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## Orange County's Beaches of Distinction

Orange County boasts [42 miles of beautiful coastline](#), epitomizing the Southern California lifestyle with towering palm trees, sunny weather, suntanned surfers, bathing beauties and the shimmering ocean. Six beach cities with equally picturesque ocean views, yet distinctive viewpoints on coastal living, line this spectacular stretch of the Pacific Coast. From Seal Beach in the north to San Clemente in the south, each city offers a look and feel of its own.

### Seal Beach

The northern gateway to coastal Orange County, [Seal Beach](#) is named after the seals that once frequented its coastline. The city is filled with quaint neighborhoods and hometown appeal. Find nostalgic reminders of the 1920s in the city's old-fashioned downtown district and enjoy burgers and shakes at a 1940s-themed diner with an ocean view at the end of the Seal Beach Pier.

### Huntington Beach

[Huntington Beach](#), officially known as Surf City USA<sup>®</sup>, celebrates its centennial this year. From surf wear shops and local wave-rider hangouts on Main Street to the U.S. Open of Surfing & Beach Games and the annual Surf Film Festival, the city's surf culture offers a laidback atmosphere. Visitors can learn how to surf, explore the International Surf Museum and the Surfing Walk of Fame, watch surfers from the expansive coastline, or have an evening cookout on the beach. Huntington Beach is the location of the truTV reality show, "*Ocean Force*," which focuses on real lifeguards.

### Newport Beach

The setting for the television show "*The O.C.*," was modeled after Orange County's posh [Newport Beach](#). Newport Beach is filled with miles of sandy beaches, the largest small craft harbor in the United States, championship golf courses and a variety of aquatic recreational activities, from kayaking in the Newport Back Bay to relaxing on a chartered yacht or public harbor cruise. See multi-million dollar homes along the

boardwalk on Balboa Island before heading to the island's popular Marine Avenue for a *Balboa Bar*, a favorite ice cream treat among locals. This sophisticated beach city also offers upscale shopping at Fashion Island, a diverse selection of award-winning restaurants and lively nightlife.

### **Laguna Beach**

Known worldwide as an artists' colony, [Laguna Beach's](#) attraction is the landscape itself. "Because of the unique proximity of the surrounding mountains to the Pacific, artists come to capture the bright coastal light's reaction on the rugged hillsides overlooking the ocean," explains Scott Moore, artist and Laguna Beach resident since 1980. Historic Main Beach features a vintage lifeguard tower overlooking an idyllic shore with volleyball nets, basketball courts and a meandering boardwalk. Boutiques, art galleries and trendy bistros line the downtown streets. The famous Pageant of the Masters tableaux vivant and the Festival of Arts take place in Laguna Canyon, attracting thousands of visitors each summer.

### **Dana Point**

Famous author of the 1800s, Richard Henry Dana deemed [Dana Point](#) one of the most romantic spots in California during his trip aboard the *Pilgrim* in 1835. Today, Dana Point features a beautiful manmade harbor and exciting annual events, including the Tall Ships Festival, the Doheny Blues Festival and the Festival of Whales. Fishing excursions, sailing voyages and whale-watching trips depart daily from the harbor, and Mariners Village is a bustling area filled with shopping and dining.

### **San Clemente**

[San Clemente's](#) charming ambiance and Spanish-style architecture evoke images of the Mediterranean. Take the train south and enjoy the leisurely pace, pristine beaches, friendly sidewalk cafés and family activities, such as an annual sand castle contest. Shop for antiques, custom jewelry, fragrant oils, designer perfumes and unique gifts along the quaint streets in what is often referred to as the "Spanish Village by the Sea."

Nostalgic, relaxed, sophisticated, creative, romantic or charming... There is a beach lifestyle in Orange County suited for everyone.