Welcome to Newport Beach!

As a member of the CAFP for over three decades, I’m excited that our Forum + Summit (aka POP) conference is coming to my neighborhood. My grandfather, who after serving in WWII by helping to design radar, bought the first two story house on Little Balboa Island right after the war; thus, I spent my summers as a Newport Beach Orange County rat. There is something for everyone so here is a bullet point list for some fun!

For families, there are tons of things to do within 5 miles of POP:

BEACHES – for waves to surf, bodyboard or to watch sunsets go to the Balboa Peninsula.

**Newport Pier** – better surfing, has some rental options: <https://15thstsurfsupply.com/>

**Balboa Pier** – great pier to walk out to for Ruby’s diner – hamburgers and milkshakes

Fun Zone nearby on the bay side with Ferris Wheel Arcades and good donuts

Pavilion (1920’s building) deep sea fishing, harbor or whale watching boat trips Rent small power boats or popular electric Duffy’s to cruise the bay

Take the hour long ferry <https://catalinainfo.com/> to Catalina Island for a day trip to snorkel, bike, play mini-golf, zipline, hike, see buffalos, or rent more boats. Better yet, spend a night or two with lots of casual seafood restaurants. You can even do a zipline through the canyons.

Ferry ride ($1.25 per person) to Balboa Island – great 1.75 mile walk around

**Balboa Island** – great for walking, dining, and calm bay beaches for under 12 year olds

Rent a bike, E-bike, paddleboard or kayak: <https://sports-rents.com/>

Marine Ave (on island) – commercial hub with restaurants from seafood to Italian

Basilic is my favorite for dinner – a small Swiss place so get reservations.

Wilma’s – my favorite for breakfast – does not take reservations.

MUST Do – Balboa bar or Frozen banana at Dad’s or the Frozen banana store

(Too Sweet – newer competitor but with great chocolate and candies)

Back Bay – more rentals and even romantic gondola ride evoking Venice.

Paddleboards and Kayaks: <https://www.newportdunes.com/watersports/>

Bicycles <https://www.beachandbikes.com/> and surreys <https://www.nbbikerentals.com/>

Outrigger and crew options at <https://newportaquaticcenter.com/>

**For landlubbers**

Newport Ecological Reserve – great nearby hiking with nature center and activities

<https://wildlife.ca.gov/Lands/Places-to-Visit/Upper-Newport-Bay-ER>

The terrific bike path connects to Balboa Island easily, too. <https://www.alltrails.com/parks/us/california/upper-newport-bay-ecological-reserve>

Children’s Museums <https://www.discoverycube.org/> in Santa Ana (15 min drive)

Disneyland/California Adventure – needs no description.

Knotts Berry Farm – classic amusement park (high speed coasters) with a cowboy vibe

Camp Snoopy for little kiddo rides and good Knott’s food a plus!

**Scenic day trip** – Laguna Beach and other a little farther distances

Driving along the 73 toll road, you can dip into Laguna Preserve for hiking <https://www.ocparks.com/parks-trails> and then drop into to the beautiful ocean beach area with beachside basketball and volleyball courts, beautiful coves (frequently in movies) and a vibrant restaurant (great for foodies) and art scene (Laguna Art Festival). There are even wineries nearby (Laguna Canyon Winery and McClain Cellars.

In **Long Beach**, about 40 minutes away, there is a great aquarium, [Aquarium of the Pacific](https://www.aquariumofpacific.org/). Even closer -**Huntington Beach** (aka Surf City USA has a Surfer’s Hall of Fame, Int’l Surfing Museum, and birding at Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve

Also nearby is **Crystal Cove State Park** along the beach route between Newport Beach and Laguna which is a hidden local gem. Book far in advance to nail a lunch reservation at the beach (literally toes in the sand) throwback [restaurant](https://thebeachcombercafe.com/) or rent a [bungalow](https://crystalcove.org/beachcottages/cottages/) along the bluff pre or post POP! This park is great for biking, hiking, and uncrowded beaches as just a day trip. Go early to get a parking spot.

And while I’d rather be outdoors than **shopping**, there is some good shopping nearby at

South Coast Plaza Shopping [Mall](https://www.southcoastplaza.com/), merry-go-round

Upscale Newport [Fashion Island](https://www.fashionisland.com/)