



Where to Stay in San Diego's 5 Coolest Neighborhoods

Whether you want to party in the Gaslamp or swim through serene sea caves, here's where to book your stay in San Diego.

By Tiffany Tse



Oceanside

[Oceanside](#), or O'side as it's affectionately nicknamed, is rooted in surf and skate history—with multiple skateparks and a southwest-facing shoreline that attracts pros from around the world for its consistent conditions. After flying under the radar for years, it's finally earning a reputation as more than just an easygoing San Diego beach town with world-class surf. Its culinary landscape has welcomed a slate of exciting,

new dining venues—many of which take advantage of its agricultural bounty with a focus on fresh, locally sourced ingredients—while its arts and culture scene is booming with must-visit museums and galleries.



Where to stay: Perched right across the street from each other, [Mission Pacific Hotel](#) and [The Seabird Resort](#) are sparkling beachfront properties that bring a sophisticated aesthetic to Oceanside's mellow energy. Slick and stylish without a hint of pretension, the former has an expansive rooftop pool and jacuzzi; a fine-dining restaurant, [Valle](#), that pays homage to Baja Mexico's Guadalupe Valley; and [The Ozone](#), a thoughtfully curated boutique highlighting local designers and artists. Meanwhile, the latter hotel has its own appealing pool with private cabanas, along with a wood-paneled library, a rotating gallery that serves as an extension of the Oceanside Museum of Art, and [Sunny's Spa](#), which offers facials, massages, and full-service treatments. The sister properties conveniently allow guests to access amenities at both—sharing a restored vintage beach Rambler with beach chair, sunscreen, and surfboard rentals that make it easy to enjoy a day of surf and sand. They're also a short walk away to the Oceanside Pier—the longest over-water wooden pier on the West Coast.

Things to do: Explore Oceanside's over 3.5 miles of beaches, perfectly primed for experiencing every kind of water sport under the sun. Catch some gnarly waves with professional surfer and third-generation Oceanside resident Duran Barr at [North](#)

[County Surf Academy](#). [Oceanside Adventures Luxury Cruises](#) offers rides on its 50-foot catamaran to spot whales, dolphins, seals, and sea lions with a certified naturalist who narrates the trip. Thrill-seekers can sky-dive and enjoy awe-inspiring ocean views from a very different vantage point with [Go Jump Oceanside](#). Hailed as one of San Diego's oldest golf courses, [Goat Hill Park](#) is a coastal short course with ocean views.



For a dose of '80s nostalgia, visit the iconic Graves House featured in the original Top Gun; newly restored, it now houses a hand-held pie shop called The [High-Pie](#) with a replica of Maverick's motorcycle parked out front (and yes, it's the perfect photo op). The [California Surf Museum](#) documents surf lifestyle throughout the decades with an impressive display of memorabilia, including surf icon Bethany Hamilton's shark-bitten board. The arts are alive and well in Oceanside too; everything from neon sculptures to contemporary paintings are exhibited at the [Oceanside Museum of Art](#), which spotlights stories of Southern California artists.