



**nileGUIDE**

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



Michael in Flagstaff, Arizona

# San Diego with Kids - Top Family-Friendly Attractions

## San Diego, 1 Day

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# Guide Description



**AUTHOR NOTE:** San Diego is a wonderful place for family vacation. Not only there are plenty of family-friendly attractions from zoo, aquarium, theme park and museum but the city itself is beautiful and family can enjoy a great nature from beach to nature park.

This guide is created by Amy @ The Q Family, a family travel blogger for The Q Family Adventures Travel blog.

TheQFamilyAdventures.com is a family friendly travel blog that helps inspire family to travel one adventure at a time.

**contact:**

tel: +1 619 239 0512  
<http://www.balboapark.org>

**location:**

1549 El Prado  
San Diego CA 92101

## 1 Balboa Park

**DESCRIPTION:** The world-renowned San Diego Zoo is only one part of this magnificent 1,200-acre city park that was built for the 1915-1916 Panama-California Expo. California's Hispanic roots were celebrated as the city erected breathtakingly ornate Spanish-style buildings, which were eventually permanently restored. So much more than just an urban park, it is home to the zoo, 14 museums, a pipe organ pavilion, botanical gardens, international cultural centers, theaters and performance venues, an antique carousel, off leash dog parks, sports fields, hiking trails, a tennis center, municipal pool, and a miniature-scale train. The December Nights Celebration is held the first weekend of December annually and this popular event is an opportunity for the whole family to enjoy pageants, plays, food and music all in the tradition of the Christmas holidays. © wcities.com



**contact:**

tel: +1 619 231 1515  
fax: +1 619 231 0249  
<http://www.sandiegozoo.org>

**location:**

2920 Zoo Dr  
San Diego CA 92103

**hours:**

Sept to mid-June daily  
9am-4pm (grounds close at 5 or 6pm); mid-June to Aug daily 9am-8pm (grounds close at 9pm)

## 2 San Diego Zoo

**OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:**

Be prepared to walk - a lot!

**DESCRIPTION:** This world-famous establishment is clearly no ordinary zoo. Walk or ride a double-decker bus throughout this expansive park, home to over 4,000 rare and exotic animals exhibited in beautiful garden habitats. More than a park, this zoo is a major research facility although it is cleverly disguised with entertaining shows and inspiring exhibits like Polar Bear Plunge and Hippo Beach. General Admission required. © wcities.com



**contact:**

tel: +1 619 221 8900  
<http://www.sandiego.gov/lifeguards/beaches/mb.shtml>

**location:**

Mission Bay channel entrance to the north end of Pacific Beach  
San Diego CA 92109

## 3 Mission Beach

**DESCRIPTION:** Near the manmade islands of Mission Bay, this beach runs along Mission Boulevard and boasts a fabulous boardwalk. One of the best places in San Diego to soak up the city's beach lifestyle, this is an unsurpassed area for people watching or building sandcastles. For a faster pace, rent a bike or in-line roller skates. Or better yet, take a ride on Belmont Park's world-famous wooden roller coaster. Whatever attraction you choose, be prepared for large crowds and limited parking. Dogs allowed on leashes before 9am and after 6pm. © wcities.com



**contact:**  
tel: (619) 226-3900  
<http://www.seaworld.com/san-diego/>

**location:**  
500 SeaWorld Drive  
San Diego California 92109

#### 4 SeaWorld® San Diego

**DESCRIPTION:** Spend a full day exploring the awe-inspiring world of marine life at SeaWorld San Diego. Every encounter is a new adventure when you come face to face with the friendly dolphins, magnificent white beluga whales and playful penguins of SeaWorld San Diego. Experience life far under the sea as you feed dolphins, get up close to a polar bear and count the teeth on a shark! Of course, there's also the mythical rush of the Journey To Atlantis water coaster and Shamu - our biggest star both day and night in Believe and Shamu Rocks. See itinerary below for full descriptions of SeaWorld attractions. Special Offer - Book for travel in 2010 and receive unlimited admission for seven (7) consecutive days - BOOK NOW! © Viator



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**contact:**  
tel: +1 760 918 5346  
<http://www.legolandca.com>

**location:**  
1 Legoland Drive  
Carlsbad CA 92008

**hours:**  
Call for details

#### 5 LEGOLAND California

**DESCRIPTION:** Just 30 miles north of San Diego, you can spend an entire day living in the land of imagination experiencing more than 40 fun-filled rides and adventures. 'Activity' is the word for the day with 128 acres of displays including MiniLand where replicas of famous sites (Hollywood Bowl, Washington, D.C.) are created from Legos. In the Imagination Zone, children under six can play with Duplos to their hearts' content. Kids over six can check out the 'Build & Test' center. © wcities.com



**contact:**  
tel: 619-557-5450  
fax: 619-557-5469  
[www.nps.gov/cabr/](http://www.nps.gov/cabr/)

**location:**  
1800 Cabrillo Memorial Drive  
San Diego CA 92106

**hours:**  
Daily 9am-5pm

#### 6 Cabrillo National Monument

**DESCRIPTION:** Cabrillo National Monument sits high on the cliffs at the tip of Point Loma, and commands one of the most impressive views in all of San Diego of both the Pacific Ocean and San Diego Bay. It commemorates the landing of Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, the first European to set foot on what later became the west coast of the United States, at San Diego Bay in 1542. Highlights of the monument include the Old Point Loma Lighthouse, Fort Rosecrans coastal defense remains, a coastal sage scrub ecosystem and the Cabrillo Tidepools. The glass enclosed Robert J. Lagomarsino Visitor Center at this site offers a spectacular view of San Diego Bay, surrounding mountain ranges, as well as Tijuana and the Islas Coronados, Mexico. During the spring and fall migrations, several vantage points along the western portion of the monument provide excellent viewing of the gray whales passing through the area. The facility offers various programs and a small museum about Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, audio stations in six languages. The facilities are fully accessible.



**contact:**

tel: +1 619 238 1233 x802  
fax: +1 619 685 5770  
<http://www.rhfleet.org/>

**location:**

1875 El Prado  
San Diego CA 92101

**hours:**

Call for details

**7 Reuben H Fleet Science Center & Space Theater**

**DESCRIPTION:** These hands-on science and technology exhibits open a window into the future. Take a multi-sensory simulated space mission and encounter a rogue comet. Also onsite, the world's first Imax Theatre is a dome 10 times larger than a typical movie screen and the museum generally shows several films at a time. If all that activity and education makes you hungry, hop into the museum's Galileo Café for a snack or sandwich. © wcities.com



**contact:**

tel: (760) 747-8702  
<http://www.sandiegozoo.org/park/>

**location:**

15500 San Pasqual Valley Road  
San Diego California 92092

**8 San Diego Zoo's Wild Animal Park**

**OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:**

Make sure to get in a safari ride while there - it's the best attraction in the park!

**DESCRIPTION:** Inspired by the African Serengeti and the endless expanses of the Asian plains, the 1,800-acre San Diego Zoo's Wild Animal Park offers you an exotic safari adventure unlike any other outside of Africa itself. San Diego Zoo's Wild Animal Park is home to more than 3,500 rare and exotic animals - most of whom roam freely in vast enclosures. Witness a family of giraffe mingle among the gazelles and cranes while rhinos gather at a watering hole. Observe South African cheetahs lounging on a sunny hill or gaze into the eyes of the majestic California condor. Board the the Journey into Africa tour for a 45-minute tour past herds of elephants, zebras, and several endangered species. Venture into the dense forests and grassy savannas at the Heart of Africa, a 32 acre safari trail. Miles of walking trails lead guests to overlooks of lions, tigers and special encounters with exotic creatures. Stroll through Nairobi Village for shopping and dining. © Viator



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# San Diego Snapshot

## History

While today San Diego is recognized for its picturesque beaches, family friendly activities and historical landmarks, during 20,000 BC the area was home to some of the richest herds of Caribou, bison and more. Eventually the natives most commonly referred to as the San Dieguito people began culturing the area just east of Rancho Santa Fe; descendants from the area moved to La Jolla (commonly referred to as La Jolla peoples) and established themselves around San Diego's modern day La Jolla Beach and Tennis Club. Named after the Catholic Saint Didacus, more often referred by his nickname San Diego, by Sebastian Vizcaino in 1602, the area was actually originally "San Miguel" by Spain's explorer Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo. With Cabrillo's death just a few months later, San Miguel (today's Point Loma) was no longer under Spain's flagship and Vizcaino took over.

The area, Point Loma and Mission Bay, had been inhabited by Kumeyaay Indians for 10,000 years. Plans to Christianize the area started immediately, as threats from "alta California" begin to loom. Father Junipero Serra – the infamous leader and founder of "El Camino Real" – began establishing the Mission San Diego de Alcalá, which marked the end of his famous California mission trail. The missionary crew got help by several European ships and two land groups, all of whom established camp in today's Old Town. The colonization was completed by 1797 when San Diego's Mission welcomed California's largest number of occupants. When Mexico won its independence from Spain, San Diego ("baja California") fell under the rule of the reigning country; the Presidio Hills welcomed some of the first residents to the area while California followed command under Mexico.

By 1825 San Diego is named the unofficial capital of both lower and upper California and just ten years later the first mayor was elected. That same year seaman Richard Henry Dana stepped onto San Diego's land following detailed accounts of his time at sea. The Mexican-American War ensues, finishing up in a bloody battle in today's Escondido. By 1850, just three years after California's brutal win against

Mexico, San Diego is named one of 27 original California counties – spanning as far east as the Colorado River into modern-day's Imperial County and the cities San Bernardino and Riverside. The city's first mayor is elected that year, while Cabrillo Monument's iconic image is captured for the first time on paper.

San Diego, now with a little more than 700 in its city, establishes the Weekly Union, which in just a few short years will become the San Diego Union-Tribune following mergers of the Union and Evening Tribune. John D. Spreckels is the paper's sole owner, who manages the business until 1928. Prominent businessman Alonzo Horton begins building the first wharf in the area in 1869 and later goes on to become one of the wealthiest men in the area – owning several blocks in today's downtown San Diego, among other establishments.

Gold rush hits San Diego in 1870, where mines produce \$2 million in gold (though the industry only lasts for another six years). The city continues to grow in population, nearly doubling in size as the city directory is published and the San Diego Society of Natural History is established. Typical city institutions finally begin to fashion a growing commerce with the establishment of several organizations like the Russ School, which will eventually be taught by Kate Sessions. When the transcontinental railroad reaches San Diego in 1885 the area begins promoting one of its most feasible resources – itself (today tourism makes up one of San Diego's biggest money-makers). The first tourists come just as construction for the Hotel del Coronado begins, welcoming guests in 1886 following the peninsula's acquisition by Elisha S. Babcock and H.L. Story.

Sessions, who began establishing a nursery upon her arrival to San Diego, purchases 36 acres of "City Park" which before long becomes known as Balboa Park. Eventually buildings are constructed in Balboa Park as San Diego hosts the 1915 Panama-California Exposition, while a large Organ Pavilion donated by resident Spreckles is also added to the venue. San Diego's now world famous San Diego Zoo is created only after Dr. Harry Wegeforth, who hoped to quarantine

animals for the 1915 Expo, petitioned for a permanent park.

Today's San Diego State University opened up as the State Normal School in 1899 in Normal Heights as a two year training college. Just four years later the Scripps Institution of Oceanography is established by University of California Zoology Professor William E. Ritter and Ellen Browning Scripps. Not before too long the University of San Diego is founded in Linda Vista (1954), followed merely a decade later by the University of California, San Diego in La Jolla.

San Diego becomes a Mecca for entertainment, with the 1929 establishment of the Fox Theatre, a prominent movie house and current home to the San Diego Symphony (Copley Symphony Hall) along with Balboa Park's Fine Arts Gallery. These mark just one of many that improve San Diego's artistic endeavors, with Del Mar Fairgrounds construction through a Work Progress Authority project and the San Diego's Civic Center debut.

The San Diego Padres moved from minor-league to Major League in 1968, opening up their season at the new San Diego Stadium (which would eventually become Petco Park). Sports become more prominent in the area beyond baseball with Escondido's Olympic training venue opening and the Super Bowl held in Qualcomm Stadium.

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## Nightlife Insights

### Art

Nightclubs

### Theater

### Film

### Music

### Sports

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## Travel Tips

### Getting There

## San Diego Snapshot continued

### Air

San Diego International Airport(SAN)+1 619 400 2400<http://www.san.org>

SAN is located three miles from downtown and services the following airlines:

Aero Mexico(+1 800 237 6639/ <http://www.aeromexico.com>) Alaska Airlines(+ 1 800 426 0333/ <http://www.alaskaair.com>) Aloha Airlines(+1800 367 5250/ <http://www.alohaairlines.com>) American Airlines(+ 1 800 433 7300/ <http://www.aa.com>) Continental(+1 800 525 0280/ <http://www.continental.com>) Delta(+1 800 221 1212/ <http://www.delta.com>) Hawaiian Airlines(+1 800 367 5320/ <http://www.hawaiianair.com>) Jet Blue(+1 800 538 2583/ <http://www.jetblue.com>) Northwest(+1 800 225 2525/ <http://www.nwa.com>) Southwest(+1 800 434 9792/ <http://www.southwest.com>) United(+1 800 241 6522/ <http://www.ual.com>) US Airways(+1 800 428 4322/ <http://www.usairways.com>)

### From the Airport

Bus: There is public transportation to and from the airport via bus on Flyer Route no. 992.

Shuttle: There are also a number of taxis and shuttle services that offer airport transit including:

Airport Shuttle(+1 619 234 4403)  
Yellow Cab(+1 619 234 6161/ <http://www.driveu.com>) San Diego Cab(+1 619 226 8294)

Car Rental: Alamo(+1 800 327 9633/ <http://www.alamo.com>) Avis(+1 800 831 2847/

<http://www.avis.com>) Enterprise(+1 800 736 8227/ [http://www.enterprise.com/car\\_rental/home.do](http://www.enterprise.com/car_rental/home.do)) Flexcar(+1 619 262 3539/ <http://www.flexcar.com/undergrad>) Budget(+1 800 527 0700/ <http://www.budget.com>) Hertz(+1 800 654 3131/ <http://www.hertz.com>) Thrifty(+1 800 367 2277/ <http://www.thrifty.com>)

### Car Share

Another attractive ground transportation option is Flexcar, which operates in certain U.S. cities. This new breed of rental car allows you to rent on an hourly basis rather than a daily basis. Be sure to register online before your trip. Flexcar(+1 877 353 9227/ <http://www.flexcar.com>)

### Train

Amtrak(+1 800 872 7245/ <http://www.amtrak.com>) offers frequent services to San Diego.

### Bus

San Diego is serviced by Greyhound(+1 800 231 2222/ <http://www.greyhound.com>) bus lines which provide transportation to destinations throughout America.

### Car

San Diego is accessible by I-5, I-15, and US 15.

### Getting Around

#### Public Transit

The Metropolitan Transit System(MTS, 1+ 619 238 0100/ <http://www.sdcommute.com>) offers a comprehensive system of buses, trolleys, light rail trains, and commuter trains to destinations throughout San Diego.

N.B. If traveling overseas, take the safety precaution of registering your trip at <https://travelregistration.state.gov> and for helpful, practical advice about traveling technicalities and safety standards check out <http://travel.state.gov/>

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### Fun Facts

**San Diego State:**California **Country:** United States

#### San Diego by the Numbers:

Population: 1.25 million Average Winter Temperature: 60 degrees F/15.5 degrees C Average Summer Temperature: 71 degrees F/22 degrees C

#### Quick Facts:

Electricity: 110 volts, 60Hz, standard two pin plugs Time Zone: GMT-8 Country Dialing Code: 1 Area Codes: 619, 760, 858

#### Did You Know?

From San Diego, you can walk across the border to Mexico!

Ever heard of a Zambian Sable Antelope? Well, the world-famous San Diego Zoo has one!

#### Orientation:

San Diego is located 120 miles south of Los Angeles and 20 miles north of Tijuana, Mexico.

©

## San Diego Snapshot continued

### Weather

Statistics	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Temperature C												
Average High	20	20	20	21	21	23	24	26	26	25	22	20
Average Mean	14	14	15	16	17	19	21	22	22	19	16	14
Average Low	8	9	10	12	14	16	18	18	18	14	10	8
Temperature F												
Average High	69	69	68	70	70	73	76	78	79	76	72	69
Average Mean	57	58	59	61	63	66	70	71	71	67	61	57
Average Low	46	48	50	53	57	60	64	65	64	58	50	46
Rainy Days	6	6	6	4	2	0	1	0	1	2	4	6
Rain Fall (cm)	5.0	5.0	5.3	1.8	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.5	1.0	2.8	3.0
Rain Fall (in)	2.0	2.0	2.1	0.7	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.4	1.1	1.2

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