

# Travel Back in Time at Old Town San Diego



Take a journey of epic proportions—all the way back to the 1800s—without traveling too far from home. On a walk through Old Town San Diego State Historic Park, you'll find out what life was like for California's first Spanish settlers. This 12-acre site, considered the birthplace of the state, has five original restored adobe homes and grand wooden mansions interspersed with retail shops selling period goods that would have appeared in local stores between 1821 and 1872.

Start at the visitors' center, where you can check out the model of the town as it looked in 1872 (the center had previously served as a family home, a railroad office and the headquarters of the *San Diego Herald*). Then, head to the shops, such as Toler's Leather, where you can see a shopkeeper in period dress cutting and working tanned hides. You can watch the blacksmith and candle-maker in action as well, or view the interior of San Diego's first schoolhouse and newspaper office.

Even more costumed actors are

on hand during the Living History presentations every Wednesday from 10 A.M. to 1 P.M. You might see the printing presses run in the newspaper office or watch tortillas being prepared the old-fashioned way at Casa Machado y Stewart, where they're paired with salsa made from ingredients grown in the garden.

Also on display is a restored 1867 stagecoach at the Wells Fargo Museum; head inside and see tellers in period dress as well as an old telegraph machine. Right next door is the tiny one-room First San Diego Courthouse. The Sheriff's Museum has authentic badges, handcuffs, and uniforms. Admission to Old Town is free ([www.oldtownsandiego.org](http://www.oldtownsandiego.org)).

When you're ready to return to the present day, head to Legoland, which offers giant rides and interactive play areas ([www.legoland.com](http://www.legoland.com)). You can also spend a day at the famous San Diego Zoo ([www.sandiegozoo.com](http://www.sandiegozoo.com)) or take a narrated tour of the city on the Old Town Trolley, which lets you on and off at such places as Old Town, the zoo, famous Coronado Island and more ([www.trolleytours.com](http://www.trolleytours.com); trolley fare is \$30 for adults, \$15 for children).

Stay overnight at the Best Western Seven Seas, which is near all the sites and has an outdoor swimming pool. Rates range from \$89 to \$159 a night ([www.bw7seas.com](http://www.bw7seas.com)). Have dinner at the Corvette Diner, a retro '50s spot where waitresses wear poodle skirts. Try a classic burger or fish taco, then have an Elvis malt for dessert (619-542-1476). 