

# CORONADO-A World Of Its Own

## And One Worth Exploring

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**Searching for a place close to home** where you'll feel a million miles away? Look no further than Coronado, where you're just a bridge away from total relaxation.

**Nestled on a peninsula just across the San Diego Bay, Coronado boasts a small-town feel, balmy weather and a postcard backdrop.** The picturesque resort town is less than a threehour drive from the Coachella Valley, but it feels more like a faraway retreat.

Interested in pounding the pavement? They say Coronado is where Main Street meets bare feet, and that's because this town is incredibly walker-friendly. Almost all of the wide, treelined streets can be reached on foot — it's only one mile from the ocean to the San Diego Bay side of the peninsula. Ready to roll? Cyclists love the 8.48-mile Silver Strand Bikeway, which curls like a ribbon around the San Diego Bay and does not run through any car traffic.

For those who truly want to relax, the broad expanses of white, sandy beaches are the best place to be hot and not bothered. Surfers get their adrenaline rush at North Beach in the morning, while four-legged friends can frolic sans leash at Dog Beach.

Surrounded by so much water, it's no surprise that Coronado also plays an important role for our naval troops. The North Island Naval Air Station, the birthplace of naval aviation, occupies the entire north half of Coronado and is the home port for several active aircraft carriers. Navy SEALs are trained toward the southern end of town at the Naval Amphibious Base.

**Getting there:** If you're driving, it's worth taking the Coronado Bay Bridge from I-5 south of downtown San Diego, for the panoramic view. You can also reach Coronado by water. The Coronado/San Diego Ferry shuttles passengers between the Broadway Pier in downtown San Diego and Coronado Ferry Landing. The ferry leaves San Diego on the hour from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. and from Coronado on the half hour from 9:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. (10:30 p.m. on weekends).

**See:** The Hotel del Coronado is a National Historic landmark, and not just because it was the backdrop for the classic film "Some Like it Hot." When the Hotel del Coronado opened its doors in 1888, it was the largest resort hotel in the world. Since then it has housed royalty, celebrities and 11 American presidents. It is also an architectural gem, representing one of the last wooden Victorian beach resorts in the nation.

**Do:** Theater-goers have two top-notch options. Lamb's Players Theatre, 1142 Orange Avenue, is housed in the historic Spreckels Building and features one of the region's largest professional theater companies. Beginning December 17, Lamb's will feature An American Christmas, a truly unique experience, in the Hotel Del's exquisite ballroom. The 1912 décor and costumed troupe host a three-hour, five-course feast with music and celebration. Or check out the Coronado Playhouse, 1835 Strand Way, the oldest community theatre in San Diego county.

**Holidays:** From late November to New Year's Day, the Hotel del Coronado offers Skating by the Sea, an experience unique to Southern California. Whether you're working on your balance or your triple axel, enjoy ice-skating outdoors with a stunning view of the Pacific Ocean. "It's the one mustdo during the holidays," says Todd Little, executive director of the Coronado Tourism Improvement District.

The main holiday event kicks off at 3:20 p.m. on December 7, when Santa Claus arrives by ferry at Coronado Ferry Landing. Afterward, a festive parade winds through the streets, and merchants will keep their doors open late for holiday shopping. Wrap up the evening with a fireworks display over the bay.

**Shop:** The Ferry Landing Marketplace, 1201 First Street. A themed shopping area, packed with boutiques, restaurants and galleries. Downtown Orange Avenue is also lined with interesting shops, restaurants and intimate cafés.