

SAN DIEGO LIKE A LOCAL

Just because San Diego has tourist attractions at every turn doesn't mean you shouldn't stray from the beaten path and pretend you're a local for a day.

A pared-down pace

Balboa Park is the city's preferred playground. Visitors with detailed agendas (Museums? Check. Zoo? Check.) often miss out on the sweet spots that keep locals coming back time and again. Grab a map from the visitor center and explore the park's nooks and crannies. Or, throw down a blanket on the lawn and laugh at the other tourists with their impossibly long to-do lists.

The hoppiest place on Earth

Cold beer seems to suit San Diego's chill personality, which may be why our craft-brewing scene has been lauded as one of the most cutting-edge in the world. You could easily spend an entire day visiting breweries, from the tiny **Alpine Beer Company**—to Escondido's venerable **Stone Brewing**, which started off as a pet project and now ships nationwide. If a full-fledged beer tour is out of the question, try a bold double IPA—a San Diego specialty—at **O'Brien's**, a Kearny Mesa pub that's low on personality but high on hops, or head to **30th Street** in North Park, which is lined with so many brewpubs that it's been nicknamed the “Belgian Corridor” by in-the-know imbibers.

Fill your heart with art

MCASD-Downtown's **Thursday Night Thing**—aka TNT—is a boisterous quarterly museum party that puts to rest all notions of an artless art scene.

Sunrise, sunset

Our beaches can't be beat, but battling the crazy summer crowds for a spot on the sand is far from relaxing. Take a brisk stroll just after dawn, and savor the views without distraction. Or, find a secluded spot on the cliffs for a sunset happy hour. Booze is banned at beaches, but a little creativity will have you toasting in no time (hint: wash and save a couple of paper coffee cups).

Break for breakfast

Even fitness freaks—and San Diegans are among the country's fittest—will agree that a slow-paced morning meal is a lovely start to the weekend, which explains the long lines at any place worth the wait.

The **Mission** has locations in Mission Beach (3795 *Mission Blvd.* 858/488–9060), North Park (2801 *University Ave.* 619/220–8992), and the East Village (1250 *J St.* 619/232–7662) plus a spot in La Jolla called the Coffee Cup. The café food is simple and hearty, ranging from traditional fare (eggs, pancakes) to the Latino-inspired (the Papas Locas or “crazy potatoes” will burn a hole in your tongue).

Big Kitchen (3003 *Grape St.* 619/234–5789) is a misnomer—the Golden Hill eatery is tiny. But it is jam-packed with charm, from the photo-plastered walls (including

autographed pics of Whoopi Goldberg, a former employee) to owner “Judy the Beauty,” who greets every guest. Cash only.

Kono’s Café (704 Garnet Ave. 858/483-1669) in Pacific Beach lures locals with an outdoor patio and ocean views, but the last thing you’ll want to do after eating one of Kono’s massive breakfast burritos is slip into a bikini. There’s a reason for the expression “burrito belly”—but it’s a small price to pay for brazenly overindulgent pleasure.