

+ Jennifer Bradley stays classy in San Diego – the craft beer culture club p.128

72 Hours In...

San Diego

 There's more to San Diego than year-round sunshine (although that's a very good reason to visit). A two-hour drive from LA, 20 miles from the Mexican border and hugging the Pacific coastline, this Southern Californian city is divided into distinct, chic and scenic neighbourhoods. It also has more than 140 breweries, microbreweries and brewpubs, making it the craft-beer capital of the US.

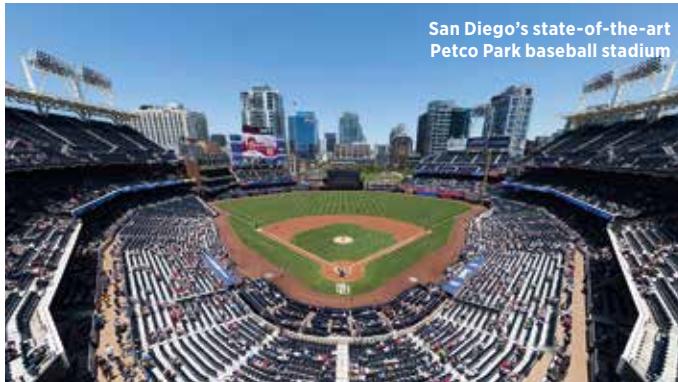


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Where to stay

The downtown Gaslamp Quarter celebrated its 150th anniversary last year and it's been transformed from the decaying "sailor's entertainment" district of the Eighties into a buzzy neighbourhood packed with restaurants, bars, boutiques and some beautiful Victorian architecture.

In the heart of it all, you'll find a smart and eco-chic bolt hole in Hotel Indigo (hotelindigo.com), where the building is insulated by a vegetation-covered "green roof" that also provides herbs for the restaurant. Indigo's Level 9 is a stylish rooftop bar serving a range of local IPAs and tropical cocktails. Make the most of the views of the Petco Park baseball stadium by requesting a corner bedroom.



San Diego's state-of-the-art Petco Park baseball stadium

Where to drink

The booming craft beer scene is so integral to San Diego that it's on the curriculum at two of its universities. Karl Strauss Brewing Company (karlstrauss.com) claims to be San Diego's original craft brewery, but Pariah (pariahbrewingco.com) is new to the scene and offers unusual brews, including the Off White Wit made with honey, jasmine, green tea, lemongrass, orange and ginger. If you can steer yourself off the beer trail, seek out the super-slick You & Yours distillery (youandyours.com) in East Village for California grape gin and vodka – distilled, bottled and labelled right on site.



Above: Hotel Indigo's Level 9 bar offers great views across the Gaslamp Quarter

Where to eat

Its close proximity means you'll never be short of Mexican-influenced cuisine. La Jolla is packed with options, such as Galaxy Taco (galaxytaco.com), a passion project for chef Trey Foshee, who serves fully loaded corn tortillas against a backdrop of colourful murals. Locals will direct you to Taco Stand (letstaco.com), where you can tuck into an authentic cactus taco for \$3 (£2.15).

Beyond burritos, there is the Arts District's Liberty Public Market (libertypublicmarket.com) – 2,300 sq metres of artisan food stalls. With options ranging from sandwiches and crêpes to Maine lobster rolls and sausages, you'll be grazing for days. Nearby, Officine Buona Forchetta (buonaforchettasd.com) is also worth the cab fare for its charred-crust pizzas alone.

What to do

As a city by the sea in one of the US's most beautiful states, San Diego doesn't skimp on breathtaking attractions (and they don't all involve spotting filming locations from *Anchorman* and *Top Gun*). Catch seals basking on the rocks at La Jolla Cove or hop on a tour to glimpse the annual migration of blue whales. Sometimes you can spot them from Sunset Cliffs, which is also – as the name suggests – a prime spot for watching the sun go down over the Pacific.

A little further afield are the wineries of Temecula Valley. New to the scene in Californian terms (it was first planted in 1968 compared to Napa Valley's 1854), the reputation of wines from this region was revolutionised after 40 per cent of the region's vines were destroyed by flying insects in the early Nineties. The growers seized the opportunity to seriously up their game, bringing in more Mediterranean varietals and improving farming methods. Some newer wineries, including Monte De Oro (montedeoro.com), focus on environmentally friendly growing techniques, but the extraordinary panorama of vineyards, ranches and mountains seen from its sun-soaked terrace should be enough to persuade you that this is a must-see on your wine-tasting tour.

Oak Mountain Winery (oakmountainwinery.com), amid Temecula's avocado groves, has the region's only "wine cave", tunnelling 320 feet into the rocky hillside to store its barrels at optimal humidity and to provide its visitors with a rustic café-bar in which to sample its huge range of wines. And, yes, they also serve those local avocados fresh from the tree. **JENNIFER BRADLY**



GQ visited San Diego with Virgin Holidays, which offers hundreds of new experiences – including Temecula Valley wine tours – and bespoke trips. A seven-night tour of the US West Coast includes flights from London Heathrow to Los Angeles, accommodation and car hire. From £1,295 per person. virginholidays.co.uk