



HERE'S WHY SAN DIEGO'S TOURIST-RIDDLED OCEANFRONT BOARDWALK DOESN'T TOTALLY SUCK

DANIEL FISHEL/THRILLIST

By [SARA NORRIS](#)

The Oceanfront Boardwalk is sort of like the public transportation in San Diego. We all know it's there, it'll get you from point A to point B, but most of us avoid it like the plague -- a plague spread by crowds of tourists. The two-lane strip of sidewalk that runs from Law St in PB to Mission Beach might be heavy on the T-word, but maybe, just maybe, they know something the locals have forgotten: the boardwalk is pretty great.

Think of it as a 2.5-mile oceanfront fast track from Pacific Beach to Mission Beach with plenty of pit stops along the way where you can grab a bite or find some adult hydration. Hop on your bike or dust off your roller blades: here are 15 places to stop on your boardwalk bar crawl this summer.

JRDN/Tower23

Pacific Beach

Attached to the Tower23 hotel, JRDN is the spot on the boardwalk for high-end dining with a fancy ocean view, so it's best to stop here before you get all sweaty on your journey down the boardwalk. Have a cocktail while you crack open Alaskan king crab, slurp down some oysters from one of the seafood platters, and watch the surfers catch waves around Crystal Pier. During weekend brunch, you can build your own mimosas with a choice of blood orange rosemary, pineapple mango, or blackberry mint splashed with either cava or prosecco because nothing complements an ocean view like a mimosa.

Kono's Cafe

Pacific Beach

This beloved PB staple serves up hot coffee and the best breakfast on the boardwalk that won't break the bank. Starting at 7am, seven days a week, you can get a hearty breakfast plate piled with enough food to feed a small village for around eight bucks. They're open for lunch until 3

or 4pm everyday, too, serving American classics like burgers and grilled cheeses with steak fries. Get your food at the cafe and take it down to the beach, or walk across the boardwalk to check out the ocean view from its hidden outdoor seating area overlooking Crystal Pier.

710 Beach Club

Pacific Beach

710 is more than just a beach bar; it's a sports bar by day and a nightclub/music venue after the sun goes down. From trivia and Liquid Courage Karaoke to live bands, there's plenty going on in there to keep you entertained all day. There's an all-day happy hour until... wait for it... 7:10pm. Every day of the week has a different special, like 2-4-1 whiskey shots, \$17 pitchers of margaritas, or \$5 endless pulled pork sliders.

Firehouse

Pacific Beach

This isn't the Firehouse you thought you knew that opened by the beach almost a decade ago -- the restaurant underwent a million dollar renovation last year. If that isn't enough to pique your curiosity, then the new menu from Chef Brian Redzikowski of Kettner Exchange should be. Now, the cocktails are a little craftier and the food is a little fancier, but is there a person on Earth who would complain about eating bacon fat mac & cheese or Kobe beef sliders on a rooftop with the ocean breeze on your face?



COURTESY OF SHORE CLUB

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PB Shore Club

Pacific Beach

Shore Club has always had one of the best beach views on the boardwalk, but it stepped up its game last summer with the addition of a brand-spankin'-new open-air rooftop patio. It's still giving people crippling hangovers with those infamous goblets of Red Bull vodka slushies (worth it), but now you can guzzle them while catching some rays and watching all of those sand-covered suckers down on the beach. The kitchen is open late night so they're slinging sautéed lobster tacos and brisket nacho fries from 9pm until close. It's a good thing, too, because you can work up quite the appetite during those Wednesday night goldfish races, which don't start until 10pm.



COURTESY OF ALEHOUSE

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Pacific Beach Alehouse

Pacific Beach

Last year, Alehouse was such a hot spot that the place literally burst into flames. OK, so maybe that was just a kitchen fire that got a little out of hand, but it reopened five months later like a phoenix rising from its greasy ashes with a new award-winning head brewer, updated interior design, and two remodeled bars. The new head brewer, Jonathon Rielly, brought along several house-made micro brews with locally inspired names like the Slomo Saison and Law Street Lager. This rooftop bar is made for weekend brunching with ocean views, but come by for specials during the week for \$1 oysters all day on Wednesdays, or all-you-can-eat crab on Thursdays from 5-10pm. Five hours to eat all the crab you can stomach? Challenge accepted.

Beach Bungalow Hostel

Pacific Beach

OK, so you can't really eat or drink anything here, but that's fine -- you might make a tourist's day or learn a little something about the world. Travelers are always hanging out on this beach-facing patio, and they'd probably jump at the chance to cruise the beach with a local. Don't be shy: make some new friends to bring along on the rest of your journey down the boardwalk.

BAJA BEACH CAFE

Baja Beach Cafe

Pacific Beach

The Baja Beach Cafe epitomizes everything a beach bar should be, from the color scheme and palm fronds lining the roof to the gigantic margaritas with tiny paper umbrellas. You can come in early for breakfast or stay for the two-for-one late-night happy hour, because it's summer and everyone should be double-fisting giant margaritas at half past midnight. The beach-level patio is perfect for people watching on the boardwalk or for stopping in after a little surfing. The food won't do anything for your beach body, but are you gonna pass up prime rib specials or lobster chowder in a sourdough bread bowl? Thought so. Plus, you'll need those carbs for the margarita double duty.

Lahaina Beach House

Pacific Beach

Despite being a cash-only bar, Lahaina's is a boardwalk favorite. Their wooden deck is usually bursting at the rails with people trying to get their drink on, so if you hate crowds... we didn't want to hang out with you anyway. If you're lucky enough to find a seat on the deck then order yourself a pitcher of beer or margaritas and don't give up your post until you see the sunset. There's also plenty of bike parking conveniently right out front so you won't have to worry too much about losing your ride while you're otherwise too occupied with the beautiful sunset.

World Famous

Pacific Beach

Who knows if World Famous is actually world famous, but it's certainly known for breakfast by the beach in San Diego. Go for brunch and order the smoked carnitas chilaquiles or one of the house eggs Benedict dishes made with carne asada, lobster, crab cakes, or BBQ pork. Wash it all down with a spicy SKYY Bloody Caliente Bloody Mary, made with atomic-grade horseradish.



SARA NORRIS/THRILLIST

Sandbar

Mission Beach

If you're looking for the best fish taco on the boardwalk, look no further. SandBar has won so many awards for its TKO Fish Tacos that we've lost count. It recently switched things up behind the bar with a serious [tequila program](#) and some fancy cocktails. Even though it's focused on the agave, Sandbar just added a few new beverages for summer, like the totally Instagramable hard root beer float, made with vanilla vodka, Coney Island Hard Root Beer, and whipped cream, perfect for sipping on the rooftop patio.

WaveHouse

Mission Beach

It doesn't matter if the real waves suck when WaveHouse has perfect never-ending waves right next to the beach. Come by the rooftop for [Rhythm and Moves](#) at 6pm on the first and third Wednesdays of the month until September. You can get your vinyasa on with a DJ for 75 minutes, followed by craft beer or wine. On June 18th, it's hosting the [Second Annual US Open](#)

of Flowboarding; competing will be its own professional flowboarding team. Catch them in action at Night Flight every Thursday after sunset.

Draft

Mission Beach

While Draft has a full bar, it also has 69 craft brews on tap -- this is the stop for beer on the boardwalk. If you can't decide on just one, there's a Flight Night on Tuesdays. Pick any four beers to build your own while listening to live music from 6-9pm. Draft's boardwalk patio is also a prime spot for grabbing a bite with an oceanfront view, but you'd be content to simply park your towel on the sand out front and pop in for beers during your beach day...

Cannonball

Mission Beach

The largest oceanfront rooftop patio in San Diego is perched right above Draft at Cannonball. Take in the insane view of the Pacific while sipping on a crafty cocktail and eating sushi around a fire pit.

Belmont Park

Mission Beach

Carnival rides, arcade games, hot dogs on sticks... we could go on, but do you really need more convincing? Do something good for your inner 10-year-old and take a ride on the wooden roller coaster, spend all your quarters on Skee-Ball, and eat cotton candy until you're nauseous, which shouldn't take long because you don't have the steel stomach of a preteen anymore.