



## Jeff's Top Beaches

### Description

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Who doesn't love a day at the beach? Where land meets ocean is a fun, relaxing place, and there is a world of variety in these coastal environments.

Not all beaches are made equal. Some are scenic wonders with warm surf, palm trees, and soft sand, while others are crowded, dirty and overbuilt. So where do I go to find the best of the beaches? Well, pretty much everywhere.

## 16. Crystal Cove, Newport Coast, California



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## Crystal Cove State Beach

California beaches are not great for swimming since the ocean water is typically between 55-65 degrees Fahrenheit depending on where you are in the state (surfing is another story). Closer to San Diego the summer water temps may hit 70 degrees F in August. With that in mind, there are some great sandy beaches in Southern California and Crystal Cove State Beach is among the best. The beach is in the heart of Orange County but is surrounded by natural cliffs.

## 15. La Jolla Cove, California



Playing at La Jolla Cove

I lived in California for ten and a half years and got to know a great many beaches in the state. La Jolla Cove was my favorite. It's a sheltered bay with reasonably warm water in the summer months, has nice sand, is quiet, and even if it's backed by hotels, it is calm and relaxing.

## 14. Bahia Honda State Park Beach, Florida Keys

This is the nicest beach in the Florida Keys and the sandiest. The Keys are coral atolls so they don't typically have much sand, but this one is the sandiest to be found there. The water is clear and fairly warm making it pretty good for snorkeling too.



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A gull flies past at Bahia Honda beach

## 13. Hapuna Beach, Big Island, Hawaii



Hapuna Beach

Hawaii is the only state in the US in Polynesia and the only place in Polynesia that I have been to. Having said that, Hapuna Beach on the leeward side of the Big Island is a long stretch of beautiful sand surrounded by rugged lava flows.

## 12. Medano Beach, Cabo San Lucas, Mexico



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## Medano Beach

Ok, so this one violates the built-up rule a bit with restaurants and hotels behind the beach. For a vast stretch of sandy beach, sheltered warm water, and scenic value with the end of Baja California's arch visible in the distance (usually with a cruise ship in the distance) this beach deserves a place. Heck, I am sure that if I had spent more time in Baja I would have found many beaches that are better.

## 11. Playa Flamingo, Guanacaste, Costa Rica



This one is a challenge for me. As you can see it is undeniably very pretty with white sand, a mostly a verdant backdrop, and fairly warm water (and playful crabs) with a beautiful sunset. But it loses points for a condo/resorts that mar the backdrop, surf that is a bit rough at times, and water that isn't always the clearest, particularly after it rains.

## 10. Siesta Key, Florida



## Siesta Key Beach

This beach wins the best sand award. It's the softest, whitest sand I've ever set foot on. Many beaches in Florida are backed by towering condos and hotels, and this one is too. But for warm water and soft sand, this is a great choice.

## 9. Kiawah Island Beach, South Carolina



Kiawah Island Beach, South Carolina

Of the Atlantic coast beaches that I have been to, this is my favorite. No high-rise condos here, just the beautiful and wild coastal land of South Carolina. The water is warm and swimmable. Quiet, calm and relaxing.

## 8. Kee Beach, Kauai, Hawaii



## Kee Beach

The north shore of Kauai has some gorgeous beaches with some of the best scenery in the entire state. Kee Beach which is the starting point of the Na Pali coast is my favorite. Kayak tours start here as does the Kalaulau Trail. You won't want to miss Hanalei and Lamahai beaches either.

## 7. Polihale Beach, Kauai, Hawaii



Sunset at Polihale Beach

Hopefully you rented a 4x4 on your visit to Kauai. Because if you did you can take a rough road to a special beach on Kauai's southwest shore. The Na Pali cliffs take on a reddish hue as sunset begins and the entire scene takes on a sublime quality that you won't find in too many places. You'll be alone on the west coast of Kauai without a sound but the waves. The waves might be a bit rough, but you won't mind.

## 6. Magens Bay, St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands



Magens Bay is the most swimmable beach you can find. The water is fairly warm and very calm, in a unique protected bay. The surroundings are verdant jungle and scenic mountains far of into the distance on a very built-up island. The beach loses some points because, unfortunately, it is VERY crowded at times (particularly when cruise ships are in port), and the water clarity isn't great, making it less than ideal for snorkeling.

## 5. Playa Grande, Guanacaste, Costa Rica



Playa Grande

I have many more beaches to explore in Costa Rica, but this was our favorite of the three we visited including Playa Flamingo and Playa Hermosa (the northern one). The water is crystal clear and warm,

the vistas vast and unspoiled, and the surfing here is great. Shelling here is also amazing.

#### 4. Makena Beach, Maui, Hawaii



Makena Beach

Hawaii has shown up four times in this list, but let's be honest, it's for a good reason. The best beach that I have been to in Hawaii is on the island of Maui. On the southwest shore Makena beach is a vast, sheltered stretch of golden sand without the overbuilt feel of condos from more well-known locations. This is the place to go on Maui to watch the sunset. Sorry Kaanapali.

#### 3. West Bay Beach, Roatan, Honduras



### West Bay Beach, Roatan, Honduras

So yes, West Bay Beach has annoying vendors trying to sell you things. But it also has a great backdrop, warm swimmable and clear waters, and the best quality beach snorkeling I've ever experienced.

## 2. Tulum Beach, Quintana Roo, Mexico



Tulum Beach and Ruins

Gorgeous surroundings with Mayan ruins above. Warm, swimmable water. Soft, white sand. Astounding is what this spot is on the Mexican coast.

## 1. Rose Island Beach, Bahamas



We found the closest we have ever been to paradise in the Bahamas. A snorkeling trip took us to a secluded island with silky soft sand, warm clear waters, gentle surf, and a natural wooded backdrop. It took me twenty years to find a beach more beautiful and perfect than Tulum in Mexico, but we found it in the Bahamas.

**Date Created**

May 2, 2022

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