4-DAY TRAVEL GUIDE

4 Days in San Diego: The Ultimate Coastal Itinerary

A complete four-day San Diego route with La Jolla, downtown, Coronado, Balboa Park, the zoo, Cabrillo National Monument, Ocean Beach and Sunset Cliffs.



AT A GLANCE

01	*Day One*	**La Jolla Coast & Local Favorites**	Wayfarer Bread & Pastry / La Jolla Cove / Windansea Beach
02	*Day Two*	**Balboa Park, the Zoo & Dinner**	Balboa Park / San Diego Zoo / Kingfisher
03	*Day Three*	**Waterfront, Coronado & Downtown Night**	San Diego Embarcadero / USS Midway Museum / Coronado Island
04	*Day Four*	**Point Loma, Ocean Beach & Sunset Cliffs**	Old Town San Diego State Historic Park / Liberty Station / Cabrillo National Monument

LA JOLLA - UNIVERSITY CITY

Day One: La Jolla Coast & Local Favorites



STOP 1 / 8:30 AM

Wayfarer Bread & Pastry

A popular craft bakery in Bird Rock that bakes French pastries by hand daily We tried a bunch, but the seasonal pear pastry was my absolute favorite



STOP 2 / 9:30 AM

La Jolla Cove

A compact cliffside walk with close-up coastal views and frequent sea lion sightings. There's literally MILES of SEALIONS!!!

BOOK THIS STOP >



STOP 3 / 10:30 AM

La Jolla Shores

A mile-long sandy beach with calmer waves for a laid back beach picnic day or a dip in the ocean! You can also book a guided kayak tour to view kelp beds and marine-wildlife habitat up close I'd choose this beach if you are a...

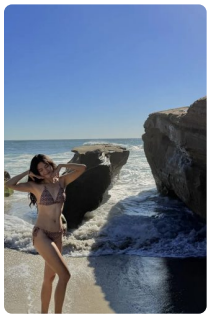
BOOK THIS STOP >



STOP 4 / 2:00 PM

The Taco Stand

Baja-style tacos with tortillas, salsas and guacamole made from scratch daily This is our San Diego tradition-the al pastor and carne asada never disappoint!



STOP 5 / 3:30 PM

Windansea Beach

A rocky La Jolla beach where nearshore reefs create powerful, photogenic surf breaks Caution: the waves are STRONG here. Don't go too far in unless you are a confident swimmer!



STOP 6 / 6:00 PM

Westfield UTC

An open-air shopping mall with major brands and more than 70 food-and-drink options This mall really has it all!



STOP 7 / 8:00 PM

Raised by Wolves

A hidden, wildly ornate speakeasy cocktail bar tucked behind a bottle shop inside Westfield UTC Come here to wind down after a shopping session in UTC mall

BALBOA PARK - GOLDEN HILL - CONVOY

Day Two: Balboa Park, the Zoo & Dinner



STOP 1 / 8:30 AM

Balboa Park

A free 1,200-acre cultural park packed with architecture, gardens and 17 museums El Prado and the Botanical Building are free even without museum tickets!

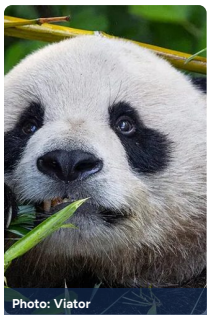
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STOP 2 / 10:00 AM

Spanish Village Art Center

A colorful working-artists' village with more than 200 local creatives across dozens of mediums Watch artists work, then browse the small studios for genuinely local souvenirs



STOP 3 / 11:00 AM

San Diego Zoo

A wildlife park where admission includes a guided bus and Skyfari aerial tram. Wear comfortable shoes. This is a BIG zoo, you could spend a whole day here!

BOOK THIS STOP >



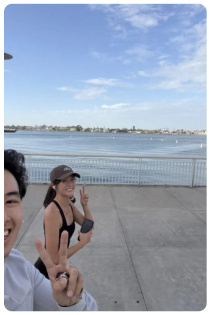
STOP 4 / 6:00 PM

Kingfisher

A polished Vietnamese-inspired dinner with dramatic cocktails and a gorgeous curved bar We came for smoked dry-aged duck, but the crispy pork ear salad stole the show

EMBARCADERO - CORONADO - GASLAMP

Day Three: Waterfront, Coronado & Downtown Night



STOP 1 / 8:00 AM

San Diego Embarcadero

A two-mile downtown waterfront linking piers, museums, public art and bay views This is the perfect stretch for a paved morning run.

BOOK THIS STOP >



STOP 2 / 9:00 AM

Tuna Harbor Dockside Market

A Saturday morning open-air market selling seasonal seafood directly from local fishermen right along the Embarcadero Come early, then grab poke, ceviche or fish and chips beside th...


Photo: Viator

STOP 3 / 10:30 AM

USS Midway Museum

A retired aircraft carrier with more than 20 historic Navy aircraft on its flight deck Explore crew quarters, engine spaces and the bridge with guided audio

BOOK THIS STOP >


Photo: GetYourGuide

STOP 4 / 1:30 PM

Seaport Village

A waterfront stroll along the Embarcadero with more than 50 local shops, snacks and bay views

BOOK THIS STOP >



STOP 5 / 2:30 PM

Coronado Island

A picturesque coastal community just across San Diego Bay from downtown San Diego with quiet resort vibes, Visit Hotel del Coronado for the classic red-roofed iconic hotel postcard scene! Take the ferry to the island for the...

BOOK THIS STOP >



STOP 6 / 6:30 PM

Tacos El Gordo

A Tijuana-style counter stop with authentic tacos! You're simply not doing San Diego right without ordering those adobada tacos! Each meat has its own line, so split up if your group is ordering different tacos to beat the lines.



STOP 7 / 8:00 PM

Arcade Monsters San Diego

A 13,000-square-foot downtown arcade with two floors, 200-plus games and unlimited play! You could lose hours here-it's honestly one of my most underrated San Diego finds They also serve beer...

OLD TOWN - POINT LOMA - OCEAN BEACH

Day Four: Point Loma, Ocean Beach & Sunset Cliffs



STOP 1 / 9:00 AM

Old Town San Diego State Historic Park

Five original adobe buildings anchor museums covering Mexican California and early American San Diego

BOOK THIS STOP >



STOP 2 / 10:30 AM

Camellia Rd Tea Bar

Craft boba built from loose-leaf tea, real milk and house sweeteners instead of powders My favorite boba spot!



STOP 3 / 11:00 AM

Liberty Station

A former Naval Training Center transformed into waterfront arts, dining and public-market spaces Browse the historic campus and grab small eats throughout the market.

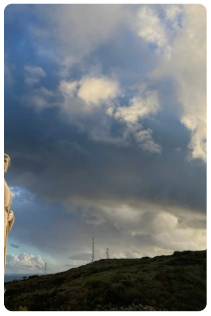
BOOK THIS STOP >



STOP 4 / 12:00 PM

Phil's BBQ

The iconic San Diego barbecue stop known for pork and beef ribs. In my opinion, the beef ribs are the star of the show! They are fall-off-the-bone tender.



STOP 5 / 1:00 PM

Cabrillo National Monument

A Point Loma historic lighthouse with bay, Coronado and Pacific views You can also visit tide pools!

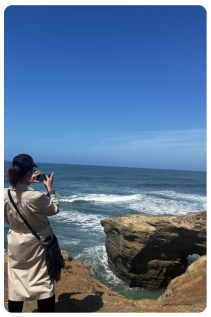
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STOP 6 / 4:00 PM

It's Raw Poke Shop

Traditional Hawaiian poke made fresh daily right on Ocean Beach This is my favorite poke shop-get the wasabi ahi. Trust! There is no seating here, so grab to go and find a spot right by Ocean Beach to enjoy your poke beside...



STOP 7 / 6:30 PM

Sunset Cliffs Natural Park

A 68-acre coastal park shaped by carved bluffs, sea caves and Pacific ocean views. Grab a spot and stay for sunset!

BOOK THIS STOP >



STOP 8 / 8:30 PM

Vallarta Express

A no-frills Mexican stop that does NOT hold back on "loaded" fries. Get the Christian fries-if you know, you know

EXTEND YOUR TRIP

Have more time?

Consider these stops.

OTHER ITINERARY LENGTHS: 2 days in San Diego - 3 days in San Diego



TIJUANA

Tijuana Guided Day Trip from San Diego

Cross the border with a guide for central Tijuana sights, market time, local context, and lunch.

BOOK NOW >



TIJUANA

Crossing Borders: Tijuana Day Trip from San Diego

Cross into Tijuana with a guide for central sights, street art, local context, market time, and lunch.

BOOK NOW >