

Self-Guided - Coastal San Diego Highlights

Google Maps route link: <https://goo.gl/maps/1Wy5ijJ85WBMPW8d9>

Stop 1: Friendship Bell, 1500 Shelter Island Dr

President Eisenhower started the Sister Cities International initiative in 1956. The vision was (and still is) to connect people at the local level to foster relationships, build trust and lead to a more peace filled world. San Diego's first sister city relationship was formed in 1957 with Yokohama, Japan. The following year the citizens of Yokohama gifted San Diego with the Friendship Bell.

There is a public parking area on the West side of the one-way loop around Friendship Bell. Note the public restroom building to the right of the parking area entrance.

Take a few minutes to stroll the very short walking trail Southwest of the parking area. In addition to the harbor views, you will encounter two public art installations: "Pacific Spirit" and "Pearl Of The Pacific".

Stop 2: Cabrillo National Monument (NPS stamp)

Cabrillo National Monument is many parks in one site: History, hiking, tide-pooling and even whale watching. Website: <https://www.nps.gov/cabr/learn/index.htm>

Cabrillo National Monument is a per vehicle entrance fee area. As of 11/1/2021 the fee is \$20 per car and \$15 per motorcycle.

While not listed as a stop, you will pass Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery. Fort Rosecrans became a National Cemetery on Oct. 5, 1934; however, there are interments dating back to 1846. Fort Rosecrans is part of the Blue Star Memorial Highway program (Route 8). The marker is located near the Administration Building on the West side of Cabrillo Memorial Dr.

Stop 3: Sunset Cliffs Blvd Parking

This is a small parking lot on the ocean side of Sunset Cliffs Blvd. This is a great stop for a few scenic photos. Please mind the advisory signs and the cliff bluffs are considered unstable.

Stop 4: Ocean Beach Pier / Newport Avenue Beach

Newport Avenue Beach is a very popular beach in Ocean Beach. It offers a "surfers only" area and for everyone else there are the sights (natural and people watching). If you are hungry, it is a very short walk to Hodad's Ocean Beach. Hodad's is an iconic seaside burger joint. There is a public restroom at the Ocean Beach Lifeguard Station - North of the parking lot along Abbot St. **WARNING: The recent comments on Google Maps were not kind.**

Stop 5: Mission Beach Boardwalk / Ocean Front Walk

The boardwalk area has shopping, restaurants, an old-school amusement park, a public pool, an indoor/outdoor mini-golf and (of course) the beach. From the Belmont Park area, the boardwalk continues North to the Crystal Pier (about 2 miles) and South to the Mission Beach Jetty (about 1 mile). There are public restrooms here.

Stop 6: Children's Pool La Jolla / Casa Beach

A seawall was constructed in 1932 to create a protected area for children to swim. The seawall was so successful that the native harbor seals and sea lions decided it was the perfect spot for them to chill. There is an ongoing battle between marine life advocates and locals that want the area to be used as originally intended. The current compromise is that the beach area is closed during seal pupping season – 12/15/2021 through May 15, 2022. According to the Seal Conservancy, the projected peak period for pup births is 2/8/2022 through 3/8/2022. There is limited parking along Coast Blvd. - the turnover rate for spots is fairly quick. There is a public restroom here.

Stop 7: Mt. Soledad National Veterans Memorial

On clear days, the views are amazing. The current cross (erected in 1954) is the third in that spot dating back to 1913. It has been the subject of numerous lawsuits and protection efforts. The issue was finally settled when the Mt. Soledad Memorial Association (a private entity) purchased the land on which the cross sits in 2015.

There is parking in the loop at the top around the cross & memorial. Additional parking is just down the hill a bit. There are port-a-potties in the lower parking area.