

26 Amazing Things to Do in Long Beach



Long Beach, California blends ocean views, urban energy, and relaxed coastal living in a way few cities can match. Travelers come here for world-class attractions like the Aquarium of the Pacific, the legendary Queen Mary, and vibrant neighborhoods filled with restaurants, coffee shops, and boutique stores. The city offers everything from soft-sand beaches and calm waterways to art museums, waterfront parks, and lively nightlife.

Long Beach makes an excellent destination for weekend getaways, family trips, and Southern California itineraries thanks to its walkable waterfront, cultural experiences, and year-round sunshine. This guide highlights the top things to do in Long Beach, helping you explore outdoor adventures, local favorites, and hidden gems that show what makes this coastal city truly unforgettable.

Quick Fun Facts About Long Beach



A short collection of fun facts that captures the spirit, personality, and hidden sides of Long Beach.

- **Home of the Queen Mary:** The RMS Queen Mary, a retired British ocean liner, is now a floating hotel and museum anchored in Long Beach.
- **Aquarium of the Pacific:** This world-class aquarium features around [12,000 animals](#) from across the Pacific Ocean.
- **Perfect Weather Year-Round:** Long Beach enjoys over [345 sunny days](#) each year, making it ideal for outdoor adventures.
- **Iconic Grand Prix:** The Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach is one of the most famous street races in the U.S., attracting motorsport fans from around the world.
- **Art and Murals Everywhere:** The city's streets are filled with colorful murals, part of its thriving public art scene.
- **Movie and TV Hotspot:** Many films and shows are shot here, including "Dexter" and "CSI: Miami."
- **Bike-Friendly City:** Long Beach is one of California's most bike-friendly destinations, with miles of scenic coastal paths.
- **The Pike Outlets:** This waterfront shopping and entertainment district features shops, restaurants, and a giant Ferris wheel.

- **Catalina Island Connection:** Long Beach serves as one of the main departure points for ferries to Catalina Island.
 - **A Blend of Cultures:** Long Beach is known for its rich cultural diversity, reflected in its food, festivals, and neighborhoods.
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26 Best Things to Do in Long Beach



A handpicked roundup of Long Beach’s most iconic, unique, and unforgettable things to do.

Visit the Aquarium of the Pacific

The Aquarium of the Pacific is one of the top marine attractions on the West Coast and a must-visit for travelers exploring Long Beach. The aquarium features thousands of marine animals, interactive exhibits, and immersive galleries that highlight the Pacific Ocean’s diverse ecosystems. Visitors can explore the shark lagoon, touch friendly rays, watch penguins swim, and learn about conservation efforts through live presentations. Families enjoy the hands-on experiences, while adults appreciate the behind-the-scenes tours that reveal how the aquarium cares

for its animals. The facility is modern, engaging, and accessible, making it an ideal stop whether you are traveling solo, as a couple, or with children.

Tour The Queen Mary

The Queen Mary is a historic ocean liner permanently docked in Long Beach and known for its captivating blend of maritime history, elegant design, and iconic architecture. Taking a guided tour gives visitors insight into the ship's glamorous years of transatlantic travel, its role during wartime, and the stories behind its most famous passengers. You can walk through preserved staterooms, admire the Art Deco interiors, and explore exhibits that detail its engineering and construction. Many travelers also enjoy the ship's reported paranormal activity, making ghost tours especially popular. Whether you love history or photography, the Queen Mary provides an immersive experience that makes you feel transported to another era.

Relax at Long Beach Waterfront

The Long Beach Waterfront is a scenic area filled with open views, pedestrian walkways, palm trees, and vibrant oceanfront energy. Visitors often come here to unwind, enjoy a leisurely stroll, bike along the shoreline, or sit on benches overlooking the harbor. The area is clean, accessible, and designed to be enjoyed at any pace, from casual sightseeing to watching boats pass by. Many restaurants, cafés, and shops line the walkway, offering options for dining outdoors while taking in coastal breezes. Families appreciate the open spaces, while couples come for sunsets and peaceful atmospheres. It is a simple but rewarding part of the Long Beach experience.

Explore Shoreline Village

Shoreline Village is a colorful waterfront shopping and dining district that blends coastal charm with entertainment. Its boardwalk-style layout features boutique stores, candy shops, restaurants, bike rentals, and photo-worthy spots overlooking the marina. Visitors enjoy wandering the pathways, browsing unique gifts, or grabbing ice cream as they explore. The village is lively on weekends with music, events, and street performers adding extra energy. Children love the carousel, and

adults appreciate the relaxed vibe perfect for a casual afternoon. Shoreline Village also provides excellent views of the harbor, making it a great place to capture scenic pictures. It is an easy and enjoyable stop for all travelers.

Walk the Long Beach Boardwalk

The Long Beach Boardwalk offers a peaceful, scenic path along the shoreline that attracts walkers, joggers, cyclists, and travelers simply looking to enjoy ocean views. The path is wide and well maintained, making it ideal for slow strolls or more active movement. Visitors appreciate the breeze, the sound of waves, and the relaxed atmosphere that contrasts with busier Los Angeles beaches. Several access points connect the boardwalk to sandy areas where you can stop and relax. Whether you are exercising or sightseeing, the boardwalk provides a refreshing escape. It is also a great place for sunrise or sunset moments when the sky brings dramatic colors.

Visit Alamitos Beach

Alamitos Beach is one of the most popular coastal spots in Long Beach, known for its soft sand, calm water, and easy access from the city. Travelers enjoy swimming, sunbathing, and relaxing under umbrellas while watching activity along the shore. The beach also offers volleyball courts, walking paths, and bike lanes that encourage outdoor fun. Families appreciate the wide shoreline that gives children space to play, while solo travelers enjoy its peaceful ambiance. Lifeguards are present during peak seasons, adding extra comfort for visitors. With nearby dining and parking options, Alamitos Beach is convenient and inviting for anyone wanting a classic California beach day.

Explore Naples Island

Naples Island is an upscale, European-inspired neighborhood featuring beautiful canals, arched bridges, and waterfront homes. Walking through the area feels charming and relaxing, with landscaped paths and unique architecture creating a picturesque environment. Visitors can explore on foot or rent kayaks and paddle through the calm canals for a serene on-water experience. Gondola rides are also available, offering a romantic and peaceful way to enjoy the island. Restaurants

and cafés nearby make it easy to extend your visit with a meal or dessert. Naples Island is one of Long Beach's most unique local experiences and ideal for slow travel and photography.

Enjoy a Gondola Ride Through the Canals

A gondola ride in Long Beach brings a surprisingly authentic Venetian-style experience to Southern California. Skilled gondoliers guide you through the calm canals of Naples Island while sharing stories, singing, or simply creating a peaceful atmosphere. Couples love the romantic setting, especially during sunset or evening tours when the lights reflect on the water. Families and groups also enjoy the gentle ride and scenic surroundings. Many gondola companies offer special packages for celebrations, making it a memorable experience for anniversaries or milestones. The slow pace lets visitors fully appreciate the charming bridges and waterfront homes that define the area's character.

Visit the Museum of Latin American Art

The Museum of Latin American Art is a major cultural institution in Long Beach dedicated to modern and contemporary Latin American and Latino art. Visitors can explore rotating exhibitions featuring thought-provoking paintings, sculptures, photography, and multimedia installations. The museum's clean, bright layout makes it easy to appreciate each piece. Travelers who enjoy learning about culture will find this museum particularly enriching, as it highlights artists from across Central and South America as well as Latino creatives in the United States. The outdoor sculpture garden adds another layer of beauty, and educational programs provide insight into artistic themes. It is a meaningful cultural stop.

Wander the Long Beach Museum of Art

The Long Beach Museum of Art sits above the coastline, offering sweeping ocean views alongside its diverse art collection. Visitors can explore exhibitions ranging from contemporary works to historic pieces in a calm, gallery-style environment. The museum is small enough to enjoy without feeling overwhelmed, making it a pleasant stop during a busy day of sightseeing. Travelers also appreciate the museum's on-site café, which features outdoor seating overlooking the water.

Whether you love art, photography, or creative expression, this museum provides a relaxing and inspiring experience. Many guests also enjoy the scenic garden and the peaceful atmosphere around the property.

Enjoy Belmont Shore

Belmont Shore is one of the liveliest neighborhoods in Long Beach, known for its main strip filled with boutiques, restaurants, bars, and beach-inspired stores. Visitors enjoy walking the area, browsing local shops, or trying out cafés that serve everything from quick bites to gourmet meals. The atmosphere is energetic yet relaxed, making it suitable for day or night outings. The beach is nearby, giving you the option to pair shopping with a coastal stroll. Travelers love the mix of local culture, sidewalk dining, and vibrant activity in Belmont Shore, making it one of the best places to immerse yourself in everyday Long Beach life.

Stroll Along Belmont Veterans Memorial Pier

Belmont Veterans Memorial Pier stretches into the Pacific, offering panoramic views of the coastline, boats, and open water. The pier is popular among fishermen, walkers, and visitors who enjoy photography. Breezes and wide-open views create a calming coastal environment perfect for slow sightseeing. You can also watch paddleboarders, kayakers, and sailboats moving across the water. Nearby restaurants make it easy to pair your visit with seafood or a casual meal. The pier is especially beautiful in the early morning or close to sunset when the light creates memorable scenery. It is a great stop for travelers seeking a simple yet rewarding Long Beach moment.

Kayak in Alamitos Bay

Kayaking in Alamitos Bay is one of the most enjoyable outdoor activities in Long Beach. The calm, sheltered water makes it accessible for beginners, while scenic views keep experienced paddlers engaged. Visitors can rent kayaks from several nearby shops and explore routes that pass waterfront homes, marinas, and peaceful inlets. Wildlife such as birds and fish are often spotted along the way, adding to the natural appeal. It is a low-stress, refreshing way to spend time on the water and

enjoy the sunny climate. Whether you go solo or with a group, kayaking offers a balanced mix of activity and relaxation.

Explore Rainbow Harbor

Rainbow Harbor is a central gathering area surrounded by restaurants, entertainment options, and waterfront views. Visitors enjoy walking along the marina, watching yachts and tour boats, or simply sitting near the water. It is a popular area for sightseeing and dining because everything is close and easy to navigate. Tour companies also launch harbor cruises from here, giving you a chance to explore Long Beach from the water. At night, the lights around the harbor create a colorful, lively ambiance perfect for evening strolls. Rainbow Harbor is an ideal starting point for travelers looking to experience Long Beach's waterfront culture.

Take a Whale Watching Tour

Whale watching in Long Beach is one of the most memorable wildlife experiences available along the California coast. Tours depart from the harbor and head into waters where whales, dolphins, sea lions, and seabirds are commonly seen year-round. Depending on the season, visitors may spot blue whales, gray whales, or humpbacks. Knowledgeable guides share insights about marine life and conservation, enhancing the experience. The boat ride itself is enjoyable with fresh air and ocean views. Travelers of all ages appreciate the excitement of seeing wildlife in its natural habitat. It is an adventure that creates lasting memories and great photos.

Relax at Rosie's Dog Beach

Rosie's Dog Beach is a dedicated off-leash beachfront area that welcomes both pets and their owners. Visitors love the friendly atmosphere as dogs run, splash in the water, and play freely. Even travelers without pets enjoy watching the lively activity and soaking up the relaxed coastal vibe. The beach is clean, spacious, and well managed, providing a fun and social environment. It is the perfect place to unwind while enjoying sunshine and ocean breezes. With nearby parking and

restrooms, Rosie's Dog Beach is convenient and enjoyable for all travelers seeking a playful twist on a traditional beach experience.

Explore Retro Row on Fourth Street

Retro Row is a vintage shopping district known for its quirky stores, boutiques, and classic California character. Visitors find antique furniture, retro clothing, vinyl records, and unique home décor across dozens of shops. The area has a nostalgic atmosphere that appeals to travelers who enjoy discovering one-of-a-kind items. Cafés and small eateries give you places to take breaks between browsing. Retro Row also hosts cultural events and small community gatherings that highlight Long Beach's creative scene. Whether you are shopping or simply exploring, the district offers a distinct and memorable local experience full of charm and personality.

Walk Through El Dorado Nature Center

El Dorado Nature Center is a peaceful outdoor retreat offering walking trails, wooded paths, lakes, and wildlife viewing areas. Visitors can choose from easy loops that pass through forests and around ponds, making it a refreshing escape from the city. Birds, turtles, and other wildlife are often spotted along the way. Families appreciate the educational displays, while photographers enjoy the natural scenery. The nature center is well maintained and provides a calm environment ideal for slow travel, meditation, or relaxation. It is a great choice for travelers seeking a quiet, nature-focused activity within Long Beach.

Visit Bixby Park

Bixby Park is a community-centered space that offers a blend of recreational activities, open fields, playgrounds, and ocean views. Travelers visit to relax in the shade, walk the pathways, or enjoy casual outdoor time. Weekend markets often bring local vendors selling crafts, produce, and snacks, creating a lively environment. The park also hosts community fitness classes, music events, and family activities. Its location near the beach makes it a nice spot to pair with a coastal stroll. Bixby Park is a welcoming place for travelers looking to enjoy a laid-back experience in a neighborhood setting.

Shop and Dine at The Pike Outlets

The Pike Outlets combine shopping, dining, and entertainment in a modern outdoor setting near the waterfront. Visitors can browse well-known brands, enjoy restaurant patios, or take a break at the movie theater. The atmosphere is lively, especially on weekends when travelers mix with locals. The location also makes it easy to explore nearby attractions such as the aquarium or harbor. Many travelers use The Pike as a starting or ending point for their day in Long Beach. It is convenient, fun, and offers something for all ages. Whether you shop or simply stroll, the area is worth visiting.

Visit Rancho Los Alamitos

Rancho Los Alamitos is a historic site that preserves California's ranching heritage with restored buildings, gardens, and educational exhibits. Visitors can tour the adobe home, explore barns, and walk through beautifully landscaped grounds. The site offers insight into the region's early years, including Native American history and Spanish-era ranch life. Volunteers and docents share stories that bring the past to life. The ranch is peaceful and picturesque, making it ideal for slow exploration. Travelers who enjoy history, culture, or outdoor strolling will appreciate this meaningful and enriching attraction.

Enjoy Harbor Cruises

Long Beach harbor cruises offer relaxing sightseeing experiences that showcase the city's skyline, marinas, and coastal scenery. Visitors glide past waterfront homes, ships, and sea life while listening to commentary from knowledgeable guides. Some cruises focus on sightseeing, while others offer sunset or dinner options. The calm water and scenic views make the experience enjoyable for travelers of all ages. It is also a great way to photograph Long Beach from the water. Whether you want a slow, peaceful ride or a lively evening experience, harbor cruises add a memorable element to your trip.

Discover Catalina Landing

Catalina Landing is the departure point for ferries traveling to Catalina Island, but it is also a pleasant area to explore. Visitors can relax near the marina, grab drinks at waterfront cafés, or browse small shops before boarding. The area has a relaxed ambience that makes it ideal for a morning or afternoon visit. Even if you are not traveling to Catalina, the harbor views and coastal scenery are enjoyable. Travelers love watching boats come and go, adding movement and energy to the environment. It is a simple but refreshing stop with scenic coastal charm.

Explore the Earl Burns Miller Japanese Garden

The Earl Burns Miller Japanese Garden is a serene cultural oasis located on the California State University Long Beach campus. Visitors walk along winding paths lined with koi ponds, wooden bridges, and carefully maintained landscapes. The garden's design encourages tranquility, making it ideal for quiet reflection or photography. Travelers appreciate the authenticity of the layout, which blends natural beauty with artistic structure. Educational programs and cultural events occasionally take place here, adding depth to the experience. It is one of the most peaceful attractions in Long Beach and perfect for travelers who enjoy nature and cultural spaces.

Visit the Pacific Island Ethnic Art Museum

This museum is a small but impactful cultural institution dedicated to the history, art, and traditions of Pacific Island communities. Visitors explore exhibits featuring textiles, carvings, and artifacts that highlight Oceania's diverse cultures. The museum focuses on storytelling and preserving heritage, making it a meaningful stop for travelers interested in anthropology or cultural learning. Its intimate size allows guests to absorb each exhibit without feeling rushed. Knowledgeable staff often share insights that add context to the displays. Although lesser known, this museum provides an educational experience that expands your understanding of Pacific Island history and creativity.

Enjoy Marina Green Park

Marina Green Park is a wide, open space ideal for relaxing, walking, picnicking, or enjoying waterfront views. Travelers appreciate the breezy atmosphere and scenic setting overlooking the harbor. The park hosts events throughout the year, from festivals to cultural gatherings, which bring music and activity to the area. It is also a great spot for casual exercise or simply watching boats pass by. The combination of grassy fields, pathways, and coastal scenery makes Marina Green Park a pleasing destination for travelers seeking fresh air and outdoor leisure. It provides a calm and easygoing part of the Long Beach experience.

Conclusion: Download Your Free Guide!

Long Beach blends coastal beauty, cultural attractions, and vibrant neighborhood life into a destination that truly offers something for every traveler. Whether you're exploring historic icons like the Queen Mary, relaxing on sun-soaked beaches, paddling through scenic canals, or discovering local art and hidden gems, this waterfront city delivers unforgettable experiences year-round. Its diverse neighborhoods, walkable waterfronts, and endless activities make it a perfect getaway for families, couples, solo travelers, and adventure seekers alike.

To help you plan your trip with ease, we have prepared a **free downloadable Long Beach Travel Guide** with maps, itineraries, insider tips, and essential travel information.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Long Beach known for?

Long Beach is known for its waterfront attractions including the Aquarium of the Pacific, the historic Queen Mary, beautiful beaches, lively neighborhoods, and year-round sunny weather.

Is Long Beach worth visiting?

Yes. Long Beach offers beaches, cultural attractions, outdoor activities, family-friendly fun, nightlife, and easy access to Catalina Island—making it a well-rounded destination.

What are the best things to do in Long Beach for first-time visitors?

Top picks include the Aquarium of the Pacific, The Queen Mary, Shoreline Village, Naples Island canals, whale-watching tours, Belmont Shore, and the Long Beach Waterfront.

What is the best time to visit Long Beach?

The best time to visit is March-May and September-November for mild temperatures and fewer crowds. However, Long Beach has great weather year-round.

Are Long Beach beaches good for swimming?

Yes. Beaches like Alamitos Beach, Belmont Shore Beach, and Junipero Beach offer calm waters ideal for swimming, sunbathing, and water sports.

Is Long Beach family-friendly?

Absolutely. Attractions like the Aquarium, gondola rides, beaches, kid-friendly parks, and waterfront activities make it great for families.

How many days do I need in Long Beach?

A 2-3 day trip is ideal to explore the top attractions, beaches, neighborhoods, and dining areas comfortably.

What are the best free things to do in Long Beach?

The best free things to do in Long beach include:

- Walk the Long Beach Boardwalk
- Visit Shoreline Village

- Explore Naples Island
- Relax at Rosie's Dog Beach
- Wander Retro Row
- Enjoy Marina Green Park
- Visit Bixby Park markets

What outdoor activities can you do in Long Beach?

Kayaking, paddleboarding, biking, whale watching, gondola rides, beach volleyball, and waterfront trails are popular outdoor options.

Is parking easy in Long Beach?

Parking is generally available near beaches, attractions, and neighborhoods, but weekends can get busy. Many areas also offer paid parking lots.

What food is Long Beach famous for?

Long Beach is known for seafood, coastal Californian cuisine, international food, vegan menus, and its diverse dining scene across Belmont Shore and Retro Row.

Are there romantic things to do in Long Beach for couples?

Yes. Couples love gondola rides on Naples canals, sunset walks on the beach, waterfront dining, and visiting art museums.

What unique attractions does Long Beach offer?

Unique spots include Naples Island canals, Retro Row, the Earl Burns Miller Japanese Garden, harbor cruises, and the historic Queen Mary.

What nightlife options does Long Beach offer?

Belmont Shore, Downtown Long Beach, and waterfront bars offer lounges, live music, pubs, and late-night dining.

Are there hiking spots in Long Beach?

While the city is mostly coastal and urban, nature walks are available at El Dorado Nature Center and other nearby parks.

What events happen in Long Beach?

Popular events include:

- Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach
- Long Beach Pride
- Long Beach Jazz Festival
- Comic Con Long Beach
- Various food and art festivals

What are the best places for photography in Long Beach?

Shoreline Village, Naples Island canals, Belmont Pier, Long Beach Waterfront, Queen Mary, and the Japanese Garden are top picks.