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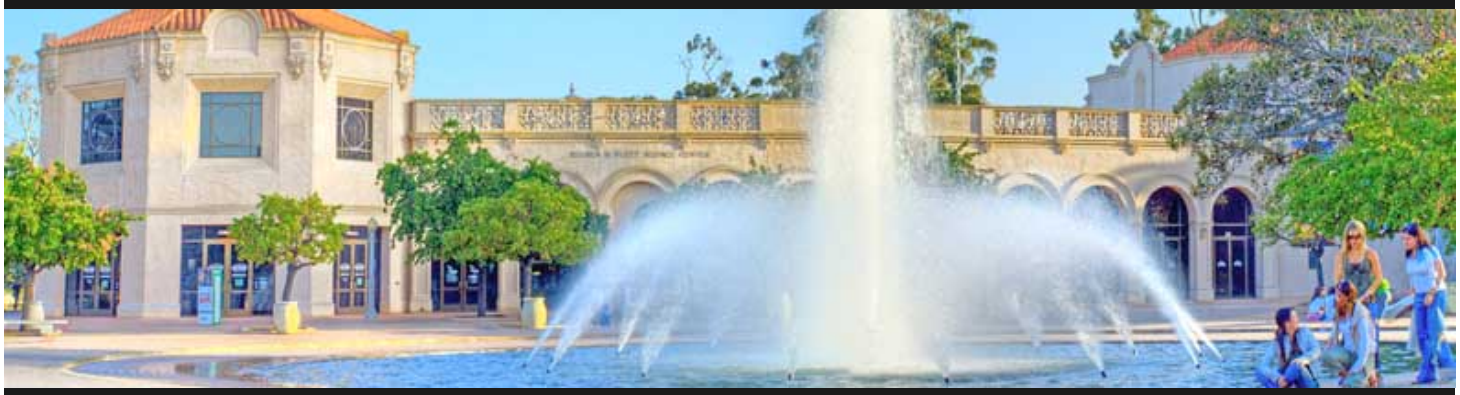
ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



Michael in Flagstaff, Arizona

San Diego Bar Crawl

San Diego, 3 Days

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Guide Description

AUTHOR NOTE: Certain areas of San Diego are renowned for their bar scene. Take Pacific Beach, for instance. Just a few shorts miles from the ocean, this prime real estate isn't just about the salty ocean air as Pacific Beach's main drag - Garnet Avenue - is filled with bar to bar stops from the freeway entrance to the ocean. It is nearly impossible to every restaurant/ bar in the lot, but it's pretty fun to try. Check out the short list that starts at Pacific Beach's well known comedy bar and finishes near Mission Beach's infamous roller coaster.

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Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - San Diego

DAY NOTE: Are you ready for this? San Diego's infamous beaches stretch far and wide, yet if you want a mixture of the great sunshine with a cold glass of beer, you're going to have to walk up and down the streets of Pacific/ Mission Beaches to find the perfect spot.

Start with a late breakfast at the well know chain restaurant The Broken Yolk, where you can sit atop the roof and order a full bottle of champagne with OJ to start the crawl off in style. After a hearty breakfast, your first stop will be Longboard's, a local joint (and Patriot's pub) where local bands play on the small stage. There is a small amount of outdoor seating to start the day off with a bit of sunshine. Next hit up the infamous PB Bar and Grill, where the second half (aka Tremors) turns into a rowdy nightclub late at night. Luckily, since you're starting early you won't have to think about those pesky lines so early on, and if you feel the need to return, you'll have a stamp to quickly allow entrance.

If you dare, cross the street and walk another block back up the beach to Fred's, where many a manly men have tried and have yet to conquer the tequila club - where patrons sign up to attempt the bar's entire supply of tequila shots in a year's time (prices start at about $4 a shot and go up to $50).

Just a few short walks from the beach, Moondoggie's is infamous for its comedy hour where amateur's line up to give the crowd a laugh. Next, head on over to the fire station (literally) of Pacific Beach, which is located on the board walk and is a converted fire station slash club, where night crawlers find themselves.

Though San Diego no longer promotes drinking on the beach, the next best thing is Lahaina Beach Club, just about as close as you can get to the beach without actually being illegal (walk down the porch steps and you'll feel the sand under your feet)

Eventually, drive (or cab it) down to Mission Beach where the slightly "off the beaten" path destination of Beachcomber is found. Just across the street from the area's infamous roller coaster, as this is the final destination you won't notice the underground feel of the place but will rather enjoy the sweet smell of popcorn via the popper and the beer pong tables offered up in the back.

Broken Yolk

RT's Longboard Grill
Dedicated to a surfing fan

Pacific Beach Bar & Grill
Pacific Beach's local hangout

Fred's Mexican Cafe
Fun, food and drink

Moondoggie's
Happy puppies congregate here

Firehouse Beach Cafe
Keeping PB red hot

Lahaina Beach Club

The Beachcomber
"Dive" into Mission Beach

Day 2 - San Diego

DAY NOTE: Day 2 in San Diego should start right at midnight, as you'll still be enjoying the many bars that occupy the streets of Mission and Pacific Beaches. Following your final stop in Pacific Beach, you'll want to sustain yourself with a little signature Mexican food via Santana's - best to go for something with a tortilla, as they are homemade and just like heaven.

Follow up your "bar crawl through San Diego" with a short nap followed by a quick pick-me up at the local coffee shop Better Buzz (located on Garnet). Enjoy the best breakfast in Mission Beach - The Mission. Fill up on hearty pancakes and egg dishes, where cholesterol isn't a factor, and perhaps even more coffee (noted on the menu as "the last legal vice"), like their Mexican Mochas or the Thai, coffee splashed with sweetened condensed milk.

Santana's Mexican Food

The Mission
Mission Beach's most popular breakfast

Costa Brava

Day 3 - San Diego

DAY NOTE: Day three should be your final day of recovery before leaving the wild life of the city. Enjoy spectacular coffee

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Itinerary Overview

from the two decade local shop Pannikin.; located in downtown San Diego, La Jolla, Del Mar and Encinitas, wherever you are staying there is likely to be one in site. After picking up one of their signature drinks (the Hammerhead is a signature). Add a brief walk on the Torrey Pines State Reserve in La Jolla.

Pannikin Coffee & Tea

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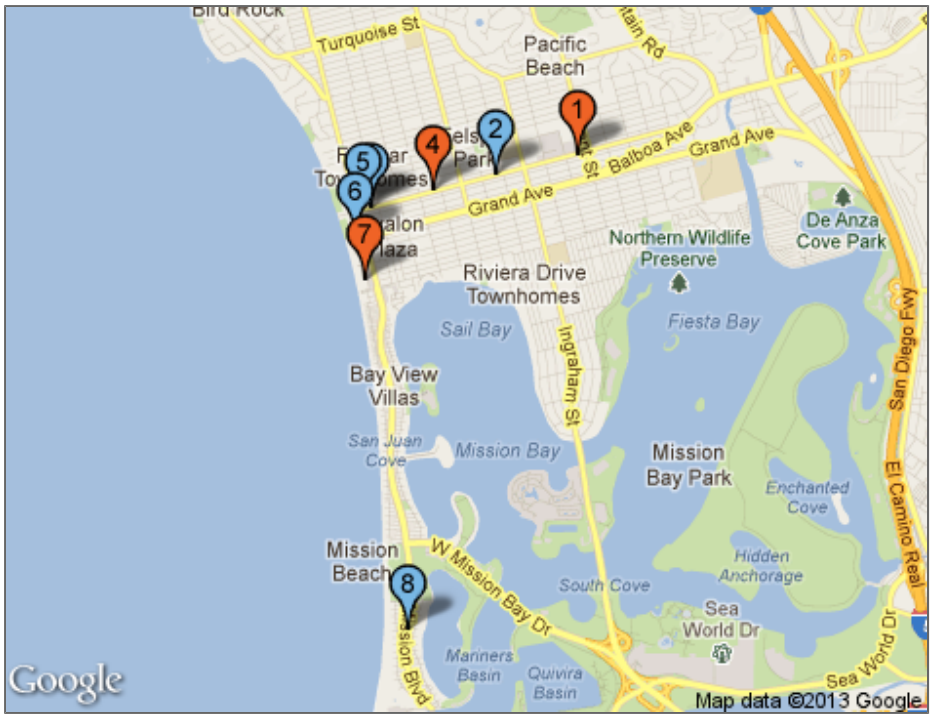
Day 1 - San Diego



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contact:
tel: (858) 270-9655
http://sandiego.citysearch.com/profile/external/463620/san_diego_ca/broken_yolk_cafe.html

location:
1851 Garnet Ave
San Diego CA 92109-3353

hours:
Daily 6am-2pm

1 Broken Yolk

DESCRIPTION: PB breakfast joint draws lines around the block for a rooftop table and the famous waffles.

citysearch

contact:
tel: 858 270 4030
http://www.longboardgrill.com/

location:
1466 Garnet Avenue
San Diego CA 92109

hours:
Mo to Su from 12:00 AM to 02:00 AM

2 RT's Longboard Grill

DESCRIPTION: This bar is dedicated to the memory of Ron Trenton. A lifeguard and pilot, Ron Trenton loved the beach and dreamed of owning a casual beach bar. After his plane disappeared in 1997, Ron's brothers decided to open his dream bar in his memory. The bar holds exactly what Ron once dreamed: casual atmosphere and a fun-filled scene. A long appetizer menu is popular among guests. Try the Calamari Strips or Nachos Grande. From the entree menu, consider a Cheeseburger or Fish Taco. Daily drink specials complement your meal. Live entertainment is performed on weekends. © wcities.com

citysearch

contact:
tel: 1 858 272 4745
fax: 1 858 483 5212
http://www.pbbarandgrill.com

location:
860 Garnet Avenue
San Diego CA 92109

hours:
Daily 11a-1:45a

3 Pacific Beach Bar & Grill

DESCRIPTION: Located in Pacific Beach, Pacific Beach Bar & Grill offers superb pizza. Try the Garbage Pizza or the Mexican Pizza, which substitutes layered flour tortillas for pizza dough. Other tasty treats include coconut-covered shrimp, pasta, sandwiches, burgers, gyros, prime rib and a large selection of "south of the border" dishes like tacos and fajitas. But be sure to leave some space for the heavenly desserts like Brownie Sundae and Mexican Cheesecake. All these are sure to make you returning for more! © wcities.com

Pacific Beach Bar & Grill

contact:
tel: 1 858 483 8226
fax: 1 858 274 2329
http://www.moosemcgillycuddys.com/fredshome

location:
1165 Garnet Avenue
San Diego CA 92109

hours:

4 Fred's Mexican Cafe

DESCRIPTION: The beautiful people of the "just over drinking age" set have discovered this small restaurant tucked within the favorite watering hole of Moose McGillycuddy's. Mexican food can be ordered a la carte or as combinations. One of the burritos (prices vary by ingredients requested and grilled to order) is enough to fill you up for an entire afternoon. For the less adventurous, hamburgers and fries are filling, grilled to order and inexpensive. Beer and wine and margaritas are available to cool down the spicy salsa. © wcities.com

citysearch

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10a-midnight Sun-Thu;
10a-2a Fri-Sat

contact:
tel: 858 483 6550
fax: 858 483 6553
http://www.moondoggies.com

location:
832 Garnet Ave
San Diego CA 92109

hours:
Daily 11a-2a

5 Moondoggie's

citysearch

DESCRIPTION: This extremely popular beach sports bar offers decent food, drinks, music and fun. A diverse appetizer menu inspires grazing rather than dining try spicy Mexican-inspired Nachos or Guacamole and Black Bean Salsa. Need something more substantial? Try Tod's Garden Pasta featuring fresh, usually local vegetables tossed in a balsamic vinaigrette. The signature Moondoggie Burger offers a big half-pound, char-grilled burger with cheese and a side of fries. The full bar offers specialty drinks such as the all-premium pour Dogarita. The cheerful, casual California beach bar atmosphere is decorated with surfing memorabilia. © wcities.com

contact:
tel: 1 858 272 1999

location:
722 Grand Avenue
Pacific Beach CA 92109

6 Firehouse Beach Cafe

citysearch

DESCRIPTION: Check out Firehouse Beach Cafe, a lively, fun place to eat. Located next to a firehouse, its menu is enormous, including nachos, burgers, pasta, chicken and seafood. A favorite item is the Martini Pasta, which boasts dry vermouth among the sauce ingredients. As the name suggests, this restaurant has many spicy dishes, which are indicated on the menu with a chili pepper next to the dish. Some dishes get two chili peppers, like the Firehouse Wings. There are several daily specials like Margarita Mondays and a Bloody Mary bar on Saturday and Sunday mornings. © wcities.com

contact:
tel: (858) 270-3888
http://sandiego.citysearch.com/profile/40027648/san_diego_ca/lahaina_beach_club.html

location:
710 Oliver Ave
San Diego CA 92109-5017

hours:
Daily 8am-9pm

7 Lahaina Beach Club

citysearch

DESCRIPTION: **In Short**
This tiny watering hole is a rarity among beachside bars. With the patio just a mere bottlecap's throw from the boardwalk, it's one of the few beach bars where you can actually high-five bladers, boarders and joggers as they pass by. Most days, this shack is relegated to a no-nonsense breakfast and lunch menu of omlettes, sandwiches and salads. On weekends (and everyday during summer), it's a post-beach cocktails crowd.

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contact:
tel: (858) 488-2644
http://sandiego.citysearch.com/profile/41926269/san_diego_ca/the_beachcomber.html

location:
2901 Mission Blvd
San Diego CA 92109

hours:
Tues-Sun 7:30am-2am, Mon 10:30am-2am

8 The Beachcomber

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:
After rainy days, don't venture here - under sea level the bar is often filled toe deep with water and closed for business.

DESCRIPTION: Though it's a typical "dive bar," Beachcomber defines Mission Beach. Locals stand in line to enjoy the $1 beers on Thursday nights, whiffing in the fresh beach smell and adorning Mexican, late-night shack. Though the dance floor is often packed, Beachcomber isn't filled with gyrating patrons - rather, locals in bathing suits and shorts fill the area with simply their bodies, chatting amongst themselves while downing the specialty. Venture up the rickety wooden steps to the smaller, cornered back where a flip cup/beer pong tournament is likely to be going on, and if you catch of whiff of the popcorn, don't hesitate in getting a bag.
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Intrepidation

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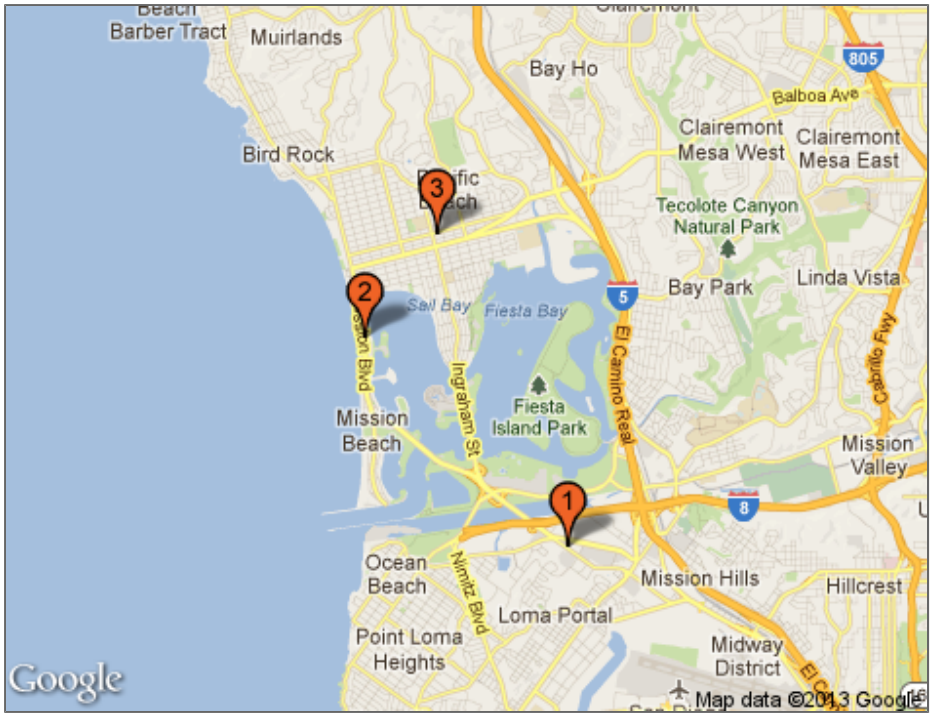
Day 2 - San Diego



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Follow up your "bar crawl through San Diego" with a short nap followed by a quick pick-me up at the local coffee shop Better Buzz (located on Garnet). Enjoy the best breakfast in Mission Beach - The Mission. Fill up on hearty pancakes and egg dishes, where cholesterol isn't a factor, and perhaps even more coffee (noted on the menu as "the last legal vice"), like their Mexican Mochas or the Thai, coffee splashed with sweetened condensed milk.

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contact:
tel: (619) 523-9517
http://sandiego.citysearch.com/profile/466276/san_diego_ca/santana_s_mexican_grill.html

location:
3742 Midway Dr
San Diego CA 92110-5203

1 Santana's Mexican Food

DESCRIPTION: Drive-thru Mexican fast food is famous for the ultimate California burrito and late-night hours.

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contact:
tel: 858/488-9060
fax: +1 858 488 4767
www.themission1.signonsandiego.com

location:
3795 Mission Blvd
San Diego CA 92109

hours:
Daily 7am-3pm

2 The Mission

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:
Get to breakfast early if you don't want to wait in line, and go in smaller groups to ensure a table!

DESCRIPTION: Located alongside the funky surf shops and bikini boutiques of bohemian Mission Beach, the Mission is the neighborhood's central meeting place. The menu features all-day breakfasts, from traditional pancakes to nouvelle egg dishes to burritos and quesadillas. Standouts include tamales and eggs with tomatillo sauce, chicken-apple sausage with eggs and a mound of rosemary potatoes, and cinnamon French toast with blackberry purée. At lunch, the menu expands for sandwiches, salads, and a few Chino-Latino items like ginger-sesame chicken tacos. Seating is casual, comfy, and conducive to lingering (tons of students, writers, and surfers hang out here), if only with a soup-bowl-size latte. Expect waits of half an hour or more on weekends. Other locations: 2801 University Ave., in North Park (tel. **619/220-8992**), and 1250 J St., downtown (tel. **619/632-7662**); both have similar menus and hours. © Frommer's

Photo courtesy of The Mission

contact:
tel: (858) 273-1218
http://sandiego.citysearch.com/profile/external/37905276/san_diego_ca/costa_brava.html

location:
1653 Garnet Ave
San Diego CA 92109

hours:
Daily 11am-12am

3 Costa Brava

DESCRIPTION: **In Short**
The raised and fenced-in garden patio secludes diners from the bustling street and pedestrian traffic of Garnet Avenue. Inside find a festive restaurant and tapas bar. Choose a filling paella (rice dish) or a fresh seafood entree, or opt for a mix of hot and cold tapas items like manchego cheese, breaded mussels and stuffed peppers. Many ingredients are imported from Spain, and are also available in the eatery's shop that's located two doors down.

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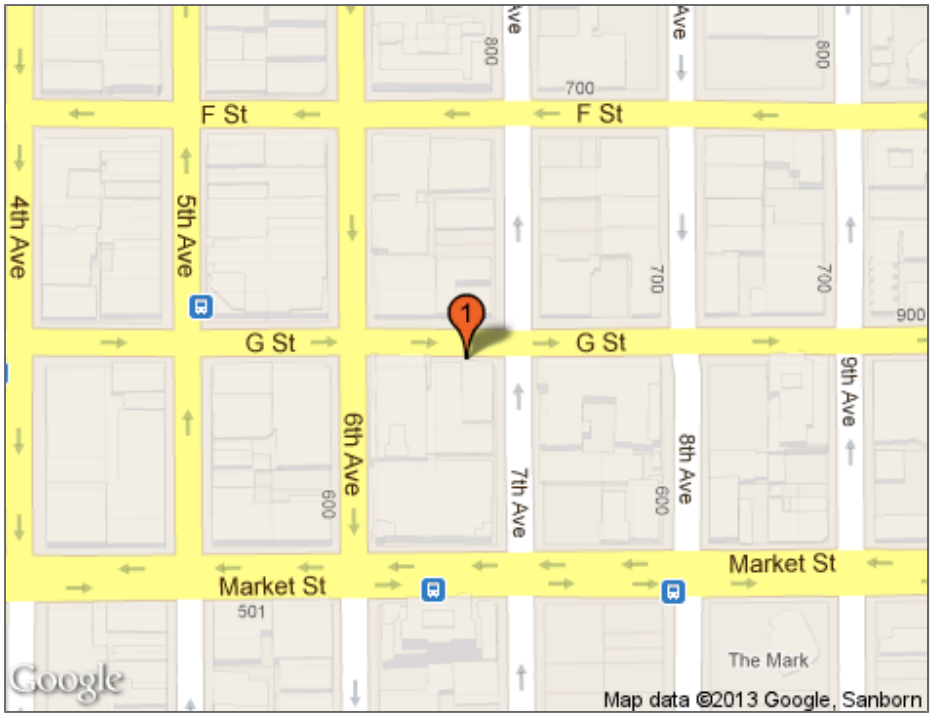
Day 3 - San Diego



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DAY NOTE: Day three should be your final day of recovery before leaving the wild life of the city. Enjoy spectacular coffee from the two decade local shop Pannikin.; located in downtown San Diego, La Jolla, Del Mar and Encinitas, wherever you are staying there is likely to be one in site. After picking up one of their signature drinks (the Hammerhead is a signature). Add a brief walk on the Torrey Pines State Reserve in La Jolla.

contact:
tel: (619) 239-7891
http://sandiego.citysearch.com/profile/444932/san_diego_ca/pannikin_coffee_tea.html

location:
675 G St
San Diego CA 92101

1 Pannikin Coffee & Tea

DESCRIPTION: **In Short**
While it does possess all the typical acoutrements of the standard 90s coffeehouse (chalkboard menu, pastries from Brad & Cie, musty, dark decor), the Pannikin boasts one attribute unique to any other in San Diego: the mini-chain has been a force on the caffine scene in San Diego for more than 20 years. Each location also features unique gifts, cards and gourmet food items from all over the world to complement the mostly South American beans.

Photo courtesy of Pannikin Coffee & Tea

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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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