

It's an Orange Adventure

Santa Ana, Orange County, Huntington Beach, Newport Beach, Dana Point, 3 Days

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Guide Description



AUTHOR NOTE: Orange County is a beautiful nestled in the bustling Southern California. It is definitely not to be overlooked for it boasts a multitude of great activities. It is centrally located with great access to both the majestic Pacific Ocean as well as the harsh deserts of California. There are many state parks and preserves in this area as well, such as Laguna Niguel Regional Park, or the Corona del Mar State Beach. The Ocean Institute is another great stop to make. Along the way your taste buds will have a trip of their own visiting the likes of Flamingo's Mexican Grill and Bar, Cowboy Seafood, and Brio Tuscany Grille, just to name a few. After this trip you will be sure to be saying "orange you glad we came".

Day 1 - Orange County, Santa Ana, Dana Point

DAY NOTE: Begin your trip by waking up on the beach at the Capri Laguna Inn on the Beach, once your have wrestled yourself from the comfort of their beds, head to The Cottage for some great breakfast and some history as well. The building is original from 1917, and feels just like a cottage, be it one that serves amazing breakfast favorites. When you have had your fill head over to the Aliso & Wood Canyons Park. This 3,789 acre site has something for everyone, cycling horse back riding or just plain old walking. Walking may be the best way to go because of all the remnants left by the native peoples. Its great exercise, and just generally a really cool place. Just a short distance away is the Laguna Niguel Regional Park, it is a very different place from the Wood Canyons Park for this 236 acre park surrounds a beautiful lake full of fun activities for all ages. From land to lake, to lunch and boy is Flamingo's Mexican Grill and Bar the place to recharge. You must experience some of the Mexican flare when visiting Southern California and this is the place. Enjoy the great chips and salsa before diving into your authentic burrito or tacos. They offer a wide selection of beer and wine as well. Now that you are full, lets head to yet another of the natural marvels of Orange County, the majestic Pacific Ocean. 1,000 steps beach lives up to its reputation for beauty but not 1,000 steps. It is only around 225 so that is good, but it is definitely worth the walk. After enjoying the beach head home and get ready for a fun and exciting dinner at Brio Tuscany Grille, a place in which you will be surprised with the fusion of a steakhouse with and Italian twist. Before or after dinner you will surely be drawn to dance this is the place for it. Dance the night away and have fun at the bar.



Aliso & Wood Canyons Park

Beautiful views for hikers, bikers and horse-riders



Laguna Niguel Regional Park

236 acres of fresh air



Flamingo's Mexican Grill & Bar

Local favorite serving good quality mexican cuisine



Brio Tuscany Grille

Jazz and steak

Day 2 - Dana Point, Newport Beach

DAY NOTE: After you full day yesterday and possibly into the night enjoy the Capri's beds, and when hunger finally finds you

take advantage of their complementary breakfast. Once you are ready to begin your day it is off the the Ocean Institute one of the man notable attractions of Orange County. This institute is a pinnacle of academic instruction, thousands of people flock here to learn a little about the Pacific Ocean. If after visiting the Ocean Institute you are hungry head to the Harbor House Cafe to enjoy either breakfast again of their assortment of burgers and fries or many other options. Your next stop is a very special one, the Upper Newport Bay Ecological Reserve and Preserve houses six endangered species which are always a treat to see. You can tour the preserve either by kayak, canoe or those good old feel. Be sure to enjoy some of the life the Newport offers at the Newport Landing Boardwalk, this is a great place to come and walk around just to enjoy the sun, fun and each other. When you have had your fill of the boardwalk Amelia's is a great stop for dinner. They offer great Italian and Seafood dishes for a very reasonable price. Amelia's is a great way to spend the night.



Harbor House Café

Family friendly, huge portions, great value



Amelia's

Delightful and delicious

Day 3 - Newport Beach, Huntington Beach

DAY NOTE: Enjoy today, sleep in when you are ready either grab a light breakfast and the Capri Laguna Inn on the Beach or head straight to Cowboy Seafood for an early lunch. This is a cool place that is an off shoot of a Houston restaurant. The name is very telling they are all about seafood so be sure you are up for their assortment ranging from grilled tuna to smoked trout. Give it a shot this is vacation be adventurous. Once you have finished with the Cowboy Grill mosey on over to the Corona del Mar State Beach. This is an extremely affluent area that is full of beautiful architecture. There are many points of interest for you to look at here, so check them out and pick your favorites. When you have had your fill of the state beach the Oceanview Promenade is a must see. The only thing to say about this place is to make sure you have enough time to enjoy it because there is enough stuff here for a whole vacation. Perusing the Promenade may create some hunger so when that happens head to Huntingtion Beach Beer Company, again the name of the establishment is telling, they know their beer. Here you will also find some good bar food food, ranging from pizza to pasta. Come for the beer, stay for the



Itinerary Overview

things to do restaurants hotels nightlife



Cowboy Seafood

Sleek surroundings



Huntington Beach Beer Company

Brewpub near the beach



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contact:

tel: +1 949 923 2200 http://www.ocparks.com/aliso andwoodcanyons/

location:

28373 Alicia Parkway Laguna Niguel CA 92677



Aliso & Wood Canyons Park

DESCRIPTION: This enormous park is an oasis of nature in Orange County. There are many hiking, biking and equestrian trails over the spectacular 3,879 acres. Beautiful canyons and rock formations make up the landscape. Also a place of history, the park contains petroglyphs carved by native people hundreds of years ago, as well as Orange County's largest collection of marine fossils. In addition, the Orange County Natural History Museum is located on the grounds. Entry fee is \$2 per car. Cash only. © wcities.com



wcities

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contact:

tel: +1 949 923 2240 http://www.ocparks.com/lagun aniquelpark/

location:

28241 La Paz Road Laguna Niguel CA 92677



Laguna Niguel Regional Park

DESCRIPTION: This park boasts 236 acres surrounding a lake stocked with trout and other fish. You can find lots of spots to relax and play beneath the hundreds of shady trees. You'll find bicycle trails that curve over the hills making for a challenging, yet still relaxed ride. Two bridges allow access to picnic areas and trails on the other side of the lake. Other facilities include horseshoe pits, rowboats, tennis courts and volleyball courts. © wcities.com



Photo courtesy of Orange County
Parks

contact:

tel: +1 949 768 3811 http://orangecounty.citysearch .com/profile/36583030/laguna



Flamingo's Mexican Grill & Bar

DESCRIPTION: Flamingo's is a fun, exciting bar and restaurant in Laguna Hills. It might be located in a strip mall, but this restaurant has a lot of character and ambience. You'll think you're in Mexico when you settle into your booth or table and taste the chips and salsa. The servers are friendly



www.nileguide.com

_hills_ca/flamingos_mexican_grill.html

location:

25342 McIntyre Street Laguna Hills CA 92653

hours:

Mo to Su from 11:00 AM to 10:00 PM

and the decor is stylishly authentic but not tacky. Many people come just for the bar. The food is as authentic as you're going to get this side of the border. Delicious tacos, enchiladas, tamales, burritos, and more will leave you full and content. The warm tortillas are the best and all the ingredients are fresh. There's a pretty good wine list and a huge selection of beer. © wcities.com

contact:

tel: +1 949 443 1476 http://www.briorestaurant.com/

location:

24050 Camino del Avion Dana Point CA 92629

hours:

Mo to Th from 11:30 AM to 11:00 PM,Fr to Sa from 11:30 AM to 12:00 AM,Su from 04:00 PM to 11:00 PM



Brio Tuscany Grille

DESCRIPTION: This steakhouse with an Italian twist serves up live jazz and salsa on the side. The live music ranges from jazz to salsa to disco and despite your full stomach from the hearty steaks, you'll still be unable to resist the urge to get up and dance. This restaurant was designed to look like a Tuscan villa. If you like steak you've come to the right place. All of the food is done in an Italian/Tuscan style, which means it's flavorful and colorful. You can also order pasta or fish. Full bar and wine list are also available. © wcities.com



Photo courtesy of Brio Tuscany Grille



Day 2 - Dana Point, Newport Beach

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contact:

tel: +1 949 496 9270 http://www.harborhousecafe. com

location:

34157 Pacific Coast Highway Dana Point CA 92629

hours:

24hrs



Harbor House Café

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

If you're not feeling like you could eat a horse, order one portion of breakfast between two - it'll save you a bit of cash and you'll still have some food left over.

DESCRIPTION: Harbor House Café offers a plethora of dining options - everything from the standard diner fare of burgers and fries to the more unique options of seafood and stir fry dishes is served here. Breakfast is conveniently available 24 hours a day and all dishes are prepared with cholesterol-free oil. The fun, retro atmosphere and hearty portions have made this restaurant a local landmark for diners of all ages. © wcities.com



Harbor House Cafe

contact:

tel: +1 949 673 6580 http://www.ameliasbalboaisla nd.com/

location:

311 Marine Avenue Newport Beach CA 92662

hours:

M-Th 11a-10p, F-Sa 11:30a-10p, Su 10a-10p



Amelia's

DESCRIPTION: This restaurant has been open since the 1960s and it has a strong following. The clientele is devoted to this spectacular little restaurant. The decor is quaint and elegant, and the focus is on the delicious food. It is a good spot for a romantic evening for two with candlelit tables and soft lighting. Serving Italian and seafood dishes that would make anyone's mouth water, this is a great place for lunch or dinner. Dinner is when the seafood shines; try the salmon, lobster or pasta with seafood. The pasta dishes without seafood are also delightful. Entrees range from \$7-15. It also offers a small wine list featuring some basic wines. © wcities.com



Amelia's



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Day 3 - Newport Beach, Huntington Beach

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contact:

tel: +1 949 718 0187

location:

850 Avocado Avenue Newport Beach CA 92660

hours:

M-Th 5:30p-10p, F-Sa 5:30p-11p, Su 4:30p-9p



Cowboy Seafood

DESCRIPTION: This is a concept restaurant from the people who brought us Houston's, a popular restaurant and bar concept featuring an eclectic menu and lively atmosphere. The decor is streamlined and modern. Fans whirl on the ceiling creating a kind of soft buzz in the air. The clientele is mostly young, hip, super-beautiful twenty and thirty-somethings. It is all about seafood here, and you will yell like a cowboy when you taste the succulent flavors of these dishes, from grilled tuna to smoked trout and beyond. Prices range from \$12-28 for entrees. There is a full bar and decent wine list with bottles ranging from \$8-40. Patio seating is also available. © wcities.com

contact:

tel: +714 960 5343 fax: +714 960 3535 http://www.hbbeerco.com/ind

ex.html

location:

201 Main Street Huntington Beach CA 92648

hours:

Daily 11a-2a

2

Huntington Beach Beer Company

DESCRIPTION: Good beer and high-definition plasma TV's (with NFL, NBA, & MLB packages) make this brewery a real find when you are wondering where to stumble in for your favorite sporting event. Typical brewery grub is served here for reasonable prices, like burgers, sandwiches, pizza and pasta, and a variety of appetizers that you might expect to accompany a cold one. Speaking of cold ones, they got lots of 'em. Including the Huntington Beach Blonde, Pier Pale Ale, Indicator IPA, and Bourbon Barleywine, to name a few. They also have great daily specials and a late-night happy hour. © wcities.com



Photo courtesy of Huntington Beach Beer Company



Orange County Snapshot

Local Info

The picture today of Orange County is much different than its image from when the Beach Boys were big. The world famous beaches, bleached blonde locals, originalMagic Kingdom, and entrenched conservatism still remain, but the years have brought gradual, beneficial change. The Democrats achieved unprecedented success in Orange County during the 2008 presidential election, while the social and cultural demographics are also much changed from Nixon's day with, for example, a strong Vietnamese presence now established in the City of Westminster.

While the Beach Boys(none of whom could actually surf) continue to be played every third song on a local radio station, K-Earth, a younger generation of locals are more likely to think of No Doubt as the representative OC-born band of recent years: inventive, exciting, and with a definite global appeal.

OC geography

This substantial 948 square mile rectangle of California, with the Pacific Ocean along the west and the San Bernardino Forest in the east, contains 34 towns within its borders with the capabilities to cater to almost any taste. With shopping, restaurants, and plenty of outdoor activities, the main draw remains the unending coastline.

Stretching the full length of the county, from the OC's southernmost city ofSan Clemente(aka: the Spanish Village by the Sea) and the westernmost tip ofSeal Beach(home to a National Wildlife Preserve), the beach is the focal point for much of life in the OC. Millionaire homesteads inNewport andLaguna Beach cap the semi-arid hills of the OC, battling for the best ocean views. Choice surf spots such as Huntington Beach, Salt Creek, and San Onofre are never without their attendant pods of wetsuit-wearing surfers, often in the water from as early as 6am to avoid the crowds and lay claim to the best waves.

Surfin' USA

Surfing being what it is in Orange County(Huntington Beach, proudly known as "Surf City USA" lays claim to the origins of the practice in the US), it's also possible to come across surfing competitions throughout the year at any of these prime surf spots. Two competitions particularly worth catching are theHuntington Beachlocated US Open(mid-July), like a local festival with live music and a skateboarding arena included, and the Hurley Pro Trestles(mid-Sept), held at Lower Trestles nearSan Clemente.

Historical pockets

If you're looking for more history than the ongoing surfing traditions(althoughHuntington does have an International Surfing Museum), there are some historical pockets of interest around the OC. MissionSan Juan Capistrano is always a popular choice, famous for its classic Spanish Colonial architecture and the Return of the Swallows celebration which marks the annual migration of the swallows from Argentina to the OC. Nearby Dana Point also holds it's own historical"hidden secret"- a replica of the brig Pilgrim(the boat upon which Richard Henry Dana rode in on to eventually write"Two Years Before the Mast", and whoDana Point is named after).

If you are a presidential history buff, be sure to stop by the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum in Yorba Linda, situated on the land where Nixon family lived until 1922. You can't miss the buildingit has an actual Army One helicopter outside(and yes, you are able to step aboard).

History can also be uncovered in unexpected places, such as along the hiking trails(or dirt bike tracks, depending on your perspective) that wind throughout the beautiful canyons that you can find just a few miles inland from the coast. The Dripping Cave(found in Aliso and Wood Canyons Park), a prime example of the wind-carved sandstone caves that litter the region, was the hideout for stagecoach

bandits, reminding you of wilder times in this now most settled of regions.

Top stops

Nowhere is more settled than the most popular areas of the region:Laguna Beach andNewport Beach(the latter incorporating Balboa Island and the Balboa Peninsula). These two towns, on the surface, are distillates of old school Orange County, with millionaire residents and, in the case of Newport's Balboa Island, gleaming powerboats docked at the end of private piers. But look closer, and you see what the super-rich are buying here is the cozy, local feel that sets these towns apart from their in-county cousins. Laguna, home to a stretch of stunning beaches backed by sea-cliffs(1,000 Steps Beach is a perennial local favorite), is also Orange County's local artist epicenter, with a small gallery almost every second shop(for a closer look, attend the annual Sawdust Festival when local artists open their studios to the public or their weekly Art Walk during the summer). Walking around Newport's Balboa Island feels like stepping backwards into a more innocent time- at the Fun Zone there's a big wheel, a 50's style diner on the pier, and stands at which to buy the local specialty of frozen bananas.

If that all sounds a little too nostalgic, South Coast Plaza, the great commercial heart of Orange County, awaits just off the I-5 for all those keen to indulge in some serious mall-time. For the wandering gourmand, increasing ethnic diversity coupled with OC resident Michelin-starred chefs ensurea galaxy of choice(for all budgets) when it comes to deciding where to eat. Oenophiles, unsure whether to go straight to Napa, can find local wineries in Orange County(Laguna Canyon for one), and are also within easy striking distance of the many vineyards found in the Temecula Valley.

The thing about Orange County is that it's full of surprises. Yes, there's Disneyland(now expanded to include the rides of sister-park, California Adventure,



and the music of the House of Blues), coastline to die for, and the laid-back surfer vibe. But there are also intense chilli cookoffs, bizarre traditions like the Laguna Niguel annual mooning of the Amtrak train service, and America's richest two-day rodeo. Remember that when deciding your itinerary, leave a couple of days free to explore and find out what you can uncover. © NileGuide

History

Although perhaps now more closely associated with sprawling oceanfront mansions and designer flip-flops, the coastal region between Los Angeles and San Diego has a past rooted in conflict over land, the Catholic Church, and agriculture.

The Mission Era

Originally inhabited by the Tongva and Juaneño/Luiseño people, a group of Spanish explorers and missionaries bound for the legendary Monterey Bay reached the region in the mid-1700s. Father Junipero Serra, founder of the Alta California Mission chain, was among the party and established the Mission San Juan Capistrano in 1776 making it the first permanent European settlement in California. The Mission was built and maintained by the native people who were converted to Christianity by the Spanish monks. Once converted, most of these native Californians were permitted to own land, undoubtedly the impetus for many of the transformations. During this time the cattle industry thrived in area with the development of a port at Dana Point, and a busy trade of tallow, hide, and other goods developed between New England and the West Coast. Mexico gained its independence from Spain in 1821 and the California missions fell into a state of disrepair. Subsequent drought and disease wiped out the cattle and killed crops, and the mission economy was further damaged by increased secularization implemented by the Mexican government. Unrest continued, and Mexico eventually lost control of the territory with Mexican-American war of

1846-1848 and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

California Becomes a State

With statehood in 1850 issues over land arose, as citizens were required to show documentation of landownership in order to retain their holdings. Because much of the land had been freely parceled out and distributed by the Spanish and Mexican governments, many people lost their land. Taking advantage of this, entrepreneurs such as James Irvine bought up huge amounts of land and planted more drought resistant crops such as walnuts, avocados, and the citrus for which the county was later named. Settlements sprung up, aided by the expansion of the railroads. An electric trolley system was put in place carrying passengers to and from Los Angeles making the region more accessible and resulting in the founding of Huntington and Seal Beach as resort communities.

Orange Becomes County

The discovery of silver in the Santa Ana mountains in 1887 caused another population surge, and as the 20th century approached the area was bursting at the seams. Tired of the long trek to Los Angeles to do official business and concerned that their needs were not being adequately addressed, residents began to push for self-government. In 1889 their wish was granted, and paying homage to its agricultural roots the county was named"Orange." While the trolley lines promoted growth and tourism during the early 1900s, it was the introduction of the automobile and freeway system that made an impact on the latter half of the century. Completion of US 101 and I-5 made this coastal haven even more accessible, and Orange County became a popular getaway for early Hollywood. The end of WWII saw another population increase when the military bases that had dominated the area closed and service men and women settled in the area and raised families. In 1955 Disneyland opened in Anaheim, followed by Knotts Berry Farm in 1968 setting the standard for the newest form of American entertainment, the theme park.

Modern History and Development

Today Orange County is the second most populous county in California, fifth in the nation. Known for its wealthy population and political conservatism, the region has entered pop culture's spotlight in recent years with hit TV shows like The O.C. and reality series such as MTV's Laguna Beach. A mecca for successful people of every profession, the area is at the center of the "Tech Coast," a term coined to describe Southern California's economic transformation from aerospace and defense to a international, multi-tech industries. The South Coast is home to of mega companies and some of the top research universities. Home to some of the country's most exclusive and expensive communities. Orange County has set the standard for master planned luxury development. With its sunny climate, sandy beaches, wealth of recreational activities, and world class dining and shopping its no wonder those with big bank accounts choose to live here.

Hotel Insights

Orange County, encompassing a number of cities and towns, offers a diverse selection of accommodations to choose from. From beach bungalows and oceanfront resorts to Disneyland's digs, there is an appropriate place for every occasion and person within the towns that make up Orange County.

San Juan Capistrano& San Clemente

For those looking to stay in the picturesque and historical areas of San Juan Capistrano and San Clemente, there are plenty of options for any budget. The Capistrano Seaside Inn offers a romantic getaway with ocean views and lush gardens at a moderate price. If you're visiting San Juan Capistrano in March, the Best Western Capistrano Inn provides a great location for watching the swallows return to the Mission. In San Clemente, the Casa Tropicana Inn& Spa is a comfortable bed and breakfast with themed rooms. Designed to look like a California, the Country Plaza Inn By San Clemente Beach



boasts a variety of amenities including fresh fruit every morning and complimentary newspapers.

Laguna Beach& Dana Point

As one drives north or south along Highway 101, California's green highway signs announce the upcoming exits for "Beach" Cities," referring to the beautiful, hip, coastal towns of Dana Point, Laguna Beach, and beyond. If you're looking for renowned golf courses, pristine beaches, high-end boutiques, or world-class surf spots, these unforgettable and unique cities are a must-see! Leading the list of Beach Cities' accommodation options is the Ritz-Carlton Laguna Niguel. Named"the best hotel in North America" by the readers ofTravel& Leisure. If the pricey rates of the Ritz aren't exactly your"cup'o tea" check out The Surf& Sand. Here, guests are treated to their very own balcony with ocean views and a unique restaurant, Splashes, which features only the finest in Mediterranean cuisine. Other luxury accommodations include the St. Regis Monarch Beach which offers many interesting packages, and Montage Resort& Spa, which boasts amenities that define luxury.

Anaheim

Obviously, the main attraction for decades in the area has been Disneyland and its accommodations are no less famous. The Disneyland Hotel and the neighboring Disneyland Paradise Pier Hotel have been mainstays for visitors to the park where kids of all ages can dine with Mickey, Pluto, and all their friends, or simply experience the luxury of the "happiest place on earth". If you're looking for something a little homier, Dolphin's Cove Resort features a wide range of condominiums that are fullyequipped with kitchens, patios, and even a mini-golf course. For more wallet-friendly options off the park grounds, the Fairfield Inn Anaheim Disneyland Resort is located right across the street and the Castle Inn Suites lets you stay in your own castle in between visits to Cinderella's.

Costa Mesa& Irvine

The immediate areas surrounding John Wayne Airport, the cities of Irvine and Costa Mesa offer many accommodation options for business travelers or those who just want to explore the area. The Atrium Hotel and Hilton Irvine/Orange County Airport are both convenient distances to the airport as well as nearby shopping and restaurants. Also near some of the area's major shopping and popular local spots are Westin South Coast Plaza, which is connected to one of Orange County's trendy fashion centers, South Coast Plaza, and Holiday Inn Express Costa Mesa/ Newport Beach provides easy access to some of the best beaches in the county.

Huntington Beach& Newport Beach

Being only a stones throw away from the most luxurious harbor in the region, Balboa Bay Club, has been alive and well since 1948 treating visitors(and many times the Hollywood elite), to four-diamond luxury amenities spread out over 15 incredible beachfront acres. Whether it's the prime waterfront dining or the short distance to Fashion Island, visitors will quickly realize why it has been dubbed"The Host of the Coast." Perhaps you're looking for a more affordable luxury experience. If so, you might want to explore the Newport Beach Marriott Hotel& Spa offering guests a rejuvenating spa experience in a comfortable and relaxing location. So whether you're looking to get away from it all, or simply trying to get close to everything, Orange County has options for every style of traveler.

Restaurants Insights

While Orange County is known for its famous beaches, mega shopping centers, and "Magic Kingdom," it's also chock full of spectacular dining spots. Their restaurants offer diverse culinary sites from places around the world including Mediterranean, Greek, French, Japanese, Hawaiian, and good old American style cuisines.

Laguna Beach/Dana Point

When in the Laguna Beach area, you'll be able to eat at luxurious locations where the dishes match the spectacular views from their ocean side seating. Have a taste of Belgium at Brussels Bistro where you'll find a traditional atmosphere that serves Belgium beer. Next up for the tour of international cuisines is the Aegean Cafe whose Greek dishes are only part of the experience. Waiters will serenade you with traditional Greek songs and balance things on their noses to create an upbeat, high-energy environment for your dining pleasure. If you're in the mood for a true Hawaiian and Polynesian experience, stop in at the Royal Hawaiian. Try the Mahi Mahi or Teriyaki Halibut at Claes Seafood. For a more historical dining experience. be sure to drop by The Cottage, a home built in 1917 that has been converted into a restaurant. Made famous for their breakfast menu, you can have brunch in a comfortable, back-in-the-day setting. Want to dine on the beach without dealing with sand and seagulls? Resting merely five feet above sea level, Five Feet feels as if you're on the beach without having to be at the beach. Las Brisas is known for its authentic Mexican food right alongside the beach as

Newport Beach/Costa Mesa/Huntington Beach

Newport Beach offers a variety of restaurant choices that will whet your appetite. After a day of parading on Balboa Island's boardwalk, stop in The Spaghetti Bender where their marinara sauce tastes as if its homemade. The Clubhouse is a perfect place to get the country club experience without the pricey membership dues. They serve American style cuisine such as chicken potpie and mashed potatoes. Hana No Ki serves everything but sushi. They pride themselves in serving often overlooked Japanese dishes like Grilled FishSaikyoyaki andShime Saba. For genuine Southern-fried comfort, check out Memphis Soul Cafe. Their menu consists of Soul Meatloaf, Cajun Gumbo, Shrimp Creole, Soul Burgers, and much more. Located on a floating riverboat, Anthony's Riverboat Restaurant serves



Fresh Northern Halibut, Lobster Tail, Roast Prime Rib of Beef, and New York Steak. Not to worry if you're vegetarian. The Avanti Cafe serves a vegetarian menu where dishes are made from locally grown vegetables. Located on the Newport Pier, The Rockin' Baja Lobster provides a fun. upbeat atmosphere. Their Baja Buckets" are the thing to try. You can stuff them with whatever seafood or meat you choose.

Anaheim/Orange

After a trip to the "happiest place on Earth." try these equally incredible places to dine. Located in the Disneyland Hotel, Granville's lamb chops, fish plates, and ribs are everything but Mickey Mouse. Within the Disneyland Paradise Pier Hotel, drop in for some sushi and tempura at Yamabuki. Continue following your dreams while in Downtown Disney at Catal Restaurant& Uva Bar. They serve Mediterranean style food such as "Paella a la Valencia" and"Duck Leg Confit."

Anaheim White House marks the spot for lovers of not only Italian food, but Italian celebrities as well. Their plates, named after Italian personalities, have names such as "Versace Whitefish" and "Dolce& Gabbana Sand Dabs." Although you will have to make a reservation at least a month in advance for The Hobbit, it's well worth it once inside because you get to take a tour of the chef's kitchen which is located in a 1930s Spanish home. One place, three zones: Restaurant, Taqueria for those on the go, and the Cantina. At Tortilla Jo's, you have it all, literally.

Nightlife Insights

Orange County's entertainment scene is crammed with endless possibilities for locals and visitors alike. Whether you like fine art or hard rock, the OC is the place for you. Its beautiful seaside surroundings and nearly perfect weather creates ample opportunities for your"things to do" list.

Art& Museums

The true beauty of Orange County is matched by equally exceptionally creative representations that celebrate California culture and contemporary art. Located at the popular Fashion Island Newport Beach, the Orange County Museum of Art features collections that concentrate on California art and late 20th century pieces. California impressionism can be seen at The Irvine Museum where they're dedicated to spreading awareness about the current condition California's natural environment. If you're interested in the works of local artists, check out the Art Institute of Southern California-Ettinger& Reynolds Galleries, that features works by students, and the Orange County Center for Contemporary Art whose emphasis is on freedom to express oneself through contemporary art. At the Irvine Fine Arts Center, you can see an array of innovative artistic expressions including ceramic, multimedia, photography, and much more.

For the seafaring enthusiasts, you will be happy to know that Orange County's proximity to beaches makes it a perfect place to see art about maritime history. The Vallejo Gallery is dedicated to portrayals of the American and British ships of the past. Also, at the Newport Harbor Nautical Museum, vou can see a historical boat that is docked at the harbor and learn about the history of Newport harbor while getting some fun-in-the-sun time too. While the art of Orange County is relatively California-based, the Laguna Art Museum features works that have a global reach as well. Here, you can find classic and modern art by both local and internationally distinguished artists. The Bowers Museum of Cultural Art has artifacts from Southeast Asian, Mexican, and Native American cultures.

Music

The music scene in Orange County offers about as much as you can imagine. An assortment of venues brings music to the ears of Orange County residents and visitors. Places such as Verizon Wireless Amphitheatre and Honda Center offers just about everything from Lollapalooza to classical concerts to the Mighty Ducks of Anaheim. Jazz fans will appreciate the Steamers Cafe where jazz musicians from around the world grace the stage. For a night of the OC's local artists, stop by The Hub where you can sip on a latte while checking out some music performers. The Coach House is a favorite spot for those that enjoy seeing their favorite musicians in the most intimate of settings.

Theater& Film

Theater& film is a significant part of Orange County's entertainment field. For Broadway fans, be sure to visit the Orange County Performing Arts Center and the Segerstrom Center for the Arts which feature shows including "Cats" and "Miss Saigon." The South Coast Repertory and Costa Mesa Civic Playhouse features many classic and contemporary plays. The Brea Curtis Theatre puts on many comedies, dramas, and also has The Kids Culture Club which is ideal for family outings where you can see ballets and jugglers. Want to see modern plays such as "Grease"? Stop by the La Habra Depot Theatre. For a fun excursion with friends, check out Medieval Times. In addition, the Newport Beach Film Festival brings to film buffs a chance to not only watch films, but also an opportunity to meet with the screenwriters, directors, and cinematographers as well. Research **Institutes& Exhibits**

While Orange County's claim to fame is its all-the-rage beaches and shopping centers, the Orange County Natural History Museum offsets this representation by being a research facility dedicated to environmental preservation. The Ocean Institute of Dana Point also serves as an educational facility for students and tourists alike.

Nightclubs

Although there's a lot to do during the day, the OC is one happening place at night. The young, hip crowd of Costa Mesa likes to go to The Shark Club where they play pool and check out the 2000 gallon shark tank. For a wild time, after a day in Laguna Beach catching your rays, drop in at the Sandpiper Lounge for their"4 second poured" drinks and live music. For an even wilder night out, check out Club Rubber, located at the Galaxy Concert Theatre. Here, you can run amok among



the most eccentric crowd of the OC and participate in one of the club's monthly themes such as "Catholic School Girl" and "60s Psychedelics." At Club M, sushi lovers can get their fill of "Spicy Tuna Rolls" and sake bombs before dancing the night away at the restaurant's club. The same goes for the China Beach Canteen. For those that like to try new things, this place breaks the mold by blending Chinese food and reggae music under one roof.

Outdoor Activities

Beautiful Orange County is also booming with outdoor activities. A day trip hot spot is the Newport Landing Boardwalk and Newport Pier, where friends, families, tourists, and locals enjoy shopping, eating, and taking in the splendor of the harbor. Take advantage of the harbor by doing some day fishing at Newport Landing Sportfishing. Balboa Island's relaxing atmosphere makes it a perfect place to spend the day on an island.

If you're an avid golfer, the OC's golf courses are certainly up to par. Come play all 18 holes at Westridge Golf Club or, if you're up for a challenge, play on the hills of the Anaheim Hills Golf Course. The Strawberry Farms Golf Club and Aliso Viejo Ice Chalet are also great places to practice your swing.

Last but certainly not least, Disneyland, is one of the OC's must-see spots. Dubbed the "Magic Kingdom," Disneyland brings visitors from far and wide to see attractions like Pirates of the Caribbean and the Matterhorn.

Things to Do Insights

Touring Orange County and nearby Los Angeles requires a car. Luckily, while in the OC. you don't need to travel far to come across the world famous beaches or the lesser well known but locally just as loved expanses of wilderness and ecological preserves. In and around those, here are a few further tips to local areas:

Huntington Beachlt's Surf City USA, so walk the pier and check out the surfing,

or, better still, get in the water yourself. If you'd rather not get your wetsuit dirty, so to speak, but still like the vibe, then head over to the International Surfing Museum to get an historical perspective. Surfed out? Then head over to the extensive collections exhibited at the Orange County Museum of Art.

Laguna BeachDon't be put off by its name,1,000 Steps Beach really doesn't have that many steps and is the gem of the local beaches. Time your visit for theSawdust Festival to really tap into the artistic vibe of this town, or check out the extraordinaryPageant of the Masters(not nearly as ridiculous as it sounds(well, nearly)). If you're looking for a better vantage point for those holiday snaps, try nearbyAliso and Wood Canyons Park for spectacular views up the coast.

San ClementeNestled at the southernmost tip of the county, San Clemente (also known as "The Spanish Village by the Sea") makes a great stop before heading on to San Diego or Mexico, but is also a lively, scenic destination in its own right(Richard Nixon used to love it). Stroll Avenida del Mar dipping into the many boutiques and cafes that line the street, before reaching the beachfront, home to arguably the most beautiful of the OC's extensive collection of piers.

Dana PointA guiet town positioned in between Laguna Beach and San Juan Capistrano, Dana Point is centered around its tranquilharbor. There're some good beaches here, and a sense of timelessness prevails as you walk the breakwater between the fishermen and standing surfers. Above the harbor, stunning views south are readily available.

Balboa/NewportA self-contained Avalon for the extremely well off, Balboa Island maintains a local charm that surprises(even more so after seeing the floating fibreglass castles of Balboa homeowners docked on their private piers). Walk down the island's Marina Avenue before hopping on the ferry to the peninsula. Spend some time at the nostalgicBalboa Fun Zone, book a boat tour around the harbor, and stop by for excellent live music an dinner at the Studio Café.

AnaheimHome of the theme parks. On this hallowed ground you'll find the hyperactive trinity of Disneyland, Disney's California Adventure and Knott's Berry Farm. Keep the doors locked upon approach, you don't want the overexcited kids making an early break for it across the I5.

San Juan Capistrano Most famous for its historical elements, namely the remaining examples of adobe architecture evident in the Old Town and the Mission San Juan Capistrano. The mission, over two hundred years old and perhaps the best preserved example of its kind, is part of a chain of missions built along the California coast by the Spanish. A good time to visit is during the annual Return of the Swallows Festival, an event held to welcome the famous migrating swallows returning from Argentina to nest in the eaves of the mission. © NileGuide

Travel Tips

By Air

John Wayne Airport(SNA): The only commercial service airport in Orange County. It is located 35 miles south of Los Angeles, between the cities of Costa Mesa, Irvine, Newport Beach and Santa Ana. (+1 949 252 5200/http://www.ocair.com/ default.asp)

John Wayne Airport is home to the following major airlines:

Alaska Airlines(+1 800 252 7522/http:// www.alaskaair.com) American Airlines(+1 800 433 7300/http://www.aa.com) Continental(+1 800 525 0280/http:// www.continental.com) Delta(+1 800 221 1212/http://www.delta.com) Southwest(+1 800 435 9792/http:// www.iflyswa.com) United(+1 800 241 6522/ http://www.ual.com) US Airways(+1 800 428 4322/http://www.usairways.com)

Airport Map& Information:http:// www.airguideonline.com/airports/ airport sna.htm



Airport Services:http:// www.airguideonline.com/airports/ airport_sna2.htm

Airport Transportation:http:// www.airguideonline.com/airports/ airport_sna3.htm

Long Beach Airport(LGB) is an alternative airport when flying to Orange County, situated midway between Los Angeles and Orange County. Long Beach Airport provides very efficient ground transportation, and the lowest-cost parking in the region.(+1 562 570 2619/http://www.longbeach.gov/airport/default.asp)

Airport Parking Service

John Wayne Airport offers a variety of parking options: Four terminal parking structures at the rate of\$1 per hour or \$17 per day, an off-site(Main Street) parking lot for\$1 per hour or\$12 per day and valet parking for\$23 per day are available. The Main Street Parking Lot offers a complimentary shuttle service to the Terminal every 15 minutes. All parking options are available for short and long-term parking.(+1 949 252 5200)

Park'N Fly(+1 800 763 6895/http://www.pnfnetwork.com)

Rental Car Companies Include

Alamo(+1 800 327 9633/http:// www.alamo.com) Avis(+1 800 831 2847/http://www.avis.com) Budget(+1 800 527 0700/http://www.budget.com) Enterprise(+1 800 325 8007/http:// www.enterprise.com) Hertz(+1 800 654 3131/http://www.hertz.com)
National(+1 800 227 7368/http://
www.nationalcar.com) Thrifty(+1 800 367 2277/http://www.thrifty.com)

Taxis

John Wayne Airport Yellow Cab Service(+1 800 535 2211/+1 714 535 0156/http://www.cayellow.com)Shuttles

Shuttles are located on the Arrival(Lower) Level in the Ground Transportation Center. Coordinators are available to assist you with your ground transportation needs.

ABC Shuttle(+1 714 719 4197/http://www.abcshuttleatjohnwayne.com)
Advance Shuttle(+1 800 567 7500/http://www.advanceshuttle.com)
Express Shuttle(+1 800 427 7483/http://xpressshuttle.com) Disneyland®
Resort Express(+1 800 828 6699/http://anaheimsightseeing.com)

Buses

Orange County Transportation Authority(+1 714 636 7433/http://www.octa.net)

Serving Orange County, regular fare is\$1.25; free for children under 6. Greyhound(+1 800 231 2222/http://www.greyhound.com)

By Train

Train stations are located throughout Orange County, with Metrolink servicing stations between Los Angeles and San Diego as well as east to San Bernardino County. Amtrak also passes through these stations but has limited stops on weekends. See websites for more details:

Amtrak(+1 800 USA RAIL/http:// www.amtrak.com) Metrolink(+1 800 371 LINK/http://www.metrolinktrains.com)

By Boat

Catalina Express: Equipped with airplanestyle seats, panoramic viewing windows and refreshments on board, Catalina Express offers year round service and up to 30 departures daily from ports in Long Beach, San Pedro and Dana Point. Views of the Pacific coast don't get any better than this, and you may even catch a glimpse of dolphins swimming alongside the boat in this memorable boating trip for the whole family.

By Car

Orange County is connected by a maze of California State and Interstate freeways.

The major Interstate freeways are: I-5, I-405, and I-605.

The major California State freeways running east-west are: CA/SR-91 and the CA/SR-22.

Running north-south: CA/SR-57, SR/CA-55, CA/SR-133, CA/SR-73, CA/SR-261, CA/SR-133, CA/SR-241, and CA/SR-241.

If traveling overseas, take the safety precaution of registering your trip athttps:// travelregistration.state.gov and for helpful, practical advice about traveling technicalities and safety standards check outhttp://travel.state.gov/.

