



100 Free Things To Do in Santa Monica
For More Information visit SantaMonica.com or call Santa Monica
Convention & Visitors Bureau at 1-800-544-5319

Family/Outdoor Activities

1. Grab a towel, sun block and a good book and head out to enjoy the Southern California scenery with picturesque Santa Monica Beaches, which stretch for 3.5 miles between Venice and Malibu.
2. Take a stroll on Santa Monica Pier, hailed as the oldest pier on the West Coast of the United States. Featured in the Oscar-winning movie, "Forrest Gump," the Pier is open year-round and is the perfect spot for viewing a sunset or taking a romantic walk under the stars.
3. Catch a glimpse of the new 9-story Ferris wheel at Pacific Park. It is the only solar-powered Ferris wheel in the world and has been seen by millions in the opening shots of NBC's Tonight Show with Jay Leno, American Idol, and ABC's Private Practice.
4. Pay a visit to the 3rd Street Promenade by evening. Street performers and entertainers light up this pedestrian-only boulevard with the sound of drums, acoustic guitars, and tambourines. Stop to watch the acrobats, dancers, psychic cats, mimes and bubble blowers, just to name a few.
5. Celebrate the Christmas season with a stroll along the nativity exhibits set up every December along Ocean Avenue in Pacific Park.
6. Take the kids to enjoy the duck pond, reflective pools and streams of Douglas Park in Santa Monica's midtown area. Make a day of it with the shady picnic tables and sandy play area. The California Park & Recreation Society has honored Douglas Park for its excellence in design.
7. Window shop along Montana Avenue, a 10-block open-air, retail destination frequented by discerning visitors and affluent Angelinos. Lined with boutiques, celebrities come to get coffee, lunch with friends, or shop for the latest in furnishings and skin care.
8. Get a unique view into the ocean world just outside its doors – The Santa Monica Pier Aquarium is home to dozens of species of marine animals and plants. Children under 12 get in free when accompanied by an adult (suggested donation).
9. Let the kid's cool off at the splash pad in Virginia Park (May-September). This park is also known as a great place for pick-up basketball games.

10. Stop by one of the Santa Monica Visitor Centers to chat with trained travel counselors and get free maps, brochures, and insider tips on local restaurants, hotels and entertainment. (1920 Main Street, 1400 Ocean Avenue and 3rd Street Promenade at Arizona)
11. Walk down Main Street to discover quintessential beach life with a hip, urban edge. Peruse the lively and eclectic boutiques, chic clothing stores and design showrooms. On Sundays visit the Farmers Market for free music and great people watching.
12. Check mate at the International Chess Park, the city's seaside chess center that offers 80 player seats and plenty of local character.
13. Photo buff? Capture that quintessential "Southern California setting" as you take in the varied landscapes and natural beauty with your camera.
14. Sway to the tunes at the Twilight Dance Series on the Santa Monica Pier featuring free evening concerts Thursday nights in the summer from some of your favorite musicians.
15. Cheer-on the professional and student artists during a free flying trapeze show on the Santa Monica Pier.
16. Make it a movie night under the stars on the Santa Monica Pier. In a series of four Friday evenings in September-October, movies are projected onto a huge screen in the open air.
17. Stroll among the vibrant stalls of Santa Monica's weekly farmers markets. Three locations: Arizona at Third St, Pico Boulevard and Main Street.
18. Watch the quintessential California sunset from one of the many wonderful vantage points along the sand or from cliff level in Palisades Park.
19. Indulge your ears with "Jazz on the Lawn" at Santa Monica City Hall on Sundays in August, the best way to spend a hot summer afternoon. Talented jazz artists bring their own flavor to the genre.
20. Watch the grunion spawning runs from Santa Monica beach (Open Season: March, June-Aug – check schedules)
21. Surf, Internet style! The City of Santa Monica offers free Wi-Fi at selected locations throughout the city for your wireless needs (pick up a map from the Visitor Center or City Hall)
22. Take the kids to enjoy the aeronautical themed play activities at Clover Park.
23. Enjoy gardens, public art, exhibitions, volleyball, beach tennis, and a playground at the newly unveiled Annenberg Community Beach House, the only public beach house in the United States.

24. Enjoy watching the comings and going of private jets at Santa Monica airport. Rich with history dating back to 1919, the airport has two free and easily accessible viewing areas where the public is invited to watch aircraft activity.
25. Pay your respects at the Arlington West Memorial, a project of Veterans For Peace, which offers visitors a graceful, visually and emotionally powerful place for reflection. Every Sunday from sunrise to sunset, a temporary memorial is created on the beach just north of the world famous pier in Santa Monica.
26. Visit the location of Bay Watch! Accessible at the northern end of the bike path, Will Rogers State Beach offers great swimming, beach activities and headquarters for the LA County Lifeguards.
27. Explore the eclectic Pico Boulevard neighborhood at the southern end of Santa Monica.
28. Tour the Natural Resource Defense Council building in downtown Santa Monica and learn about this environmental watchdogs efforts to protect the planet.
29. Cast your line of the end of the pier and enjoy a days fishing in our local waters – no permit required.
30. Stretch your artistic skills and let your imagination flow with a family sand castle competition on the beach.
31. Strolling through Palisades Park, take in the many historic monuments that stand testament to the city's history and culture.
32. Marvel at the magnificent 100 year old Moreton Bay Fig Tree at the Fairmont Hotel – annual holiday gathering at the beginning of December with holiday treats, a gingerbread city and seasonal entertainment.
33. Visit the new DC-3 monument recently unveiled to commemorate the legendary aircraft built here at Clover Field in the 1930s-40s.
34. Flex your muscles at the original Muscle Beach, which beckons visitors to test their strength and work on their beach body in an open-air gym. Test out the fully restored areas featuring chinning bars, parallel bars, rings and small jungle gyms for children. Celebrities such as Jack LaLanne, Jayne Mansfield, and Mae West were frequent visitors at Muscle Beach, helping to establish Southern California as a body builder's paradise.
35. Pay your respects to stars like Glenn Ford and Ingrid Bergman at City of Santa Monica's Woodlawn Cemetery, an old-fashioned cemetery with a sea of large, tall headstones - a somewhat unusual sight in Hollywood where "lawn parks" are in the majority. Enjoy the natural beauty and pick up a map for a walking tour.
36. Hunt for Santa Monica's many green-friendly businesses. City partners have joined together to implement the Santa Monica Certified Green Business program. Look for these decals in storefronts showing that they meet the "green" requirements.

37. Pack a picnic and your favorite non-alcoholic beverage and spread out on the lawn at Palisades Park.
38. Where historic Route 66 ends! Visit the spot that is home to the plaque of the original US highway that ran from Chicago to Los Angeles at Santa Monica Blvd. and Ocean Avenue.
39. Peruse Ocean Park Merchants Mart, an eclectic selection of 25 shops, just steps from the beach.
40. Check out Mid City Santa Monica for the eclectic assortment of businesses that call Santa Monica home, like major film, television and music companies such as Universal Music, MTV and Sony.
41. Celebrate summer with the city's "Summer Solstice" celebration on Main Street, which offers a lively scene with many cover performances.
42. Attend a neighborhood Open House! Every December both Montana Avenue and Main Street are on display with free food, festive and free drinks like eggnog and holiday caroling.
43. Don't let limited mobility stop you! Loan a sand wheel chair from Perry's Rentals and gain access to the water's edge.
44. Bring friends and neighbors to celebrate the community's rich history and environmental resources at the annual Santa Monica Festival, Clover Park (May)
45. Celebrate summer at the annual Juneteenth Celebration commemorating African American history, with Gospel, Blues and dance entertainment. (June)
46. Join the parade! Celebrate Independence Day with friends and neighbors at the annual Main Street Parade. (July 4th)
47. Enjoy fireworks at Santa Monica College in celebration of our nation's Independence Day (Saturday before 4th July).
48. Fire up a family barbecue at one of the many pits in neighborhood parks (Clover, Virginia and Airport Parks)
49. Take a 30-minute walk south from Santa Monica to enjoy the colorful ambiance of Venice Beach.
50. Test your skills at croquet or horseshoe tossing at Emerson Reed Park.
51. Set up a picnic for the kids by the Ocean Park beach play area – endless of hours of fun for younger kids with climbing structure, swings and scooping toys.

52. Join the fun of the Winterlit celebrations on 3rd Street Promenade, with 'snow days' carolers and seasonal entertainment.
53. Visit the bronze plaque that acknowledges the 200 ft strip of sand that was segregated in the 1920s to 1950s. Known as Inkwel Beach, it ran between Bay Street and Pico Boulevard.
54. Keep an eye out for the varied wildlife off the beach, including pelicans, dolphins, and rare sightings of migrating grey whales as they head south to their winter breeding grounds in the warm waters off Mexico.

Wellness

55. Rollerblade, walk or jog along the boardwalk that stretches parallel to the Pacific, taking in magnificent views of mountains, the beach, and ocean.
56. Join the Friday Night Skate/Bike – known as dance party on wheels (8.30pm, 3 Fridays a month from cannon at Ocean/Colorado)
57. Gather a crowd of friends or office mates for a Frisbee contest on the beach. Pick up ultimate Frisbee games south of the pier.
58. Enjoy a game of volleyball at Santa Monica's many beach volleyball courts, where several US Olympic beach volleyball competitors have trained. Dotted along the length of the beach, there are courts available to the public on a first come, first serve basis. Olympic Gold Medalist Misty May-Treanor notes the courts south of the pier are her favorite.
59. Flex your muscles at the original Muscle Beach, which beckons visitors to test their strength and work on their beach body in an open-air gym. Test out the fully restored areas featuring chinning bars, parallel bars, rings and small jungle gyms for children. Celebrities such as Jack LaLanne, Jayne Mansfield, and Mae West were frequent visitors at Muscle Beach, helping to establish Southern California as a body builder's paradise.
60. Explore the nearby Santa Monica Mountains Recreation Area, which offers visitors a stunning coastal mountain range with opportunities for hiking, exploring, and biking.
61. Live like a true Californian and try your hand at skateboarding along the sidewalks of Ocean Avenue.
62. Work it out by jogging the Santa Monica Stairways that lead from Ocean Avenue down to the Pacific Coast Highway.
63. Relax and unwind with a sunset meditation in a Santa Monica park.

64. The South Bay Bicycle Trail runs for 22 miles from Will Rogers State Beach to Torrance Co. Beach and provides a unique way to see a long stretch of Pacific coastline and get some exercise. With easy points of entry and exit, cyclists can make the ride as long or as short as they desire.
65. Bicycle along one of Santa Monica's great city bike paths, such as the Santa Monica Pier Bridge at Colorado Avenue, Bicknell Avenue, Ocean Park Boulevard or Ashland Avenue.
66. Take a dip, surf or body board in the Pacific Ocean.
67. Enjoy the winding stair walk and great views from Ocean View Park, off Barnard Way.
68. Polish up your forehand with a few games of tennis at Yahoo Park (Other free courts available at Marine, Memorial, Douglas, Clover and Los Amigos Parks)
69. Kick a soccer ball around with friends on the perfect flat grass surface at Beach Green.
70. Kids and teens keep fit and learn new skills (aged 6-24) at Virginia Avenue Fitness Gym and Boxing Ring
71. Enjoy fabulous ocean views as you jog along the cushioned crushed asphalt path in Palisades Park.
72. Take your hockey stick and rollerblades down to the beach parking lot for a game of roller hockey.

Art/Music

73. Immerse yourself in the arts at Southern California's largest art gallery complex, Bergamot Station. Visit over 35 contemporary art galleries, studios, and architecture design firms.
74. Visit The Getty Villa, an educational center and museum dedicated to the study of the arts and cultures of ancient Greece, Rome, and Etruria. Museumgoers can stop by the Santa Monica Visitor Center on Main Street to arrange same-day passes to the Villa.
75. Join in on a free Docent Tours of the Annenberg Beach House. Tours are offered daily from May-October at the old Marion Davies/Hearst Beach house site at 415 Pacific Coast Highway
76. Go back in time at the annual Pico Art Walk & Vintage Auto Show that takes place at Virginia Avenue Park on one Saturday in October. Double-decker bus ride along Pico Blvd.
77. Get a glimpse of the wall mural depicting ocean scenes outside of the newly remodeled Santa Monica Aquarium on Ocean Front Walk.

78. Take advantage of Santa Monica's ideal year-round weather and "Walk Santa Monica" to take in the city's many historical landmarks (self-guided Santa Monica Conservancy tour map available from SM Visitor Centers)
79. The Santa Monica Library offers a dazzling public facility, showcasing cutting-edge environmental technology and featuring solar panels and an energy efficient roof. Events include author talks, concerts and presentations.
80. Explore the Santa Monica Museum of Art, displaying innovative exhibits that foster diversity, and pivotal moments in the history of contemporary art and history.
81. Schedule a special visit to The Eames House, a landmark of mid-20th century modern architecture. Constructed in 1949 by husband and wife design pioneers Charles and Ray Eames, the Eames' gracious live-work lifestyle continues to be an influential model in design and architecture. ([Www.eamesfoundation.org](http://www.eamesfoundation.org))
82. Enjoy a mirror-and-lens panorama that has documented Santa Monica for more than 100 years. Stop by *Camera Obscura* – a life size, walk-through pinhole camera – only one of three in the US along Palisades Park.
83. Experience "culture within culture" along Santa Monica's Design District, featuring showrooms of modern design for home or business.
84. Hang out and strum a vintage guitar at legendary McCabe's Guitar Shop. Opened in 1958, McCabe's specializes in acoustic and folk instruments and offers thousands of books and recordings.
85. Show off your talents, whether it is poetry or comedy, at Open Mic nights at Un-Urban Cafe on Pico, or The Novel Cafe.
86. Hit the beach in search of art. West of Pico Blvd., in the sand, is "Singing Beach Chairs," a pair of playfully oversized lifeguard chairs by Douglas Hollis. In a strong wind, the aluminum tubes that form the backrests become 14-ft-tall panpipes.
87. Check out "Open Mic" at the Westside Eclectic on the Third Street Promenade; come practice your 3-5 minute stand-up routine, showcase a new sketch or show a short video.
88. Experience "Art Nights" at the 18th Street Arts Complex that provokes public dialogue through contemporary art making.
89. Check out the schedule of free feature films that are screened at the Main Library, Martin Luther King Auditorium.
90. Enjoy Free Docent Tours of the Santa Monica Library on the 3rd Friday of every month
91. Pick up a Santa Monica Art Trek Map which offers a comprehensive guide to public art works around the City.

92. Discover hidden art! Find Manfred Miller's haunting public art installation Twilight and Yearning consisting of three wooden boats lashed to the pilings underneath the boardwalk. Also find a huge concrete stamp roller that imprints a map of Los Angeles into the wet sand.
93. Attend a lecture at Santa Monica Community College. The college presents more than 100 distinguished speakers all year and is open to the public.
94. Learn about the Artists Web, a cooperative store on Main Street displaying local artists' work. Similarly, "Ten Women" is owned by a group of artists who craft handmade items such as jewelry, fine art and ceramics
95. Music to your ears. The award winning Santa Monica Symphony presents four free concerts a year at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium.
96. Free live music concerts for children come to the Pier on Sunday afternoons February through May at the Santa Monica Pier.
97. Stroll down Adelaide Drive to admire the elegant early Craftsman homes built by Santa Monica's founding residents.
98. Visit the Third Street Historic District, south of Ocean Park Boulevard. Architecturally, the buildings chronicle the evolution of design from the Victorian era through the revival styles of the 1920s and 1930s.
99. Enjoy great buildings from world-renowned yet local architect Frank Gehry – from the Edgemar Building on Main Street to his one time home of corrugated metal and chain link on 22nd and Washington, his talents are showcased right here in Santa Monica.
100. Discover the classic Streamline Moderne architecture of the original Merle Norman Cosmetics building at 2525 Main Street. Giving hope to the community during the great depression, the skincare and cosmetics company started here in the 1930s.