

CATALINA ISLAND

Article by Crystal Harrell



Located off the coast of Southern California, Santa Catalina Island (referred to by most as simply Catalina Island, or Catalina) is an alluring inland paradise tucked away within the Channel Islands archipelago, just 22 miles south-southwest of Los Angeles. Catalina is characterized by rocky terrain with mountain peaks of tremendous heights, like Mt. Orizaba towering at 2,097 feet and



Photo by Catalina Island Chamber of Commerce

Catalina Island's Golf Gardens miniature golf course, located less than a block away from the beach, has been a popular attraction to visitors and locals for nearly 40 years. The 18-hole course has a uniquely diverse layout and is beautifully sculpted to fit the island's landscape. Golf Gardens is open every day, year-round, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. until 8:30 p.m.

Hikers can indulge in a selection of exhilarating trails with breathtaking scenery of the island's lush wildlife and oceanfront backdrops. The Trans-Catalina Trail stretches 37.2 miles from the Renton Mine Trailhead on the East End to Starlight Beach on the West End. It winds up hills and down valleys, offering fantastic views across the 43,000-acre Nature Preserve of the Catalina Island Conservancy known as Catalina's "Interior," while Two Harbors Enterprises is a back way of scattered trails equipped with a safari bus to navigate through the island and a general store to supply all your outdoor necessities.

For a truly invigorating self-guided tour, there are several bike rentals on Catalina Island

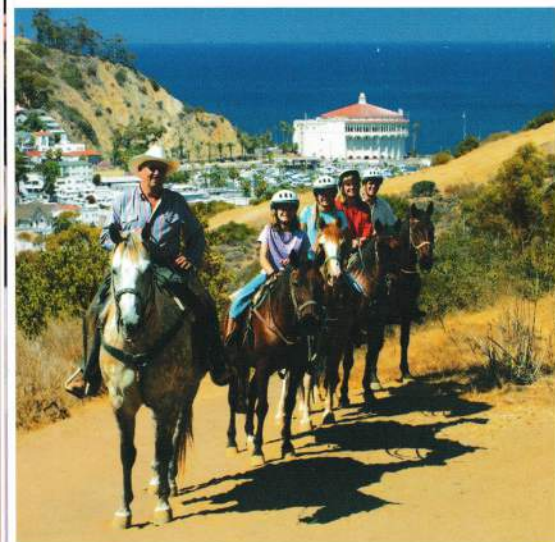


Photo by Catalina Island Chamber of Commerce

Mt. Black Jack standing at 2,006 feet. Tourists can travel to Catalina Island in as little as 15 minutes by helicopter or one hour by boat from the mainland. Boat companies provide scheduled service to Catalina Island with departures from San Pedro, Long Beach, Dana Point, and Newport Beach, while helicopter service is also available with departures from Long Beach, San Pedro and Orange County Airport. With water temperatures ranging from 64-73 degrees in the summer and 54-59 degrees in the winter, Catalina is a vacation destination that has possibilities as boundless as the ocean blue surrounding it. The island's main city, Avalon, is a haven for family fun, offering activities that will appeal to adventurers of all ages, like picnicking, zip lining, snorkeling and various beach escapades.



for you and your family to embark on a cycling odyssey throughout every corner of the island—on land and water. Catalina Island Jet Ski and Electric Bike Rentals gives visitors aquatic recreational outlets to cruise through the Pacific coastlines and a top-notch selection of bikes to roam rugged terrain. Other bike rentals like Brown's Bikes and Catalina Auto & Bike Rentals provide accessible transportation, even the inclusion golf carts—Catalina natives' preferred mode of travel.

The Catalina Island Museum is Avalon's only establishment devoted to the arts, culture, and history of Santa Catalina Island. Newly refurbished, the Catalina Island Museum includes an expanded museum store, digital theater, galleries depicting the history of Catalina Island, and a new traveling exhibitions showcase. The Catalina Island Museum is open daily from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

And, of course, there is a bevy of water activities to be experienced amid the shores of Santa Catalina Island. Glass bottom boat tours are among the most popular attractions, as a glimpse of the colorful marine and plant life can be viewed beneath tourists' feet with a sheet of glass separating them from the ocean depths below. Scuba diving, kayaking, fishing, and parasailing are among the chief ocean-based activities—not to mention catching a glimpse of Catalina Island's famous fly-

ing fish. Afishinado's Catallac is a very large and stable platform with 360-degree viewing from the deck and bridge levels that ensures you will be able to get an optimum view of the ever-elusive flying fish. 10-20 volunteers are selected during the night tours to manage the high-powered hand-held beams used to track the flyers, in addition to spotlights and underwater lights.

Originating from the 1958 hit "26 Miles (Santa Catalina)," Catalina has garnered a reputation of being the "Island of Romance." There are a myriad of memorable experiences to be shared with that special someone whilst vacationing in this intimate paradise. Many of the lodges have amenities such as fireplaces, whirlpool Jacuzzi tubs, private balconies, and ocean views to set the mood when enjoying the evening with your person of choice. Avalon's day spas and movie theater are not too far away, and afterwards, a moonlit walk along a beach coated with fine sand will be the cherry on top of a sultry getaway.

31-year Santa Catalina Island residents Ken and Silvia Harrell are proud to call the island their home. "Living on Catalina in the small town of Avalon is like living in a vacation resort. Of course we work, but this island has spectacular waters, good fishing, clean air, safe streets at night, and the best weather in California," praised Ken.

Catalina has undergone a change in its population size over the years, increasing from the small community of 1,500 people to almost 4,000—resulting in more cars on the narrow streets of the island. The interior of Catalina, however, has remained the same and

there are still tour companies that take tourists to the back country. "Catalina is only 26 miles from Long Beach, but seems hundreds of miles away from the hustle and bustle of city life. The focus on clean environment and healthy activities is what [the residents] want. The Wrigley family used to own the whole island and established the Conservancy and they have added many attractions to invite visitors," informed Ken. One of these attractions includes a 1,200-seat theater set inside the famous Casino Building that has the largest free standing ceiling ballroom dance floor west of the Mississippi.

Regarding their favorite activities to partake in on Catalina Island, Silvia cites "hiking and the regular exercise classes with [her] friends" while Ken deems just "living in the good weather and clean air" and feeling like he is on vacation every day as the best part of island living.

Santa Catalina Island transports visitors to a land of intrigue, beauty, and serene wonderment, making it the perfect vacation spot for your family this summer as you leave all your worries on the mainland and let the island breezes whisk you away to the peace you have been pining for all year long.

DON'T MISS THESE GREAT LOCATIONS



Catalina Zip Line Eco Tour

Travel close to three quarters of a mile over five consecutive zip lines at heights of 300 feet above the canyon floor at speeds of 45mph. Reserve by phone 800-626-1496



Windows To Another World

Santa Catalina Island is famous for crystal clear water and glass bottom boats—a perfect combination for fun and discovery. For more information, please call 800-626-1496.

