

San Diego



©2002 James Blank, San Diego Visitor and Convention Bureau

San Diego Top Attractions

THE 59 MILE SCENIC DRIVE IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY

A perfect introduction to a unique and exciting city. The route can be driven in approximately three hours, but please allow additional time for sightseeing along the way. If you have the time, we suggest you devote a full day for your excursion. Please [click here](#) for a map and route planner for the 59 Mile Scenic Drive. San Diego's 59-mile scenic drive is a beautiful way to spend a day. Encompassing a good portion of the city's most outstanding attractions, it can be driven in three hours with a few stops. However, one could spend days visiting the many museums, parks, restaurants, shops and attractions along the way. The scenic drive, a drive through "America's Finest City" provides a quick lesson on San Diego's fascinating history, scenery, people, places, and things. Follow the blue and yellow signs illustrated with a white sea gull, which are posted every quarter-mile along the route. (Please note: Some of the sea gull signs may be missing or turned, follow the directions as written.)

EMBARCADERO

Start at the foot of BROADWAY driving north on HARBOR DR. On your left is the Broadway Pier: from here you may take a harbor excursion, or a ferry across to Coronado. Next is the Cruise Ship Terminal, where cruise ships dock when calling on San Diego. Further along the Embarcadero, visit the three ships of the MARITIME MUSEUM. The ferryboat Berkeley, built in 1898, was used to ferry people to safety after the San Francisco earthquake in 1906. The luxury yacht Medea was built in Scotland and served during WW II. The Star of India, built in 1863 is an iron hulled square rigged sailing vessel that has circled the globe 27 times. It is sea worthy and is sailed for special events.



©2002 San Diego Visitor and Convention Bureau

HARBOR ISLAND

From this point, drive north along the harbor on HARBOR DR. Drive past the airport, Lindbergh Field, (named after Charles Lindbergh, whose famous flight began in San Diego) until you see the exit sign HARBOR ISLAND. Take the exit and drive to both ends of the island. Harbor Island is a man made island created by dredging the channel. There are several hotels and restaurants located on the island. The island is an ideal spot to walk or picnic if you care to make a stop here.

SPANISH LANDING & SHELTER ISLAND

To return to HARBOR DR., cross the bridge, stay in the right lane, go through the loop and continue driving west along Harbor Drive past SPANISH LANDING. On your right is the "USS Recruit" or "USS Never Sail", formerly used to train recruits. It is the only landlocked commissioned ship. Continue west and make a LEFT turn on SCOTT ST. This island, also man made, was once a submerged shoal, and reflects a nautical theme. Most of San Diego's sportfishing fleet is docked here. On the tip of the island you will find the "YOKOHAMA FRIENDSHIP BELL" Yokohama is San Diego's sister city in Japan. San Diego has several sister cities around the world. THE TUNA MAN'S MEMORIAL was dedicated in 1986 to honor the tuna fishermen who helped build San Diego's large tuna industry. Visit the small beach and walk along the marinas.

POINT LOMA

From Shelter Island Drive make a left turn on SCOTT ST. then a right turn at TALBOT ST. In the second quarter of the 19th century San Diego's economy was based on raising cattle. As a result, a huge industry in hides and tallow developed. It was from this area that these hides were loaded aboard freighters and shipped to New England to be made into fine leather goods. The hides, known as California Banknotes or leather dollars, were used as legal tender and valued at one dollar. The cattle fat, as tallow or soap, was shipped to South America and used as a by-product to make candles.

The Old Point Loma Light House began operating in 1855. Standing 462 feet above sea level, the light house was built with lights but, without a foghorn. It has been restored to its former residential style and is open to the public on special occasions. Because the original lighthouse was often obscured by fog and therefore unable to guide ships into the bay, another lighthouse was built at sea level in 1891, and is still in use today. Naval research and a submarine base are located on Point Loma. The military, with its depression-proof payroll, was an economic savior during hard times. The tip of Point Loma is the most southwestern point of the continental U.S. During the winter months it is an excellent spot to watch the Gray Whale Migration. Visit the tide pools, join in a ranger walk, see the auditorium, stop at the visitor center and enjoy the panoramic view of the San Diego harbor.



CABRILLO MEMORIAL

On both sides of the road, you will see the gravestones in Fort Rosecrans Cemetery. This is a military cemetery. Many of San Diego's military men and women who lost their lives during wartime are buried here. A monument honoring 60 sailors killed in the 1905 explosion of the gunboat USS Bennington is also found here.

CABRILLO NATIONAL MONUMENT

Continue driving to the CABRILLO NATIONAL MONUMENT. Sailing under the flag of Imperial Spain, Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo set out to search for the Strait of Anian, believed to be the passage linking the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. On September 28, 1542, with two ships, the San Salvador and the La Victoria, he sailed into San Diego bay naming it San Miguel after the Archangel Saint Michael. From the tip of Point Loma you can see Ballast Point, formerly known as Fort Guijarros (Fort Cobblestones), where trading ships loaded and unloaded cargo. Historians believe that Cabrillo anchored just inside Ballast Point. Sixty years later, on the feast day of the Franciscan Saint Didacus, or Saint de Alcala de Henares, Sebastian Vizcaino renamed the port San Diego de Alcala. There is a minimal fee to enter the park.

OCEAN BEACH

Return to CABRILLO MEMORIAL DR.; the name changes to CATALINA BLVD. Continue driving along Catalina Boulevard and turn LEFT at HILL ST. Continue on and turn RIGHT at CORDOVA ST which becomes SUNSET CLIFFS BLVD. Sunset Cliffs is a popular surfing spot. At the base of the cliffs are the tide pools and small beaches. You are now driving along the waterfront and through the community of OCEAN BEACH. If you wish, you may make a short side trip to Ocean Beach Municipal Fishing Pier by taking a LEFT turn onto NEWPORT AVE. The pier is an excellent spot for fishing and bird watching.

MISSION BAY AQUATIC PARK

Return to and continue driving along SUNSET CLIFFS BLVD. And follow the signs to MISSION BAY PARK. This area, originally known as Bahia Falso (False Bay), was developed in the 1950's. Today, this is a 4600 acre aquatic playground with 27 miles of beaches. To visit MISSION BAY AQUATIC PARK, follow SUNSET CLIFFS BOULEVARD, continue driving across the bridge, keeping to the right around the clover leaf and drive NORTH on INGRAHAM ST.

SEA WORLD DR.

135-acre marine life park. You may enjoy dolphin, killer whale, otter and seal shows scheduled all day long. The Penguin and Shark Encounters are very interesting, as are the other educa-

©2002 San Diego Visitor and Convention Bureau



tional exhibits and aquariums. To continue the Scenic Drive, return to Ingraham Street and continue driving NORTH on INGRAHAM STREET and across two bridges. At the second bridge, which crosses over Fisherman's Channel, turn RIGHT onto CROWN POINT DR. Stop and enjoy the wind surfers and catamarans flying across the water, or enjoy a walk on the pathway around the bay. Located on Mission Bay, this 150 acre marine life and entertainment park is home to the famous Shamu, the killer whale. Visitors can choose from 5 shows and more than 20 live exhibits and attractions, including lunch with Shamu.

SOLEDAD MOUNTAIN

Follow CROWN POINT DR and turn LEFT at LAMONT ST. At the intersection of BERYL ST., the name will change to SOLEDAD RD. Drive up the hill past KATE SESSIONS PARK and turn LEFT onto SOLEDAD MOUNTAIN RD. Shortly thereafter, turn RIGHT onto LA JOLLA SCENIC DR. This is an exclusive residential area. Look for the turnoff to MT SOLEDAD PARK. At this lookout point, you can see San Diego County for miles in every direction. The MT SOLEDAD cross, 43 feet high, was dedicated in 1954 to honor the nation's war dead.

UCSD CAMPUS & SALK INSTITUTE

As you leave the park turn RIGHT on VIA CAPRI, drive down the hill and turn LEFT on HIDDEN VALLEY RD. Turn LEFT at the stop sign onto the frontage road and RIGHT at the stoplight. At the next stoplight, turn LEFT and follow the signs to TORREY PINES RD. Turn LEFT on NORTH TORREY PINES RD. The UCSD CAMPUS is on your right. Each technical school features a different style of architecture. The magnificent library is located in an eucalyptus grove and is a spectacular sight. The faculty has many distinguished scholars and nobel laureates.

BIRCH AQUARIUM AT SCRIPPS AND SALK INSTITUTE

While you are in the UCSD area, you can take two short side trips from the marked route. First, to visit the Birch Aquarium at Scripps, turn left from NORTH TORREY PINES RD onto Expedition Way. Follow the signs. When you leave the Aquarium parking lot, turn LEFT onto NORTH TORREY PINES RD. To take the second side trip, continue north along NORTH TORREY PINES RD to the SALK INSTITUTE, named after Dr Jonas Salk, who developed the polio vaccine. Just beyond the institute is the Torrey Pines Glider Port where you may see the hang gliders sail through the air off the cliffs. Make a U-TURN and return south along TORREY PINES RD. Watch for the beautiful views of the La Jolla Shoreline. On your right is LA JOLLA SHORES BEACH, once known as "Long Beach". At low tide, you can walk from La Jolla Shores Beach to Torrey Pines State Beach. Blacks Beach is located between these beaches.



©2002 Bob Yarbrough, San Diego Visitor and Convention Bureau

LA JOLLA COVE PARK & LA JOLLA CAVE

Continue in the same direction along LA JOLLA SHORES DR. and turn RIGHT onto TORREY PINES RD. Turn RIGHT at PROSPECT, a well-known shopping street in La Jolla. Turn RIGHT onto COAST BLVD and drive along the LA JOLLA COVE.

LA JOLLA COVE PARK

With its rock formation called Alligator Point, is a lovely park for picnics, kite flying and other waterfront activities. The nearby Children's Pool, with its protective breakwater, is a safe seaside playground. Stop and visit the LA JOLLA CAVE area. Explore the cliff on top and view its vegetation and many bird nests. The entrance to the cave is through the La Jolla Cave and Shell Shop. Walk down the stairs and visit the cave. LA JOLLA UNDERWATER PARK is an ecological preserve, that can only be reached by snorkelers from La Jolla Cove and by scuba divers from La Jolla Shores.

PROSPECT ST.

Walk up Cuvier Street to the elegant shopping and restaurant district on Prospect Street and Girard Avenue.

LA JOLLA RESIDENTIAL AREA

Continue driving along COAST BLVD. Turn RIGHT at OLIVETAS STREET, the street name will change to PEARL STREET. At the stop light, turn RIGHT onto LA JOLLA BLVD. At the stop light, turn LEFT onto NAUTILUS and drive up the hill and turn RIGHT onto LA JOLLA SCENIC DR. Turn LEFT onto LA JOLLA MESA DR and drive down the hill. Beautiful homes are on both sides of the road and the view of Pacific Beach and the coastline is magnificent.

PACIFIC BEACH

The street name will change to MISSION BLVD. The cross streets are named after gems and minerals. On your right is PACIFIC BEACH, a popular and attractive place for sunbathing. If you wish to walk along the ocean front, use OCEAN FRONT WALK and stop at Diamond Street. The beach walk is a great spot for people watching, skateboarding, biking and roller skating. During WW II the ballroom on the 1000-foot-long Crystal Pier hosted big band orchestras. Today you can stay at the motel and fish from the pier. The Grunion, a native fish, spawns from March through August and Grunion Runs are very popular with San Diegans. During the Grunion Runs, in the evenings, hundreds of the female fish are carried by waves to the beach, where they lay their eggs in the sand. The male fish fertilize them seconds later. The male and female fish are carried out by the next wave. During the next high tide, about ten days later, the baby grunions hatch.



©2002 Bob Yarbrough, San Diego Visitor and Convention Bureau

MISSION BEACH

The community of Mission Beach has the highest population density in San Diego. Continue driving along MISSION BLVD and at the ROLLER COASTER, turn right at the light and park your car in the lot. The Giant Dipper, 74 feet tall, is a historic landmark. Go for a swim in the indoor swimming pool, "The Plunge" in Belmont Park, or stop at one of the ocean front restaurants or shops.

SPORTS ARENA

Drive East on WEST MISSION BAY DR. Follow the signs for SPORTS ARENA BLVD. Drive under the freeway overpass and turn LEFT at the first stoplight to continue along SPORTS ARENA BLVD. At KOBAY'S SWAP MEET (open air market) you will find bargains of all sorts. It is open Thursdays through Sundays 7:30am-2:00pm.

OLD TOWN STATE HISTORIC PARK

Pass the SPORTS ARENA, drive straight through the intersection from the right-hand lane, bear LEFT onto ROSECRANS ST. and go under the freeway overpass. At the stoplight the street name will change to TAYLOR ST. On your right is OLD TOWN STATE HISTORIC PARK. Visit the historic Spanish and Mexican park with its many restaurants, museums and shopping facilities. (Several parking lots are available and clearly marked). Many buildings have been restored to their original beauty. You may stop at the Whaley House, Mormon Battalion, Casa de Estudillo, Seeley Stables, or Bazaar Del Mundo, just to mention a few. Docents in the park can tell you more. There are free walking tours of Old Town State park daily at 2pm. They leave from the State Park Headquarters. Visit the charming Heritage Park Row. Many Victorian buildings scheduled for demolition were moved here and restored. Near the west entrance to Mission Valley, Old Town State Park commemorates San Diego's earliest European settlement. A popular landmark with locals and visitors alike, the park is filled with historical points of interest, quaint shops, and an abundance of Mexican and early California-style restaurants.

JUNIPERO SERRA MUSEUM

Continue driving along TAYLOR ST. Turn RIGHT on PRESIDIO DR., drive up the hill and turn LEFT on PRESIDIO DR. Visit the JUNIPERO SERRA MUSEUM, which displays artifacts and photographs depicting the early days of San Diego. A panoramic view of Mission Valley, Mission Bay, and the University of San Diego is seen from the tower. Father Serra began Mission San Diego de Alcala within the perimeter of the fort overlooking present day Old Town. Archeological excavations uncovered the site of the first church in Alta (Upper) California, where Father Junipera Serra preached the gospel to the Kumeyaay Indians in 1769. These Native Americans were migratory desert people from Arizona. Read about a side trip to the MISSION SAN DIEGO DE ALCALA at the conclusion of these instructions.



©2002 San Diego Visitor and Convention Bureau



©2002 James Blank, San Diego Visitor and Convention Bureau

HILLCREST

After visiting the Serra Museum, continue up PRESIDIO DR. and turn LEFT at ARISTA ST. Turn RIGHT at FORT STOCKTON. You are now driving through Mission Hills, one of San Diego's first suburbs. You will note the streets have names of birds. Turn RIGHT at GOLDFINCH. Continue one block and turn LEFT onto WASHINGTON ST. You are now in HILLCREST. At the turn of the century, Hillcrest was developed as the city up the hill from Old Town. In those days, many bankers lived there and it was called "Bankers Hill". In this small community you may visit many antique stores, art galleries, bakeries and restaurants.

BALBOA PARK

Turn RIGHT on FIRST AVE. Here the 23 streets are named alphabetically after trees, from Ash to Walnut. Turn LEFT onto LAUREL STREET, which becomes EL PRADO and drive into BALBOA PARK. Balboa Park was named in honor of the Spanish explorer Vasco Nunez de Balboa, who discovered the Pacific Ocean in 1513. Paseo del Prado or "The Promenade" was named after a fashionable promenade and its famous museum of art in Madrid, Spain: the Prado. In 1892, Kate O. Sessions leased part of the park to establish a nursery. As a horticulturist, she cultivated and planted a great variety of flowers and trees which today beautify San Diego's parks. Many buildings in Balboa Park are of Mexican or Spanish Colonial architecture and were constructed for the Panama-California Exposition, 1915 to 1916, and used for the California-Pacific International Exposition in 1935. The park covers 1400 acres. Balboa Park offers a multi-pass for \$30 you can purchase a Passport to Balboa Park. The Passport enables you to experience 13 Balboa Park Museums for only \$30 (\$70 approximate value) and is good for an entire week. You may purchase the Passport to Balboa Park at any participating museum, the Balboa Park Visitor Center or at the Times Arts Tix Booth located at Horton Plaza. Located in Balboa Park is home to 4,000 rare and endangered species, 6,500 varieties of birds, mammals and reptiles, and 6,500 varieties of exotic plants. Among its most striking features are the Polar Bear Plunge, Giant Pandas, Hippo Beach, Gorilla Tropics, Tiger River, Sun Bear Forest, the Children's Zoo and giant walk-through aviaries.

With dozens of public parks, 70 miles of beaches and a myriad of museums and attractions, hours of fun await.

The Online Transit Information System Trip Planner is a great tool for navigating your way around San Diego using public transportation.

SAN DIEGO ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN

The world famous SAN DIEGO ZOO occupies 100 acres of Balboa Park. Dr. Harry Wegeforth founded the San Diego Zoo in 1916 with animals left over from the Panama-California Exposition. Founders Day is celebrated the first Monday of October each year and admission to the Zoo is free. The exhibits feature animals in their natural shared environments. The zoo is best known for its conservation work. Research on the survival of endangered species is on-going. For information about visiting the WILD ANIMAL PARK, also run by the San Diego Zoological Association, read about suggested side trips at the end of these instructions.



MUSEUMS, ORGAN PAVILLION, HOUSES OF PACIFIC RELATIONS

Balboa Park is also known for its gardens, picnic areas, theaters and sports facilities: golf, tennis, horseshoes, swimming and shuffleboard. The many museums in the park are devoted to art, history, space, sports, physical and natural sciences. A replica of "The Spirit of St. Louis", the plane in which Charles E. Lindbergh crossed the Atlantic in 1927, is displayed in the Aerospace Museum. Funding for the flight came from businessmen in St. Louis, Missouri, hence its name. From EL PRADO, turn RIGHT to PAN AMERICAN EAST RD.

ORGAN PAVILLION

on your left. Free concerts are performed here on Sunday afternoons. The cluster of small cottages on your right is known as the HOUSES OF PACIFIC RELATIONS. Each Sunday afternoon, one of the house's sponsors ethnic folk dances, music or entertainment.

FINANCIAL DISTRICT

To exit the park, turn LEFT on PRESIDENTS WAY. Turn RIGHT onto PARK BLVD. The street name will change to 12th AVE. Turn RIGHT at "B" ST. You are now driving through the Financial District of San Diego. Turn LEFT on FOURTH AVE and RIGHT on BROADWAY. You are now traveling west towards the waterfront.

SEAPORT VILLAGE

Turn LEFT on PACIFIC HWY. About one-half mile farther down, you will reach SEAPORT VILLAGE. Park your car in one of the parking lots and visit this charming shopping center located on the waterfront. Children will enjoy a ride on the restored 1890 Broadway Flying Horses Carousel, which like all carousels, rotates counter clockwise. The animals were carved by Charles Looft. Visit the many shops and restaurants and enjoy the fresh breeze.

CONVENTION CENTER & EMBARCADERO MARINA PARK

When you leave Seaport Village, turn RIGHT onto HARBOR DR. You are now driving East. On your right is the SAN DIEGO CONVENTION CENTER, opened in 1989. Just beyond the convention center visit the Embarcadero Marina Park. From this park there is a good view of the CORONADO BRIDGE. The “nickel snatchers”, Juanita and Glorietta, ferried people across to Coronado until 1969, when the bridge was opened. The bridge is 230 feet high and spans a distance of 2 ½ miles. The midsection is built with flotation devices in order to allow for safe passage of Navy ships in case of disaster. Stroll the boardwalk, fly a kite, or just enjoy the Marina and San Diego Bay.

GASLAMP QUARTER DISTRICT

Return to HARBOR DR, turn left on HARBOR DR, then turn RIGHT on to FIFTH AVE. During the California Gold Rush, this waterfront section was once known as the Stingaree District. It was here the saloons, gambling halls and opium dens opened their doors to sailors at nightfall. The area was also the home for most of San Diego’s growing Chinese population. You are now traveling through the historic heart of San Diego called the GASLAMP QUARTER. This 16 « block area was the business district of Alonzo Horton’s “New Town”. In 1867, Horton, a native of San Francisco, bought 960 acres of mud flats and sagebrush for a total cost of \$265.00, or 27 « cents an acre. He developed it into what is now downtown San Diego. Because corner lots were more valuable, he made short street blocks. The area recalls decades of the last century and is the gem of Victorian and California style architecture. Note the fire resistant brick walls and metal shutters in the buildings. Many art galleries, restaurants, theaters and antique shops are located in this area. Street festivals are held throughout the year. Weekend guided walking tours of the Gaslamp Quarter start at the WILLIAM HEATH DAVIS HOUSE. This “salt box” house, as it was known, was built in 1859 in New England, shipped around Cape Horn and assembled here. It is the oldest standing prefabricated house in San Diego.

THE HORTON GRAND HOTEL

on Island Ave. was built by joining together the Grand and the Kahle Saddlery Hotels which were originally built in 1886. Tours of the hotel are guided by the "Madam" and afternoon tea is served daily. The San Diego Hardware Company established in 1892 is the oldest family owned company in San Diego. In 1907, The Golden Lion Tavern, featuring a spectacular stained glass dome, first opened its doors to men only, women were not allowed admission until 1915. It is now known as Johnny M's 801 (801 Fourth Ave.).

HORTON PLAZA

Continue driving on FIFTH AVE. and turn LEFT onto "F" ST. At the next intersection, you are at HORTON PLAZA. Horton Plaza is a unique shopping, dining and entertainment complex. To visit this interesting site of contemporary architecture, park your car in the parking garage. Be sure to take note of the number and vegetable or fruit level on which you are parked. For information, maps, pamphlets and tourist booklets, stop at the INTERNATIONAL VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER, an office of the SAN DIEGO CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU, located on the west side of the plaza at street level on First Avenue at "F" Street, close to Nordstrom. The information center is open Monday thru Saturday from 8:30 to 5:00pm (Sundays 11:00am to 5:00pm June, July & August). Phone number: (619) 236-1212.

MISSION SAN DIEGO DE ALCALA

To access the Mission, drive eastbound on INTERSTATE 8, exit MISSION GORGE RD., turn LEFT onto TWAIN ST. which becomes SAN DIEGO MISSION RD. (The Mission will be on the right). In 1774, MISSION SAN DIEGO DE ALCALA was moved from its original location in Presidio Park to the valley where water and grazing land were plentiful. In an effort to protect the native Kumeyaay Indians from the influence of the military, father Serra moved them to the new mission site. The soldiers remained at the Presidio. Mission San Diego de Alcala was the first of 21 missions founded in California along the historic trail of El Camino Real or "The Royal Road". It was to be an outpost for the Spanish Empire, part of a carefully thought out plan to colonize California.



©2002 James Blank, San Diego Visitor and Convention Bureau

HOTEL DEL CORONADO

From INTERSTATE 5 drive across the CORONADO BRIDGE turn LEFT at the first traffic light ORANGE AVENUE. When you spot the red turrets, turn right and park your car in the hotel parking lot. Hotel Del Coronado was completed in February 1888. It was one of the world's largest wooden buildings and is an example of elegant Victorian architecture. In the late 1800's Thomas A. Edison supervised the installation of electricity. Guest rooms displayed small signs stating: "This room is equipped with the Edison Electric Light. Do not attempt to light with a match. Simply turn key on the wall by the door. The use of electricity for lighting is in no way harmful to health, nor does it affect soundness of sleep". Visit the Hall of History to see the collection of memorabilia, and/or enjoy a stroll along the beach.

WILD ANIMAL PARK

Drive north on INTERSTATE 15, exit VIA RANCHO PKWY, turn RIGHT and follow the signs. Ride the Wgasa Bush Line for a 50 minute tour of the park by monorail. See the animals roam freely in an environment similar to their native African, Asian and Australian habits. Hike the Kilimanjaro trail, visit the exotic gardens and Nairobi Village. Photo caravans are scheduled May through September. San Diego Wild Animal Park is located in San Diego North County, near Escondido, this 2,200 acre exotic animal and botanical reserve is dedicated to the preservation and protection of endangered species. Highlights include a 50 minute guided monorail tour, petting kraal, Bird and Elephant shows, and several specialty safari tours which get you safely up close to the animals. Specialty tours availability and schedule change throughout the year.

LEGOLAND

Located in San Diego North County, in Carlsbad, this is a family/kid's LEGO interactive theme park and some static activities primarily for youngsters 3-11 years of age. Walk on a mysterious journey featuring inhabitants of the Amazon rain forest, ancient Egypt and the Arctic all made from LEGO bricks.more