



Southern California and the Southwest

Description

In November of 2017 we took a road trip to Southern California with stops in Carlsbad and San Diego, California, Sedona, Arizona and Monument Valley in Utah. Hereâ??s a look at the places we went and what we encountered along the way.

- **Highlights**

- **Oggiâ??s Sports Brewhouse**
- **Sheraton La Jolla Hotel**
- **Legoland**
- **La Jolla Cove**
- **USS Midway Museum**
- **Sedona scenery**
- **Monument Valley**

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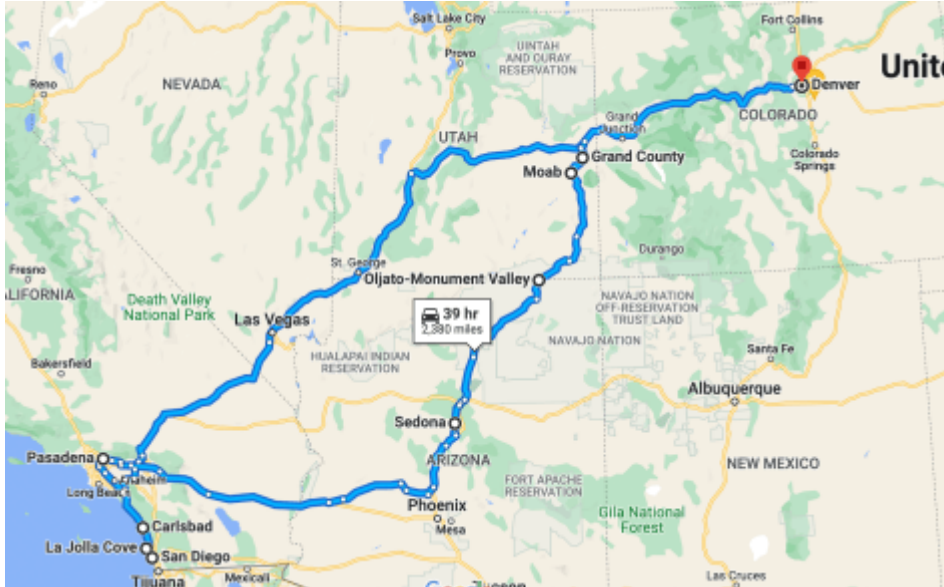
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Carlsbad and La Jolla, California

Carlsbad is just south of Oceanside on the Pacific Coast and is the home of Legoland. This is a great place to be even if you aren't going to Legoland, however. The beach is long there are a ton of nice hotels and restaurants along the coast. On arriving we were certainly tempted to just skip dinner and head straight for the beach, but instead we stopped at one of our favorite pizza and beer places: Oggi's Sports Brewhouse.

Restaurants: Oggi's Sports Brewhouse

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Rating: 4.5 out of 5.





Oggiâ??s is now all over California so even if the one in Carlsbad is closed, there is one in San Diego and Orange County (where we used to live). The pizza is completely unique (try the Field House: if youâ??ve never had corn on your pizza youâ??ll realize it works). We had a lot of good times at Oggiâ??s and enjoyed plenty of pizza and beer there.

After dinner we headed off to our hotel in nearby La Jolla, the Sheraton La Jolla Hotel.

Hotels: Sheraton La Jolla Hotel

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Rating: 4.5 out of 5.

I really liked this hotel. The rooms are great, the landscaping is great. Even the parking is secure and easy. I guess you could wish that you were located right on the beach (it isnâ??t) but beyond that, the hotel is perfect.

The hotel is one that you could select as part of a Legoland package that included two day park hopper tickets. This was a good deal for us and gave us some freedom to enter the park at our leisure over the next couple days.

The next day we made our first visit to Legoland.

Legoland











We spent part of two days in Legoland and it's certainly a fun amusement park for two young kids. Our boys enjoyed the rides which are fairly simple compared to rides at much larger theme parks. For

me, the coolest thing is seeing entire cities built out of legos.

After a long day at Legoland we retired to the hotel and planned to hit the beach first thing the next morning before returning to Legoland.

La Jolla Cove

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Rating: 5 out of 5.

I lived in California for 11 years and spent much of my free time seeking out great beaches. In many ways this beach located just north of San Diego is my favorite beach. The waters are calm and clean, tend to be relatively warm compared to much of the rest of the coastal waters, it's quiet, and while it's backed by a hotel and the city of La Jolla, it's not at all busy and crowded.





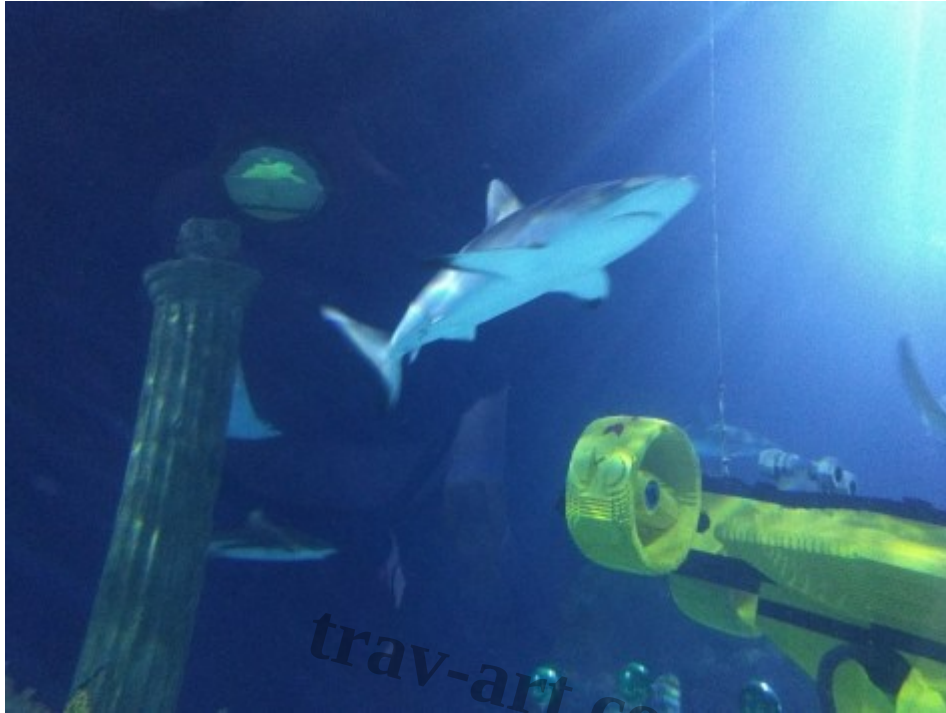


Over the years we had kayaked in the cove and found that itâ??s one of the best swimming beaches in California (no rip tides).

Sea Life Aquarium at Legoland

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Rating: 3.5 out of 5.







While I probably wouldn't say we would have gone to this aquarium on its own, being part of Legoland and included with our ticket package it was certainly worthwhile. It's not the biggest or most impressive aquarium but the sea life exhibits are still neat to see and being geared toward kids they will enjoy it.

San Diego

After spending time at Legoland we proceeded to San Diego to visit the very cool U.S.S Midway Aircraft carrier docked at the downtown pier.

USS Midway Museum

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Rating: 5 out of 5.









The USS Midway sits alongside the ships of the San Diego maritime museum located at the downtown waterfront. The aircraft carrier provides a good self-guided tour of basically the entire ship and tell of its service time in war. The best part is the deck where there are numerous aircraft to view and sit in for photos.

There is a ton (to say the least) to see and do in San Diego but this was the only stop we had time for on this trip. In other pages I'll go over many of the other great places to see in San Diego that we've visited over time.

Sedona, Arizona

The following day we started back toward Colorado with an overnight stop planned in what I think is my favorite town in Arizona, Sedona. Since we were getting in late that night we wouldn't have time to hike and enjoy the scenery until the next morning.

Hotels: Holiday Inn Express, Sedona

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Rating: 4 out of 5.

This was a brand new hotel at the time we visited and its one of the better midrange options in a town with many uber-luxury resorts. The room was nice and comfortable and there was a great breakfast as well. There is only a shower and no bathtub, if that matters to you.

There are great trails all over Sedona that you can start on from right off the main road. The scenery in the town is outstanding no matter where you are. We did the Bell Rock trails and then proceeded on

toward the very cool chapel.







Since we had another big stop to make that day we had to leave Sedona after a few hours in the morning to be sure we could make our way to Monument Valley for the first time.

Monument Valley, UT

There are a few iconic places in America that everyone should see at least once, and Monument Valley is among those places. We stopped off at the visitor center where the "mitten" are visible.

Arriving in the late afternoon we caught the monument at its most beautiful.





As we left we made sure to take the road that was traveled by Forrest Gump on his run back and forth across America. At the approximate spot that Forrest stopped I took this picture at sunset. Someday I will make a point of visiting all of the Forrest Gump locations in America.



We proceeded north until we arrived at our destination for the night in Moab, UT.

Moab, UT

Since this was a simple overnight stop at a chilly time of year (late November) we wouldn't be visiting all of the cool outdoor parks in the surrounding area. I'll link to two other guides I've written that include Arches and Canyonlands).

Restaurants: Moab Brewery

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Rating: 3.5 out of 5.

We decided to eat that night at Moab Brewery and being the offseason it was quiet, uncrowded and the service was great. This was a great last meal of the roadtrip.

The next morning we took the scenic road out of Moab (not the one toward Crescent Junction, but Highway 128). I recommend this route along the Colorado River if you have a little extra time. The scenery is worth it.





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