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WELCOME TO TODAY'S LONG BEACH

Settled along five-and-a-half miles of sandy coastline, Long Beach is the quintessential vacation getaway, boasting both the ambiance of a sophisticated urban center and the charm of a seaside community. Located 20 miles south of Los Angeles, California's seventh largest city offers visitors a dynamic range of oceanfront hotels, attractions, shopping, recreational activities, art and culture, restaurants and nightly entertainment that make it an ideal destination for any time of the year.

NEIGHBORHOODS

Long Beach is a community full of matchless neighborhoods and cultural diversity, one of the only cities on the west coast with a downtown situated right next to the Pacific Ocean. Downtown Long Beach is a perfect blend of sophisticated urban center and charming seaside community, filled with a myriad of entertainment choices. Pine Avenue, in the heart of downtown, is an enticing "Restaurant Row" with dozens of restaurants serving food from around the world. Within an 8-block area within the downtown waterfront, visitors will discover more than 120 quality eateries serving everything from hot dogs to haute cuisine, plus attractions, entertainment, and shopping, all just steps from a host of first class hotels.

For more international flavors, visitors can discover the city's historic Spanish roots in Bixby Knolls, home of Rancho Los Cerritos, one of two Spanish-era Ranchos in Long Beach. Both feature their original adobe ranch houses and formal gardens. Long Beach's Cambodia Town, has been recognized as one of the largest Cambodian communities in the world.

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Just a mile from downtown Long Beach is the seaside community of Belmont Shore, which features Second Street, a shopper's Mecca and a premier location for outdoor dining and people watching. Tucked behind Belmont Shore is one of the city's most romantic destinations, Naples Island, where Italian-style gondoliers cruise along canals lined with picturesque, million-dollar homes. Right next to Belmont Shore is picturesque Alamitos Bay, offering sheltered sandy beaches, lots of on-the-water recreation and restaurants with spectacular panoramic waterfront views.

ATTRACTIONS

The Queen Mary is one of Long Beach's signature attractions, a piece of world history that attracts visitors from around the globe. Once the world's most luxurious ocean liner, today the ship features a 340-stateroom hotel, unique shops and fine restaurants. Visitors can explore this majestic ship from the wheelhouse to the engine room. The ship offers several different guided and self-guided tours. Visitors can learn about the heydays of Trans-Atlantic travel when the Queen was the most elegant and fastest ship on the high seas. Or relive the Queen's wartime adventures as she carried men and materials to battlefronts around the world.

The Long Beach Aquarium of the Pacific offers a "face-to-fish" encounter with its more than 11,000 inhabitants of the world's largest ocean. There are numerous areas where visitors can actually touch some of the animals, including stingrays, sea cucumbers, starfish and more. Explorer's Cove features Lorikeet Forest where these colorful and friendly miniature parrots can be hand-fed by visitors. Also in Explorer's Cove is Shark Lagoon, where nine species of shark can be viewed from both above and below water. Visitors can actually touch several of the shark species in special touch lagoons. The Molina Animal Care Center offers enhanced healthcare to animals as well as opportunities for guests to view veterinary medicine in action. Three fan favorite exhibits are the otters, penguins, and sea lions.

A short walk from the Aquarium along the picturesque Rainbow Harbor Esplanade, you'll find two exciting entertainment/dining/shopping complexes—Shoreline Village and The Pike Outlets. Shoreline Village has the look and feel of a charming seaside fishing village, with a boardwalk of specialty and souvenir shops and restaurants. The Pike Outlets entertainment center features name brand outlet shops, a cornucopia of great restaurants, and a multiplex movie theater. Entertainment options include a comedy club, a dueling piano show, a vintage Ferris Wheel and Carousel. Rainbow Harbor itself is home to boats of all types, including fishing boats, tall ships, luxury charter yachts, harbor tour boats, pleasure craft and even a replica Mississippi sternwheeler.

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RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Long Beach boasts 11 ½ miles of sandy beaches, inland waterways and bays, and the pleasant climate and 345 days of sunshine make it the ultimate year-round playground. Winding along the beach are smooth, wide paths perfect for biking, rollerblading, running or romantic strolls. Visitors can dive right into a variety of water sports such as kayaking, sailing, windsurfing, kite surfing, fishing, scuba diving and jet skiing. Everything from rollerblades to wetsuits, paddle boards to windsurfing equipment, can be rented at various places along the beach. Day and night harbor cruises are also available, offering beautiful views of the Pacific Ocean.

All year-round, visitors can witness the awe-inspiring migration of more than 15,000 Pacific Gray Whales passing through Long Beach on their way to their breeding and birthing grounds in the Gulf of Mexico. Whale watching excursions are available through several companies.

SHOPPING

Long Beach offers an eclectic array of shopping options, from antiques to retail centers. On Broadway in the East Village, visitors will discover antique shops, art galleries, and rare books. Mid-town's "Funky" Fourth Street, between Cherry and Junipero, has been dubbed "Retro Row," with dozens of shops selling antique and vintage furniture, clothing, and memorabilia. Hollywood costume and set designers often shop Retro Row for vintage clothing and décor.

Shoppers will also be delighted to find several art stores featuring original works.

For the mainstream shopper, Long Beach has several retail centers including Los Altos Market Center, Marina Pacifica, The Pike Outlets, Long Beach Marketplace and the Long Beach Towne Center. Downtown's CityPlace and Belmont Shore's Second Street are also great shopping venues filled with blocks of specialty and retail shops.

ART AND CULTURE

From award-winning drama and opera to historic museums, visitors will enjoy an exciting range of artistic expressions that comprise the city's rich heritage. Long Beach is home to a number of impressive museums, including the Museum of Latin American Art (MoLAA), the only museum of its type in the U.S. The Long Beach Museum of Art includes the historic Elizabeth Milbank Anderson house (built in 1912), oceanfront gardens and a pavilion with two floors of gallery space for changing exhibitions. The Pacific Island Ethnic Art Museum (PIEAM) highlights the art and crafts of the many island cultures found in the Pacific Ocean. The University Art Museum (UAM) at Cal State University Long Beach presents cutting-edge exhibitions of contemporary art. The Long Beach Historical Society Museum presents the city's past with revolving exhibitions.

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DINING AND NIGHTLY ENTERTAINMENT

When it's time to dine, Long Beach offers visitors hundreds of options from intimate cafes to spectacular oceanfront restaurants. Visitors can nosh on fried green tomatoes in a restored 1920s California Bungalow, dive into a table full of seafood along Alamitos Bay or feast in a historic bank building complete with teller cages. Long Beach is one of the most ethnically diverse cities in America, and that is reflected in the dining scene, with restaurants offering cuisines from around the globe.

VISITOR SERVICES/TRANSPORTATION

No other community in Southern California is as visitor friendly as Long Beach—and getting here is easy. Fly directly into the Long Beach Airport (LGB) on several major airlines. Direct flights are available to many major cities, including New York, Washington DC, Austin, San Francisco, Seattle, Oakland, Las Vegas, and more. If you prefer to fly into Los Angeles (LAX) or Orange County (SNA), Long Beach is just a short 25-minute drive from either airport. While in town, the Passport local shuttle service offers complimentary transportation to all of downtown Long Beach's most popular attractions including the Aquarium, Queen Mary, Shoreline Village, and Pine Avenue. For a low fare, Long Beach Transit buses serve all parts of Long Beach.

In addition, water taxi service is offered by the Aquabus, and can transport guests across the water to Shoreline Village, the Aquarium, the Queen Mary, or Catalina Landing. The Aqualink is a high-speed catamaran water taxi from downtown to Alamitos Bay.

HOTELS

The Long Beach area boasts more than 5,000 rooms citywide from a variety of name brand properties in all price ranges. Many hotels offer panoramic ocean and city views at affordable prices while others feature notable characteristics from international treasures to world class restaurants. If you're looking for an easy and affordable getaway, Long Beach is the perfect home base, located in the center of Southern California, just minutes away from the major attractions of LA and Orange County. To plan your Long Beach experience, log onto www.visitlongbeach.com.

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