



HOW TO STAYCATION LIKE A TOURIST

You can't remember the last time you took a vacation, and it's definitely not gonna happen anytime soon. But who ever said you have to leave the city when you take time off? Let's reexamine what's going on in our own backyard. San Diego attracts droves of tourists looking to escape their own personal hells known as "the Midwest" and "the East Coast." Living smack dab in the middle of paradise, it's easy to take all we have for granted. Time to step away from the computer, put your email in vacation mode, and ignore calls from your boss, because you're joining the hordes -- you are officially on staycation. Why should tourists get to have all the fun? Treat yo self.

Check in to check out

Various locations

It doesn't matter that you have a perfectly good apartment -- get a few friends together and rent a room for the weekend. Hotels and resorts around here are more than just room service, fluffy robes, and free HBO; they're total vacation packages. Take advantage of the deals reserved exclusively for hotel guests. Get rental discounts on paddleboards, kayaks, and surfboards. Some hotels have jet skis and speedboats waiting for guests to use. Some will provide guides to take you wakeboarding, or on a dinner cruise around the bay. If relaxing is more of your vacation style, then get pampered in the hotel spa, or chill by the pool with an umbrella in your drink. It's your staycation. Do you.



SARA NORRIS/THRILLIST

Have a guy build a bonfire for you

Various locations

Thanks to the more than [20 designated areas](#) around town with fire pits by the water, a perfect day at the beach doesn't have to end when the sun goes down. Get the fire going, break out the hot dogs and marshmallows, and have a good old-fashioned bonfire under the stars. If you're too lazy to do it yourself (I mean, you *are* supposed to be on vacation), [the Beach Fire Guy](#) will build you a rager complete with tiki torches, adirondack chairs, and s'mores. The crew will even clean it all up when the fire dies down.



COURTESY OF IFLY

Go skydiving... indoors

Mission Valley

Not everyone has the cojones to jump out of a plane. But if you still want the experience of floating on air without the risk of, y'know, death, the next best thing is indoor skydiving at [iFLY](#). It recently opened a location in Mission Valley where you can get the free-fall feeling and learn how to do flips and tricks in the vertical wind tunnel like a pro.



SARA NORRIS/THRILLIST

Explore all of Balboa Park

Balboa Park

When people think of San Diego, "beach" is the first thing to come to mind. But one of the best places to spend the day relaxing is in [Balboa Park](#). Keep it simple with a picnic in the grass, or eat lunch on the patio at The Prado. Grab a cocktail from Panama 66 before you take in some culture at the bevy of museums. Best of all, locals get the special treatment on resident free days. Flash your ID (with an SD address) on Tuesdays, and you'll be granted free entrance to select museums in the park. Participating museums change each Tuesday, so [check the schedule](#) before you go.



SARA NORRIS/THRILLIST

Take to the sea

La Jolla/Mission Bay

There's no reason to sit and bake on the sand all day when there's an entire ocean out there to explore. Whether you want a guided tour into the La Jolla sea caves, or prefer to paddle at your own pace, companies like [Everyday California](#) in La Jolla or [Aqua Adventures](#) in Mission Bay have you covered. Rent a kayak, paddleboard, surfboard or snorkel gear, and go get wet.

RELATED

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SARA NORRIS/THRILLIST

Cruise the boardwalk

Pacific Beach/Mission Beach

Brush the cobwebs off your bike, strap on your helmet, and take a cruise down the boardwalk. If you plan it right, you can practically make a whole day of it. Hit up [Kono's](#) for breakfast outside, take a break for a Red Bull slushie at [PB Shore Club](#), stop by [Lahaina's](#) for lunch and a pitcher of margaritas, then end the day with a couple of award-winning TKO fish tacos at [Sandbar](#). You can always stop to lounge on the beach, or jump in the ocean when you get tired of pedaling. Definitely chat up the backpackers as you pass by the deck of the [Beach Bungalow Hostel](#). If you make one too many slushie stops, maybe one of them will invite you to stay the night. Then you'll *really* get the tourist experience.

Spend a day at the Del

Coronado Island

The iconic Hotel del Coronado has a rich history that should attract both hotel guests and San Diegans. There's an entire page of its website dedicated to [locals](#) looking to do some s'more roasting, or who are interested in a day at the [spa](#). If the beach is more

your style, rent out cushioned lounge chairs with terrycloth covers, cabanettes, day beds, and fringed umbrellas, complete with food and beverage service at Del Beach. If your boo is joining you (which, they should), hit up the romantic Swedish massage for two, and have yourself a private bonfire with Champagne. How's that for a staycation you'll never forget?



COURTESY OF THE LOT

Do dinner and a movie

La Jolla

Catching a movie at [THE LOT](#) is no ordinary cinematic experience. Sink into one of its oversized leather recliners while eating charred shishito peppers and grilled octopus, ending with honey-goat cheesecake for dessert. Wash it all down with a craft beer, cocktail, or a glass of Champagne; why the hell not? The arthouse shows the latest releases, plus old favorites as part of its Throwback Series. Don't feel like cutting through a filet mignon while simultaneously paying attention to a movie? Hit the dining room before or after the screening.



[SAN DIEGO BEACH RIDES](#)

Hit the beach on horseback

Tijuana River Valley

Riding a horse down the beach at sunset is on the bucket list of just about any woman who has ever seen a rom-com, and [San Diego Beach Rides](#) exists to make that fantasy a reality. It provides the horse, the guide, and the beach. The magical movie moment is not guaranteed (nor is it likely), but hey, a girl can dream. Book a trail ride through the Tijuana River Valley, trot along the shore of San Diego's southernmost beach, or go for it and take that horse into the water for a swim.



SARA NORRIS/THRILLIST

Go hang gliding along the ocean

La Jolla

Sometimes not getting in enough vacation days will make you feel like jumping off a cliff. But here's your chance to take that leap in a more positive way! There's nothing like gliding up and down the Torrey Pines coastline on a breeze. Take a tandem flight or sign up for lessons so you can learn how to paraglide or hang glide on your own. If you're afraid of heights, you can still grab a sandwich at the Cliffhanger Cafe at the Gliderport. Its patio has a perfect view overlooking the ocean, and you can watch as people take off and land in the field next to the cafe.

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SARA NORRIS/THRILLIST

Visit historic Old Town

Old Town

If you haven't been to Old Town since that one elementary school field trip, it's time to revisit this part of San Diego. It's the ultimate tourist experience, from the reenactors walking around in period clothing, to the historic buildings. You can watch the ladies making fresh tortillas in front of [Café Coyote](#), grab a sausage for lunch at [RUST General Store](#), have a couple of the famous giant margaritas at [Casa Guadalajara](#), and then get the crap scared out of you by the ghosts at the [Whaley House](#) on a nighttime tour. Who knows, now that you're revisiting this place as an adult, you might actually learn something about the history of San Diego.