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Page 1 of 3



Facts: Many people live in San Diego, it has a population of more than 1.4 million and is the eighth largest city in the US. However, few people are actually from San Diego.

Instead, it's full of surfers, beach bums, professionals, immigrants and military personnel – people who fell in love with the city and never left.

With more than 100km of stunning coastline, near perfect weather year-round, a laid-back SoCal vibe and named California's beach city, it's not hard to see why.

As the famous sign-off line from the hit movie, *Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy*, goes, "You stay classy, San Diego."

SO WHAT ABOUT THOSE BEACHES?

La Jolla is the jewel of San Diego and the coastal up-market township is likened to that of LA's Beverly Hills.

The coastline here is spectacular and varied, from 100-metre cliffs to rocky reefs, golden beaches and secluded coves. One of the best ways to take it all in and get up close to the playful seals and sea lions is on a kayak tour at La Jolla Cove with local company Everyday California.

For beach town vibes, head to Ocean Beach, a laid back '60s-style beach community, and be sure to check out the weekly farmers' market held every Wednesday from 4pm-8pm. Grab a plate of ceviche or a slice

of pizza from one of the food stalls and walk down to the beachfront for great people watching.

WHAT'S THE BEST

WAY TO SEE THE BEACHES?

To see some of San Diego's most famous coastline, hire a bike and cruise along the boardwalk of Mission Beach and Pacific Beach (PB to locals).

Popular with the young party set, you'll find the 20 to 30-something-year-olds at one of the many watering holes in the area. For an iconic San Diego moment, stop at Belmont Park and take a ride on the wooden Giant Dipper Rollercoaster with ocean views.

IF YOU'RE AFTER CULTURE ...

Balboa Park, where culture, science, and nature collide, is home to more than 17 museums, multiple performing arts venues, beautiful gardens, trails and the famous San Diego Zoo. The museums cover San Diego history, arts, crafts, the history of flight, trains, cars and cultures the



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Page 2 of 3

world over. You can buy a Balboa Park Explorer multi-day pass from \$57.

IF YOU'RE A MARILYN FAN ...

Coronado, on San Diego's Coronado Island, is consistently voted one of America's best beaches and is set against the backdrop of the iconic Hotel del Coronado featured in Marilyn Monroe's 1958 film, *Some Like It Hot*.

The "Hotel Del" has hosted some of

the most famous celebrities, from Marilyn Monroe to the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. Even if you're not staying there you can wander through the magnificent hotel and try not be spooked by its ghost tales.

WHAT'S THE FOOD LIKE?

San Diego's proximity to Mexico means the city has a thriving Cali-Baja food scene. Think fish tacos, ceviche, salsa and enchiladas. One of the most popular Mexican restaurants is Galaxy Taco at La Jolla – the head chef recommends trying the lengua taco (beef tongue).

Curadero in the city's Gaslamp Quarter has great Mexican street food in a funky setting. Share some of the main plates including braised pork shank and roasted chicken in black bean sauce.

AND THE RESTAURANTS?

San Diego's food scene has taken off with a focus on farm to table produce. Near Balboa Park is Cucina Urbana, a California-inspired Italian kitchen and wine shop with pizzas and pastas that uses local, sustainable products.

Little Italy is buzzing with new restaurants and the bustling Kettner Boulevard is now known as "Top Chef Alley".

Ironside Fish & Oyster bar has a menu full of local seafood (Little Italy was historically a fishing village) and *Top Chef* winner Richard Blais has recently opened Juniper & Ivy.

WHAT'S COOL?

Celebrity chef Santiago Campa is the cholesterol-raising brains behind Donut Bar where Instagram-worthy doughnuts have made him famous.

USA Today named him the top doughnut shop in the country and Uber Eats says his french toast doughnut is the No. 1 ordered item globally. Campa sells about 3000 doughnuts a day and says his secret to making great-tasting doughnuts is

double fermentation.

FOR AMERICAN BREAKFAST ...

Arrive hungry and don't expect to eat for the rest of the day. Breakfast Republic puts a twist on American classics including S'mores french toast, Oreo pancakes and Mexican-influenced dishes including chilaquiles – corn tortillas, eggs, salsa, beans and Mexican rice – in portions that hurt your stomach by just looking at them.

AND BEER?

San Diego's craft brew scene has exploded with more than 140 breweries throughout the county.

Mike Hess Brewing in North Park was the original nano brewery of San Diego known for its grapefruit-flavoured IPA. Order a tasting flight of beers from lagers to IPAs and stouts and sip among the huge beer tanks.

WHERE'S THE BEST NIGHTLIFE?

The trendy uptown neighbourhood of North Park is the bar-hopping spot of San Diego with numerous craft-beer establishments, restaurants and bars.

The historic Gaslamp Quarter also transforms into an adults' playground at night. The main strip buzzes with pubs, live music and plenty of trendy restaurants.

WHERE SHOULD I STAY?

Downtown, Hotel Indigo has a unique view overlooking Petco Park where you can literally watch a baseball game at the stadium in comfort from your hotel room. The modern hotel is conveniently located right by the Gaslamp Quarter with a great rooftop for a relaxing evening drink.

For something more fancy, The Lodge at Torrey Pines sits on the famous Torrey Pines Golf Course on the clifftops of La Jolla. The 18th hole at Torrey Pines will forever be remembered as one of the most exciting days in golf – when Tiger Woods forced a playoff in the 2008 US Open which he won the next day for his 14th major.

The Lodge feels part Californian bungalow, part hunting lodge. You'll be greeted by a concierge in a kilt and stay in rooms overlooking the famous course. Dine at the award-winning A.R. Valentien signature restaurant.

HOW DO YOU GET THERE?

Delta Airlines, Virgin Australia, Qantas, United and American Airlines fly direct to Los Angeles. From there it's a two-hour drive to San Diego or you can take an internal domestic flight. San Diego airport is just 10 minutes from downtown.

MORE

SANDIEGO.ORG

THE WRITER WAS A GUEST OF SAN DIEGO
TOURISM AUTHORITY

UBER EATS SAYS
SANTIAGO CAMPA'S
FRENCH TOAST
DOUGHNUT IS
THE NO.1 ORDERED
ITEM GLOBALLY





TASTY TIPS

FIVE BEST SAN DIEGO FOOD EXPERIENCES

1.

Galaxy Taco in La Jolla – order the avocado tostada with Oaxacan crickets. The crickets are sourced from Mexico and marinated in citrus and chillies.

2.

Ironside Fish & Oyster Bar in Little Italy is famous for the lobster roll but the real standout is the seriously tender octopus a la plancha.

3.

Urban Solace in North Park offers Southern flair comfort food. Make sure to order their take on the mac'n'cheese – Duckaroni with duck confit and blue cheese.

4.

Snooze Eatery in Hillcrest is tops for their breakfast pot pie.

5.

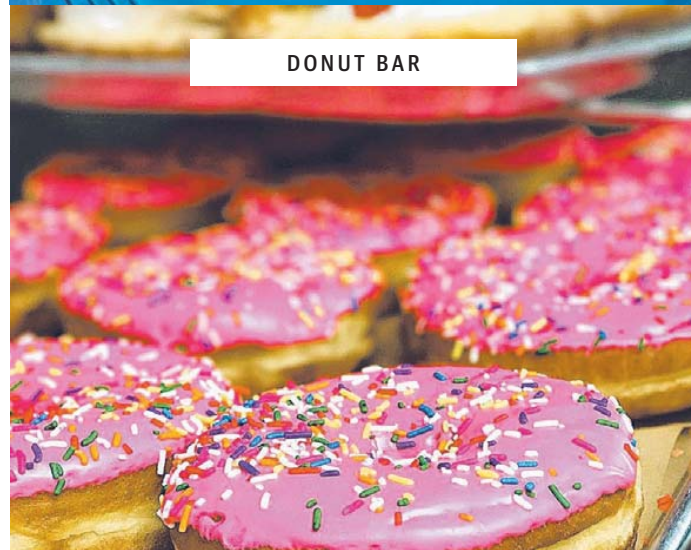
A.R. Valentien at The Lodge Torrey Pines for a menu that changes with the seasons. Its seafood, including the Alaskan halibut, is excellent.



GOLDEN BEACHES



THE LODGE TORREY PINES



DONUT BAR