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House destinations USA + Canada USA California The San Diego Area La Jolla Getty Images San Diego's beaches and coastal communities define the city. It is a reflection of the San Diego lifestyle and attitude - bowel movements and loving life. From the border from Mexico to camp Pendleton lies many beach neighborhoods in San Diego, and each of these beach communities has its own unique personality and attraction. From the funky neo-hippie aura from Ocean Beach to the cool, upscale vibe of Del Mar, San Diego's beach communities and towns have something for everyone. Here is a round of San Diego's beaches, travelling south to north. 01 of 13 Richard Cummins/Getty Images Imperial Beach is the most southwest town in the United States, and it is probably the most low-key and unsatisfactory of San Diego's beach communities. Imperial Beach is an ideal surfing spot, with four miles of sandy beach. The immediate beach area is not nearly as commercial as other beach towns, so if you are looking for hot action, Imperial Beach is not your destination. But if you want a melting day on the beach, that's the place. Don't miss: Walk along the Imperial Beach Pier, the central point of the beach. 02 of 13 TripSavvy/Sharyn Umaña-Rage Well, what more can you say? Coronado Beach was rated as the Top Beach in the United States for 2012 by Dr Stephen Leatherman, also known as Dr. Beach, in his annual survey. And rightly, so because living in this small upscale city about the San Diego Bay Bridge is very idyllic. It is a worthy Mayberry with quiet streets, manicured lawns and expensive ocean mansions. If you want the rowing beach life to go with your beach, Coronado is not your place. But if you want a healthy small town vibe, go to Coronado. Don't miss: The Hotel Del Coronado, the town theatre and the Ferry Landing for views of the center. 03 of 13 Richard Cummins/Getty Images of all San Diego's beach communities, no one far-fetched the community and neighborhood ethos better than Ocean Beach. This funky beach town sits between the Pacific Ocean to the west and the more upscale enclave of Point Loma on the hill to the east. It was unsettled and less rowing (relatively speaking) than his brothers Mission Beach and Pacific Beach a few miles north. Where other beach communities have embraced commercialism, OB remains fiercely independent and skeptical of wholesale change, and that's what makes it so cool. Don't miss: A walk along the Newport Street business district, Hodad's for probably the best citizens everywhere, Dog Beach and the massive OB pier. 04 of 13 Do you want the quintessential SoCal beach lifestyle? Then Mission Beach is your place: surfboard, sun, sand, beach ba base, beach bombs, crowds and noise. Occupy the southernmost part of an isthmus that separates the sea from Mission Bay, Mission Beach is all across the beach and the boards. This is the place where you go to California sun, where you go to be noticed, and where you go to and see how those who want to be noticed. Throw in the old school Giants Dipper wood roller coaster, cruising on the plank, and sunbathing alongside sand volleyball players, and that's your place. Don't miss: Belmont Amusement Park and the roller coaster, the boards and peek into the oceanfront condos. Continue until 5 of 13 below. 05 of 13 Richard Cummins/Getty Images If you take Mission Beach, throw in a pier, 10 times more bars and the main drag of retail and restaurants, you have Pacific Beach. Travel north on Mission Boulevard from Mission Beach and you find yourself quickly in PB. In fact, the boards run from the jet in South Mission Beach to and through PB, making it a wonderful people who move watching. The sandy beach is an extension of Mission Beach, and it culminates at the iconic Crystal Pier. Pacific Beach is a residential community- if you are a young adult and you move to San Diego from town and want to live on the beach are the chances that you end up in PB. With plenty of nightlife and places to eat and buy, PB is an noun community. Don't miss: the Crystal Pier Hotel and its booths over the water, an amble down Garnet Avenue. 06 of 13 TripSavvy/Sharyn Umaña-Angers Just about everyone wishes they could live in La Jolla. And just about everyone knows they can't. So the next best thing is to visit its picturesque beaches. There are actually a few areas of La Jolla: there is the old, ritzy enclave of the town area, with its pristine center, awesome rocky La Jolla Cove, and family friendly La Jolla Shores; then there is the Bird stone area south of town, transitioning from Pacific Beach to the exclusive old money part of La Jolla. Bird Rock is a little more comfortable (but still expensive), and it is the location of the iconic Windansea Beach, immordually in Tom Wolf's The Pump House Gang. Don't miss: the Cove, Bird Rock neighborhood, Kinderpool and the Munchkin Houses of La Jolla. 07 of 13 sandiegoa/Getty Images If you're rich and you can't find a place to buy in La Jolla, then your next best bet to go just north to Del Mar, known as the town for the annual San Diego County Fair and the Del Mar Horse Races, Del Mar is an upscale but relaxed community with some fine surfing beaches. The town business district next to Camino Del Mar is the central point of the small city, with upscale eateries and shopping. The beach near the old train depot is a beautiful, picturesque place, and a walk north along the beach gives you a glimpse of the ocean houses owned by the rich and famous. On the north side of Del Mar beach is Dog Beach, a favorite place for pooches. Don't miss: the Town Area, Torrey Pines State Beach immediately to the south, the Del Mar Fairgrounds. 08 of 13 Loco Steve/Flickr/CC BY 2.0 Solana Beach is where Coastal Highway starts 101 and heads north through San Diego's famous coastal beach communities. Solana Beach is a small city, with some beaches that embrace the coast that the North Count San Diego coast is known. The beaches of Solana Beach are not so readily accessible and often involve a hike to and long stairs, meaning the beaches are not so crowded. The Coaster and Amtrak trains make a stop at the Solana Beach station, just a few meters from the popular Fletcher Cove Beach. Don't miss: the Solana Beach Design District, which includes the awesome Belly Up Tavern for concerts, and Pizza Port, known for its award-winning microbrewers. Continue until 9 of 13 below. 09 of 13 Danita Delimont/Getty Images Cardiff-by-the-Sea is actually part of the much larger city of Encinitas, but it still maintains its own identity: that of a small beach neighborhood with huge surfing found at Swami's Beach. Cardiff is one of those local places; most of the people hanging out in Cardiff live in Cardiff. It has a small town centre with a few restaurants and shops, but Cardiff is mostly all about its beaches, accessible from Highway 101. Cardiff is also famous for San Elijo Lagoon and the very popular San Elijo State Beach Campground, and its Restaurant Row, where you can literally eat on the beach. Don't miss: San Elijo State Beach, Swami's Beach, Restaurant Row, and the notorious Cardiff Cook statue. 10 of 13 sandiegoa/Getty Images Encinitas is a fairly large city that extends well beyond coast to the eastern interior. But along the immediate coast, Encinitas is still a beautiful beach town with a cool downtown business district along Coast Hwy 101, and some very nice beaches, the most popular is Moonlight State Beach. Checking the north coast beaches, Encinitas is a great place to stop and do some walks and dining room in Old Encinitas. Don't miss: Moonlight State Beach, Lou's Records for vinyl, La Paloma Theatre for surf movies, the Lumberyard for shopping. 11 of 13 Sandy Huffaker/Corbis via Getty Images Like Cardiff, Leucadia is actually a neighborhood of the larger Encinitas, but it still retains its original character as a surfer-friendly beach town. Probably the most unacceptable, along with Imperial Beach, of all the beach communities, Leucadia means sheltered paradise and is indeed just that; kind of art with minimal commercial all that is to be less the case with every passing year. While there are a few businesses along Coast Hwy 101, Leucadia is largely a quiet residential beach neighborhood, with a few kilometres of beaches under the immediate coastal clenches. In the past, Leucadia was known for its flowering artcure, with some greenhouses still doing the landscape. Don't miss: the Pannikin Coffee House, housed in an old train depot, and Beacon's Beach. 12 of 13 sandiegoa/Getty Images Carlsbad is a busy, beached city with a corporate center that includes golf manufacturers such as Callaway, Taylor Made and Titleist; attractions such as Legoland and the Carlsbad and master-planned residential communities. Carlsbad is also a coastal Town with Carlsbad State Beach is the sandy hub and a favorite of North District residents because it is a great beach for families (of which Carlsbad has a lot). The campsite at the state beach is also popular. Old Carlsbad Village is a beautiful shopping and dining room next to the beach. Do not miss: Carlsbad Premium Outlet Center, Museum of Making Music, Legoland, Carlsbad Flowerfields and the Carlsbad Mineral Water Spa. Continue until 13 of 13 below. 13 of 13 TripSavvy/Kathleen Messmer San Diego's beach communities end at the northernmost tip in the country with Oceanside. The city next to Camp Pendleton is known as a large military community and its residents regularly find the vibrant beach area. The center sees a huge surge after several difficult years, and the port area is a popular gathering place. The Oceanside Pier is a favorite for anglers and hikers and families enjoying Tyson Street Beach. Don't miss: Oceanside Pier, California Surf Museum, Buccaneer Beach Park. Park.