



SUBLIME SAN DIEGO

A YEAR-ROUND PLAYGROUND

Text by LYDIA KREMER | Photograph by SAVAGEAXON

The allure of 70 miles of spectacular Southern California coastline might sound like enough reason to plan a San Diego sojourn, but that's only the tip of the surfboard. San Diego is an international attraction that has a myriad and diverse number of ways to enjoy this laid-back haven.

With nearly perfect weather, San Diego is one of the world's greatest year-round playgrounds. For hiking, whale watching, shopping, dining, strolling, sunbathing, or just rollicking—San Diego has it all. And as singer/songwriter Randy Newman says: "They've got surfing, too!"

THE BIRTHPLACE OF CALIFORNIA

San Diego has notable history that is inextricably woven into California's rich historical tapestry. The city is celebrating an important milestone in 2019—its 250th anniversary! Established as the first European settlement on the West Coast in 1769, San Diego embraces and celebrates its rich cultural and historical past.

Although the Spanish explorer Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo and his soldiers first sailed into the harbor in 1542, it would be more than two centuries before Europeans would settle in the region. During Cabrillo's brief stop, the only inhabitants were the Kumeyaay Nation tribe who have inhabited the region for thousands of years. Cabrillo disembarked on what is now Point Loma where you'll find the Cabrillo National



LEFT The historic La Valencia Hotel, known as the Pink Lady, has been offering guests gracious hospitality for more than 90 years.

BELOW Located at the lively Liberty Station, El Jardin's chef is a Top Chef and James Beard nominee who has created a menu of innovative Mexican cuisine. *Photograph by James Tran. Courtesy sandiego.org*

BOTTOM LEFT The beautifully-preserved Mission San Diego de Alcalá was commemorated in 1769 as the first of 21 California Missions. *Photograph by Stacy Keck. Courtesy sandiego.org*

BOTTOM The Cabrillo National Monument, located on Point Loma, is one of San Diego's many important historic highlights to visit. *Photograph by Brett Shoaf. Courtesy sandiego.org*



Monument—one of the many important historic highlights to visit in San Diego.

San Diego was eventually founded on July 16, 1769, when the **Mission San Diego de Alcalá** was commemorated as the first of 21 California Missions. The Mission is a little out of the way, but well worth a visit. At Old Town, the arc of San Diego's history is told through a walking tour of some of Old Town's first adobe homes built. The **San Diego Old Town State Historic Park** offers daily walking tours with a knowledgeable docent. A variety of shops, restaurants, museums, historic sites, and the 250th milestone celebration make Old Town reasons it's a not-to-be-missed attraction. sandiego250.com

A FOODIE HAVEN

Revvng up the epicurean experience in San Diego are a bevy of James Beard-winners and Michelin-starred chefs who have helped turn the town into an incredibly sophisticated dining destination. Here are some new and notable eateries to check out.

At **Cloak & Petal** in Little Italy, enjoy inventive and revelatory Japanese cuisine in a stylish dining room and bar dominated by enormous cherry blossoms. After dinner, head across the street for hand-made ice cream at **Salt and Straw**. cloakandpetal.com, saltandstraw.com

From the renowned George's at the Cove restaurant, chef Trey Foshee has created a wonderful "Cali-Baja" dining experience at

Galaxy Taco. Who can resist house-made tortillas? Definitely put a visit to **Liberty Station** on your list. Set on 125-acres, the former 1923 historic US Navy Training Station has been reinvented through adaptive reuse into a vibrant arts, shopping, and dining hub. galaxytaco.com, libertystation.com

Dining options at Liberty Station abound, but **El Jardín** restaurant is a notable standout with its Top Chef and James Beard House nominee Claudette Zepeda-Wilkins who has crafted authentic and innovative regional Mexican menu. eljardinrestaurantbar.com

San Diego is a town that loves speakeasies—in Hillcrest, you'll find one of the newest on the scene—**Caché**, a chic Parisian-style cocktail lounge cleverly tucked behind the freezer door inside **Tacos Libertad**. barcache.com, cohnrestaurants.com/tacoslibertad

As the foodie scene has made quantum leaps, so has the craft beer offerings throughout San Diego County. In fact, it could be said the craft beer movement was born here. At last count, there were nearly 200 breweries and tasting rooms. So many brews, so little time. To sample them all in one location, plan your visit for the annual **Beer Week** or the annual **Rhythm and Brews Festival**. sdbeer.com, sandiego.org

A PLACE TO DREAM

With more than 600 hotel rooms—from casual low-key digs to luxe accommodations—you'll always find the perfect accommodations for your visit. If you're traveling with your pampered pooch, they will be welcomed at all of these pet-friendly hotels. Each of these hotels will provide a bed, bowls, and treats for your four-legged pals.

The **Fairmont Grand Del Mar Hotel** is indeed one of the grandest hotels in San Diego. Designed as a sprawling Mediterranean villa on 400-acres, the Fairmont Grand Del Mar is an AAA Five Diamond luxury resort. fairmont.com/san-diego

In downtown San Diego, a block from Horton Plaza and the Gaslamp Quarter, the **Kimpton Hotel Palomar** will put you right at ground zero for San Diego fun. hotelpalomar-sandiego.com

Just slightly north in the elegant enclave of La Jolla, meaning the "jewel," is **La Valencia Hotel**. Built in 1926, the "Pink Lady," as it is called, is perched above the Pacific coast, steps from the famed La Jolla Cove and its famous seals. lavalencia.com

Whether you need a weekend to decompress, a getaway to celebrate, or a family vacation, San Diego beckons with the promise of fun adventure.

To learn more and make your plans to visit sandiego.org

