



nileGUIDE

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



Michael in Flagstaff, Arizona

Top San Diego Kid-Friendly Activities

Escondido, San Diego, 7 Days

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Guide Description



AUTHOR NOTE: Guide written by Nancy Solomon

Nancy Solomon grew up in Del Mar, a great beach town in the North County area of San Diego. She heads to San Diego every year with her kids.

Note: Be sure to read the Day Notes for the kid-friendly details on recommended attractions.

Ciao Bambino provides tips and advice around all things related to traveling with kids and is a guide to the best kid friendly hotels.

Itinerary Overview

Day 1 - San Diego

DAY NOTE: Downtown & Balboa Park

The San Diego Zoo:

This world famous zoo will amaze children and adults alike! The habitat inspired enclosures make the experience unique and enjoyable. Be sure to watch the swimming hippos and polar bears. Also, visit the tigers, pandas, koalas and Children's zoo. Please note: the zoo is set on a steep hill be sure to wear comfortable shoes and bring or rent a stroller. If you're determined to see the whole property, consider the popular hop-on, hop-off bus. The zoo also pre-books private tours which are definitely worth considering. The zoo's sister property located in the northeast section of the county is the "safari" style Wild Animal Park. There is a monorail that runs through expansive enclosures. For a truly one-of-a-kind experience, they offer special encounters like a "photo safari" and overnight camp outs.

Balboa Park:

Balboa Park is a 1,200-acre complex, which is home to the zoo, but also offers a multitude of museums, theaters and large open areas to run. The Reuben H. Fleet Science Museum is a favorite among children that love hands-on exhibits. We also love the Old Globe Theater and the Starlight (open-air) Theater.

Corvette Diner:

This 50's style diner is a fun spot to grab dinner. Heads up that they don't take reservations.



San Diego Zoo

Internationally recognized zoo



Balboa Park

The center of the city



Corvette Diner

Day 2 - San Diego

DAY NOTE: Birch Aquarium and La Jolla:

La Jolla means "the Jewel" and truly this is a special little town. Start at Birch Aquarium located at the nation's leading oceanography research center. This is an intimate sight that takes about 45 minutes to explore. The back terrace offers some of

the best beach views, as well as, a small tide pool. It's an easy destination for any age.

Then, within a few miles you have many fun options. You can watch the hang-gliders soar from the cliffs (keep toddlers close), hike Torrey Pines National Reserve, or go to La Jolla Cove to run, play eat and gallery hop. We love Children's Cove because the seals are right on the beach and you can get within 20 feet and they are truly entertaining.

Don't miss the Brockton House for a great breakfast overlooking the cove.

Rimel's:

Easy and delicious food in both Cardiff and La Jolla. The casual stop makes a healthy and varied menu for picky kids—it's one of our favorites.



Torrey Pines State Preserve

A wilderness island in an urban sea

Day 4 - San Diego

DAY NOTE: Surf's Up & North County

Powerhouse Park in Del Mar:

This is a great playground and park where kids can run around while taking in the ocean front setting.

Pipes:

Located in Cardiff by the Sea, this is a locals favorite where the surfers come to replenish after a morning of surfing. Don't miss the fresh and huge breakfast burritos. Think fresh salsa, cilantro and avocado wrapped with eggs. It's a great way to start the day—San Diego style.

Menehune Surf Camp:

This camp caters to children and provides an excellent introduction to surfing. They offer both half day and full day camps at multiple locations in San Diego.



Pannikin Coffee & Tea

Itinerary Overview

Day 5 - San Diego

DAY NOTE: Sea World:

Sea World is the perfect combination between education and amusement. The shows are informative and entertaining. Bring hats to avoid roasting while sitting in the bleachers. Also, if your kid loved getting soaked - thoroughly soaked, by whales or dolphins bring a change of clothes. There's a "fun zone" with fantastic climbing structures, a water play zone and even a roller coaster. What more do you need? For smaller kids, consider hand feeding the dolphins or walruses and exploring sea animals in the tidal pool exhibit. You can also pre-book "exclusive experiences" to feed or train different animals.



SeaWorld® San Diego

Splash with Shamu and friends

Day 6 - San Diego

DAY NOTE: Hit the Beach

No matter what ages your children are, the beach is always fun. San Diego offers miles of public beaches. Some with boardwalks and college crowds (Pacific Beach), some with tide pools (La Jolla), all with the natural beauty the Pacific has to offer. The beautiful ocean and San Diego weather provide many opportunities to enjoy the outdoors. Also, there are great kayaking and mountain biking opportunities



Mission Beach

A boardwalk for entertainment & exercise

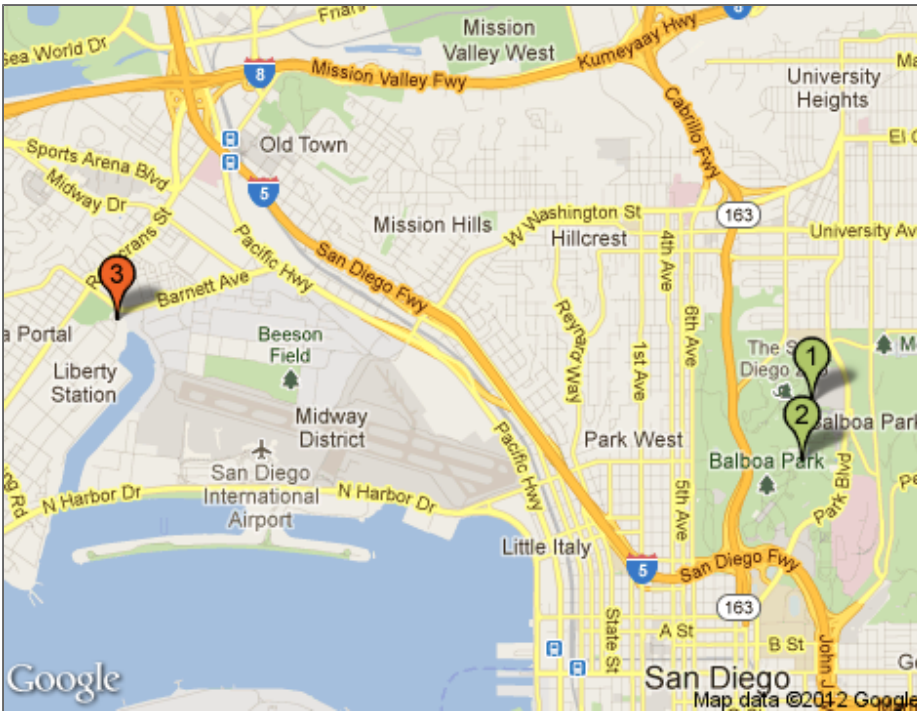
Day 7 - Escondido



San Diego Wild Animal Park

San Diego safari

Day 1 - San Diego



QUICK NOTE

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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)

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

location:

1549 El Prado
San Diego CA 92101

2 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) 542-1001
http://sandiego.citysearch.com/profile/external/452769/san_diego_ca/corvette_diner.html

location:

2965 Historic Decatur Rd
San Diego CA 92103-3112

3 Corvette Diner

DESCRIPTION: The Scene

Black and white checkered floor, chrome accented counters and real soda fountains fill the two-tiered dining room, with a shiny, vintage corvette on display in the center. Waitresses don huge wigs and display impressive pin collections on their aprons, and their colorful personalities are exaggerated during impromptu song-and-dance routines whenever Rock Around The Clock cranks on the juke box.

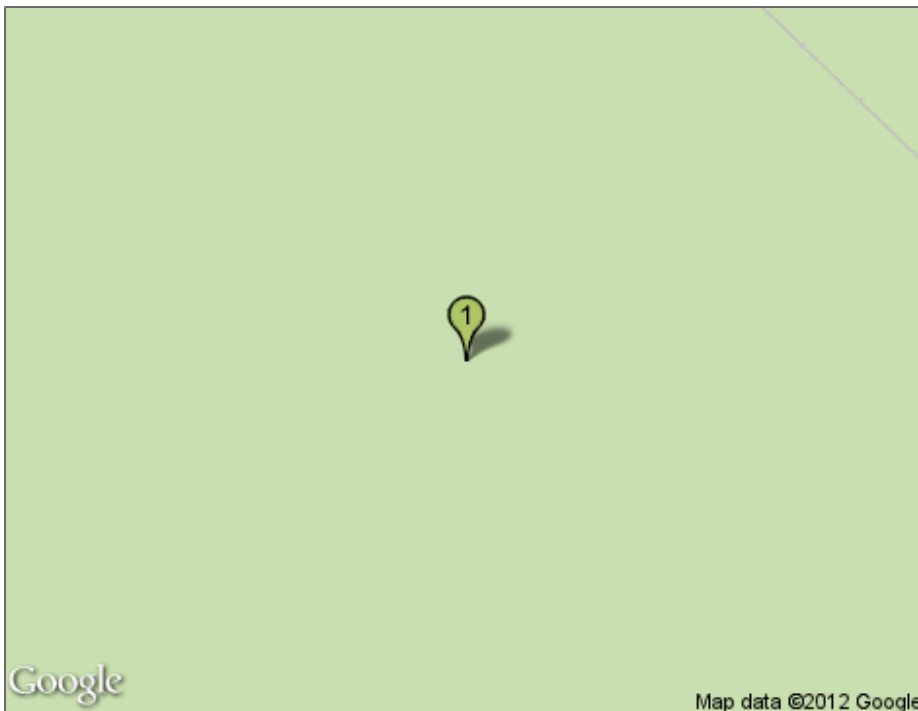
The Food

In classic 1950s diner style, every burger is named for a pretty lady and the milkshake section is the longest on the menu. Chicken fingers and mac 'n cheese please the kiddos, which make up the bulk of the clientele, and parents will delight in a decent salad selection. After dessert, watch out for flying Bazooka bubble gum at your table as the check arrives.



citysearch

Day 2 - San Diego



QUICK NOTE

DAY NOTE: Birch Aquarium and La Jolla:

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Rimel's:

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contact:

tel: 619-642-4200

fax: 619-642-4222

<http://www.torreypine.org/>

location:

9609 Waples Street, Suite
200

San Diego CA 92121

1 Torrey Pines State Preserve

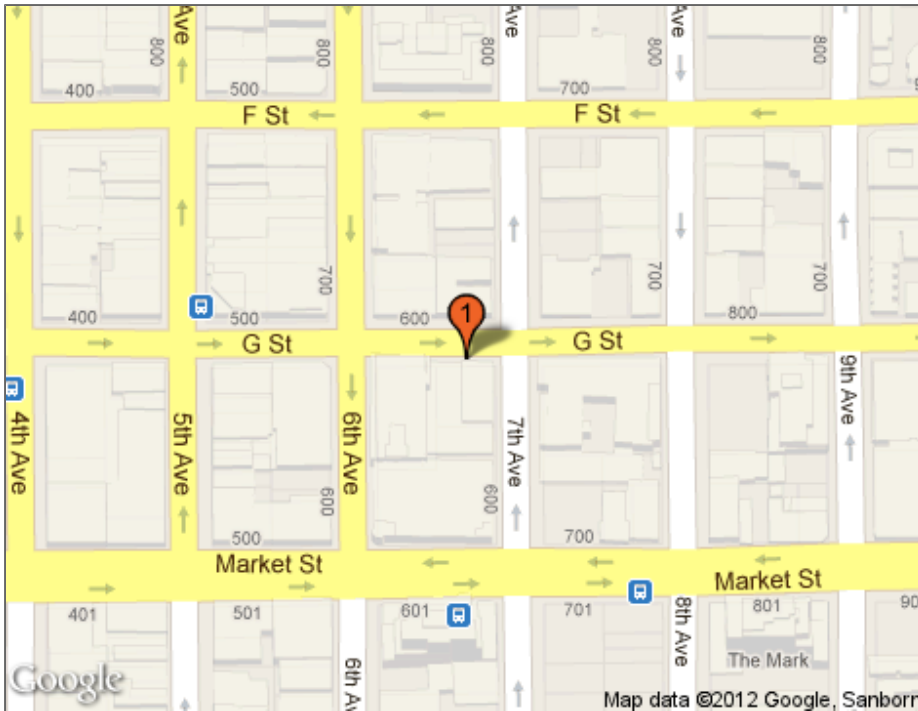
DESCRIPTION: This fragile environment is the home of our nation's rarest pine tree - *Pinus torreyana*. Once this tree covered a larger area. It now grows only here and on Santa Rosa Island off the coast near Santa Barbara. The park preserves not only the trees, but also the last salt marshes and waterfowl refuges in Southern California. The reserve features high broken cliffs and deep ravines on headlands



Photo courtesy of Torrey Pines State Preserve

overlooking the ocean. Hikers can follow trails through stands of wind-sculpted pines. A picturesque, pueblo-style structure that served as a restaurant when it was built in 1923 houses the visitor center, featuring interpretive displays. Picnicking and camping are prohibited in the reserve. The reserve's rich plant community features wildflowers in the spring and visitors can see the California quail gathered in coveys in the early mornings of fall and winter. Torrey Pines State Beach can also be reached by trail from the Reserve. Hiking if available in the preserve, however, picnicking and camping are prohibited. Torrey Pines State Reserve is located between La Jolla and Del Mar, California, north of San Diego. From Hwy. 5, exit on Carmel Valley Road and drive west for about 1.5 miles till you reach the Coast Highway 101. Turn left and proceed along the beach for about a mile. The park entrance is on your right just before the highway begins to climb the Torrey Pines grade.

Day 4 - San Diego



QUICK NOTE

DAY NOTE: Surf's Up & North County

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Pipes:

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Menehune Surf Camp:

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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 accoutrements 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 caffeine 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

Day 5 - San Diego



QUICK NOTE

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contact:
tel: (619) 226-3900
<http://www.seaworld.com/san-diego/>

location:
500 SeaWorld Drive
San Diego California 92109

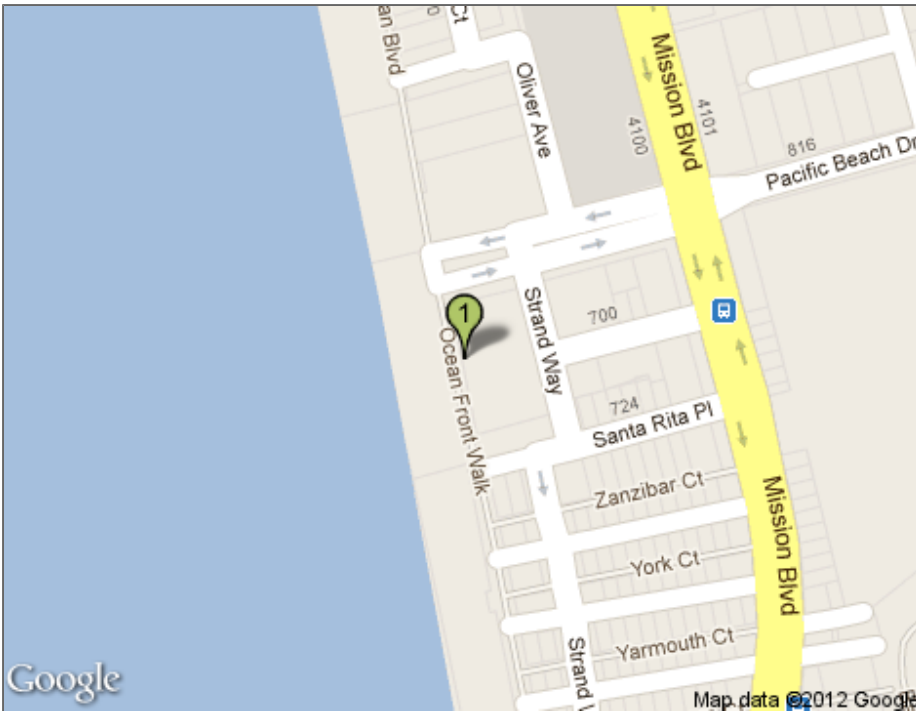
1 SeaWorld® San Diego

DESCRIPTION: Spend a full day exploring the awe-inspiring world of marine life at SeaWorld San Diego. Every encounter is a new adventure when you come face to face with the friendly dolphins, magnificent white beluga whales and playful penguins of SeaWorld San Diego. Experience life far under the sea as you feed dolphins, get up close to a polar bear and count the teeth on a shark! Of course, there's also the mythical rush of the Journey To Atlantis water coaster and Shamu - our biggest star both day and night in Believe and Shamu Rocks. See itinerary below for full descriptions of SeaWorld attractions. Special Offer - Book for travel in 2010 and receive unlimited admission for seven (7) consecutive days - BOOK NOW! © Viator



viator

Day 6 - San Diego



QUICK NOTE

DAY NOTE: Hit the Beach

No matter what ages your children are, the beach is always fun. San Diego offers miles of public beaches. Some with boardwalks and college crowds (Pacific Beach), some with tide pools (La Jolla), all with the natural beauty the Pacific has to offer. The beautiful ocean and San Diego weather provide many opportunities to enjoy the outdoors. Also, there are great kayaking and mountain biking opportunities

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

1 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



Day 7 - Escondido



QUICK NOTE

contact:
tel: +1 619 231 1515
fax: +1 760 738 5023
<http://www.sandiegozoo.org>

location:
15500 San Pasqual Valley Rd
Escondido CA 92027

hours:
Daily 9a-4p

1 San Diego Wild Animal Park

DESCRIPTION: Animal lovers of all kinds will want to make the trek to this beautifully designed park and refuge for endangered species, including a renowned display of extremely rare California Condors. Thirty two miles north of downtown San Diego, you'll be transported to the wilds of Africa, Asia and Australia. Here at the park, more than 3,500 animals representing 260 species roam in habitats designed to simulate their natural environs. Ride the Wgasa Bush Line Railway for a five-mile, 55-minute guided tour or walk the trails that weave through the 1,800 acre park. Exceptional Botanic Gardens, gift shops, research information and restaurants can all be found here. Check out some gear for you or your own companion animals in the gift shop. Admission required. © wcities.com



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 renowned 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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