
BACK ON THE RAILS

Swapping car for train in California, from San Luis Obispo to San Diego, is easier than you might think, says **Megan Eaves**

Oceanside

For decades, prosaically named Oceanside – around 80 miles south of LA – was known for two things: soldiers and surfers. Primarily catering to marines from nearby Camp Pendleton, Oceanside had a reputation for seedy dive bars, surf shacks and not much else. In recent years, the city has been reinvented thanks to the opening of two eco-friendly resort hotels on the waterfront, which were followed swiftly by new cafes, restaurants and breweries.

Oceanside was one of California's original surfing hotspots in the 1950s, a history exhibited in the California Surf Museum here. You can ride the legendary waves by signing up for a lesson with [North County Surf Academy](#)'s third-generation pro surfer, Duran Barr. For dinner, don't miss Wrench & Rodent – a “nose-to-tail” sushi concept restaurant from British chef Davin Waite, whose “waste not” philosophy means utilising every part of the animal or plant for dishes such as Fish Skin Chips and Kentucky Fried Tuna Heads.

Getting around

Oceanside's main grid, including the train station and beach, is walkable. To reach Wrench & Rodent, catch a city bus from Oceanside Transit Centre.

Where to stay

Twin resorts [Mission Pacific](#) and [The Seabird](#), both of which opened in 2021, can take a big dollop of credit for Oceanside's recent transformation into a tourist hotspot. Both boast sustainability credentials and huge, luxe rooms with ocean views.