



Destination Guide: Anaheim



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AAA Destination Guide: Official AAA maps, travel information and top picks

AAA Destination Guide: Anaheim includes trip-planning information covering AAA recommended attractions and restaurants, exclusive member discounts, maps and more.

When Walt Disney brought Mickey Mouse to Anaheim in 1955, he helped establish the city as a major destination. With Disneyland (and, later, Disney's California Adventure) as a guide, other kid-friendly attractions followed: Snoopy and pals are a major draw at Knott's Berry Farm, and Soak City U.S.A., Medieval Times and the Discovery Science Center round out the fun family diversions.

But there's more to the area than just theme parks and fuzzy, life-size cartoon characters. Situated between Los Angeles and San Diego, Anaheim and surrounding Orange County benefit from year-round, moderate temperatures, which contribute to the enjoyment of several outdoor activities.

With 42 miles of coastline, Orange County is home to the headquarters of such top-notch surfing brands as Billabong, O'Neill, Op, Pac Sun, Rip Curl and Quicksilver, which testifies to its status as a surfing mecca. Within 30 minutes of Anaheim, you'll find laid-back beach towns with prime fishing conditions off one of the longest piers in the state, gorgeous beaches where you can hang ten or just bury your toes in the sand, a lively, eclectic arts scene, and an elite yacht harbor with plenty of sailing options.

An ancient mission, presidential birthplace, renowned art festivals and museums with pieces from ancient tribal art to cutting-edge works by contemporary Californian artists bring sophisticated culture to the area.

Essentials

Take the kids to [Disneyland Resort](#), and make time for [Disneyland](#) park and [Disney's California Adventure](#), both GEM attractions in Anaheim; get a FastPass to zip through the lines.

Promenade the harbor at elite [Newport Beach](#), docked with thousands of ritzy yachts, and witness daredevil bodysurfers take on The Wedge, a gnarly surfing spot.

In [San Juan Capistrano](#), tour the 18th-century, GEM-rated [Mission San Juan Capistrano](#) and its modest Serra Chapel, where founding Father Junipero Serra once celebrated Mass.

Catch your reflection in the 10,000 mirrored glass panels of Garden Grove's modern [Crystal Cathedral of The Reformed Church in America](#), and admire the religious figures in the sculpture garden.

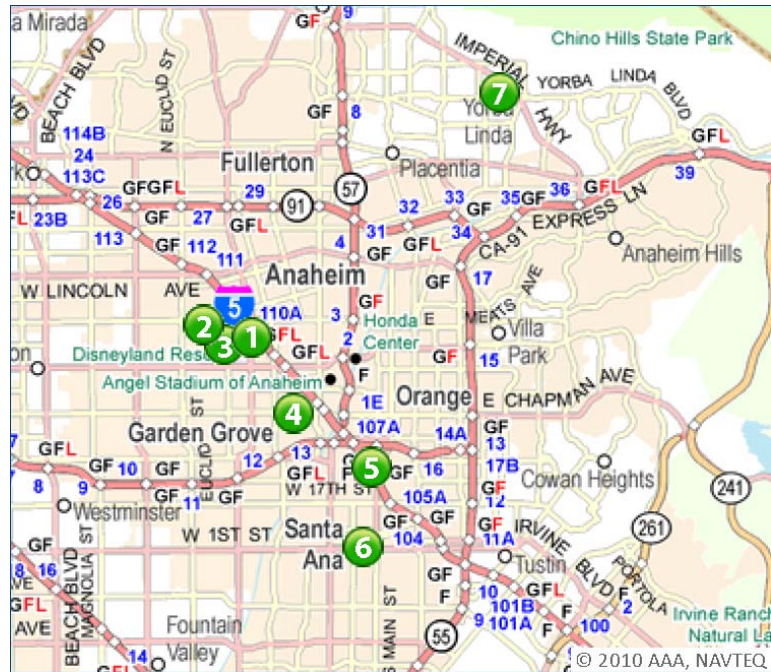
After perusing the boutiques and galleries in the artists' community of [Laguna Beach](#), do lunch at an outdoor cafe overlooking the rocky, sparkling coast.

Perform experiments at more than 120 hands-on exhibits at the [Taco Bell Discovery Science Center](#), a AAA GEM attraction in [Santa Ana](#).

Hit the beach: Consult a pro for a surf lesson on the chilly Pacific waves, soak up the rays on the sun-kissed sand or enjoy the salty night air while gathered around a beach bonfire.



Essentials Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using [TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com](#)

Stroll the gardens and peek into the farmhouse where Richard Nixon was born, on the grounds of the [Richard Nixon Presidential Library & Birthplace](#), a AAA GEM attraction in Yorba Linda.

Blow your budget at the gigantic, high-end South Coast Plaza shopping complex in [Costa Mesa](#); it's one of the world's largest shopping and dining venues, with 128 acres of opulent retailers.

Watch a professional surf or volleyball tournament and enjoy miles of coastline from the extra-long pier in laid-back [Huntington Beach](#), known as Surf City.

Essentials Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](#):



- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*



- Exclusive AAA member discounts available

1. Disneyland Resort
1313 Harbor Blvd
Anaheim, CA 92802
Phone: (714) 781-4565



2. Disneyland
1313 Harbor Blvd
Anaheim, CA 92802
Phone: (714) 781-4565



3. Disney's California Adventure
1313 Harbor Blvd
Anaheim, CA 92803
Phone: (714) 781-4565



**4. Crystal Cathedral of
The Reformed Church in America**
12141 Lewis St
Garden Grove, CA 92840
Phone: (714) 971-4013

**5. Taco Bell Discovery
Science Center**
2500 North Main St
Santa Ana, CA 92705
Phone: (714) 542-2823

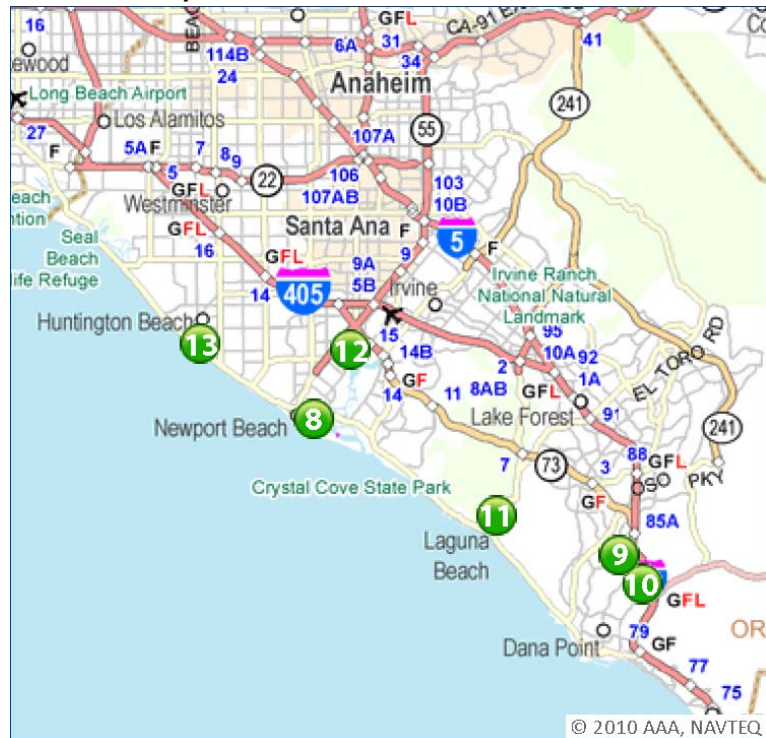


6. Santa Ana

**7. Richard Nixon Presidential
Library & Birthplace**
18001 Yorba Linda Blvd
Yorba Linda, CA 92886
Phone: (714) 993-5075



Essentials Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using [TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com](#)

Restaurants

Located in Downtown Disney and a part of the Patina Restaurant group, Catal Restaurant & Uva Bar offers several dining options. The Uva Bar is a large, circular, open-air bar offering 40 wines by the glass and such tapas as grilled skewer of chorizo with garlic-roasted potatoes and saffron aioli. The downstairs café offers casual dining, specializing in soups, salads and pastas, while a fine dining restaurant is on the second level. The several fine dining areas exude a more elegant, formal decor. Since the chef uses fresh ingredients and Mediterranean Rim preparation methods, the paella is excellent, as are the boneless braised short ribs, served with a creamy polenta and wild mushrooms. Request a table with a balcony view overlooking the Downtown Disney scene.

Essentials Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](#):



- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*

8. Newport Beach

11. Laguna Beach

9. San Juan Capistrano

12. Costa Mesa

10. Mission San Juan Capistrano

13. Huntington Beach

26801 Ortega Hwy
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675
Phone: (949) 234-1300



Right off the lobby in the Sheraton Anaheim Hotel sits the Garden Court Bistro, an airy space with abundant greenery and windows overlooking large, colorful shrubs and flower beds surrounding a large patio. Children and adults will be able to find something to satisfy their appetites for breakfast, lunch or dinner at reasonable prices. Fresh ingredients are evident on the menu, which features a good selection of salads, sandwiches, steaks and seafood. You'll also find some Japanese and Italian dishes.

Formerly a fine dining restaurant decorated with antique furniture and classic artwork, J W's Steakhouse in the Anaheim Marriott Hotel recently has been converted to a steakhouse. The use of rich, dark walls, amber lighting and wood evoke a warm, inviting ambience. Colorful, backlit glass pieces and contemporary artwork enhance the elegant decor. Meat lovers won't be disappointed by the well-aged cuts of beef and chops, but fresh seafood also is a good choice. Depending on hotel occupancy, hours may vary, so we recommend you call ahead for reservations.

Long a mainstay in the original part of Anaheim, the La Palma Chicken Pie Shop & Restaurant is in a small strip mall in a commercial area of the city. Get past the location and dated interior decor, and you'll find some of the best chicken and noodles, chicken soup and chicken pies you'll ever taste. A rich broth is the perfect complement for the thick egg noodles in the chicken and noodles dish and the chicken noodle soup. The flaky crust and big chunks of chicken in the chicken pie taste like they just

came out of Grammy's oven. After a home-style meal, you'll want to stop by the bakery and take one of the delectable pastries home—while you're at it, take home some chicken pies to stock your freezer.



Loreley Restaurant is on the grounds of the Phoenix Club, Orange County's German-American cultural center. Heavy beamed ceilings and large chandeliers attest to the European-inspired decor, and the ambience is warm and friendly. The menu includes a large selection of such original German cuisine as

sauerbraten and wiener schnitzel as well as steaks and seafood. Find a large selection of German beers in bottles or on tap in the restaurant and in the beer garden, perfect for the many German festivals and social events held at the club.

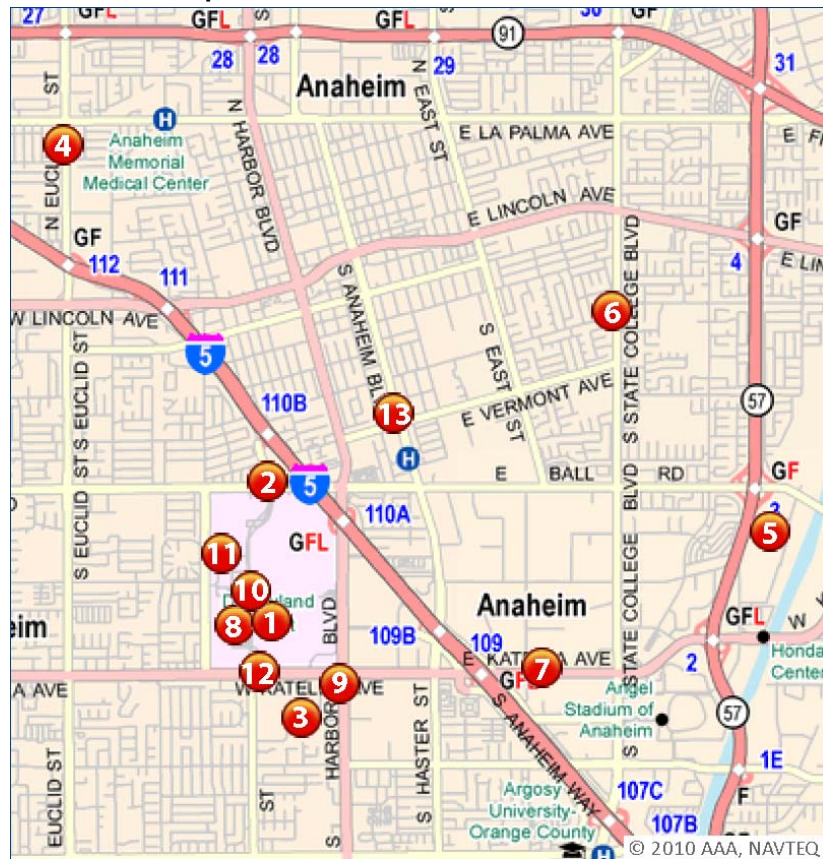
While Luigi's D'Italia isn't located in the best part of town, this family-owned and -operated restaurant proves it's been doing something right after two decades in the business. It's popular with locals and large families looking for large portions at reasonable prices. The decor is nothing fancy, just red vinyl booths and tables with red checked tablecloths, but the food is good, basic Southern Italian fare. The minestrone has a rich broth with lots of fresh vegetables; pasta dishes with well-seasoned red sauces are authentic; the bread is fresh and hot; and service is friendly and unpretentious.

Built in 1968, the lovely California mission hacienda-style building housing Mr Stox Restaurant is surrounded by beautifully manicured trees and flowering plants with tiny white twinkle lights. Upon entering, you'll spot a cozy lounge with a fireplace. The perfect setting for a business meeting or a special evening out, the tastefully decorated dining room features a large collection of fine art as well as mahogany wood beams and molding. Ambience is warm and cozy, the high-back booths provide privacy, and service is professional and accommodating. The food never

disappoints. The chef's cooking style relies on simple, contemporary recipes with such fresh ingredients as herbs from his garden and fruits from the many citrus trees on the premises. Muscovy duck and farm-raised venison are served when available. The seafood linguini is prepared using fresh seafood tossed with spinach linguini in olive oil, garlic and tomatoes, while the osso buco features a braised veal shank in a sweet vermouth reduction with rustic vegetables and potato gnocchi. The restaurant boasts a 25,000-bottle wine inventory with 1,100 different wine selections for a perfect complement to your meal. A variety of unusual breads baked on the premises can be found at local gourmet markets.

Steps away from Disney's California Adventure theme park, Napa Rose is in Disney's Grand Californian Hotel® & Spa. Specializing in California Wine Country-inspired cuisine, the restaurant offers more than 60 premium wines by the glass, most from California vineyards. At last count, there were more than 40 sommeliers on staff to assist with wine selections. The restaurant follows the Arts and Crafts-inspired style of the hotel in its use of light-colored woods, 20-foot-high vaulted ceilings, floor-to-ceiling, stained-glass walls and copper and amber glass lights and chandeliers. An exhibition kitchen offers a few counter seats from which you can view the food preparation up close. The inventiveness of the chef is expressed in his Sizzling Beach Rock appetizer—meant to be shared by two; it includes a combination of garlic-seared shrimp, soy-glazed spare ribs and lemongrass chicken cooked on a hot beach stone. Fish is represented in the cashew-crusting ocean trout with heirloom apples and sautéed coastal mushrooms, parsnips and pecans. Available in season, the roast breast of pheasant is served on a ragu of butternut squash, wild mushrooms, parsnip and pecans. There is always a selection of delicious and unusual desserts prepared by the house pastry chef, and a children's menu is available.

Restaurants Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com

One of the original steakhouses in the area, the Overland Stage Southwestern Grill & BBQ Company is much less expensive and more casual than the newer, upscale chain steakhouses that have opened in recent years. Still serving good steaks, the emphasis now is on mouthwatering barbecue ribs and a good selection of Mexican dishes, including burritos and sizzling fajitas. The kids will enjoy the Old West atmosphere, and it's just a short drive to the convention center and Disneyland parks.

**Restaurants Details - Get additional information on AAA.com;
AAA Diamond Rating information available on AAA.com/Diamonds**

- 1. Catal Restaurant & Uva Bar** 1580 Disneyland Dr
Anaheim, CA 92802
Phone: (714) 774-4442
- 2. Garden Court Bistro** 900 S Disneyland Dr
Anaheim, CA 92802
Phone: (714) 778-1700
- 3. J W's Steakhouse** 700 W Convention Way
Anaheim, CA 92802
Phone: (714) 750-8000
- 4. La Palma Chicken Pie Shop & Restaurant** 928 N Euclid St
Anaheim, CA 92801
Phone: (714) 533-2021
- 5. Loreley Restaurant** 1340 S Sanderson Ave
Anaheim, CA 92806
Phone: (714) 563-4164
- 6. Luigi's D'Italia** 801 S State College Blvd
Anaheim, CA 92806
Phone: (714) 490-0990
- 7. Mr Stox Restaurant** 1105 E Katella Ave
Anaheim, CA 92805
Phone: (714) 634-2994
- 8. Napa Rose** 1600 S Disneyland Dr
Anaheim, CA 92802
Phone: (714) 300-7170
- 9. Overland Stage Southwestern Grill & BBQ Company** 1855 S Harbor Blvd
Anaheim, CA 92802
Phone: (714) 750-1811
- 10. Ralph Brennan's Jazz Kitchen** 1590 S Disneyland Dr
Anaheim, CA 92802
Phone: (714) 776-5200
- 11. Steakhouse 55** 1150 Magic Way
Anaheim, CA 92802
Phone: (714) 778-6600
- 12. Tangerine Grill & Patio** 1030 W Katella Ave
Anaheim, CA 92802
Phone: (714) 772-1186
- 13. Anaheim White House Restaurant** 887 S Anaheim Blvd
Anaheim, CA 92805
Phone: (714) 772-1381

You won't need to travel all the way to New Orleans for excellent Cajun-Creole food—it's as close as Downtown Disney. Ralph Brennan's Jazz Kitchen mimics the charming architecture that you would expect to find in the French Quarter. The two-story restaurant includes French doors galore and wrought-iron accents, and its downstairs patio and the second

story balcony are great locations for people watching. Three food service options include casual dining downstairs, fine dining upstairs and the Creole Café, which serves beignets and coffee from 8 to 10 a.m. Not to be missed is the Gumbo Ya Ya, full of chicken and andouille in a dark, rich roux flavored with Creole seasonings and served with rice. A little milder but still seasoned to perfection is the fried gulf shrimp wrapped in coconut and served with pecan leek rice pilaf and Tabasco pepper jelly sauce. For dessert, bananas Foster is flamed tableside. Entertainment is featured nightly in Flambeaux's jazz club.

In the [Disneyland® Hotel](#), [Steakhouse 55](#), formerly known as Granville's, has been redecorated, renamed and re-staffed. The room now boasts a warm and cozy feeling thanks to dark woods and large black-and-white photos of 1950s movie stars. Specializing in certified Angus beef prepared with the chef's specially developed rubs, the restaurant also offers lamb chops, fish, tasty salads prepared with fresh ingredients and side dishes that are large enough to share.

A family-friendly, three-meal-a-day restaurant, [Tangerine Grill & Patio](#) is in the [Anabella Hotel](#), across the street from Disney's California Adventure and next to the convention center. Sit on the patio surrounded by colorful trees and flower beds or in a dining room with Southwestern decor. The chef's creative use of fresh ingredients punctuates the entrees, which feature Mexican and Pacific Rim influences. California citrus fruits are used to individualize such dishes as chicken tangerine, lime shrimp and the delicious tangerine cheesecake.

You may be surprised to find one of the finest restaurants in the area set in a modest residential area of Anaheim. [Anaheim White House Restaurant](#) is situated in a white 1909 pillared Victorian-style house. Each of the dining areas is individually decorated, but all have elegant undertones of whites and pastels, with glowing wall sconces, white chair covers and white table linens. Since 1989, restaurateur Bruno Serato has been providing diners with contemporary Northern Italian-inspired offerings made from scratch. The chef's ingenuity produces such items as an appetizer of delicate pasta sheets layered with crab meat in a

tomato béchamel sauce; poached salmon served atop a white chocolate mashed potato puree; and an oven-roasted filet mignon served over polenta with a Gorgonzola cheese sauce. Homemade desserts are lavish and delicious, and the service is attentive and accommodating.

Attractions

In a city with dozens of attractions, you may have trouble deciding where to spend your time. Here are the highlights for this destination, as chosen by AAA editors. GEMs are "Great Experiences for Members."

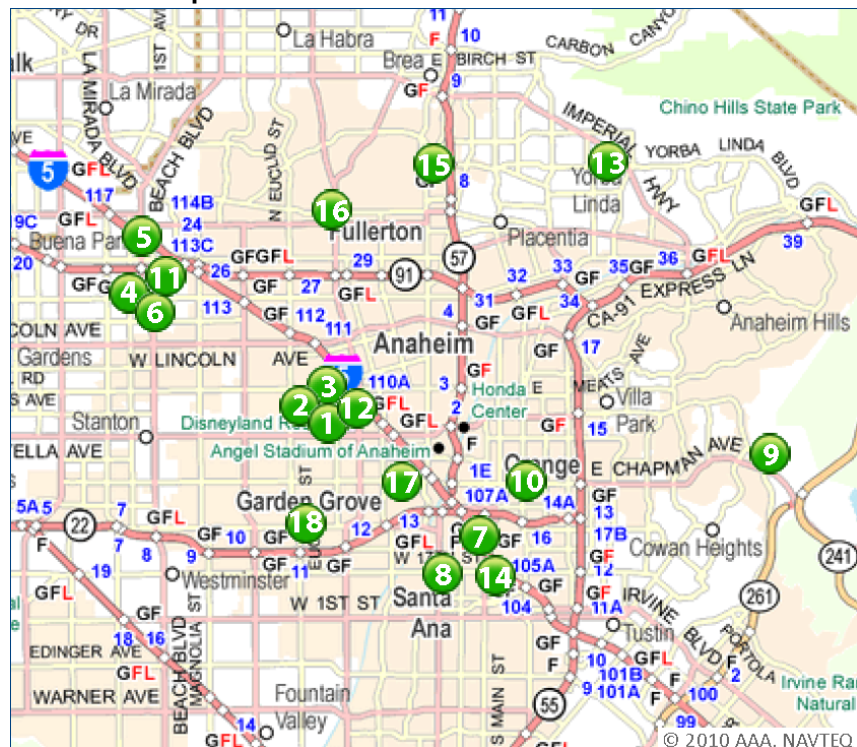
Walt Disney put Anaheim on the map in 1955 when he chose the city for his new theme park. And where Mickey goes, others will follow. Today, the northern Orange County area is home to a number kid-friendly attractions centered around the [Disneyland Resort](#), a AAA GEM attraction. The resort itself encompasses two theme parks, a bustling night spot and three resort hotels. The main draw, of course, is [Disneyland](#), home to Mickey, Minnie and other Disney-inspired characters who reside in the park's eight theme lands. While visiting the park, you can catch a parade in Main Street, U.S.A.; hop aboard a Jungle Cruise in Adventureland; spin yourself into a tizzy on the Mad Tea Party ride in Fantasyland; brave the darkened tracks of the Space Mountain roller coaster in Tomorrowland; explore pirate hideouts on Tom Sawyer's Island in Frontierland; search for "hunny" on The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh ride in Critter Country; and call on Mickey and Minnie at their houses in Mickey's Toontown.

Allow a second full day to visit [Disney's California Adventure](#), another AAA GEM attraction. The 55-acre park highlights the state's best features in its thrill rides and attractions in four theme lands. Holler till you're hoarse on the California Screamin' roller coaster; learn how It's Tough to be a Bug in a 3-D film filled with special effects; ride Heimlich's Chew Chew Train; and "fly" over California scenes in a simulated hang gliding ride.

Once a family-owned fruit farm, [Knott's Berry Farm Theme Park](#) in [Buena Park](#) re-creates the Old West in such theme areas as Ghost Town, Fiesta

Village, Wild Water Wilderness, Indian Trails and the Boardwalk. Thrill rides abound, and the AAA GEM attraction also has characters: Members of the PEANUTS gang welcome guests in Camp Snoopy, with rides for little tykes. Its partner attraction, Knott's Soak City U.S.A.-Orange County is a great spot for summer fun, with plenty of water rides—a lazy river, tidal pool, tube rides, body slides and the like—to help cool off. Budding scientists will enjoy experimenting at the Taco Bell Discovery Science Center in Santa Ana, a AAA GEM attraction with more than 100 hands-on exhibits that explore science, space, math and technology. Another great place to take the kids is the local zoo. Home to Nacho the bear, mountain lions, a bald eagle and horned owls, the Orange County Zoo in Orange is set in a shaded wilderness park.

Attractions Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using [TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com](#)

Attraction Details - *Get additional information on [AAA.com](#):*



- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*



- Exclusive AAA member discounts available

1. Disneyland Resort
1313 Harbor Blvd
Anaheim, CA 92802
Phone: (714) 781-4565



2. Disneyland
1313 Harbor Blvd
Anaheim, CA 92802
Phone: (714) 781-4565



3. Disney's California Adventure
1313 Harbor Blvd
Anaheim, CA 92803
Phone: (714) 781-4565



4. Knott's Berry Farm Theme Park
8039 Beach Blvd
Buena Park, CA 90620
Phone: (714) 220-5200



6. Knott's Soak City U.S.A
8039 Beach Blvd
Buena Park, CA 90620
Phone: (714) 220-5200



7. Taco Bell Discovery Science Center
2500 North Main St
Santa Ana, CA 92705
Phone: (714) 542-2823



8. Santa Ana



9. Orange County Zoo
1 Irvine Park Rd
Orange, CA 92862
Phone: (714) 973-6847

10. Orange

11. Medieval Times
7662 Beach Blvd
Buena Park, CA 90620
Phone: (714) 521-4740



12. Downtown Disney
1530 S. Disneyland Dr
Anaheim, CA 92802

13. Richard Nixon Presidential Library & Birthplace
18001 Yorba Linda Blvd
Yorba Linda, CA 92886
Phone: (714) 993-5075



14. Bowers Museum
2002 N Main St
Santa Ana, CA 92706
Phone: (714) 567-3600

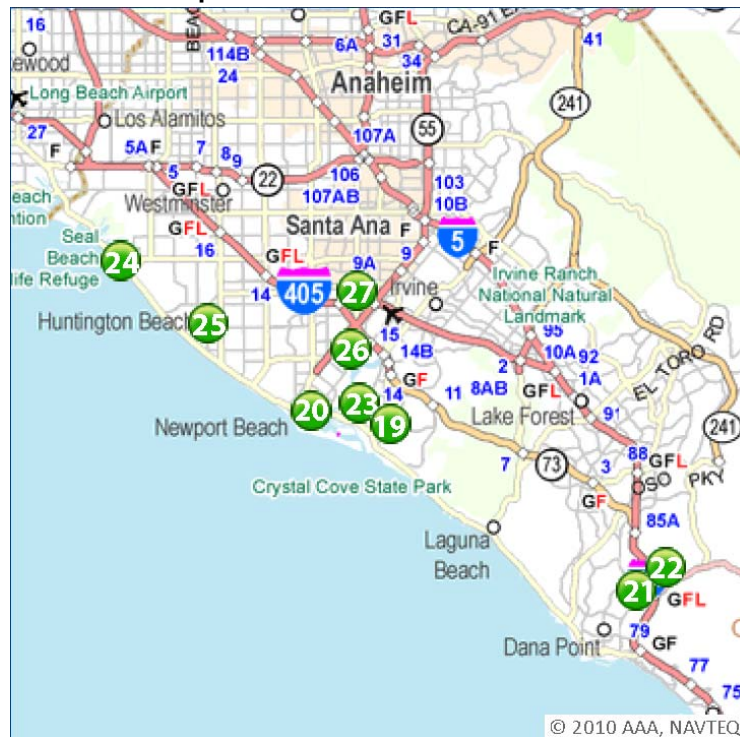
15. Fullerton Arboretum
1900 Associated Rd
Fullerton, CA 92831
Phone: (657) 278-3579

16. Fullerton

17. Crystal Cathedral of The Reformed Church in America
12141 Lewis St
Garden Grove, CA 92840
Phone: (714) 971-4013

18. Garden Grove

Attractions Map



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Sports fans both wee and large will appreciate the collection at the [Newport Sports Museum in Newport Beach](#). Individual rooms dedicated to each sport display countless equipment and rows and rows of autographed jerseys.

At night, the diversions only get more entertaining. Head to [Medieval Times](#) in Buena Park for a knightly theme dinner show. Seated around a simple dirt ring, guests watch jousting, sword fighting and fancy equestrian moves while noshing on a medieval-style feast. A more modern nightspot awaits at [Downtown Disney](#), an entertainment promenade in Anaheim with a movie theater, restaurants and shops (including the largest World of Disney store on the planet, where you'll find nearly anything Walt and friends ever created).

Attraction Details - *Get additional information on [AAA.com](#)*



- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*



- Exclusive AAA member discounts available

19. Newport Sports Museum

100 Newport Center Dr
Newport Beach, CA 92660
Phone: (949) 721-9333

20. Newport Beach

21. Mission San Juan Capistrano

26801 Ortega Hwy
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675
Phone: (949) 234-1300



22. San Juan Capistrano

23. Orange County Museum of Art

850 San Clemente Dr
Newport Beach, CA 92660
Phone: (949) 759-1122

24. Bolsa Chica Interpretive Center

3842 Warner Ave
Huntington Beach, CA 92649
Phone: (714) 846-1114

25. Huntington Beach

26. Costa Mesa

27. Orange County Performing Arts Center

600 Town Center Dr
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
Phone: (714) 556-2787



If you're looking for history and culture, Orange County has that as well. Begin at the [Mission San Juan Capistrano](#), a AAA GEM attraction in [San Juan Capistrano](#). The 1776 mission was the seventh of its kind established in the state, and its chapel is considered to be the oldest. If you're visiting in the spring, try to time a visit around the annual arrival of the swallows, little birds who have been traveling from Goya, Argentina, to the mission for as long as anyone can remember. The mission receives worldwide attention when they arrive in mid-March to nest at the church.

More recent history is celebrated at the [Richard Nixon Presidential Library & Birthplace](#), a AAA GEM attraction in Yorba Linda. The compound encompasses an enormous museum, 22 high-tech galleries, movie and video theaters, a meticulous garden and the memorial sites of

the president and first lady. A special asset to the attraction is the 1912 farmhouse, where Nixon was born. Nixon's father built the home himself on this original site, and the family's furniture and personal effects remain inside.

Art collections include Newport Beach's [Orange County Museum of Art](#), which focuses on modern and contemporary art by California artists. Find paintings, sculpture, photography, drawings and prints as well as video and digital art. Historical pieces at the [Bowers Museum](#) in Santa Ana encompass Pre-Columbian art from Mexico, Central and South America and works by American Indians as well as California artists from 1875-1955.

Nature lovers will appreciate the [Fullerton Arboretum](#) in [Fullerton](#) for its gardens. Find desert, woodlands, cultivated and Mediterranean gardens filled with rare plants from around the globe. While on the grounds, stop in for a tour of the refurbished Eastlake Victorian-style Heritage House. And if you prefer fauna to flora, trails traversing the ecological wetlands at [Bolsa Chica Interpretive Center](#) in [Huntington Beach](#) are a good place to spot some 300 different bird species.

Inventive structures also attract visitors to the vicinity. In [Costa Mesa](#) the [Orange County Performing Arts Center](#) is prominent for its design. Narrated tours take you behind the scenes as well as explain the center's architecture and history. Another impressive architectural marvel is the contemporary, edifice-like [Crystal Cathedral of The Reformed Church in America](#), covered in thousands of panes of mirrored glass. An impressive sculpture garden surrounds the building, which has an address in [Garden Grove](#).

Events

In addition to its many cultural and historic landmarks, this destination hosts a number of outstanding festivals and events that may coincide with your visit. GEMs are "Great Experiences for Members."

The arts are no stranger to the northern Orange County area. Creative residents of the cozy seaside town of [Laguna Beach](#) have been playing host to the town's annual [Festival of Arts](#) since 1932. Held in a 6-acre canyon from late July to early August, the juried art show features works by more than 140 artists. Find paintings, sculpture, pastels, drawings, silk screen paintings, photographs, ceramics, jewelry, etched and stained glass, fiber arts and handcrafted furniture as well as workshops and hands-on demonstrations for ceramics, paper art and painting. The notable show is paired with the [Pageant of the Masters](#), during which every evening in an outdoor amphitheater, actors portray well-known artworks. With elaborate costumes, extensive make-up, narration, sets, lighting and a live orchestra providing an original score, actors pose to re-create giant, living interpretations of selected paintings.



Another notable area event is the [Return of the Swallows Celebration](#) at the [Mission San Juan Capistrano](#), which commemorates the arrival of the swallows to the mission each spring. In mid-March, the little birds converge on the mission, ending their 7,500-mile, 30-day flight from Argentina. After nesting in cone-shaped mud nests cloaking the mission grounds, the birds return to South America for the fall. Observed from as early as the 1900s, the birds are assumed to have begun arriving centuries earlier. The festival that marks their arrival includes docent tours, crafts demonstrations, ethnic food and performances by mariachi bands, local school choirs and American Indian dance troupes.

California-style sports competitions also are big draws. The [American Motorcyclist Association Supercross Series](#) arrives in Anaheim in January and February. Watch as daredevil dirt bike riders master challenging tracks and perform impressive tricks. The [AVP Huntington Beach Open](#) takes place on the south side of the pier in [Huntington Beach](#) each May, when the best in beach volleyball players hit the sand for some stiff two-

on-two competition. The city's [Huck Finn Fishing Derby](#) encourages kids to don their best Huck or Becky outfit and enter a friendly fishing match (poles and bait are provided) off the Huntington Beach Pier. Tykes are guided on how to bait a hook, cast a line and measure and release their catches; kid-friendly prizes include bicycles and skateboards. A costume contest tops off the event, which takes place in late August.

Another old-fashioned festival is the [Huntington Beach 4th of July Parade](#), said to be the largest of its kind west of the Mississippi River. Following an extensive parade, the 4-day event includes a home decorating contest, pancake breakfast and a 5K run (perhaps to work off the pancakes).

Car shows include Huntington Beach's [Beachcruisers Woodie Meet](#) in mid-March and [Concours d'Elegance](#) in early June. The Woodie Meet welcomes all beach cruising vehicles manufactured before 1968 (we're told if it can haul your "board, buddies or babe," it's a beach cruiser). Check out fun vintage wagons, sedans, convertibles, VWs, woodies and pick-ups, some still speckled with sand. The Concours d'Elegance event displays classic cars, motorcycles and vintage bicycles and features entertainment and automobile memorabilia.

Sample delectable cuisine from 35 of the finest restaurants in [Newport Beach](#) at the town's [Taste of Newport](#), a 3-day wine, food and music festival in mid-September. Tastings from more than 15 local wineries pair nicely with the culinary offerings. If brewskies are more your style, head to Huntington Beach from early September through late October for [Oktoberfest](#), a collection of events celebrating the traditional German festival. Dance to German bands, drink, sample sauerkraut and sausages and attend the dachshund races. If you pull on your lederhosen or dirndl skirt, admission is free.

However balmy, the holiday season brings two traditional events. From mid- to late December, homeowners on Huntington Beach's surrounding man-made islands go to town with holiday lights, hoping to win the best home or best yacht decor award. The [Cruise of Lights Boat Tour](#) is the best way to see the displays of hundreds of homes, docks, decks and

boats adorned with twinkle lights and lighted animated figures reflecting off the water. Mission San Juan Capistrano's [Christmas at the Mission](#) kicks off with the lighting of the mission Christmas tree and continues with a live nativity, a visit from Santa and crafts in Santa's workshop.

Insider Info

Cruise the Coast

One of the most scenic drives in the country, California's Pacific Coast Highway hugs the ocean, riding atop rocky cliffs leading to sandy beaches, through canyons and amid seaside foothills. Rent a convertible if you can, and spend a day exploring the jagged coast along this celebrated, winding route from Laguna Beach to Seal Beach.

Beginning in Laguna Beach and heading north toward Seal Beach, the 25-mile drive will take you about 45 minutes if you can resist stopping at every turn-out to take in the scenery and inhale the salty air. The pace is slow, so don't rush it. Instead, pack a picnic to be enjoyed seaside or choose a sandy shore for a stroll alongside the brisk waves.

The highway bisects sleepy beach towns and passes spectacular scenery as it meanders over sloping hills dotted with colorful wildflowers, around hairpin turns and past steep cliffs. Around every corner are breathtaking, panoramic views of the sea as it rolls onto sandy beaches or crashes against rugged outcrops.

An artists' enclave, Laguna Beach is marked by towering headlands and coastal bluffs. After perusing the town's collection of galleries and boutiques, you'll want to hit the highway. Departing Laguna Beach, you'll pass the town of Crystal Cove, home to a coastal state park where you can scuba dive, surf and swim, or hike, mountain bike or ride on horseback through its woodlands. A quick visit is enough time to explore the beach's tide pools and coves, home to all sorts of waterlogged residents. Farther along the route, stop for a game of beach volleyball, some sunbathing or swimming at Corona del Mar's Big Corona State Beach, bordered by cliffs and a rock jetty.

You'll know you're approaching Newport Beach when you spot the town's swanky yacht harbor crammed with thousands of high-end craft, its chic

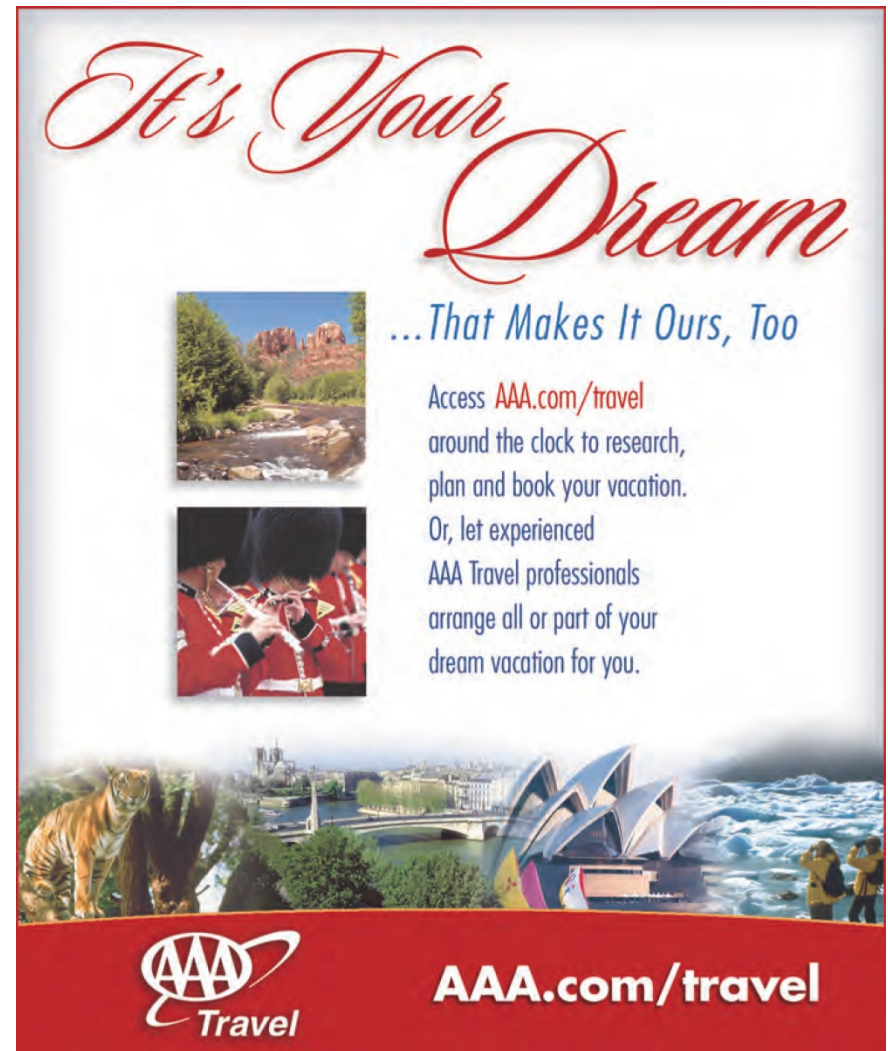
shopping district and expansive beach packed with surfers and sunbathers. Consider having lunch here, or opt for a gondola tour or harbor cruise.

Upon your arrival in Huntington Beach, you can stroll the extra-long pier and watch surfers ride what are said to be the best swells in the state. After passing tranquil Sunset Beach and Surfside, you'll arrive in Seal Beach. Home to a naval weapons station and a retirement community and devoid of the barking sea critters that gave the town its name, Seal Beach is a quiet seaside town that operates at a slow pace.

While the drive isn't long, it is stunning. Your memory will retain its picture-perfect views: Breaking waves against high cliffs, the sun shimmering off the blue sea, frothy water meeting caramel-colored sands and grassy foothills leading inland.

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The advertisement features a collage of travel-related images: a river flowing through a rocky landscape, a group of people in red uniforms, a tiger, a cityscape with a bridge, and the Sydney Opera House. The text is written in a mix of elegant cursive and clean sans-serif fonts.

100104

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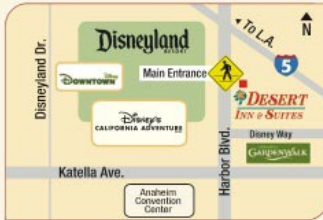
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