

10 ESSENTIAL SAN DIEGO EXPERIENCES

1. Stroll around **Balboa Park**, the nation's largest urban cultural park. Beyond the museums, theaters and galleries, the 1,200- acre park embraces nature with rose and cactus gardens, eucalyptus forests and hiking trails.
2. Take in the stunning park and city views from the aerial tram ride at **San Diego Zoo**, also renowned for its rare baby giant pandas, gorilla tribes and animal friendly habitats.
3. Watch penguins strut at **SeaWorld** San Diego and eagle rays spread their wings at **LEGOLAND's Sea Life Aquarium**. San Diego's theme parks offer far more than heart-thumping rides.
4. Use pedal or foot power to explore **Mission Bay Park's** beaches, lawns and playgrounds. Pack a picnic for the full experience.
5. Let your inner child free in downtown **San Diego's New Children's Museum**, an eco-friendly civic model of "green" architecture and a fun-filled playground for kids and their guests.
6. Climb ladders between decks and the galleys and play with a flight simulator at the **USS Midway Museum's** 1,001-foot-long aircraft carrier docked in San Diego Bay.
7. Peer through binoculars at great gray whales spouting offshore from atop Point Loma at **Cabrillo National Monument** in winter, and check out the Navy vessels in San Diego Bay year-round.
8. Swoop above **The Flower Fields of Carlsbad** in a restored biplane, lingering over rows upon rows of brilliantly hued Giant Tecolote Ranunculous flowers as they burst forth in spring.
9. Drive to the **Cuyamaca Mountains, Mt. Palomar** and the **Anza-Borrego Desert**, an amazing trip achievable in a day. But why would you race through when campgrounds, lodges and resorts beckon you to stay?
10. Pick a patch of sand anywhere from **Imperial Beach to Oceanside** and enjoy the show as the sky goes from sunny blue to dusky rose as the sun slips into the ocean. You just might catch a glimpse of the elusive green flash.