



BEYOND THE CONFERENCE

The Ultimate San Diego Experience Guide

Welcome to San Diego

California's coastal capital of sunshine, shoreline, culture, and culinary innovation. While you're here for a powerful week of learning and connection, we encourage you to enjoy the city's walkable districts, breathtaking waterfronts, historic neighborhoods, renowned restaurants, and sustainability-forward open spaces. From morning coffee along the harbor to sunset strolls, wine bars, museums, and dynamic local markets, San Diego offers something for every pace and interest. Explore, unwind, and soak up the best of San Diego!

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OUTDOOR & NATURE ACTIVITIES

BALBOA PARK

- 📍 One of the largest urban cultural parks in the U.S., featuring botanical gardens, outdoor plazas, landscaped trails, and lush scenic walks.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.balboapark.org>

🚗 Drive: 6–10 min | 🚊 Transit: 12–20 min

JAPANESE FRIENDSHIP GARDEN (BALBOA PARK)

- 📍 A serene garden with koi ponds, traditional landscaping, cultural exhibits, and walking paths.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.niwa.org>

🚗 Drive: 6–10 min | 🚊 Transit: 12–20 min

SUNSET CLIFFS NATURAL PARK (POINT LOMA)

- 📍 Dramatic oceanfront cliffs, coastal walking paths, and breathtaking sunsets in a protected natural shoreline environment.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.sandiego.gov/park-and-recreation/parks/regional/sunsetcliffs>

🚗 Drive: 18–25 min

CABRILLO NATIONAL MONUMENT (POINT LOMA)

- 📍 Scenic headlands with panoramic coastline views, tide pools, and protected nature areas ideal for walking, wildlife spotting, and coastal photography.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.nps.gov/cabr/index.htm>

🚗 Drive: 18–25 min

HARBOR ISLAND PARK

- 📍 A bayside walking trail with skyline views, marina scenery, benches, and ideal sunrise or sunset vantage points.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.portofsandiego.org/waterfront-parks/harbor-island-park>

🚗 Drive: 12–16 min

MARSTON CANYON TRAIL (BALBOA AREA)

- 📍 A quiet canyon trail with shaded paths, native plants, and a peaceful outdoor nature escape close to downtown.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.alltrails.com/trail/us/california/marston-canyon>

🚗 Drive: 6–10 min

BEACHES AND WATERFRONT TRAILS

SEAPORT VILLAGE WATERFRONT TRAIL

- 📍 A scenic boardwalk with harbor views, marina piers, restaurants, cafes, and beautiful sunset walking paths.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.seaportvillage.com>

🚶 Walk: 15–20 min | 🚗 Drive: 5–8 min

EMBARCADERO MARINA PARK NORTH

- 📍 A waterfront park with coastal walking paths, skyline views, open lawns, and public art perfect for outdoor exploration or relaxation.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.portofsandiego.org/waterfront-parks/embarcadero-marina-park-north>

🚶 Walk: 20–25 min | 🚗 Drive: 7–9 min

SHELTER ISLAND SHORELINE TRAIL

- 📍 A quiet coastline walking route with marina views, palm trees, bird habitats, and peaceful oceanside seating.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.portofsandiego.org/waterfront-parks/shelter-island>

🚗 Drive: 12–18 min

MISSION BEACH BOARDWALK

- 📍 A lively beachfront pathway with restaurants, rooftop patios, ocean views, bike paths, and vibrant beach culture.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.pacificbeach.org/mission-beach>

🚗 Drive: 18–25 min

PACIFIC BEACH BOARDWALK (GARNET & OCEAN BOULEVARD)

- 📍 A coastal stretch with oceanfront patios, surf bars, taco spots, beach trails, and classic Southern California energy.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.pacificbeach.org>

🚗 Drive: 18–25 min

LA JOLLA COVE & COASTAL TRAIL

- 📍 A world-renowned oceanside trail featuring dramatic cliffs, sea life viewing, art galleries, and elevated scenic walking paths.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.lajollabythesea.com/lajolla-cove>

🚗 Drive: 22–30 min

TORREY PINES STATE RESERVE (LA JOLLA)

- 📍 A protected oceanfront hiking preserve with cliff-top trails, panoramic views, native plants, and serene nature walks.

🌐 Visit Website: https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=657

🚗 Drive: 25–35 min

CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL ATTRACTIONS

THE USS MIDWAY MUSEUM

- 📍 One of San Diego's most iconic historic attractions — a legendary aircraft carrier museum with immersive exhibits, aircraft displays, and docent-led interpretations of naval history.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.midway.org>

🚗 Drive: 6–10 min | 🚶 Walk: 18–22 min

SAN DIEGO MUSEUM OF ART (BALBOA PARK)

- 📍 The region's premier art museum featuring classical and contemporary collections, traveling exhibitions, sculpture gardens, and cultural programming.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.sdmart.org>

🚗 Drive: 6–10 min | 🚆 Transit: 12–20 min

SAN DIEGO NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM (BALBOA PARK)

- 📍 A scientific and educational museum featuring geology, biodiversity, climate science, and natural history exhibitions.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.sdnhm.org>

🚗 Drive: 6–10 min | 🚆 Transit: 12–20 min

SAN DIEGO AIR & SPACE MUSEUM (BALBOA PARK)

- 📍 Dynamic aviation and aerospace exhibits featuring restored aircraft, interactive engineering displays, and California's aerospace heritage.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://sandiegoairandspace.org>

🚗 Drive: 6–10 min | 🚆 Transit: 12–20 min

MUSEUM OF US (BALBOA PARK)

- 📍 A cultural anthropology museum with thought-provoking exhibits on human connection, societal structures, and cultural storytelling.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://museumofus.org>

🚗 Drive: 6–10 min | 🚆 Transit: 12–20 min

RICHARD WALKER'S HISTORIC DOWNTOWN DISTRICT

- 📍 A walkable area surrounding historic architecture, plazas, theaters, and restored buildings reflecting San Diego's early 20th-century downtown development.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.sandiego.org/explore/downtown.aspx>

🚶 Walk: 4–10 min

OLD TOWN SAN DIEGO STATE HISTORIC PARK

- 📍 California's birthplace, featuring historic adobe structures, museums, artisan shops, and Mexican-inspired dining in a lively cultural district.

🌐 Visit Website: https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=663

🚗 Drive: 12–16 min | 🚆 Transit: 20–25 min

LOCAL ATTRACTIONS

GASLAMP QUARTER

- 📍 A historic nightlife and entertainment district with rooftop lounges, craft cocktail bars, theaters, artisan cafés, late-night dining, and live music venues.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.gaslamp.org>

🚶 Walk: 5–8 min

SEAPORT VILLAGE

- 📍 A coastal boardwalk marketplace with wine bars, artisan shops, outdoor patios, live music, and scenic harbor views.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.seaportvillage.com>

🚶 Walk: 15–20 min | 🚗 Drive: 5–8 min

THE HEADQUARTERS AT SEAPORT

- 📍 A restored historic police headquarters reimagined as a courtyard dining and specialty retail destination with chic patios, tasting rooms, and boutique shops.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://theheadquarters.com>

🚶 Walk: 17–22 min | 🚗 Drive: 6–8 min

LITTLE ITALY

- 📍 A vibrant culinary neighborhood with wine bars, Italian bistros, craft gelaterias, outdoor plazas, and a thriving restaurant scene popular with locals.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.littleitalysd.com>

🚗 Drive: 6–10 min | 🚶 Walk: 20–25 min (depending on destination)

PETCO PARK

- 📍 An iconic urban stadium offering rooftop lounges, craft breweries, ballpark tours, restaurants, and social game-day culture — great even outside game hours.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.mlb.com/padres/ballpark>

🚶 Walk: 12–16 min | 🚗 Drive: 5–7 min

HARBOR DRIVE WATERFRONT

- 📍 A scenic coastal walking route with marina views, public parks, outdoor seating, and easy access to wine bars, seafood restaurants, and harbor tours.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.portofsandiego.org/waterfront-parks>

🚶 Walk: 15–20 min | 🚗 Drive: 5–8 min

POINT LOMA LIBERTY STATION (EVENTS & NIGHT MARKET AREA)

- 📍 A creative mixed-use district with public art, tasting rooms, weekly food markets, galleries, and lively community events in a historic former naval campus.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://libertystation.com>

🚗 Drive: 14–20 min

SUSTAINABILITY FOCUSED ATTRACTIONS

SERRA MESA ECOLOGY CENTER & NATURE GARDENS

- 📍 Community-driven ecology site featuring indigenous planting, composting demonstrations, native garden walks, and sustainability education programming.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.sandiego.gov/serramesa/rec-centers>

🚗 Drive: 14–20 min

LIBERTY STATION PUBLIC MARKETS & ART WALKS

- 📍 A community-forward district with local makers, farm-forward dining, independent retailers, rotating art exhibits, and walkable historic campus landscaping.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://libertystation.com>

🚗 Drive: 14–20 min

BAYSIDE BIKEWAYS & SLOW STREETS

- 📍 A network of flat, scenic bike and pedestrian routes connecting marina piers, waterfront parks, and coastal nature paths with reduced-car corridors and protected lanes.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.sandiego.gov/bike>

🚗 Drive: 6–10 min to begin | 🚲 (Bike-friendly)

TORREY PINES STATE RESERVE (CONSERVATION PRESERVE)

- 📍 A protected ecological reserve with clifftop trails, native habitat conservation, interpretive signage, and low-impact hiking focused on ecosystem protection.

🌐 Visit Website: https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=657

🚗 Drive: 25–35 min

MISSION BAY NATURAL PRESERVE & WETLANDS

- 📍 A coastal environmental area with restored marshlands, boardwalk trails, native bird habitats, and interpretive walking paths supporting ecological preservation.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.sandiego.gov/park-and-recreation/parks/regional/missionbay>

🚗 Drive: 14–22 min

CROWN POINT SHORELINE WALK (LOW-IMPACT WATERFRONT)

- 📍 Flat, low-impact waterfront trail with calm ocean views, habitat watching, and shoreline access ideal for reflective sunrise or sunset walks.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.sandiego.org/explore/coastal/mission-bay.aspx>

🚗 Drive: 16–22 min

SAN DIEGO RIVER ESTUARY & INTERPRETIVE TRAILS

- 📍 Restored wetland ecosystem with habitat restoration, wildlife spotting, interpretive ecology signage, and guided conservation perspectives.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://sandiegoriver.org>

🚗 Drive: 14–18 min

SHOPPING

WESTFIELD HORTON PLAZA PARK DISTRICT (DOWNTOWN)

- 📍 A centrally located downtown district with open-air plazas, boutique retail, casual patios, seasonal events, and pedestrian-friendly green space.
- 🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.hortonplazapark.com>
- 🚶 Walk: 6–10 min | 🚗 Drive: 3–4 min | 🚇 Transit: 10–14 min

SEAPORT VILLAGE MARKETPLACE

- 📍 Waterfront shopping with coastal boutiques, artisan merchants, wine bars, cafés, and scenic plazas overlooking the marina.
- 🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.seaportvillage.com>
- 🚶 Walk: 15–20 min | 🚗 Drive: 5–8 min

THE HEADQUARTERS AT SEAPORT

- 📍 A restored historic complex offering elevated boutique retail, specialty dining, tasting rooms, and lifestyle merchants in a courtyard setting.
- 🌐 Visit Website: <https://theheadquarters.com>
- 🚶 Walk: 17–22 min | 🚗 Drive: 6–8 min

LITTLE ITALY RETAIL DISTRICT

- 📍 A lively culinary and boutique shopping district with local designer fashion, artisan makers, Italian markets, and wine-forward specialty retailers.
- 🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.littleitalysd.com>
- 🚗 Drive: 6–10 min | 🚶 Walk: 20–25 min | 🚇 Transit: 12–18 min

LIBERTY STATION ARTS & MARKET DISTRICT

- 📍 Former naval campus transformed into a walkable lifestyle district with artisan shops, galleries, tasting rooms, and curated independent retail.
- 🌐 Visit Website: <https://libertystation.com>
- 🚗 Drive: 14–20 min | 🚇 Transit: 20–28 min

FASHION VALLEY MALL (UPTOWN / MISSION VALLEY)

- 📍 San Diego's premier luxury mall with designer retailers, elevated dining, outdoor promenades, lifestyle brands, cafés, and movie theaters.
- 🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.simon.com/mall/fashion-valley>
- 🚗 Drive: 10–15 min | 🚇 Transit: 16–24 min

UTC WESTFIELD (LA JOLLA)

- 📍 An upscale lifestyle destination with luxury shopping, outdoor plazas, fine dining, cocktail lounges, open-air walkways, and curated boutiques.
- 🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.westfield.com/utc>
- 🚗 Drive: 18–25 min

DINING

LOU & MICKEY'S – GASLAMP DISTRICT

- 📍 A classic San Diego steakhouse and seafood institution with elegant indoor dining, fresh catch selections, and upscale bar atmosphere in the heart of the Gaslamp Quarter.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.louandmickeys.com>

🚶 Walk: 7–10 min | 🚗 Drive: 3–5 min

THE LION'S SHARE – DOWNTOWN

- 📍 Eclectic craft cocktails, small plates, candlelit speakeasy ambiance, and inventive globally inspired cuisine served in a cozy lounge setting.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.thelionsshare.com>

🚶 Walk: 12–15 min | 🚗 Drive: 4–6 min

THE MORGAN BAR & TERRACE – AT THE U.S. GRANT

- 📍 Sophisticated cocktails, California small plates, wine, and craft beverages in an elegant historic hotel setting — ideal for evening gatherings and networking.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.usgrant.net/dining>

🚶 Walk: On-site

CAFE SEVILLA – GASLAMP DISTRICT

- 📍 Elevated Spanish tapas, sangria, live music, and flamenco-inspired ambiance in a lively, upscale setting perfect for group dining or social evenings.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.cafesevilla.com/san-diego>

🚶 Walk: 10–14 min | 🚗 Drive: 3–6 min

GREYSTONE PRIME STEAKHOUSE – GASLAMP DISTRICT

- 📍 Upscale steakhouse offering exotic cuts, Wagyu selections, seafood, premium wine flights, and polished fine dining.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.greystonesteakhouse.com>

🚶 Walk: 9–12 min | 🚗 Drive: 3–5 min

CUCINA URBANA – BANKERS HILL

- 📍 Modern Italian-California cuisine, beautiful interiors, craft cocktails, polished dinner menus, and atmospheric wine-forward dining just uphill from downtown.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.urbankitchengroup.com/cucina-urbana/>

🚗 Drive: 6–10 min | 🚆 Transit: 12–18 min

WATERFRONT DINING

THE FISH MARKET – WATERFRONT

- 📍 Fresh seafood, oyster bar, sunset patio, and marina views overlooking the bay with a relaxed and refined California coastal atmosphere.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.thefishmarket.com>

🚗 Drive: 6–10 min | 🚶 Walk: 18–22 min

ISOLA PIZZA BAR – LITTLE ITALY

- 📍 Charming neighborhood eatery offering wood-fired Neapolitan pizza, Italian wines, small plates, and patio seating in a lively downtown culinary district.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.isolapizzabar.com>

🚗 Drive: 6–10 min | 🚶 Walk: 20–25 min | 🚊 Transit: 12–18 min

VEGAN & VEGETARIAN DINING

PLNTHOUSE (vegan-only)

- 📍 100% plant-based dining with fresh bowls, salads, cold-pressed juices, and organic coastal cuisine in a polished beach-town atmosphere.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.plnthousesandiego.com>

🚗 Drive: 18–25 min | 🚊 Transit: 30–45 min

URBAN INDIA (vegetarian-friendly menu)

- 📍 Indian restaurant with a large vegetarian and vegan menu, flavorful curry options, samosas, and aromatic spices in a relaxed adult dining environment.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.urbanindiarestaurant.com>

🚶 Walk: 12–16 min | 🚗 Drive: 4–6 min

EL VEGANITO (vegan-only)

- 📍 Popular plant-based Mexican cuisine with tacos, tostadas, and inventive vegan spins on traditional Baja flavors in a casual adult-friendly atmosphere.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.elveganito.com>

🚗 Drive: 14–22 min

CIVICO 1845 (vegetarian-friendly menu)

- 📍 Modern Italian dining with an impressive vegetarian and vegan menu section, boutique wines, elegant interiors, and elevated culinary craft.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.civico1845.com>

🚗 Drive: 6–10 min | 🚶 Walk: 20–25 min | 🚊 Transit: 12–18 min

NIGHTLIFE & DRINKS

NOBLE EXPERIMENT – SPEAKEASY

- 📍 Hidden speakeasy known for high-end cocktails, intimate design, reservations-only seating, and refined mixology.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.thenobleexperiment.com>

🚶 Walk: 10–14 min | 🚗 Drive: 3–5 min

SAN DIEGO WINE & CHEESE SHOP – SEAPORT

- 📍 Sophisticated wine tastings, patio seating, curated pairings, and sunset-friendly ambiance on the waterfront boardwalk.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.seaportvillage.com/shop/wine/>

🚶 Walk: 15–20 min | 🚗 Drive: 5–8 min

THE LION'S SHARE (cocktail lounge)

- 📍 Craft cocktails, elevated small plates, candlelit ambiance, and intimate speakeasy-style lounge perfect for adult social evenings.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.thelionsshared.com>

🚶 Walk: 12–15 min | 🚗 Drive: 4–6 min

FALSE IDOL (tiki cocktail bar)

- 📍 Award-winning immersive tiki bar with exceptional craft cocktails, atmospheric design, and strong adult-forward energy for an unforgettable night out.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.falseidol.bar>

🚶 Walk: 20–25 min | 🚗 Drive: 6–8 min | 🚊 Transit: 12–18 min

BALLAST POINT (brewery – Little Italy)

- 📍 San Diego's staple craft brewery with rooftop seating, waterfront views, elevated small plates, creative IPAs, and lively adult social atmosphere.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.ballastpoint.com/little-italy/>

🚗 Drive: 6–10 min | 🚶 Walk: 20–25 min | 🚊 Transit: 12–18 min

STONE BREWING WORLD BISTRO (Liberty Station)

- 📍 Open-air brewery and restaurant with lush gardens, tasting flights, polished adult dining, and sustainability-forward brewing ethos.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.stonebrewing.com/visit/bistros/liberty-station>

🚗 Drive: 14–20 min

THE GASLAMP SPEAKEASY CIRCUIT (multiple venues)

- 📍 A downtown cluster of hidden lounges, elevated cocktail bars, jazz rooms, and late-night social destinations offering atmospheric adult nightlife.

🌐 Visit Website: <https://www.gaslamp.org/nightlife/>

🚶 Walk: 6–10 min