

DESTINATION *Spotlight*

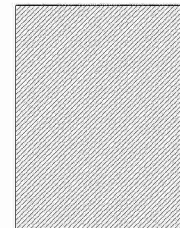
Some destinations have an indefinable *je ne sais quoi*—that special spirit that captures the attention, drawing visitors year after year. Travelers come to explore unique attractions, savor regional cuisines, connect with locals and take selfies in front of iconic landmarks.

While most will want to hit the highlights of any given city, many others will also want to delve a little deeper, perhaps exploring some of the lesser-known city corners or new developments.

In this Destination Spotlight section, we take a look at 10 U.S. cities that are perennial favorites, putting the spotlight on local flavor, must-see attractions, hidden gems and tidbits of information you need to know. Then, for more information about new developments in any of these cities, see the U.S. Destination section on pages 29 through 83.

To learn more about specific hotels in these destinations, also see the Hotel Listings section that begins on page 134. And be sure to check out *Travel Weekly's* online Hotel Search, a comprehensive database that includes more than 140,000 informative listings that are updated throughout the year, so you'll always find the most up-to-date information.

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San Diego

LOCAL FLAVOR

Consistently pleasant temperatures and almost endless sunshine make the city and its environs a year-round outdoor playground, with highlights ranging from the chic Gaslamp Quarter and European-flavored Little Italy to legendary beaches and championship golf courses. With the opening of Liberty Public Market at the mixed-use Liberty Station in Point Loma, San Diego gets its first artisan food hall, an indoor-outdoor market serving up everything from cheeses and salami to locally caught seafood and seasonal produce.

MUST-SEE ATTRACTIONS

Two new maritime attractions offer the best of San Diego's past and present. The *San Salvador* is a historically accurate, working replica of the first European ship to explore the Pacific coast, when Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo landed near San Diego Bay almost a century before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock. The 60-foot-tall wooden ship replica is docked alongside the Maritime Museum. For a modern-day exploration of San Diego Bay, Flagship Cruises' new Patriot Tour is the ticket. The 30-minute tour carries 139 passengers past the Coronado Bridge and around the scenic bay.

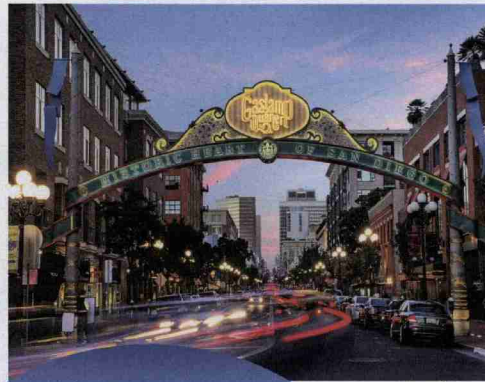
HIDDEN GEMS

Open for six weeks in the spring, the Flower Fields at Carlsbad Ranch provide a stunning visual photo opp. They make for a lovely wedding backdrop as well. A newly opened barn house nestled among the flowers can accommodate up to 200 guests and offers beautiful views of the Pacific Ocean.

NEED TO KNOW

Visitors, as well as cruise ship passengers, will enjoy improvements to the downtown San Diego waterfront. They include a new esplanade with landscaped plazas and pathways, comfortable benches and new seating areas. New shade pavilions offer a visitor information center and outposts of popular local restaurants.

For more information on what's new in San Diego, see page 54.



CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

reimagined hotels and innovative spaces



Enviably weather, world-class attractions and a coastal lifestyle have long been top selling points for San Diego. But the country's eighth largest city has much more going for it—including smart public planning, green practices, cultural diversity and a strong tech center. Those attributes have inspired the National Geographic Channel to include San Diego in its World's Smart Cities documentary. New and reimagined hotels plus innovative new public spaces make the city more attractive than ever.



- are a city-view executive lounge, outdoor event deck, restaurant and artisan food marketplace.
- ▶ Renovations at the Manchester Grand Hyatt San Diego have upgraded and rebranded the spa, modernized meeting space, added a new dining/event venue and upgraded the Top of the Hyatt waterfront bar, with panoramic views from 40 stories above San Diego Bay.
- ▶ For special events, The Dana on Mission Bay has added a new outdoor reception venue called Marina Garden. The open-air space features a secluded lawn area with a view of the hotel's private marina.
- ▶ Paradise Point Resort & Spa has also completed its new event space, the Sunset Pavillion overlooking Mission Bay.

FAST FORWARD

The much-anticipated Pendry San Diego is set for a fall 2016 debut. The 12-story property in the Gaslamp Quarter will feature an underground "ultra-lounge" nightclub and a beer hall. Other openings may not be as edgy, but fill an equally important niche.

- ▶ In early 2016, two new hotels, a Hilton Garden Inn and a Homewood Suites will open in San Diego's downtown Little Italy District. The hotels will utilize one shared entry and one check-in. In total, the campus will include 364 guestrooms. It's located two blocks from the bay and San Diego International Airport, and a few miles from downtown San Diego and the Gaslamp Quarter.
- ▶ Under construction is Homewood Suites by Hilton San Diego Mission Valley/Zoo. The 118-room, all-suite property is close to the San Diego Zoo, the Gaslamp Quarter and SeaWorld San Diego.
- ▶ Marriott Marquis San Diego & Marina is undergoing an extensive ballroom renovation and expansion. The \$107 million dollar project will add two new 36,000-square-foot rooms overlooking the San Diego skyline and a 25,000-square-foot outdoor terrace overlooking the bay. The renovation will be completed by June 2016.

INSIDER'S EDGE

Some new cutting-edge attractions are coming soon to Legoland California Resort. A highlight is the LEGO Movie 4D A New Adventure, set to debut at the resort in early 2016. In the works for spring is a new Ninjago-themed ride, drawing on the popularity of the Ninjago construction toys and Cartoon Network series. In summer 2015, Legoland was added to the Southern California CityPASS, which also provides discounts to SeaWorld and Disneyland.

HOTEL HAPPENINGS

Reimagined, renovated and reinvented spaces have redefined the hotel scene in San Diego. Here are some recent highlights.

- ▶ Fairmont Hotels & Resorts has assumed management of San Diego's Grand Del Mar. The Five-Star, Five Diamond property is TripAdvisor's top-rated California luxury hotel for 2015. The Fairmont Grand Del Mar features 249 rooms, a 21,000-square-foot spa and a Tom Fazio-designed golf course.
- ▶ Two InterContinental Hotels Group properties have opened in Carlsbad, north of San Diego. The 133-room Holiday Inn Carlsbad features a top-floor executive VIP lounge. The 106-room Staybridge Suites Carlsbad features a kitchen in every room, on-site library, restaurant and bar, fitness center and room service.
- ▶ La Jolla's Empress Hotel by Greystone Hotels, a block from the beach, has completed a \$1.9 million renovation, revamping guestrooms.
- ▶ Hilton San Diego Mission Valley has completed a \$12 million renovation. The 350-room hotel's lobby and interior spaces have been redesigned. Newly added