

SAN DIEGO LOCAL'S GUIDE

Adventures, tips, bucket lists, and must-dos for every local or local-to-be

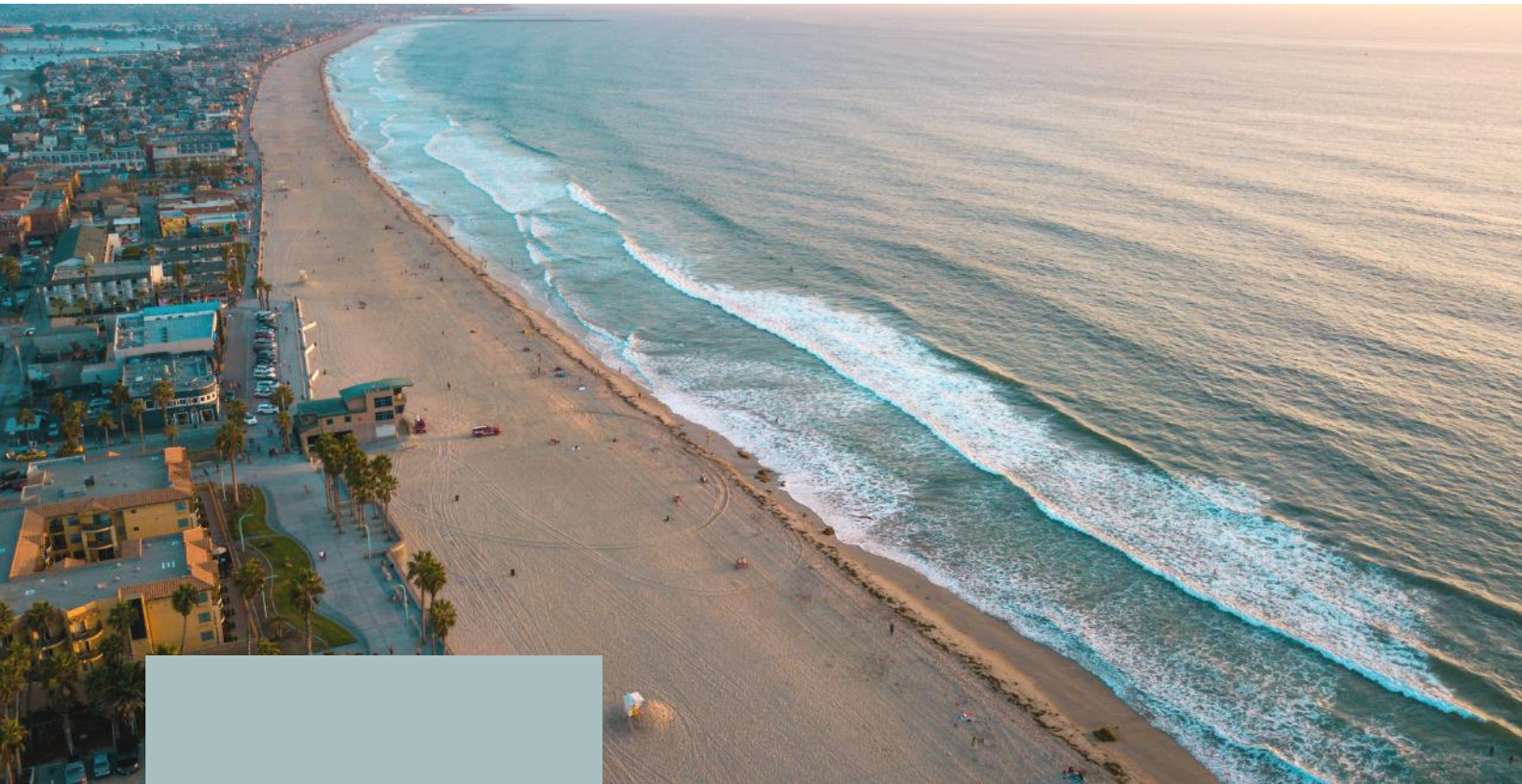


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DO AS THE LOCALS DO

From mornings spent surfing, to award-winning restaurants, to sunset hikes and family-friendly days at the zoo, San Diego has so much to offer.

But the city can be...overwhelming. Where should you live? What kind of commute will you have? How will you make new friends? Which 'best taco shop' can be trusted?

That's where we can help. We polled our people about all the city has to offer, including best hole-in-the-wall taco spots and top weekend activities. It's all compiled in this handy guide, here to make your life easier (and more adventurous!). Plus we're always available for custom recommendations - [just ask us](#).

Economic Overview

ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT

- **San Diego Jobs:** 1.4 Million
- **San Diego GDP:** \$253.1B
- **Median Household Income:** \$83.5K
- **Population:** 3.3M+

Learn more: <https://www.sandiegobusiness.org/>

Let's get the basics out of the way first. We'll cover how much you should set aside for rent, lifestyle, and transportation, as well as growing industries and market basics.



Lifestyle costs

Food -

- Average grocery bill: \$316/month
- Average meal at a standard restaurant: \$15/person
- Average meal for 2 at a mid-range restaurant: \$75

Fitness and entertainment -

- Average gym membership: \$40.26/month
- With 70 miles of coastline and mostly sunny weather year-round, San Diego has access to swimming, jogging, volleyball, and hiking for free!

Cost to rent/own a home

Rent (average) -

- One Bedroom: \$1,651/ month
- Two Bedroom: \$2,189/ month

Own (average) -

- Single Family House: \$729,000
- Two Bedroom Condo: \$440,000

*Cost of Living Calculator

Major SD industries

- Aerospace/Defense
- Biotech/Pharmaceutical
- Cleantech (renewable energy)
- Cybersecurity
- Healthcare
- Medical Device Manufacturing
- Software/Technology
- Tourism



Your lay of the land



Now for the good stuff - where to live! Is walkability your non-negotiable? Or school district? Or restaurant selection? Or proximity to the ocean? Get to know San Diego's major neighborhoods...

Carlsbad/ Oceanside



- **Lifestyle:** Quiet coastal living for families and professionals alike
- **Fun things to do:** Kayak in the Carlsbad Lagoon, visit Legoland, check out the Flower Fields in the springtime
- **Landmarks:** Leo Carillo Ranch Historic Park, San Diego Botanic Gardens, The Magee House

La Jolla/ UTC



- **Lifestyle:** Great for beach bums who want a more luxury lifestyle. Home to lots of bars, restaurants, coffee shops, and of course the beach!
- **Things to do:** La Jolla Shores, UTC Mall, Torrey Pines State Reserve, Scripps Institute of Oceanography, and Birch Aquarium.
- **Landmarks:** Mt. Soledad Veteran's Memorial, UCSD

Encinitas/ Solana Beach



- **Lifestyle:** Surfers, young families, and young professionals
- **Fun things to do:** Explore the downtown shopping district in Encinitas and the Cedros Design District in Solana Beach, hike Annie's Canyon Trail, and visit Tide Beach Park
- **Landmarks:** Self-realization Fellowship Meditation Gardens, Swami's Surf Beach, Cedros Design District Center

Escondido/ San Marcos



- **Lifestyle:** Suburban neighborhoods with a diverse demographic
- **Fun things to do:** Visit the San Diego Safari Zoo, check out the 5-acre arboretum at Kit Carson Park, watch the sunset at Lakeview Park
- **Landmarks:** Queen Calafia's Magical Circle

Carmel Valley



- **Lifestyle:** Suburban neighborhood composed of residential living, retail stores, and restaurants
- **Fun things to do:** Carmel Valley is just a short drive to the beach, Torrey Pines State Park, and One Paseo in Del Mar for shopping and Dining
- **Landmark:**s St. Therese of Carmel Catholic Church

Scripps Ranch/ Poway



- **Lifestyle:** Home to the prestigious Poway School District, Poway is an ideal suburban neighborhood for families. Poway is known for its fun outdoor activities and is one of the safest neighborhoods in California.
- **Things to do:** Hiking at Potato Chip Rock, Blue Sky Ecological Reserve, Lake Poway, Golfing
- **Landmarks:** Tony Gwynn Memorial

Ranch Bernardo/ Carmel Mountain



- **Lifestyle:** Suburban neighborhood known for its excellent parks, clubs, and golf courses
- **Things to do:** Golfing, hiking, Bernardo Winery, Lake Hodges
- **Landmarks:** Lake Hodges, San Dieguito River Park, Los Peñasquitos Canyon

Del Mar



- **Lifestyle:** Coastal neighborhood favored by families and professionals
- **Fun things to do:** Attend the San Diego County Fair and watch the Del Mar Horse races
- **Landmarks:** Torrey Pines State Reserve

More lay of the land



Hillcrest/ North Park/ Mission Valley



- **Lifestyle:** Urban city living known for walkability. Hillcrest is the heart of the LGBTQIA+ community and North Park is known for its breweries and good eats
- **Fun things to do:** Variety of restaurants, breweries, nightlife, and Farmer's Markets
- **Landmarks:** Balboa Park, Spruce Street Suspension Bridge, North Park Water Tower, Hillcrest and North Park Sign

Point Loma/ Ocean Beach



- **Lifestyle:** Local's version of San Diego
- **Fun things to do:** Visit Liberty Station, attend a hockey game or concert at Pechanga Arena
- **Landmarks:** Sunset Cliffs, Cabrillo Lighthouse

South Bay



- **Lifestyle:** Industrial, lots of shipyards along the coast with diverse demographic of families
- **Fun things to do:** South Bay Drive-in Movie Theater
- **Landmarks:** Imperial beach and downtown Chula Vista

East County



- **Lifestyle:** Known as the Sunny Side of San Diego with limited fog/overcast, affordable family living, and "country style" attractions
- **Fun things to do:** Hike in Mission Trails Regional Park, visit Santee Lakes
- **Landmarks:** Five Las Vegas-style casinos

Mission Beach / Pacific Beach



- **Lifestyle:** Laid back beach neighborhood
- **Fun things to do:** Check out the variety of casual bars and restaurants (i.e. tiki bars!), with great beach views, or go kayaking in Mission Bay
- **Landmarks:** Kate Sessions Park, Belmont Park

Clairemont Mesa



- **Lifestyle:** Family friendly with great schools and libraries
- **Fun things to do:** Try the Asian eateries on Convoy St.
- **Landmarks:** Tecolote Canyon Natural Park

Mira Mesa / Sorrento Valley



- **Lifestyle:** Innovative companies mainly in high tech, biotech, and scientific research
- **Fun things to do:** Hike Los Penasquitos trail, try out the Asian restaurants on Mira Mesa Blvd.
- **Landmarks:** Home to Qualcomm, largest F500 company headquartered in San Diego!

San Diego is primarily a car city. If you like to walk, try Little Italy, the Gaslamp District, Harborview, North Park, East Village, or La Jolla.

The San Diego Trolley also connects San Diego's east and south county communities with the Downtown region, and bus routes run all throughout San Diego.

Let's grab some food & drinks



Best drinks

- Polite Provisions (North Park)
- Original 40 Brewing Company (North Park)
- Kilowatt Brewing - hidden tiki cocktail lounge! (Kearny Mesa & ocean Beach)
- El Prez (Pacific Beach)
- George's at the Cove (La Jolla)
- Barleymash (Gaslamp Quarters)
- Viewpoint Brewing (Solana Beach)
- Ballast Point Brewery (Miramar & Little Italy)
- Rose Wine Bar (North Park)
- Starlite (Little Italy)
- JRDN (Pacific Beach)
- George's Ocean Terrace (La Jolla)
- Waterbar (Pacific Beach)

Morning coffee

- Better Buzz --> most voted spot! (Multiple locations)
- Kono's (Pacific Beach)
- Philz Coffee (Multiple locations)
- Bird Rock Coffee Roasters (Multiple locations)
- Santos (North Park)
- Cafe Calabria (North Park)
- Blue Bottle Coffee (Multiple locations)
- S3 Coffee Bar (Mission Valley)

Top restaurants

MEXICAN + HISPANIC

- Brothers Mexican Food (North Park)- Try the Pastor + carne asada tacos says Sydney Shields
- Roberto's (Linda Vista) - Qian recommends the surf & turf burrito
- El Salvador Pupuseria Y Restaurante (City Heights)

ASIAN (MINUS SUSHI)

- Hot or not Thai (Pacific Beach)- April says you have to try the Panang curry
- Banh Thai (Hillcrest) - Jenifer recommends the Panang and green curry
- Shanghai Saloon (Convoy) - Linh suggests the honey walnut shrimp and the soup dumplings

SUSHI

- Sushi Deli 3 (Kearney Mesa)- Chelsea votes for the spicy garlic edamame
- Azuki Sushi Lounge (Bankers Hill) - Go for the Kobe roll say Yulia and Maria
- Sushi Ota (Mission Bay) - The bluefin sashimi comes highly recommended by Sean Phinney

SOUL FOOD

- Surf & Soul Spot (Rolando)
- Laylah's Jamaican Food (Barrio Logan)
- Da South In Ya Mouth (Chula Vista)

SEAFOOD // COASTAL

- Jake's (Del Mar) - Try the Hula pie says Heather Henderson
- Pacific Coast Grill (Solana Beach) - Grab the scallops!
- Point Loma Seafood (Point Loma)
- Bluewater Grill (OB & Mission Hills) - Freshly caught fish daily

VEGAN // VEGETARIAN

- Spoiled Vegan Cafe (Downtown SD)
- The Purple Mint (College area) - Mike likes the orange "chicken"
- The Yazai (Convoy): - Vegan sushi & ramen



Proven picks!



The highly contested... Best tacos!

We had a lot of internal debate about this one. Here's what our people had to say:

- PB Fish Shop --> most highly voted!
- Asadero's
- Tacos El Gordo
- Taco Stand
- Mike's Tacos
- Oscar's Seafood & Mexican Food
- Tuetano Tacos
- King and Queen Cantina
- Cuatros Las Milpas
- Jorges

"Oscar's is my go-to for fish tacos and ceviche. It's so fresh and flavorful. Lines can get long with tourists and locals so pro-tip: order online and pick it up for a picnic in Balboa Park!"

- Vanessa Nguyen

ON TO WEEKEND ADVENTURES

We've collected a bunch of kid-friendly, dog-friendly, friend-friendly activities to keep you busy and help you get to know your city!



What to do & where to go

Fun stuff to do with kids	Fun stuff to do with friends	Fun stuff to do with dogs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feed the giraffes at the SD Zoo• Spend the day in Balboa Park• Splash around at Mission Beach• Visit Santee Lakes• Pass the hours at SeaWorld• Catch a baseball game in Petco Park• Explore Old Towne• Swim at one of SD's many YMCAs• Whale watch off Point Loma	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dinner in Little Italy, North Park, or Hillcrest/Mission Hills• Go for a Padres game + drinks downtown• Dancing at Jimmy O's or The Kraken• Rent a jacuzzi on Mission Bay• Check out the Sunday Farmer's Market in Little Italy• Enjoy sunset on Del Mar Beach• Grab dessert from Extraordinary Desserts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PB restaurants allow dogs!• Del Mar Dog Beach• Cowles Mountain hike• Ocean Beach Dog Park• Grab a slushee at Fernside then walk to Grape Street Dog Park• Play fetch at Fiesta Island

San Diego Bucket List picks!

- Go sailing!
- Picnic at Sunset Cliffs
- Delight in Food Truck Fridays at Balboa Park
- Enjoy drinks at George's overlooking La Jolla
- Catch a Padres game
- Have a picnic on the beach
- Spend the day at the SD Zoo
- Check out Cabrillo National Monument and Coronado Shores
- Hike/golf at Torrey Pines
- Explore the Gaslamp District

Go forth and adventure!

We hope you enjoyed this little tour of San Diego as much as we did. If you're looking for more specific suggestions, you can always reach out to one of our SD local guides:

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