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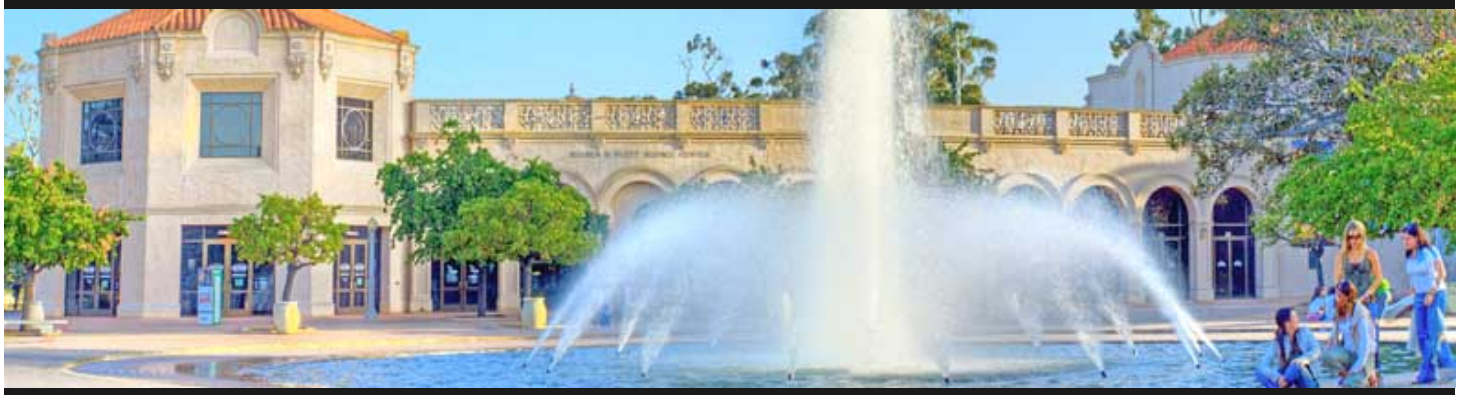
ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



Michael in Flagstaff, Arizona

Adventure in San Diego

San Diego, 2 Days

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Guide Description

AUTHOR NOTE: San Diego is a southern California haven with the mountains, beach and everything in between. Spend a warm weather weekend off the couch and out enjoying everything the city has to offer, which includes long hikes through Torrey Pines' Gliderport, Mission Beach's boardwalk, Segway tours through Balboa Park and a traditional baseball game at Petco Park. Finding an adventure in San Diego is easy to do, as long as you've got some hiking boots and an eager attitude.

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Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - San Diego

DAY NOTE: No true weekend in San Diego is complete without an afternoon sweating in the sun. No matter the weather, find yourself on the beach or at least near it when you hike through Torrey Pines' Gliderport, a moderate hike that takes you straight to the beach. Swap hiking boots for swimsuits after the short mile-plus hike, before succumbing to the beauty of La Jolla with a hearty sandwich at the Cheese Shop. Within La Jolla Village, spend the rest of the afternoon with the seals in La Jolla Cove, or a quick bike ride through some of the area's most pristine views.

For an early evening party enjoy a meal at Pacific Beach's illustrious Mama Mia's before hitting the bars, or walking on Mission Beach's mile long shore. The roller coaster is at the end of the boardwalk, and other bars like Wave House are excellent, inexpensive choices for this beach city.

La Jolla Sea Caves Kayak Tour
Kayaking

La Jolla Coastal Bike Tour
Bike Tour

Mamma Mia Italian Restaurant
Real Italian in PB

Mission Beach
A boardwalk for entertainment & exercise

Giant Dipper Roller Coaster
If You Need a Good Scare

Bar West
Southern flavor with beach ambiance

Day 2 - San Diego

DAY NOTE: After an adventurous first day in San Diego, things aren't expected to slow down the second day. See everything with a hike up to Los Pensaquitos Canyon, a more expert adventure in San Diego that has a spectacular view and will get you pumped for the upcoming activities.

Travel downtown following the early morning/ afternoon hike (suggestion: make a picnic!) and make your way downtown. Gaslamp district is one of the best known parts of the city, but don't just do the tourist thing. Check out a ball game, and if you're hungry for more after a Friar Frank check out Quality Social, a low key bar that serves up local fare and reasonably priced drinks. Later check out a segway tour that will give you the basics of famous downtown, before hitting the club at the Hard Rock Hotel, one of the most recognized hotels downtown, particularly for its hefty schedule of prime-time events.

Los Penasquitos Canyon Preserve
Hiking & history

PETCO Park
Fantastic baseball stadium

San Diego Gaslamp District Segway Tour
Segway Tour

Quality Social
Fun dining and drinks downtown

Hard Rock Hotel San Diego
Classic rock hotel in San Diego

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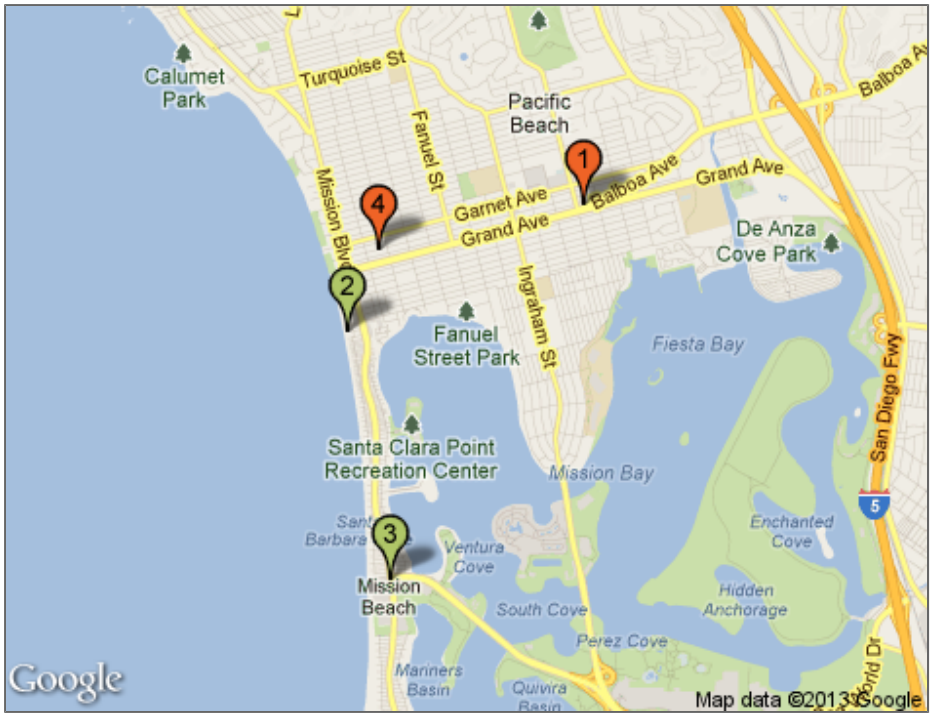
Day 1 - San Diego



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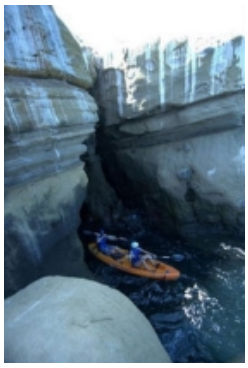
contact:
http://www.partner.viator.com/en/6793/tours/San-Diego/La-Jolla-Sea-Caves-Kayak-Tour/d736-3654CAVES

location:
San Diego California

La Jolla Sea Caves Kayak Tour

DESCRIPTION: This is the most popular kayak tour. If you can ride a bike you can kayak. After a brief paddle instruction and safety talk, you take your kayak down to the beach. And launch your kayaks from La Jolla Shores and paddle to the La Jolla Sea Caves taking in the gorgeous views and watching for the abundant wildlife. You can see numerous types of sea birds and usually sea lions, seals and sometimes dolphins. You then kayak into the fascinating kelp beds of the La Jolla Ecological Reserve and enjoy the surf zone on your way back. Kayaking is fun for all ages! No experience necessary. **What to Expect:** Be prepared to get wet! For safety reasons, the tour operator does NOT guarantee going into the caves on tours. This tour is not recommend entering the caves for pregnant women, small children or inexperienced kayakers. This tour is recommended for ages 6 and up. Participants must be able to swim. **Special Offer - Book and travel by December 31, 2008 and the price**



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contact:
http://www.partner.viator.com/en/6793/tours/San-Diego/La-Jolla-Coastal-Bike-Tour/d736-3654COASTAL

location:
San Diego California

La Jolla Coastal Bike Tour

DESCRIPTION: Start at La Jolla Shores. You will ride on the bike path overlooking the ocean, through the beautiful back streets of La Jolla, through Bird Rock, Wind'n'Sea, Pacific Beach and then return to La Jolla Shores. Short stop at La Jolla Cove and Children's Pool on the way back and you will usually see quite a few seals or sea lions! **What to Expect:** The pace is not strenuous, but expect to do some pedaling! This tour is mostly flat, with a few hills (that can be walked up). **MINIMUM 2 PASSENGERS REQUIRED PER BOOKING** This tour is recommended for ages 8 and up. © Viator

viator

contact:
tel: (858) 272-2702,(858) 272-2324
http://www.mammamiaitalianrestaurant.com/

location:
1932 Balboa Avenue
San Diego CA 92109

hours:
Tue-Sun 11am-10pm, Closed Mondays

1 Mamma Mia Italian Restaurant

DESCRIPTION: If you want to experience a piece of Italy, look no where else in San Diego than Mama Mia's - owned by local Italians, this Pacific Beach treasure was once a local secret and has since expanded to the area's favorite Italian destination. Upon entering you'll be greeted by a loud and boistorous crew of "fresh off the boat" Italians who loved food just as much as you do. Owned and operated by the husband and wife - the husband who will greet you with a warm Italian welcome while the wife works away in the kitchen - is just the local flavor Pacific Beach needs more of. From fresh pastas of ravioli, lasagna- a small corkage fee for bringing in your own bottle, salads and meat entrees, you'll never leave without a fresh feeling of Italy.
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Mamma Mia

contact:
tel: +1 619 221 8900
http://www.sandiego.gov/lifeguards/beaches/mb.shtml

location:
Mission Bay channel entrance to the north end of Pacific Beach
San Diego CA 92109

2 Mission Beach

DESCRIPTION: Near the manmade islands of Mission Bay, this beach runs along Mission Boulevard and boasts a fabulous boardwalk. One of the best places in San Diego to soak up the city's beach lifestyle, this is an unsurpassed area for people watching or building sandcastles. For a faster pace, rent a bike or in-line roller skates. Or better yet, take a ride on Belmont Park's world-famous wooden roller coaster. Whatever attraction you choose, be prepared for large crowds and limited parking. Dogs allowed on leashes before 9am and after 6pm. © wcities.com

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contact:
tel: +1 858 488 1549
fax: +1 858 488 4316
http://www.giantdipper.com

location:
3190 Mission Blvd
San Diego CA 92109

hours:
Hours vary by season, call or check website

3 Giant Dipper Roller Coaster

DESCRIPTION: Enjoy the fun this Mission Beach icon has been offering for decades. Fully renovated, but still clattering, this roller coaster, offering 2600 feet of thrills and 13 hills, was part of the original Belmont Amusement Park, built in 1925. Today, Belmont Park offers 12 other rides such as bumper cars, an edless wave for surfing fun, and a carousel, game arcades, and shops and restaurants. © wcities.com

citysearch

contact:
tel: 858 273 4800
www.barwestsd.com

location:
959 Hornblend Street
San Diego CA 92109

hours:
Su to We from 09:00 PM to 01:00 AM,Th to Sa from 09:00 PM to 02:00 AM

4 Bar West

DESCRIPTION: A new echelon of hip, casual sophistication is ushered into Pacific Beach with the arrival of Bar West and its downtown-meets-the-beach vibe. Offering California coastal cuisine, re-imagined, Chef Larry Abrams injects flavors from Louisiana and around the world into the menu, creating savory plates designed to be shared. A cool, inventive seafood bar anchors the interior's loungy atmosphere, where patrons can indulge in a variety of the freshest local seafood.

citysearch

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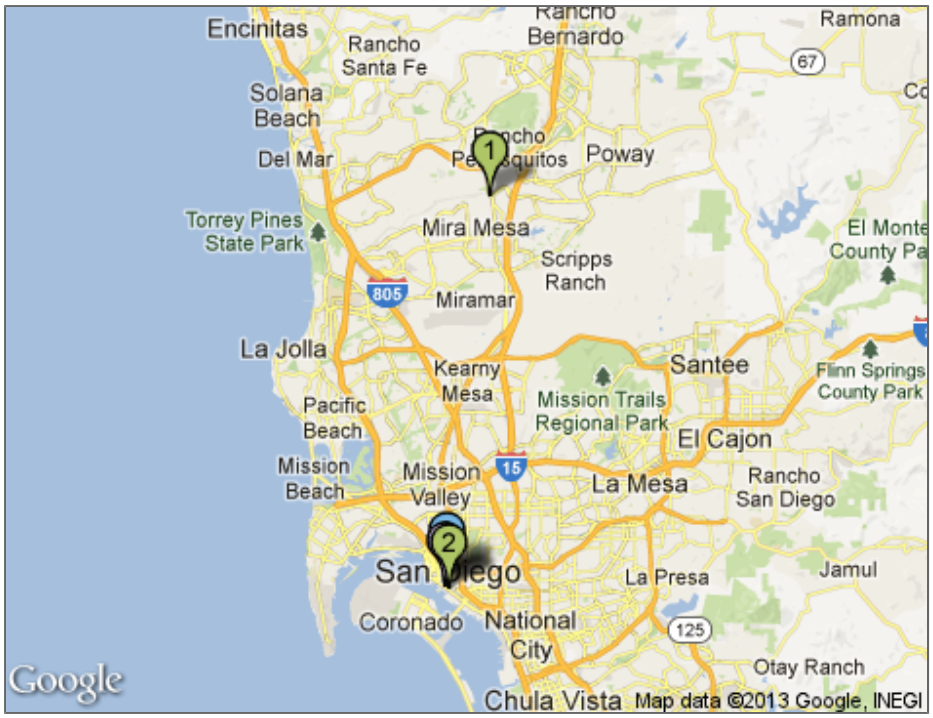
Day 2 - San Diego



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contact:
tel: (858) 484-7504
http://www.sandiego.gov/park-and-recreation/parks/penasq.shtml

location:
12020 Black Mountain R.
San Diego CA 92129

hours:
24 hrs

1 Los Penasquitos Canyon Preserve

DESCRIPTION: Los Peñasquitos (meaning little cliffs) Canyon Preserve lies between Rancho Peñasquitos and Sorrento Hills to the north and Mira Mesa to the south. Stretching approximately seven miles from the I-5 and 805 merge to just east of I-15; it encompasses some 4,000 acres of both Peñasquitos and Lopez Canyons, with trails perfect for hiking, biking, and equestrian use. Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve attracts people with its natural beauty and rich natural resources both today and in the past. Native American history within the Preserve dates back as far as 7,000 years ago. More recently the area was part of the first Mexican land grant in San Diego County, and the ruins of pasts adobes are still visible. There is a full variety of habitat, a year-round stram and riparian woodland, a small waterfall cascading over volcanic rock, grasslands, scrublands, groves of sycamore and live oak, and a fresh water marsh. Wildlife is plentiful, including coyotes, bobcat, and mule deer and numerous

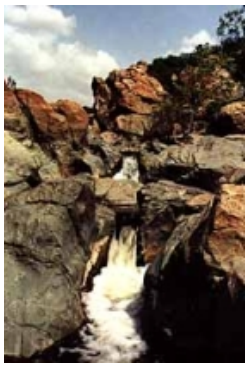

Photo courtesy of Los Penasquitos Canyon Preserve.

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raptors, such as hawks, eagles, kites, falcons and owls soar overhead. A multitude of birds are found in the wooded areas. There are several convenient entrances to the Preserve. The east entrance, or staging area, is located at the intersection of Black Mountain and Mercy Roads. The western staging area is on the south side of Sorrento Valley Boulevard, approximately 1 mile east of Vista Sorrento Parkway. A convenient northern entrance is near Peñasquitos Creek Park at the intersection of Park Village Road and Camino Del Sur in Rancho Peñasquitos. A staging area for Lopez Canyon is located at the intersection of Pacific Mesa and Pacific Center Boulevards in Mira Mesa. Look for the information kiosks located at each of these entry points that designate the trail head and provide additional park information.

contact:
tel: +1 619 795 5012
http://sandiego.padres.mlb.com/NASApp/mlb/sd/ballpark/sdballpark_index.jsp

location:
100 Park Boulevard
San Diego CA 92101

hours:
Varies

2 PETCO Park

DESCRIPTION: Home to the San Diego Padres, Gaslamp's PETCO Park is one of the most distinctive features in downtown San Diego. Concrete walls separate the rest of the city from it's major league baseball players, where every summer hundreds of fans from all over the country come out to show their support for the blue and gold (officially "sand"). Just outside the massive doors are some of Gaslamp's most lively bars and nightclubs, perfect for before or after game drinks, while inside fans nosh on Friar Franks, beer and peanuts. In true San Diego fashion, the cheap seats offer up families and big parties grass seats, while kayakers can often be spotted catching the wide screen from the adjacent ocean. © NileGuide

contact:
http://www.partner.viator.com/en/6793/tours/San-Diego/San-Diego-Gaslamp-District-Segway-Tour/d736-5044SANSEG01

location:
San Diego California

San Diego Gaslamp District Segway Tour

viator

DESCRIPTION: This San Diego Gaslamp District Segway Tour is the perfect way to see all the important sites! Hop on a Segway and glide from sight to sight on this cool narrated tour that is sure to please tourists and natives alike! This tour is narrated and offers a brief Segway instructional session. Stops include: China Town Convention Center Seaport Village USS San Diego Memorial and USS Midway Museum Hub Rose Gardens San Diego Bay   © Viator

contact:
tel: (619) 501-7675
http://qualitysocial.com/

location:
789 6th Avenue
San Diego CA 92101

hours:
5pm - 2am

3 Quality Social

Flickr Creative Commons

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:
The grilled cheese is good, but lacking a bit of the exceptional cheese.

DESCRIPTION: The newest addition to downtown San Diego is Quality Social, an upscale bar and restaurant that serves both drinks and locally grown dishes late into the evening. Right in the heart of San Diego's Gaslamp district, the venue offers outdoor seating for the summer months and

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an expansive space filled with two bars, booths and a VIP room. Unique entrees fill the menu that serves up everything from hot dogs and grilled cheese to hamburgers with fried eggs and Portuguese fish. While it tries to steer clear of the typical upscale bar in downtown, most notably without a cover charge, Quality Social still maintains an upscale feature ideal for downtown lovers.
© NileGuide

contact:
tel: 866/751-7625
fax: 619/702-3007
http://www.hardrockhotelsd.com/

location:
207 Fifth Ave
San Diego CA 92101

4 Hard Rock Hotel San Diego

citysearch

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:
Still a new treat in San Diego, the hotel is always crowded with special events for local colleges and bachelor parties, so book a hotel early!

DESCRIPTION: A far cry from the tired burger-and-memorabilia joint over on Fourth Avenue, this new 12-story condo-hotel has a sweet location -- right at the gateway to the Gaslamp Quarter -- and plenty of star power in the personages of master chef Nobuyuki Matsuhisa and nightlife tastemaker Rande Gerber. Matsuhisa, who has partnered with actor Robert De Niro on restaurants in New York, Milan, Tokyo, and London, adds San Diego to that heady list with **Nobu**, the Hard Rock Hotel's signature eatery. Lounge impresario Gerber works his magic with two bars, one on the ground floor, **Sweetwater Saloon**, and one on the fourth-floor pool deck, **Moonstone Lounge**. The Black Eyed Peas weigh in, too, with a million-dollar "doped-out" suite specially designed by the group. It's one of 17 "Rock Star" suites, some of which include private decks, fire pits, outdoor hot tubs, and 270-degree city views. Standard rooms are hip and modern, with sophisticated furnishings and 42-inch TVs; accommodations are also well soundproofed from the Gaslamp hubbub. The Hard Rock also features two music venues (**Folsom**, a 500-person-capacity indoor space, and **Woodstock**, a 9,000-square-foot area next to the pool), a full-service spa, and a retail boutique. **In Rooms:** A/C, HDTV with on-demand video and video games, Wi-Fi, 2 dataports, personal electronics docking station, minibar, hair dryer, iron, safe, 2-line telephone, alarm clock, daily newspaper
© Frommer's

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San Diego Snapshot

Local Info

Semi-tropical San Diego, with its mean temperature of 70 degrees, Mediterranean-like white-washed stucco buildings and strong cultural influences from southern neighbor Mexico, is as close to visiting a foreign country as visitors could get and yet, is as American as apple pie.

The heart of this bustling city lies at the foot of the harbor just minutes by car from Lindbergh Field, where most travelers debark. Spanning from the North County beach areas to the South Bay cities along the Mexican border, San Diego is one of the top ten largest cities in the United States, and while all of these areas fall under the San Diego umbrella, each individual community maintains its own personality, geography and identity. In San Diego's case, the whole is truly greater than the sum of its parts.

Downtown

Less than three miles from the airport is downtown proper. This thriving commercial area with its active waterfront is a bustling, colorful combination of major hotels, convention facilities, restaurants, nightclubs and shopping venues. Its focal point is Horton Plaza, an architectural masterpiece that holds trendy shops, lively restaurants, a movie theatre and even an ice rink during the holiday season. Horton is ideal for parking and within walking distance to any of the restaurants, shops or clubs just outside its walls.

Just east of Horton Plaza is theGaslamp District, a 16-block source of civic pride. Once slated for destruction, this area has been reclaimed by the people of San Diego thanks to the 1970s Redevelopment Plan. Where once dilapidated warehouses and run-down Victorian houses stood, and where no one dared to enter after dark, the Gaslamp District has now become the pulse of the city. The area even includes Balboa Theater, a historic venue that until recently was closed for reconstruction and now opens its doors for local plays, ballets and more.

Due west of downtown is the Embarcadero, a fun daytime location where visitors can take in leisurely views of the bay, hop aboard a harbor cruise(including the infamous"booze cruise" of the Bay, better known as theBahia Belle) and enjoy seafood at its finest. For shopping, visit Seaport Village, a 14-acre shopping and dining complex designed to emulate early California-style architecture.

Balboa Park

No visit to San Diego would be complete without a trip to Balboa Park. Home to the world-famous San Diego Zoo, the park is much more than a beautiful place to see exotic animals. Gardens and grounds in Balboa Park were established as a city park for the people in 1868. In preparation for hosting the Panama-California Exposition of 1915, a celebration of the opening of the Panama Canal, founding fathers, architects and master gardeners collaborated to create the fine Spanish Colonial Revival-style buildings and gardens that still grace the grounds today. Additional buildings were raised on the site in the early 1930s, this time incorporating the look and feel of the Mayan civilization and California's early indigenous peoples. Within the confines of the park, visitors can enjoy scores of museums and art galleries including the Museum of Man, San Diego Museum of Art, Timken Museum of Art and Spreckel's Organ Pavilion(for a dollar saving Balboa Park experience, visit the park on the first Tuesday of any month, where admission to the museums are free).

Old Town

For a taste of what San Diego was like in its earliest years, take in the sights and sounds of this colorful settlement now preserved as a state historic park. Famous as the first European settlement in California, this area is also well known for its glorious year-round gardens, mouth-watering Mexican dishes, lilting Mariachi music and free-flowing margarita; though typically touristy, there are some true tortilla souls that can be found amongst all the trendy trinkets. Be sure to spend a little time browsing through Bazaar del Mundo, truly a marketplace of the world. While it might be typical to dine on Mexican cuisine inspired by the San Diego history, for an extravagant just a block from all the"fiesta" rush,Harney Sushi is a local favorite that flavors fish in unheard of ways.

Within easy walking distance from the center of Old Town is the Presidio, a must-see while in San Diego. This structure, now a historic landmark, is where Junipero Serra established the first of the Spanish missions in California.

La Jolla

A short drive up the coast takes visitors to La Jolla,"the jewel" in Spanish. Despite its dense population, the people of this affluent city have somehow managed to maintain its natural beauty. Cliffs along the main streets overlook the beaches and coves along the Pacific Ocean; tropical vegetation creeps and climbs across red-tiled roofs and verandas; and sunsets at La Jolla Shores are simply spectacular. Enjoy the village's serene center, where fish restaurants, chic boutiques and La Jolla locals are in abundance, likeGeorge's at the Cove- famous for their modern, American ambiance and cuisine- as well asWarwick's Books, ideal for every school/project need.

Beyond breathtaking oceanfront scenery, which can be enjoyed on bike, by walking or just by driving along La Jolla Boulevard, this seaside community is also home to the Birch Aquarium, which features the largest oceanographic display in the United States. Just up the hill from the town center, the Aquarium is located just across the street from theUniversity of California, San Diego, whose 25,000 university students make up the majority of the area.

North County

Travel a few miles further north along the coastal drive to reachDel Mar, a smaller beach community that supports itself with farmer's markets, surfers and restaurants. Famous for its racetrack founded by Bing Crosby and fellow Hollywood cronies during the 1940s, this seaside town offers as much to families as it does to racing aficionados. Beaches here are clean and family friendly; boutiques and open-air restaurants line the main street, giving it a Riviera-like quality. The city even boasts the newL'Auberge, which took over the Hollywood favorite resort Stratford Inn and remains a residence for socialites and affluent guests year round in Del Mar's average 70 degree temperature.

Moving inland, the city ofEscondido is a quieter, more rural version of San Diego, replete with avocado and livestock ranches, vineyards and granite-strewn hillsides. The community hosts the San Diego Zoo's 2,200-acre Wild Animal Park, an extension of the city's world-famous zoo providing

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visitors a look at animals in the wild.Bates Nut Farm is another rare feature for the area, where visitors from around the county enjoy the biggest pumpkin patch as well as hundreds of vast acres open to the public to enjoy while snacking on delicious nuts.

Just north of this city, visitors can find the renownCarlsbad Flower Fields andLEGOLAND California, great for those with young children in tow. Carlsbad's beaches also offers big time surfers some of the best waves in the area, where locals are always welcome.

South Bay

Visitors would be remiss if they never traveled south from the city proper into the area referred to as the South Bay. The main city in this area isChula Vista, home to one of San Diego's greatest music and entertainment venues, the Coors Amphitheatre. This entertainment complex provides state-of-the-art acoustics, VIP tables complete with cocktail table service, stadium seating and picnic seating on grassy knolls. Adjacent to the amphitheater, visitors(and especially their children) can cool off in the watery fun at Knott's Soak City U.S.A.

The most renaissance of the south bay cities has become North Park, a relatively untapped area that is now home to some of the area's most unique restaurants, live music venues, bars/ nightclubs and more. Just a shuffle inland and you'll find a hubbub of activity on 30th Avenue that houses local bars- like theBar Pink Cocktail Lounge- and the hidden Italian adventureAlexander's on 30th.

While each district of San Diego has an original flair, the various sections blend seamlessly into a thriving, cosmopolitan city. From the North County beaches to the downtown shopping districts, San Diego's first-class attractions consistently please tourists and locals alike.
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