earthquake. Also near Anaheim, **Old Towne Orange** offers another break from Disney jingles, with its antique and vintage shops and eclectic restaurants. A little further southwest in Westminster, **Little Saigon** trades theme-park hot dogs for fragrant bowls of authentic *pho* (noodle soup).

Continue south toward the OC's unbeatable beaches, the perfect place to chill, dude. Take a day off in **Huntington Beach**, aka 'Surf City USA'. Rent a board, slam a volleyball on the sand, then build a bonfire around sunset. When the sun rises, roll south to **Newport Beach** and people-watch by the piers. Make a quick stop for power shopping or eclectic eats in **Costa Mesa**, then continue south to soulful **Laguna Beach**, a former artists' colony with more than two dozen public beaches, a worthy art museum and chic downtown shopping and dining scenes.

From **Dana Point** you could catch a ferry to Med-style **Catalina Island**. Otherwise slingshot back toward the I-5, stopping off at **Mission San Juan Capistrano** for a sun-baked sampling of Spanish Colonial and Mexican rancho heritage. Alternatively, continue with the beach-bum attitude by slacking south to nostalgic surf enclave **San Clemente**, near Trestles, a year-round surf break. Just prepare to never want to leave.



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KIRK WESTER / SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Top: Avalon Harbor,
Catalina Island (p228)
Bottom: Huntington
Botanical Gardens
(p211)



Pacific Coast Highway

Drop the convertible top, cue up ‘California Girls’ and step on it. This famous route starts in San Diego and hugs the Pacific throughout most of SoCal.

Before heading north soak up 360-degree views from **Point Loma**, buff surfers in **Mission Beach** and the underwater treasures of **La Jolla**. Our vote for prettiest Orange County town is cultured **Laguna Beach**, whose secluded coves and cliffs enchant. For yachts and glitz, plow on to **Newport Beach**. Just up the road is **Huntington Beach**, ‘Surf City USA’.

Across the LA County line is **Long Beach**, home to an impressive aquarium and museum of Latin American art. Continue around beautiful **Palos Verdes Peninsula** before plunging into LA’s **South Bay** beach towns. North of boho-chic **Venice**, **Santa Monica** beckons with its carnival pier, shopping and vibrant street life.

The busy coast highway has more surprises in store further north, with surreal ocean vistas en route to celebrity hideaway **Malibu**. Wrap up your trip in **Santa Barbara**, a seductive mélange of red-tile roofs, lauded wineries and soul-lifting beaches.



Desert Escapes

SoCal’s desertescapes range from the poetically beautiful to the downright surreal. This route takes you through striking arid corners, with a splash of urban glitz thrown in for refreshment.

Start your trip in surfside **San Diego** and head northeast for **Julian**, an Old West mining town where you can pan for gold and gorge on apple pie. Drop into **Anza-Borrego Desert State Park**, where dirt roads and trails lead to hidden canyon oases, Native American petroglyphs and 19th-century stagecoach stops.

Watch for endangered bird species at the strange and salty **Salton Sea** before heading north to retro-chic **Palm Springs**, the once-again hip resort hangout of Elvis and the Rat Pack. Refreshed, continue to mystical **Joshua Tree National Park**, whose namesake trees have inspired artists and poets.

Next stop: **Las Vegas**, where you can climb the Eiffel Tower, make out in a gondola and catch an exploding volcano, all in the same day. Partied out, drive back west into California to **Death Valley National Park**, a mesmerizing jigsaw puzzle of sand dunes, sun-baked salt flats, volcanic cinder cones and ghost towns.

Map Legend

Sights

- Beach
- Bird Sanctuary
- Buddhist
- Castle/Palace
- Christian
- Confucian
- Hindu
- Islamic
- Jain
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery/Historic Building
- Ruin
- Shinto
- Sikh
- Taoist
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo/Wildlife Sanctuary
- Other Sight

Activities, Courses & Tours

- Bodysurfing
- Diving
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Course/Tour
- Sento Hot Baths/Onsen
- Skiing
- Snorkeling
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity

Sleeping

- Sleeping
- Camping
- Hut/Shelter

Eating

- Eating

Drinking & Nightlife

- Drinking & Nightlife
- Cafe

Entertainment

- Entertainment

Shopping

- Shopping

Information

- Bank
- Embassy/Consulate
- Hospital/Medical
- Internet
- Police
- Post Office
- Telephone
- Toilet
- Tourist Information
- Other Information

Geographic

- Beach
- Gate
- Hut/Shelter
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- Mountain/Volcano
- Oasis
- Park
- Pass
- Picnic Area
- Waterfall

Population

- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

Transport

- Airport
- BART station
- Border crossing
- Boston T station
- Bus
- Cable car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro/Muni station
- Monorail
- Parking
- Petrol station
- Subway/SkyTrain station
- Taxi
- Train station/Railway
- Tram
- Underground station
- Other Transport

Routes

- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed road
- Road under construction
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour detour
- Path/Walking Trail

Boundaries

- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

Hydrography

- River, Creek
- Intermittent River
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Reef

Areas

- Airport/Runway
- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Glacier
- Mudflat
- Park/Forest
- Sight (Building)
- Sportsground
- Swamp/Mangrove

Note: Not all symbols displayed above appear on the maps in this book



OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Dublin, Beijing and Delhi, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

OUR WRITERS



Andrea Schulte-Peevers

Curator: Palm Springs & The Deserts Born and raised in Germany and educated in London and at UCLA, Andrea has earned her living as a professional travel writer for over two decades and authored or contributed to nearly 100 Lonely Planet titles, as well as to newspapers, magazines and websites around the world. She also works as a travel consultant, translator and editor.



Andrew Bender

Los Angeles; Disneyland & Orange County An award-winning travel and food writer, Andrew Bender has written three dozen Lonely Planet guidebooks, plus numerous articles for lonelyplanet.com. Outside of Lonely Planet, he writes the Seat 1A travel site for Forbes.com and is a frequent contributor to the *Los Angeles Times*, in-flight magazines and more.



Cristian Bonetto

Los Angeles Cristian has contributed to over 30 Lonely Planet guides to date, covering New York City, Italy, Venice & the Veneto, Naples & the Amalfi Coast, Denmark, Copenhagen, Sweden and Singapore. His writing has appeared in numerous publications around the world, including the *Telegraph* (UK) and *Corriere del Mezzogiorno* (Italy). He lives in Melbourne, Australia.



Jade Bremner

San Diego Jade has been a journalist for more than a decade. Wherever she goes she finds action sports to try – the weirder the better – and it's no coincidence many of her favorite places have some of the best waves in the world. Jade has edited travel magazines and sections for *Time Out* and *Radio Times* and has been a correspondent for the *Times*, CNN and the *Independent*.



Benedict Walker

Palm Springs & The Deserts Berlin-based Ben grew up in the 'burbs of Australia, spending weekends and long summers by the beach, and while he's still magnetically drawn to big mountains, beach life is in his blood. Ben thinks that the best thing about travel isn't as much about where you go as who you meet: living vicariously through the stories of strangers really adds to one's own experience.



Clifton Wilkinson

Santa Barbara County Christmases spent near Sacramento, bike rides across the Golden Gate Bridge and hiking in Yosemite National Park have all reinforced Clifton's opinion that the Golden State is the best state in the whole US, and Santa Barbara is one of its most beautiful corners. Having worked for Lonely Planet for more than 11 years, he's now based in the London office.

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