

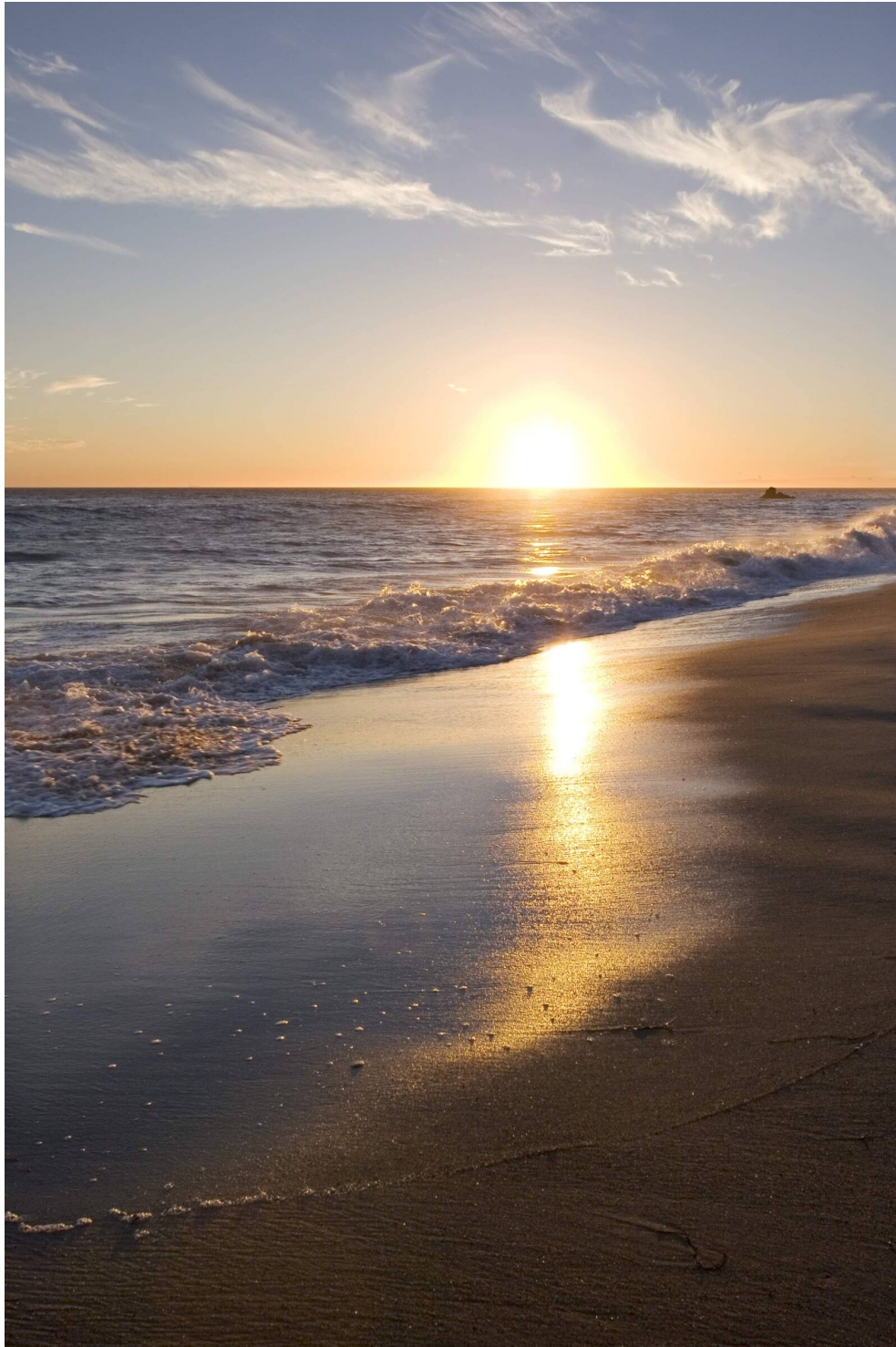
# Getaway: Unwind with a San Diego beach vacation

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[pressdemocrat.com/article/lifestyle/getaway-unwind-with-a-san-diego-beach-vacation/](http://pressdemocrat.com/article/lifestyle/getaway-unwind-with-a-san-diego-beach-vacation/)

DIANE COVINGTON-CARTER

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Looking for a fun spring beach getaway but don't want to pay for expensive flights to Hawaii or face the long flight?

Two Southern California beach towns offer plenty of romantic or family fun, on the beach and off. Both are just north of San Diego, an easy 1½-hour flight from San Francisco or a one-day drive from Northern California, and both offer stretches of clean white sand.

La Jolla and Del Mar are the treasured secrets of locals, both a short 20-minute drive north of the San Diego Airport and near the better known attractions of Sea World, the San Diego Zoo, Balboa Park, The San Diego Zoo Safari Park, and Legoland.

## LA JOLLA

La Jolla means “the jewel” in Spanish, and these two gems are among my favorite ways to enjoy on a mile long stretch of white sand. You can snag great off-season rates from now until summer, when the rooms will quadruple in price.

La Jolla Beach and Tennis Club: This private club, which sits at a private end of the beach, offers 90 rooms (ranging from hotel style rooms to three-bedroom suites), and guests have access to all of the club amenities with no resort fee.

Here are just a few of those perks: 12 championship tennis courts, a nine-hole golf course, putting practice greens and driving nets, heated pool, fitness center, private beach with beach umbrellas and lounges, fireplaces, food and beverage service.

For the kids, there are swim, golf and tennis lessons, a playground on the beach and, in the summer, a kid's camp. Or walk a short walk to kayak/surfing/snorkeling, paddleboard and bike rentals, plus lots of shops and restaurants on nearby Avenida de la Playa. [LJBTC.com](http://LJBTC.com)

The hotel's legendary restaurant, the Marine Room, sits so close to the incoming waves that during a high tide, the waves put on an exciting and wondrous dance as they splash against the windows. [MarineRoom.com](http://MarineRoom.com).

La Jolla Shores Hotel: The same beautiful stretch of white sand continues right next door at the La Jolla Shores Hotel. Step out onto the sand, or relax by the pool or in the Jacuzzi after a day at the beach. Check for specials at [ljshoreshotel.com](http://ljshoreshotel.com).

Kids 8 and younger receive free breakfasts every day and free dinners on Sundays. Bed and Breakfast and mid-week stay discounts also are available.

Checking rates for two adults and two children during the week before Easter, a room with a kitchenette came in at around \$400. A room with two queen beds was \$260.

The oceanfront restaurant, The Shores, features fresh, sustainable seafood and local farm fresh ingredients. [theshoresrestaurant.com](http://theshoresrestaurant.com)

From either hotel, it's possible to explore the tide pools during low tide from places just north of the Scripps Institute of Oceanography Pier at the north end of the beach. Or visit The Birch Aquarium and Museum, just up the hill.

The European feel of the village of La Jolla, across the waves and a short drive away, is chock full of interesting boutiques, restaurants and art galleries. Scripps Park winds along the coast, the perfect outlet for playing and walking. The clear water of the nearby cove is great for swimming and the chance for snorkelers to observe sea life.

In the center of the village, the high-end La Valencia Hotel known as the Pink Lady has been an icon since it opened in 1926. Stop in for a drink or a meal or just to admire the lovely views, and enjoy the tiled courtyards, hand painted murals and Spanish mosaics.

## DEL MAR

Another 14 miles north is the little town of Del Mar, long a choice for vacationers. It's known for its racetrack in the summer, but off-season it is quiet and peaceful.

On more than 5 acres of gardens, trees and walkways, the hotel L'Auberge Del Mar overlooks another long stretch of white sand and gentle waves. The hotel has two outdoor pools, a fitness center, tennis court and spa. Across the street in Del Mar Plaza, you'll find three levels of shopping and dining, with an ocean-view plaza deck. [laubergedelmar.com](http://laubergedelmar.com)

Some fun family activities to choose from at L'Auberge include:

Hopping on one of the hotel's Electra Beach Cruisers for a spin around Del Mar village or a cruise along the ocean on Pacific Coast Highway.

Riding the waves on complimentary body boards; or scheduling a surf lesson with Fulcrum Surf to learn how to hang 10 like a pro. [fulcrumsurf.com](http://fulcrumsurf.com)

Grabbing hotel beach chairs and umbrellas, then ordering a picnic basket to make a day at the beach.

Hiking in Torrey Pines State Park. The hotel offers complimentary transportation to and from the nearby natural preserve.

For a more affordable option, check out the Del Mar Motel, down the hill from L'Auberge and right on the sand. [delmarmotelonthebeach.com](http://delmarmotelonthebeach.com)

Jake's, an upscale ocean front restaurant, is perfect for a romantic or celebratory dinner. [jakesdelmar.com](http://jakesdelmar.com)

Right next to Jake's you can relax on the deck at The Poseidon, a favorite spot for a beer and a burger or a hearty breakfast. [poseidonrestaurant.com](http://poseidonrestaurant.com)

Board and Brew, on the Camino Del Mar, makes delicious and filling sandwiches. And down the road about five minutes at the Flower Hill Mall, you'll find much loved Geppetto's Toy store, Whole Foods and lots of other shopping and eating options.

So stay in California during spring break for beach fun and all the attractions San Diego is known for, relaxing "in the warm California sun."

Diane Covington-Carter grew up in North San Diego County enjoying these beaches.

## **If You Go**

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### **For March 20-25, some sample room rates:**

La Jolla Beach and Tennis Club, 2000 Spindrift Drive, La Jolla, (858) 454-7126, [LJBTC.com](http://LJBTC.com). 2 double beds with kitchenette, \$269.

La Jolla Shores Hotel, 8110 Camino Del Oro, La Jolla, (866) 392-8762, [ljshoreshotel.com](http://ljshoreshotel.com). 2 queen beds, \$269.

La Valencia Hotel, 1132 Prospect St., La Jolla, (858) 454-0771, [lavalencia.com](http://lavalencia.com). Junior Suite, \$323.

L'Auberge Del Mar, 1540 Camino Del Mar, Del Mar, (858) 259-1515, [laubergedelmar.com](http://laubergedelmar.com). Spring rates start at \$319.

Del Mar Motel on the Beach, 1702 Coast Blvd., Del Mar, (858) 755-1534, [delmarmotelonthebeach.com](http://delmarmotelonthebeach.com). 2 double beds, \$189.

### **Other attractions:**

Jake's Restaurant, [jakesdelmar.com](http://jakesdelmar.com)

The Poseidon Restaurant, [poseidonrestaurant.com](http://poseidonrestaurant.com)

Geppetto's Toy Store, [flowerhill.com/shop/geppetτος-toys](http://flowerhill.com/shop/geppetτος-toys)

Whole Foods Del Mar, [flowerhill.com/shop/whole-foods-market](http://flowerhill.com/shop/whole-foods-market)