



**nileGUIDE**

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



Michael in Flagstaff, Arizona

## SD Tourist Spots - Another Look

### San Diego, 5 Days

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# Guide Description



**AUTHOR NOTE:** Check out the iconic Balboa Park, the area's new 'it' renaissance city of Northpark and the chic, affluent city of La Jolla. Everything from these areas screams "tourist" to many travelers, but because the beauty of these destinations even natives love to enjoy them. Keep your wallet heavy while still enjoying the most iconic features of the city - from the area's best kept secrets - like the infamous vegetarian Mexican restaurant Pokez - to the staples of the area, like Balboa Park.

# Itinerary Overview

things to do  
restaurants  
hotels  
nightlife

## Day 1 - San Diego

**DAY NOTE:** Though the Balboa Park remains San Diego's biggest tourist destination, enjoy the area without looking like a tourist. While it is home to the San Diego Zoo, be sure to take in Balboa Park's rolling hills that are filled with museums, the Spreckels Organ Pavilion and the Globe Theater. If you want to save money, enjoy the simplicity of its lush gardens, breathtaking architecture and people watch your way through a picnic in the park. Lawn areas are often filled with small parties, wedding receptions and more, making for a scrumptious and educational meal. Another pointer: if you make it on a Tuesday, take advantage of the free, rotating museum schedule.



### Balboa Park

The center of the city



### Spreckels Organ Pavilion

4,445 pipes



### San Diego Zoo

Internationally recognized zoo



### Old Globe Theatre

Theater at it's best - in Balboa Park

## Day 2

**DAY NOTE:** Just a skip, hop and a jump across the water is Coronado, the city's "island" that houses local boutiques, the Hotel Del and most importantly, the Navy base. Driving onto the island provides a quick view of the vast Navy vessels, while trekking through Coronado by foot or bike offers a more personal view. Colonial houses fill every neighborhood in this small section of San Diego, and following a walk through the Hotel Del, enjoy a quick cup of Joe courtesy of Café 1134, where the locals embrace the tourists with friendly chatter.

## Day 3 - San Diego



### Sea Rocket Bistro

Dinner and a movie

## Day 4 - San Diego

**DAY NOTE:** At the center of most visitors' San Diego holiday is Gaslamp. Take advantage of validated parking at Horton Plaza and the small mall's unique architecture, but venture out into the area's landmark attractions - restaurants and chain boutiques line the alphabetical map. Venture into East Village for the San Diego staple, Pokez Mexican Restaurant and Vegetarian Cuisine, where locals chomp down on the typical Mexican fare with a tofu twist.



### Horton Plaza

Exciting Outdoor Mall



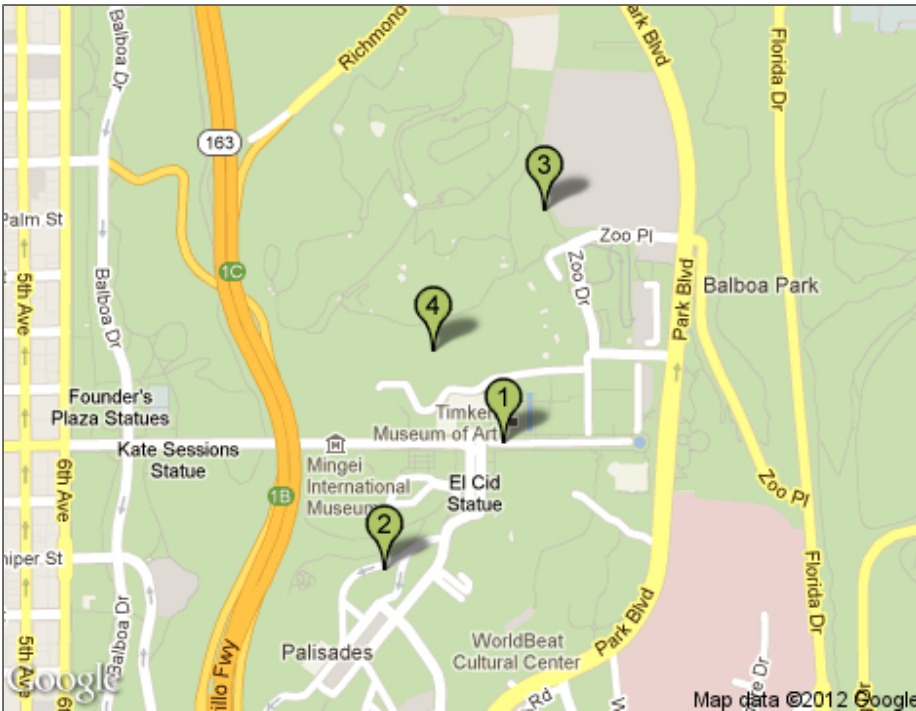
### Pokez Mexican Restaurant

Vegetarian Mexican cuisine

## Day 5

**DAY NOTE:** Don't waste the final moments that La Jolla Children's Pool's - that locals renamed seal beach - still houses some of the area's largest seal population. Walk along the La Jolla landmark where at all hours of the day these barking beasts play music to unsuspecting passersby's. Just a few short jaunts ahead is windansea, the local surfing favorite where anyone but the experts get pushed onto the rocky shores.

# Day 1 - San Diego



## QUICK NOTE

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**contact:**  
tel: +1 619 239 0512  
<http://www.balboapark.org>

**location:**  
1549 El Prado  
San Diego CA 92101

## 1 Balboa Park

**DESCRIPTION:** The world-renowned San Diego Zoo is only one part of this magnificent 1,200-acre city park that was built for the 1915-1916 Panama-California Expo. California's Hispanic roots were celebrated as the city erected breathtakingly ornate Spanish-style buildings, which were eventually permanently restored. So much more than just an urban park, it is home to the zoo, 14 museums, a pipe organ pavilion, botanical gardens, international cultural centers, theaters and performance venues, an antique carousel, off leash dog parks, sports fields, hiking trails, a tennis center, municipal pool, and a miniature-scale train. The December Nights Celebration is held the first weekend of December annually and this popular event is an opportunity for the whole family to enjoy pageants, plays, food and music all in the tradition of the Christmas holidays. © wcities.com



**contact:**

tel: 619 702 8138  
fax: +1 619 702 8128  
<http://www.serve.com/sosorgan/>

**location:**

2211 Pan american Rd E  
San Diego CA 92101

**hours:**

Concerts: 2p onwards Su

**2 Spreckels Organ Pavilion**

**DESCRIPTION:** Presented to the citizens of San Diego in 1914 by brothers John D. and Adolph Spreckels, the ornate, curved pavilion houses a magnificent organ with 4,530 individual pipes. They range in length from the size of a pencil to 32 feet, making it one of the largest outdoor organs in the world. With only brief interruptions, the organ has been in continuous use. Today visitors can enjoy free hour-long concerts on Sundays at 2pm, given by civic organist Carol Williams; free concerts are also held in the evening during the summer months. There's seating for 2,400 but little shade, so bring some sunscreen. © Frommer's



**contact:**

tel: +1 619 231 1515  
fax: +1 619 231 0249  
<http://www.sandiegozoo.org>

**location:**

2920 Zoo Dr  
San Diego CA 92103

**hours:**

Sept to mid-June daily  
9am-4pm (grounds close at 5 or 6pm); mid-June to Aug daily 9am-8pm (grounds close at 9pm)

**3 San Diego Zoo**

**OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:**  
Be prepared to walk - a lot!

**DESCRIPTION:** This world-famous establishment is clearly no ordinary zoo. Walk or ride a double-decker bus throughout this expansive park, home to over 4,000 rare and exotic animals exhibited in beautiful garden habitats. More than a park, this zoo is a major research facility although it is cleverly disguised with entertaining shows and inspiring exhibits like Polar Bear Plunge and Hippo Beach. General Admission required. © wcities.com



San Diego Zoo

**contact:**

tel: 619 234 5623  
fax: 619 231 6752  
<http://www.oldglobe.org>

**location:**

1363 Old Globe Way  
San Diego CA 92101

**hours:**

Box office: Daily noon-6p

**4 Old Globe Theatre**

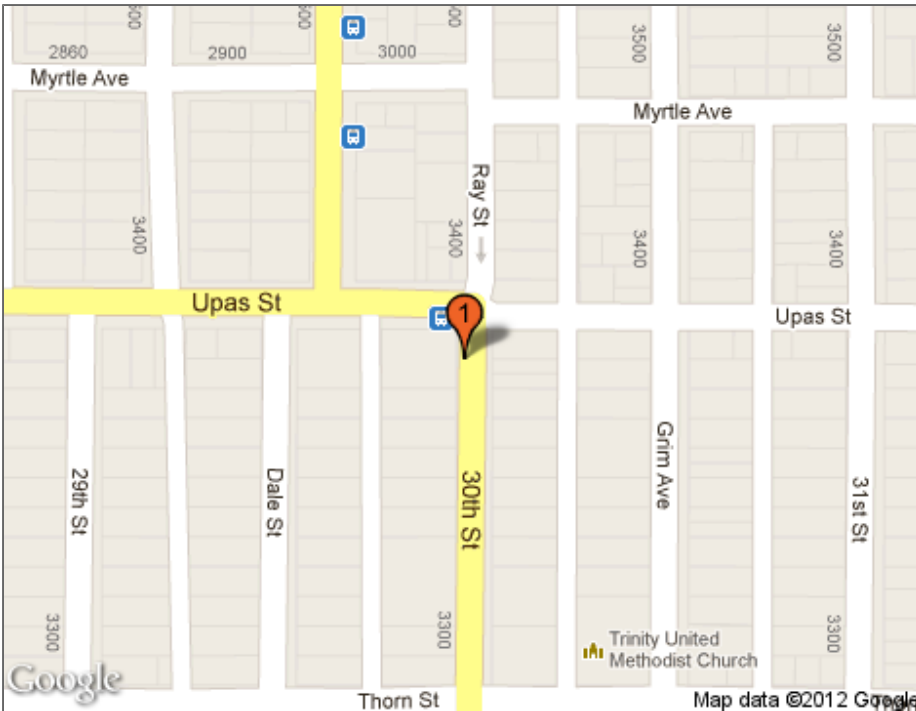
**DESCRIPTION:** Modeled after Shakespeare's own theaters, this San Diego establishment is actually part of a complex of three theaters also including the Cassius Carter Centre Stage and the outdoor Lowell Davies Festival Theatre. Sadly, the 1935 original Globe has been replaced since it was destroyed by fire, though it appears that the renovation is a success. In 1984, the 581-seat replica won a Tony award for best regional theater. Predictably, the theater is home to an annual Shakespeare festival, but it is open year round. It also hosts much more than the classics. Its focus is actually the opposite - opening new plays. © wcities.com



# Day 2

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# Day 3 - San Diego



QUICK NOTE

**contact:**

tel: 619-255-7049

<http://searocketbistro.com/>

**location:**

3382 30th Street  
San Diego CA 92104

**hours:**

Mon-Thu, Sun 5:30pm-10;  
Fri-Sat 5:30-11pm

## 1 Sea Rocket Bistro

**OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:**

Their menu changes daily in accordance with the local finds, so if you're looking for something particular make sure to double check online or call in

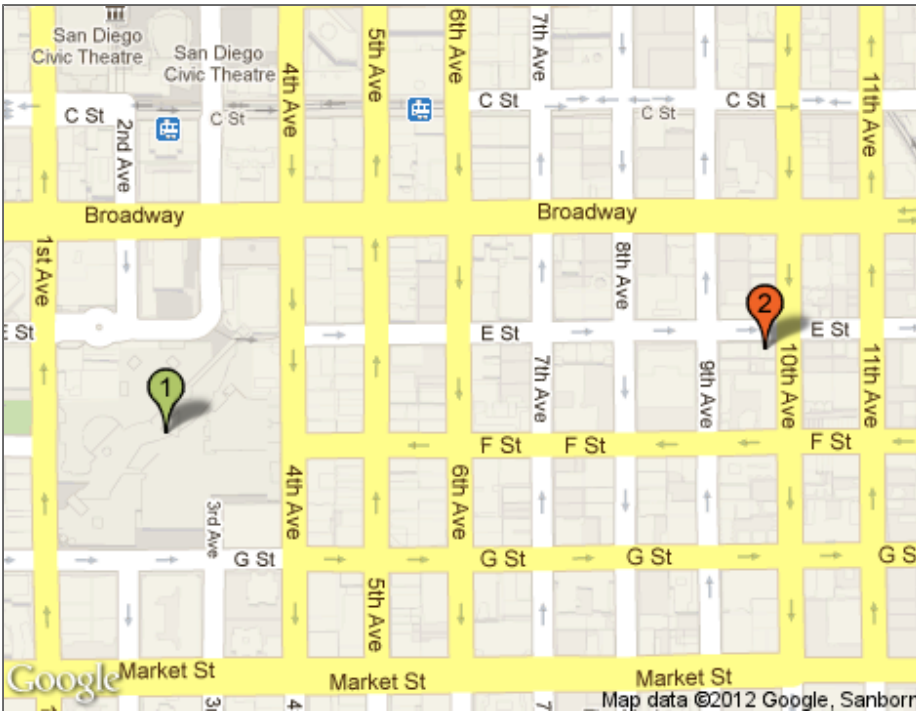
**DESCRIPTION:**

Besides serving dishes complete with locally and regionally grown ingredients, North Park's Sea Rocket Bistro has a little known secret – special events offer fans a "movie night," where their family style dining offers up special screenings of classic flicks via a large screen and projector. End of the week specials are typically themed (National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation in December) and is perfect playing in the background with a large group or party. With a friendly staff and a small bar that familiar faces habitually inhabit, Sea Rocket Bistro's local perspective is a perfect jumping point for your night in North Park. © NileGuide



[searocketbistro.com](http://searocketbistro.com)

# Day 4 - San Diego



## QUICK NOTE

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### contact:

tel: +1 619 239 8180

fax: +1 619 239 4021

<http://westfield.com/hortonplaza/>

### location:

324 Horton Plaza  
San Diego CA 92101

### hours:

M-F 10a-9p, Sa 10a-8p, Su  
11a-7p

## 1 Horton Plaza

**DESCRIPTION:** The Disneyland of shopping malls, Horton Plaza is the heart of the revitalized city center, bounded by Broadway, First and Fourth avenues, and G Street. Covering 6 1/2 city blocks, the multilevel shopping center has more than 130 specialty shops and kiosks -- there are clothing and shoe stores, fun shops for kids, and a bookstore. There's a performing arts venue (the Lyceum Theatre, home to the San Diego Repertory Theatre), a 14-screen cinema, two major department stores, and a variety of restaurants and short-order eateries. Horton Plaza opened in 1985 to rave reviews and provided an initial catalyst for the Gaslamp Quarter's redevelopment. It's almost as much an attraction as SeaWorld or the San Diego Zoo, transcending its genre with a conglomeration of crisscrossing paths, bridges, towers, and piazzas. Anchor stores are Macy's and Nordstrom, while name outlets such as Abercrombie & Fitch, Victoria's Secret, and Louis Vuitton are also in the mix; the top-level food court has a good variety of meal options. Three hours of free parking are available from 7am to 9pm; there are machines scattered throughout the mall where you can self-validate (validation





# Day 5

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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 disembark. 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 the Gaslamp 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 the Bahia 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, like George's at the Cove- famous for their modern, American ambiance and cuisine- as well as Warwick'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 the University 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 reach Del 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 new L'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 of Escondido 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

## San Diego Snapshot continued

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 renown Carlsbad Flower Fields and LEGOLAND 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 is Chula 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 the Bar Pink Cocktail Lounge- and the hidden Italian adventure Alexander'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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