

25 FUN AND FREE THINGS TO DO.

HAVING FUN IN SAN DIEGO DOESN'T REQUIRE A LOT OF MONEY.

Having fun in San Diego doesn't require a lot of money; in fact, many things to see and do here are absolutely free. With 70 miles of beautiful beaches, near-perfect weather year-round, and a variety of magnificent settings countywide, San Diego offers a fun and inexpensive getaway during all seasons of the year.

Free Activities for Kids and Adults in San Diego

1. Head to San Diego's many beaches, all free to the public, to swim, body surf or hang-ten. Play in the sand, collect seashells or just bask in the sun.
2. Visit La Jolla Cove and see the magnificent sunset on the ocean. La Jolla Cove is one of the most spectacular natural settings in the world.
3. Visit downtown San Diego's Seaport Village for hours of free entertainment, leisurely strolling and window shopping. Enjoy a laid-back day of hanging out in the grass and watching the many passing yachts and ships on picturesque San Diego Bay, or take in the sights from one of the many bay-view eateries.
4. Stroll through the 16½-block historic Gaslamp Quarter in downtown San Diego and view the renovated turn-of-the-century Victorian architecture, home to boutiques, art galleries, specialty shops and more.
5. Fly a kite along the grassy field in the Tecolote Shores of Mission Bay Park, a 4,600-acre aquatic park. Here, away from trees and overhead wires, friends and family gather to launch colorful kites into the bay breezes.
6. Enjoy free organ concerts at 2:00 pm on Sundays at the Spreckels Organ Pavilion in Balboa Park. The Organ Pavilion features one of world's largest outdoor pipe organs, a San Diego landmark since 1914, where organists play traditional favorites, waltzes and show tunes on enormous 32-foot pipes.
7. Visit Old Town and witness the living legacy of San Diego history. Guests are also invited to wander free through Old Town's historic buildings, including the blacksmith shop, Seeley Stables, Stewart House, Estudillo House and the oldest schoolhouse in San Diego.
8. Bike or jog along Mission Bay Park's many trails. Joggers and walkers share more than 20 miles of scenic running paths that wind through sunlight and shade near the shoreline and feature workout courses at planned stations along the route.
9. Visit the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Chula Vista for a free tour of the 150-acre facility, including training fields and tracks, athlete dorms and the Otay Lake Reservoir. Tours are offered from the Copley Visitor Center at 11:00 am on Saturday. Self-guided tours are available daily between 9:00 am - 4:00 pm.
10. Stargaze outside the Reuben H. Fleet Science Center in Balboa Park on the first Wednesday of every month. The San Diego Astronomy Association sets up huge telescopes to offer guests a great view of all the stars in the night sky.
11. Take a scenic, one-hour drive to Mt. Laguna. Once there, hop out for an invigorating hike and enjoy the fresh mountain air whispering through the pines.



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12. Step back in time with a stop in Julian, a century-old gold mining town in the Cuyamaca Mountains. Pick up a free map at the Chamber of Commerce for a self-guided walking tour of the area's historic sites and later enjoy a slice of homemade apple pie - a Julian specialty!
13. Grab your picnic basket and head to Torrey Pines State Beach where you can watch talented and daring hang gliders do tricks in the strong winds that sweep along the coastline cliffs.
14. The 59-Mile Scenic Drive allows travelers to take in all of the must-see places in San Diego.
15. Rollerblade, skateboard or bicycle along the Mission Beach Boardwalk, a scenic 3-mile boardwalk along picturesque Mission and Pacific Beaches.
16. Visit Mission Trails Regional Park to explore the cultural, historical and recreational aspects of San Diego. Stop at the Visitor's Center and learn about the wonders of nature and the people who once lived on the land. Or, roam through the park's 40 miles of natural and developed hiking and biking trails.
17. Go scuba diving or snorkeling off San Diego's shores and see spectacular creatures of the sea. La Jolla Cove offers some of the clearest waters on the California coast, as well as miles of protected underwater preserves to explore.
18. Go bird watching at the Torrey Pines State Reserve. Located high above Torrey Pines State Beach, the area is home of the rare and ancient Torrey Pine as well as a beautiful protected habitat for swifts, thrashers, woodpeckers and wrentits.
19. Stroll through Balboa Park and marvel at its beautiful Spanish Colonial Revival architecture. While there, take advantage of the park's variety of offerings, including 15 museums (select museums free on Tuesdays for San Diego residents), free daily park tours, public organ concerts (Sundays), and spectacular gardens (seven are free daily).
20. Visit other museums around town that offer similar free days. Both the downtown and La Jolla locations of the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego are free on the third Thursday of each month from 5:00 - 7:00 pm.
21. Gather family, friends and firewood for a cozy beach bonfire at one of the beaches in San Diego County, including Coronado Beach, La Jolla Shores and Mission Beach.
22. Explore the tidepools in Point Loma at low tide and get up close and personal with flowery anemones, scampering shore crabs, elusive octopus, spongy deadman's fingers and many other magnificent sea creatures.
23. Drive to the top of Mt. Soledad in La Jolla for breathtaking, 360-degree views of San Diego, including the gently curving La Jolla coastline and Mission Bay. Spectacular views of San Diego's East County communities also await guests at the top of Mt. Helix.
24. Visit the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and experience the natural beauty of the desert. The 600,000-acre park is one of the largest state parks in the United States and each spring, following winter rains, explodes into a rainbow of colorful wildflower blossoms.
25. Take a scenic walk along The Big Bay, San Diego's "largest attraction." With 27 miles of waterfront featuring bayside parks, marinas, hundreds of shops and restaurants, and miles of promenades and bikeways, the Big Bay appeals to all ages and interests.

