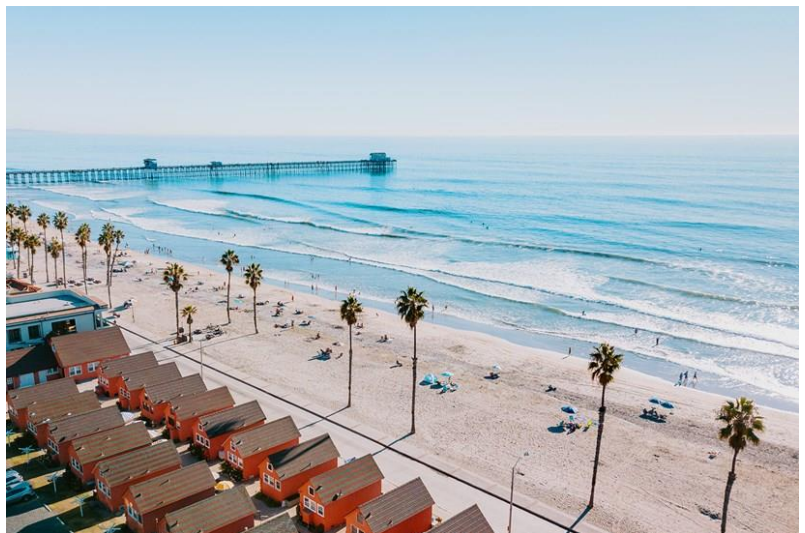


# This Pacific Coast getaway is timeless ~ Oceanside ~



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Set along three miles of picturesque Pacific coastline, this California town fits all the imagery you might dream up about a place called [Oceanside](#): sandy beaches, laid-back surf culture and a classic wooden pier stretching far into the waves. Beyond the beach, you'll find a thriving culinary scene, including a Michelin star restaurant and a buzzy live events lineup.



### ***Roberts Cottages along Strand Beach***

Located equidistant from San Diego and Orange County, this lesser-known beach town offers affordable coastal getaways (without the crowds) compared to its neighbors to the north and south. And thanks to that proximity, it's easy to get to. Drive in, hop on a train or fly into one of the nearby airports, like John Wayne or San Diego International.

With over 130 years of history, Oceanside embodies a timeless blend of historic sites, contemporary additions and lovingly restored California-classic buildings. Here's our guide to embracing it all during your beachy getaway.

### **The enduring Oceanside landmarks**

Oceanside's coastal, laid-back and authentic atmosphere has lured beachgoers for decades. With its miles of beachfront and consistent waves, [surfing](#) has long been a huge draw, starting from the mid-1900s. You can appreciate the full story at the family-friendly **California Surf Museum**, located downtown. It's currently home to exhibits like a surfboard collection showing the change in boards throughout the years; an educational display showing the connection between science and modern surfing advancements; and an exhibit honoring Bethany Hamilton's courageous career, including a display of her shark-bitten surfboard.

Of course, the town proudly continues its surfing legacy today; you can watch surfers in action from spots like the Oceanside Pier and Oceanside Harbor Beach, or get onto the board yourself with a surfing lesson. Options like **Oceanside Surf School** and **California Kahuna** offer individual or group lessons to learn the surfing basics.

### ***Oceanside Pier at sunset***

One of the town's most iconic sites, the **Oceanside Pier**, stretches nearly 2,000 feet into the water. First built in 1888, the pier has been damaged by the sea and rebuilt a handful of times, and the current structure was constructed in 1987. There are spots along the wooden pier where you can drop a line and catch fish like mackerel and halibut (the nearby bait shop offers rod rentals and supplies). Make your way to the end of the pier for a chance to spot marine life like whales, dolphins—and if you time it right—a beautiful sunset.



### ***Oceanside Harbor***

Just north of the pier is the **Oceanside Harbor**. You'll know you've arrived once you set eyes on the charming red and white lighthouse and the "Oceanside" letters—evocative of the Hollywood sign, but with a maritime spin. The harbor was opened in 1963 and serves as a gateway for aquatic activities: join a [whale watching boat tour](#) (there are sighting opportunities year-round); rent a Jet Ski or paddle board to cruise the water yourself; or admire the ocean view from afar with a stroll along the two miles of harbor walkway, primed for bird (and people) watching with benches and picnic tables en route. Keep an eye out,

too, for the area's sea lions, known for lounging on the harbor's boat slips and near the Oceanside sign on "Sea Lion Island." You'll find the equipment rentals at the **Oceanside Harbor Village**, which is also home to gift shops and restaurants like **Stratford at the Harbor**, a waterfront cafe with a patio where you can sip your morning coffee (or mimosa).

Just across from the beach between the pier and harbor are the [Roberts Cottages](#). The two rows of small, pink beach cottages are one of Oceanside's notable landmarks. These were first imagined in the late 1920s, with all 23 structures built to include an ocean view. Today, visitors looking to stay close to the beach can rent one of the individually-owned cottages.

### ***Mission San Luis Rey***

Oceanside is home to arts and culture landmarks, too. Located about 15 minutes inland, [Mission San Luis Rey](#) is the largest of the 21 Spanish missions built in California. This one dates back to 1798. It's recognized as a National Historic Landmark and offers self-guided tours.



Among [Oceanside's performing arts venues](#) is the intimate **Star Theatre**, which opened in 1956. The community theater's 2024 lineup includes beloved titles like Disney's "Aladdin Jr." and "A Chorus Line." The Sunshine Brooks Theater features improv and comedy shows, as well as main stage performances by the **Oceanside Theatre Company**.



### **A new wave: fine dining, ocean-view resorts and unique rides**

While the town's taken care to preserve its historic charm, it's also ushered in an exciting array of new additions. **The Seabird Ocean Resort & Spa** opened in 2021 just steps away from the Oceanside pier. Lounge on the beach, where the resort offers complimentary beach chairs and umbrellas; take a dip in the resort's pool overlooking the stunning Pacific Ocean; or head to the spa for one of its many stress-reducing offerings. Just next door to the Seabird—and just as new—is the **Mission Pacific Beach Resort**. The rooftop pool looks directly out onto the pier, where you can wind down with a

cocktail in the evenings at The Rooftop Bar. Located inside the resort is **Valle**, a restaurant by chef Roberto Alcocer awarded a Michelin Star in 2023. The seasonal eight-course tasting menu features cuisine from Mexico's Guadalupe Valley and an expansive wine list, including some from the chef's own winery.

### ***A view of the Oceanside Pier in the distance***

Less than a mile up the road from Valle is a hub of dining options. **Rosewood Kitchen**, located on Mission Avenue (part of the town's Mission District dining scene) has re-envisioned their menu to feature Japanese comfort food—think garlic noodles, chicken katsu and a selection of Tonkotsu ramen. **The Lodge by Northern Pine Brewing**, located in Mission Square, is a recent addition to the veteran-owned brewery. The menu consists of what The Lodge calls "good mountain food," like a honey duck butter biscuit, smoked maple pork sausage and hearty burgers on house-made brioche buns.

Embrace the California weather and enjoy the views with a new transportation option. The [Pegasus Sidecar Tour](#) consists of an open-top passenger vehicle (the sidecar) attached to a motorcycle. Choose from an offering of tours, led by a personal driver, that explore the Oceanside area or you can customize your own. For a self-guided option, [Moke and Sun](#) has brought the buggy back to the beach. Their Moke Electric Vehicles are a low-speed option for cruising around town while taking in the ocean breeze.

### **Breathing new life into O'side originals**

When you're near the pier (or staying at the Mission Pacific Hotel) you won't be able to miss the **"Top Gun" house**, a 19th-century Victorian-style structure used as a filming location for the 1986 film; the little blue cottage with an ornate front porch sticks out against the backdrop of its more modern neighbors. Today, after undergoing some restoration, the Victorian cottage resides one block north of its original location. It was officially reborn in 2022 as

HIGH-pie, a dessert shop specializing in handheld pies, where you can sample classic flavors like apple and cherry with dipping sauces like sea salt caramel—plus check out some movie memorabilia.



*The "Top Gun" house*

Spend your nights taking in part of Oceanside's history at [The Brick Hotel](#), located in a restored brick building as old as the town. The Schuyler Building (as it's also known) has lived many lives—a hardware store, hotels, dry cleaners. Today, the downtown hotel offers modern accommodations less than a 10-minute walk from the pier. The onsite **Cococabana Rooftop Bar** and **Q&A Restaurant and Oyster Bar** will keep you fueled with flavors from the sea and shore.

For a few leisurely hours of sipping and browsing, head to the [Tremont Collective](#). Formerly a set of auto repair garages, the space was transformed to host local shops and eateries. Start off with a drink in hand from **Communal Coffee**, with unique options like a lavender honey latte or sweet mint cold brew; shop **Brixton's** seasonal collections, an Oceanside-born apparel and hat brand; and stop by **Bottlecraft**, where you can peruse the rows of unique beer, hard kombucha, cider, and wine to take home or try out one of the 30 rotating beverages on tap.

### ***Pannikin Coffee & Tea***

**Pannikin Coffee & Tea** has opened a brand-new location in a historic Oceanside building, known as the Bunker house, which dates back to 1886. The brand is known for its curated offerings of coffees and teas, plus a selection of pastries. Cozy up inside the charming shop or enjoy the delightful front porch seating as you prepare for another day on the coast.

