

The West Coast is calling.  
Plan your winter escape with a  
sun-filled trip to the Golden State.

PRODUCED BY **SIMONE OLIVERO** ILLUSTRATIONS BY **RYAN MILLS**

# California Dreamin'



**P. 44**

Sitting on the dock of  
the bay with your kids is  
never a waste of time.

**SAN FRANCISCO**



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Lights, camera, action!  
The whole family will fall  
in love with La La Land.

**LOS ANGELES**



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Mickey and the gang  
have some exciting  
things planned for 2020.

**DISNEYLAND**



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The list of kid-centric  
things to do is longer  
than the coastline.

**SAN DIEGO**



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Dinosaurs, sun and  
scenic hikes will appeal  
to desert-loving families.

**PALM SPRINGS**



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## GOLDEN GATE CITY

WHILE YOUR CALVES ARE SCREAMING FROM THE STEEP HILLS, IMPRESS KIDS WITH THESE MUSEUMS, TASTY FOODS, WILDLIFE AND MORE.

### 1. GET A CITYPASS

For longer stays (three or more days), it may be worth investing in a CityPass. This gains you access to several popular attractions as well as a three-day pass for MUNI (a network of buses, light-rail Metro trains, historic streetcars, and cable cars—so you can snap that iconic San Francisco shot). Start by visiting the Aquarium of the Bay, a showcase of 20,000 marine animals from San Francisco Bay and nearby waters. Next, use your pass to pop into the Exploratorium, a hands-on laboratory where kids can wander freely and flex their STEM muscles learning about colour, time, gravity and more. The pass also provides access to the Blue & Gold Fleet Bay Cruise Adventure and the California Academy of Sciences.

### 2. EXPLORE THE PRESIDIO

This massive 1,500-acre park that once served as a military post is now almost a city unto itself. Explore the hilly forests and beaches,

and get that classic pic of the fam in front of the Golden Gate Bridge. Every Sunday from late March to late October, city dwellers flock here for the Presidio Picnic, with food vendors, yoga, performances and free learn-to-ride bike lessons for the little ones. While you're here, check out the Walt Disney Family Museum. More for Disney aficionados than kids, the museum is home to the first drawing of Mickey Mouse and gives an extensive history of Walt's creative journey.

### 3. LET YOUR TUMMY GUIDE YOU

If you haven't had a taste of what the locals eat, can you even say you've been there? Luckily, San Francisco has enough to please even the pickiest eater—from the fresh seafood at Fisherman's Wharf to the famous burritos found in the Mission District. Try August (1) Five for modern Indian cuisine (kids can eat with their hands!), Red Dog for a taste of northern California farmhouse cooking or grab a bite at Wipeout Bar and

Grill after visiting the sea lions on Pier 39. Parents will love Magnolia Brewing's new Dogpatch beer garden, which has plenty of space for the kids to run around; Pizzeria Delfina with endless breadsticks and memorable pies; as well as International Smoke, a hip barbecue joint from Ayesha Curry. Also, a trip to San Francisco wouldn't be complete without a stop in Chinatown. China Live is one part marketplace, one part interactive food show, where kids can watch through a glass window as chefs prepare dishes like Peking duck and dumplings.

### 4. HIT THE WATER

The bay in San Francisco is easily the heart of the city. In fact, it's where Otis Redding was inspired to co-write the famous song "The Dock of the Bay." Visit Alcatraz Island where kids can run around the notorious prison that once housed Al Capone and Machine Gun Kelly. To experience the bay from the water, hop on a lunch or dinner

### Beat the jet lag

Visiting from the East Coast? Forget naps and get your kids outside between 2 and 3 p.m. Studies suggest the sunlight will help their brains adjust to the time change quicker.



cruise with Hornblower Cruises & Events, where kids can try spotting a great white shark in between courses. The boat will also give you a unique view of both the bay and Golden Gate bridges from below.

### 5. LET THEM EAT... ICE CREAM

Get your Instagram fix with a visit to the Museum of Ice Cream. Wander from room to room learning about the history of ice cream, interacting with the artistic installations and enjoying *lots* of ice cream—prepare yourself for a serious sugar crash. Kids under two get in free (and are welcome to partake in the eating of the treats). Finish your visit with a dip in the picturesque swimming pool full of approximately one hundred million antimicrobial biodegradable "sprinkles." (Note: These are not for eating!) Warning: It can get rowdy in the pool. Most kids (and adults) have reached peak sugar high at this point—so meltdowns may ensue when you eventually decide it's time to leave.

### 6. DISCOVER OAKLAND

Real estate in San Francisco isn't cheap, which is why many people who work in the city live just across the bridge in Oakland. Spend some time exploring this city—the very manageable zoo can be experienced

in a morning or afternoon, or make a stop at Children's Fairyland, a whimsical amusement park built in the '50s. But the real reason to come to Oakland is to eat. A few of our favourite stops were Fentons Creamery (let the little ones get ice cream for lunch), Homeroom, a mac 'n' cheese restaurant that parents will love just as much as kids, and Ramen Shop, an Instagram-friendly space with tasty noodles.

### 7. ESCAPE TO SONOMA

If you're visiting over a weekend, do like the locals and escape the city. The scenic ride to Santa Rosa—you'll get a chance to drive over the Golden Gate Bridge and through the pretty town of Petaluma, the "Egg Basket of the World"—is just over an hour (depending on traffic), and you'll typically find there's a 10- to 15-degree rise in temperature—bring on the heat! While lots of wineries in the region now cater to families, the Francis Ford Coppola Winery should not be missed. The American film director bought the sprawling property in 2006 and has transformed it into a small slice of paradise that kids and parents will both adore. Arrive early and book a "cabine" beside the impressive swimming pool and then grab lunch at one of the on-site restaurants—we're partial

to the spaghetti and meatballs from the kids' menu at Rustic. Aspiring film buffs can wander through the memorabilia scattered throughout the property—including Don Corleone's desk from *The Godfather*, costumes from Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and some of Coppola's actual Academy Awards—while parents partake in a tasting. End the day by winding down in the kids' lending library, situated by the pool, or catch an evening show at the performing arts pavilion.

### 8. GO ON A SAFARI

Most kids love the zoo, but a trip to Safari West is a rare opportunity to let your little ones go behind the fence to see some of their favourite animals in their (mostly) natural habitat. The 400-acre preserve features approximately 900 animals—from flamingos and black swans to zebras, rhinos, cheetahs and monkeys. Informative group tours run around three hours—you'll need to book a private tour if you're travelling with kids under four—and take you through the property on a canvas-covered safari Jeep. If you're feeling adventurous, splurge on an overnight stay in one of the luxury safari tents imported from Botswana where you can wake up to the sounds of giraffes chomping on nearby trees.

## CLASSIC CALI EATS

### MISSION BURRITOS

Sure, you've had a burrito, but not the family-size version made famous in **San Francisco's** Mission District. Head to any taqueria for the original.

### IN-N-OUT BURGER

Try naming a celebrity who hasn't popped into this popular burger joint founded in **Los Angeles** County. Check out the website for access to the "secret" menu.

### MICKEY'S ICE CREAM BAR

This classic mouse-shaped bar is dipped in chocolate and is one of the best ways to cool off during a hot day at **Disneyland**.

### DATE SHAKE

The Coachella Valley is known as the date capital of the world, and in **Palm Springs**, you'll find some of the tastiest shakes made with the sweet fruit and blended ice cream.

### BAJA FISH TACOS

Fried fish, *crema*, shredded cabbage and *pico de gallo* may sound like simple ingredients, but in **San Diego**, they are the building blocks for this local staple.

TEXT: SIMONE OLIVERO

PHOTOS: ISTOCK PHOTO MAC'N CHEESE PHOTO: HOMEROOM

## WELCOME TO LA LA LAND

THE WHOLE FAM WILL FALL IN LOVE WITH THE CITY OF ANGELS. HERE ARE OUR FAVOURITE THINGS TO DO.

### 1. Explore Griffith Park

The biggest decision kids will have to make is which to ride first, a train or a pony! Let them blow off some steam at the huge playground or take a spin on the old-time merry-go-round from the 1930s. At the Griffith Observatory, tiny astronomers can explore the stars and learn about space.

### 2. Start your engines

Around the corner from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the collection of vehicles at the Petersen Automotive Museum is impressive. Kids will head straight to the life-sized model of Lightning McQueen from Disney's *Cars*, but steer them toward the Hollywood Dream Machines exhibit, where they can see the Batmobile, and the Lexus from *Black Panther*.

### 3. Dig in

Go back tens of thousands of years at La Brea Tar Pits and Museum, where paleontologists are making discoveries almost daily. You can't enter the pit, but the excavator tour (which comes

free with your museum admission) gives you a close look at neat discoveries like a Columbian mammoth and a dire wolf.



### 4. Discover new things

The California Science Center boasts all kinds of exhibits, from ecosystems to how airplanes are made. Don't miss the newest exhibit, The Art of the Brick, the world's largest display of Lego

art, which exposes kids to brick versions of famous works of art by Vincent van Gogh and Leonardo da Vinci. Grab a bite at the on-site cafeteria or head down the street to The Fields LA, a food hall with options that will satisfy even the pickiest eater.

### 5. Walk the walk

The Hollywood Walk of Fame may be a tourist trap, but for good reason. Little ones will light up when they discover the stars for Big Bird, Winnie-the-Pooh, Mickey Mouse, Snoopy and more. They can even get a picture with some of their favourite characters, like Spider-Man (for a tip) outside of the TCL Chinese Theatre and the Hollywood & Highland complex. Other nearby attractions include Madame Tussauds and the Hollywood Museum, which has one of the best collections of movie memorabilia in the world.



### 6. Get ready for lights, camera, action!

Part working film studio, part theme park, Universal Studios Hollywood brings the magic of Hollywood to life with studio tours, rides and attractions inspired by your kids' favourite movies and TV shows, including *Despicable Me*, *Transformers*, *The Simpsons* and *Jurassic Park*. But most families make their way to this sunny studio to visit The Wizarding World of Harry Potter. The coveted destination transports kids to Harry's magical world in England, with snow-capped roofs and cobblestone streets. They can ride the Hogwarts Express, which travels from Platform Nine and Three-Quarters at King's Cross Station to Hogsmeade; attend Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry; and sample Bertie Bott's Every Flavour Beans.



## THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD

**L**IFE WITH two kids often requires NASA-level organization. There's flag football on Tuesday, water polo on Wednesday, religious school on Sunday. In between all of that, there are doctor appointments, playdates, drop-offs, pickups, Target runs, birthday-party planning and, oh yeah, work. Out of nowhere surprises are about as welcome as a swarm of termites. Predictability and routine are what get most parents through the day-to-day, but there is one time when the unexpected, the unknown, the last-minute deviations are welcome: the family road trip.

A few years ago, my husband and I sold our home in New Rochelle, NY, in search of adventure. We settled in Southern California. Everything was new to us and we couldn't wait to explore, so for spring break, we surprised the kids with a road trip up the California coast. Our journey would take us through nearly 1,600 kilometres in seven days, hitting up all the must-see sights: Santa Barbara, Hearst Castle, the elephant seals in San Simeon, and Yosemite National Park.

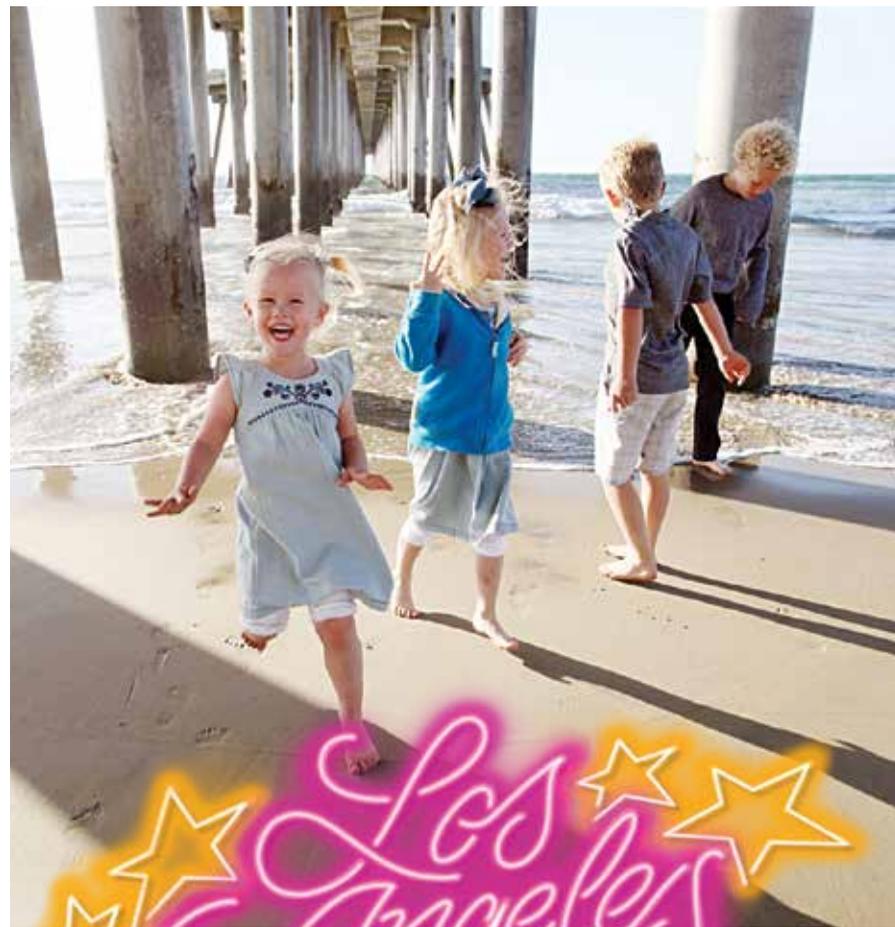
We packed the car full of *Garfield* and *Archie* comics, blankets, pillows and copious amounts of snacks, including fruit, Cheerios and granola bars. Before we'd reached the highway, apple cores and wrappers had already littered the back seat—but that's life on the road, right?

We gave each kid a book of homemade coupons. We'd have to stop for gas fairly often, and these coupons were to be used for treats like sweets or soda. When the coupons ran out, so did the in-car sweets. As soon as we mentioned getting off the highway, the back seat negotiations began. My 13-year-old daughter never knew if it was the right time to use her coupons, so she'd try to see if her 10-year-old brother would use one of his and share. One time, my son chose to spend his coupon on a small plush character, who quickly became our mascot. We discovered the best mini-mart stop was the Love's in Tulare, off Exit 85 on Route 99. If you haven't visited a Love's, you haven't road-tripped enough. They have showers, likely meant for truckers, but they're perfect for a diaper explosion or carsick mess. They also have every kind of gum, candy, chip, snack and drink you could dream of.

Creating an itinerary to please the whole family is no easy task—and, at times, there was bickering—but we all learned to take turns, even if it meant doing something we thought was boring. We visited California Polytechnic State University's architectural graveyard in San Luis Obispo so my son, a design buff, could run around the enormous structures built by the school's Architecture and Environmental Design students. Later, we veered off-course to visit the famed Solvang, the unofficial Danish capital of California, at the request of my daughter. As we pulled up to the window of Olsen's Danish Village Bakery, I announced we'd be having pastry for dinner, something I'd never normally do, and we ended up ordering a Danish waffle, a coffee cake and almond *kringle* that typically serves 10 to 12 people.

Over the course of seven days, we made lots of stops. In Santa Barbara, we visited Julia Child's favourite restaurant, La Super-Rica Taqueria, for the ridiculously delicious *rajas*—roasted peppers and onions sautéed for hours and doused with melty cheese. At Yosemite, my husband had the genius idea to slide down a freezing-cold natural rock waterslide in Hetch Hetchy, producing a legendary squeal that we caught on video—it still makes me and the kids giggle. We pulled the car over for each of the 500 cow pastures on the way to Paso Robles despite my kids yelling each time from the back seat, "Mom, seriously, do you have to take a picture of every cow?" I did. We played hundreds of games of Uno. We saw a zebra on the side of the road (we later learned it was a remnant of William Randolph Hearst's personal zoo). And I'll never forget the emergency bathroom break at a McDonald's that accidentally brought us in front of McFarland High School, as in the movie *McFarland, USA*. I was so excited. The kids, not so much.

But what struck me most about our 168 hours of uninterrupted together time without wifi was that we all still liked each other. Maybe even a little bit more. Laughs were had and memories were made, which is what family road trips are all about. —CATHERINE PEARLMAN



TEXT: BARRY CHOI | HUNTINGTON BEACH, CARTRIIP PHOTOS: STOCKSY | UNIVERSAL STUDIOS PHOTO: ISTOCK PHOTO

KNOTT'S BERRY FARM PHOTO: KNOTT'S BERRY FARM | THING: BY CATHERINE PEARLMAN



### 7. Head to the farm

Tucked away in Buena Park, Knott's Berry Farm, a family farm in the mid-1920s, is now a 160-acre theme park. Come for the thrill rides like the Pony Express and the Timberline Twister, and then head to Camp Snoopy, where kids can meet the whole Peanuts gang. If it's a particularly steamy day, cool off at Knott's Soak City, which has waterslides, a wave pool, a lazy river and a family raft ride. Before you leave, try some of the boysenberry-inspired cuisine and famous fried chicken from Mrs. Knott's Chicken Dinner Restaurant.

### 8. Sun, sand and surf

A trip to LA wouldn't be complete without some family time at the beach. An hour outside of the city, Huntington Beach is the perfect place to relax for a few days of sun and surf. Spend a day making sandcastles, check out the frequent free events or rent a Duffy electric boat on the harbour to explore the area from the water.



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## THE FAMILY FUN GUIDE

WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO.

### 1. THERE ARE TWO PARKS

Disneyland Resort may seem more manageable to families than its counterpart, Disney World, in Florida, since there are only two major parks. At California Adventure Park, you'll find Pixar Pier, which has an upscale Coney Island boardwalk feel—similar to Santa Monica Pier. It's also the location of Cars Land, which is particularly popular with the preschool set. Don't miss the Radiator Springs Racers ride (the mountainous desert landscape design alone is unreal) and Mater's Junkyard Jamboree, and get Mater-shaped waffles at Flo's V8 Cafe, a retro diner that looks just like something you'd pass on Route 66. At Disneyland Park (separate admission fee), you'll find Space Mountain, Big Thunder Mountain Railroad, Pirates of the Caribbean, the Haunted Mansion, *Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge* and all the Disney classics, such as Sleeping Beauty's castle, It's a Small World and Mickey's Toontown.

### 2. PLANNING AHEAD IS KEY

This is one family trip where you really can't just play it by ear. If you want to experience certain in-demand rides and activities, you'll need to book ahead. Restaurants inside the park generally require reservations (up to 60 days in advance), even for breakfast, and especially if it's one of the more popular options, like Oga's Cantina inside *Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge* or the Blue Bayou, the



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fancy Cajun restaurant you pass by during the Pirates of the Caribbean ride. Check the Disneyland app for last-minute options—some of the restaurants are open until 11 p.m.—or use the Disneyland Dining phone number (714-781-DINE) to make reservations. Tip: When using the app, try searching by time rather than by type of meal (breakfast, lunch, dinner)—this tends to yield the most options when you're looking for last-minute same-day or next-day options. If you need to cancel your restaurant reservation with less than 24 hours' notice, there's often a cancellation fee.

### 3. THE DISNEYLAND APP IS YOUR FRIEND—LEARN HOW TO USE IT

Speaking of the app, download it ASAP and familiarize yourself with how it works. Explore the different features before you're inside the park and bring a portable phone charger, because you'll be using your phone all day: as a map, to find available restaurant reservations, to check ride wait times and to skip the lines at takeout counters and snack shacks by mobile ordering in advance.

### 4. FASTPASS AND MAXPASS 101

If you purchased a MaxPass, which gives you the digital ride-booking option, you can start looking up available ride times once you enter the park turnstiles in the morning. (Unlike at Disney World, you can't book rides and Fastpasses ahead of time.) Use the app to search for the ride you want and it'll spit up ride times for you. If you purchase a FastPass, you'll have to use the machines inside the park to book rides. Once you've booked a Fastpass or MaxPass reservation, you won't be able to book another ride for 90 minutes, but you can check out other rides or areas of the park that do not accept Fastpass or MaxPass reservations. At the time of publication, this included the newest land, *Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge*. We suggest heading to that part of the park first thing for a shorter wait time. (When we went at 9 a.m. on a Tuesday, the wait for Millennium Falcon: Smugglers Run was only about 50 minutes.)

### 5. THERE ARE BENEFITS TO BRINGING YOUR OWN STROLLER

If you want to keep your kids out past their bedtimes so you can see the nightly fireworks show, which starts at 9:30 p.m., you'll want a stroller they can pass out in. There are blue rental strollers available, but they're made from hard plastic and don't recline; if you're

banking on a mid-day stroller nap, you may prefer to bring your own. Stroller parking is everywhere, and if your stroller has a storage basket, this is great for stashing bags too big to take on a ride with you. (Only some rides at Disneyland have bag cubbies, though there are lockers throughout the park for bigger items.) If you have little ones who can't walk too far, take the monorail from Downtown Disney to avoid some of the crowds and get deeper into the park. It comes with your park admission ticket and the view from the monorail helps you get your bearings. There's only one stop, in Tomorrowland, which is right across from the Finding Nemo Submarine Voyage ride—a big hit with kids.

### 6. HAVING AN EARLY-RISER KID HAS BENEFITS

One of the greatest advantages of staying on-site at one of the three Disneyland Resort Hotels is the Extra Magic Hour. This is when the park is open only to hotel guests and wait times are much shorter. The Magic Hour runs from 7 a.m. to 8 a.m. and switches parks each day. (For example, at California Adventure Park, it runs on Mondays, and at Disneyland Park, it's Tuesdays.) For those on Eastern Standard Time, it can be a huge advantage, as many kids will be up and ready to go early. However, you might want to pack some Goldfish crackers in your suitcase: If you're staying in a Disneyland Resort Hotel, reservations for the restaurants need to be booked, breakfast included. Guests of the Disneyland Hotel towers (Fantasy, Frontier and Adventure) can try the Tangaroa Terrace open-air takeout restaurant, or other in-the-know moms of young kids suggest ordering UberEats to the lobby!

### 7. IT'S ALL ABOUT THE LAYERS

Weather at Disneyland is wonderfully sunny and blessedly less humid than the sticky Floridian heat of Walt Disney World. If you're visiting in the winter, dress in layers. (It's chillier in the morning and the evening; you might need a light jacket or sweater.) And always wear your most comfortable walking shoes—you'll be on your feet most of the day!

### 8. YOUR KID WILL NEED TO RUN OFF SOME ENERGY

If your high-energy wild child is getting antsy from waiting in too many lines, make a beeline for Tom Sawyer Island (between Frontierland and New Orleans Square). Take a quick motorized raft trip to the island, which has a liberating *Lord of the Flies* freedom you won't find elsewhere inside the congestion of the parks. Kids can run around the Pirate's Lair, exploring pathways, rope bridges, treehouse forts and caves (watch your head!).

### 9. RIDER SWITCH IS SOMETHING TO EMBRACE

Kids aren't the only ones who want to enjoy the rides as Disney. Take advantage of the rider-switch program at select attractions for adults. One parent waits with the kids while the other goes on the ride. When the first adult returns, the other parent can jump on the ride right away, without having to go to the back of the line.

### 10. HOW TO CHILL OUT

After a lot of stimulation and a full day of managing overexcited expectations, your kid might need some downtime. Fend off any impending meltdowns with a stop at the Lego Store in Downtown Disney, just outside the parks. There are tons of brick bins and stations for kids to play at while you plot your next park move. And because you know they'll be begging for something to take home, there are plenty of under-\$20 options to choose from.

## DON'T MISS THIS

FROM PARADES TO THRILL RIDES AND THE LATEST INSTALLATION OF *STAR WARS*, THERE'S NEVER BEEN A BETTER TIME TO GO TO DISNEYLAND.



### STAR WARS: RISE OF THE RESISTANCE

It's more than just a ride: Mini galaxy explorers (40 inches or taller) can join the Resistance in a secret mission against the First Order with some of their favourite characters, like Rey, Finn and Poe.



### MAGIC HAPPENS PARADE

Set to a brand-new song co-composed by former *American Idol* star Todrick Hall, the new parade features scenes from *Frozen 2*, *Moana* and *Coco*, along with other Disney classics.



### INSIDE OUT EMOTIONAL WHIRLWIND

Head to Pixar Pier, where riders can step into the workplace of Riley's emotions—Anger, Joy, Sadness, Fear and Disgust—on this swirling and colourful ride that's perfect for the preschool set.



### AVENGERS CAMPUS

Superheroes will gather at Disney California Adventure Park in summer 2020 for the launch of this new land. Kids can sling webs with Spider-Man, go to Wakanda, and meet characters like Ant-Man.

TEXT: ARIEL BREWSTER; CARS, STAR WARS, EMOTIONAL WHIRLWIND PHOTOS: JOSHUA SUDOCK/DISNEYLAND RESORT

AVENGERS CAMPUS PHOTO: DISNEY/MARVEL; DISNEYLAND PHOTO: ISTOCK PHOTO; SIDEBAR: SIMONE OLIVERO



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## PALM TREES AND PARADISE

WITH GIANT DINOSAURS, SCENIC HIKE AND IMPRESSIVE MUSEUMS, THESE ATTRACTIONS WERE MADE FOR HEAT-SEEKING FAMILIES.

### 1. VILLAGEFEST

Every Thursday, starting at either 6 p.m. or 7 p.m. (depending on the season), locals and visitors hit the streets to celebrate this pedestrian-friendly street fair. It's worth keeping the kids up for local shopping, entertainment, live music and sweet treats, like Brandini Toffee.

### 2. PALM SPRINGS AERIAL TRAMWAY

Within the world's largest rotating tram car, kids will get a bird's-eye view of the Palm Springs valley as they make their way up the cliffs of Chino Canyon to Mt. San Jacinto State Park, which sits at an elevation of 8,516 feet. The trip up takes only around 10 minutes, but at the top, you'll find two restaurants, observation decks, a natural history museum and the opportunity to get lost in nature. In summer, there's more than 80 kilometres of hiking trails, as well as camping and guided nature walks. In winter, take advantage of the snow—yes, the desert gets snow!—by going snowshoeing, by cross-country skiing or by just having a good ol'-fashioned snowball fight.

### 3. CHILDREN'S DISCOVERY MUSEUM OF THE DESERT

With more than 80 hands-on exhibits, this museum offers kids the chance to build their own race car, meet Smiley and Abigail the desert tortoises, watch zucchini grow in the edible gardens or blow off some steam on the Rancho Mirage Trike Track. Throughout the year there are activities, like a butterfly release for Earth Day and Savoury Sunday, where you can learn to make an international dish, like empanadas.

### 4. PALM SPRINGS AIR MUSEUM

Strap your tiny pilot in for a day of aerial exploration. This living history museum features aircraft from World War II, Korea and Vietnam—most in flyable condition. Kids can scout out the air-conditioned hangars, experience flight simulators or play in the kid-sized control tower. This year, the museum will open the Houston

Pavilion, where air enthusiasts can get a close look at a Black Devil F-117A Nighthawk Stealth Fighter, which was deployed during Desert Storm.

### 5. BOOMERS PALM SPRINGS

Go-carts, an arcade, bumper boats, mini golf—this place has got it all. It's the perfect spot to let your kids blow off steam or to cool off indoors on one of those extra-hot desert days.

### 6. HIKE INDIAN CANYONS AND TAHQUITZ CANYON

Plan a day trip into nature by taking the little ones to visit the picturesque Indian Canyons. About an hour's drive outside Palm Springs proper, play Spot the *Washingtonia filifera* (a California fan palm) on the Palm Canyon trail or check out the lush oasis of Andreas Canyon. Experienced hikers can tackle the Tahquitz Canyon trail, which leads to a stunning 60-foot waterfall, while smaller kids hang back at the visitors' centre to look at artifacts, explore cultural exhibits from the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians Reservation, or watch *The Legend of Tahquitz Canyon*.

### 7. THE LIVING DESERT ZOO AND GARDENS

Feed a giraffe, pet a Nigerian dwarf goat or spend the day with a camel. There's so much for little ones to do at this impressive zoo in Palm Desert. Feeling spent? Save some cash by bringing your own lunch (picnic tables are dotted throughout) and then go on a family hike through the grounds. Before you leave, treat the fam to a fresh, made-to-order churro from Churro Stop before taking a final ride on the endangered-species carousel.

### 8. CABAZON DINOSAURS

Dino-loving kids will be blown away by these massive steel and concrete dinosaurs hanging out on the side of Interstate 10 in Cabazon. The 150-foot-long brontosaurus was made of spare material salvaged from the highway's construction and is actually a store that kids can go inside to buy kitschy souvenirs. Parents may remember this and the 65-foot-tall T. Rex from the 1985 classic film *Pee-wee's Big Adventure*.

### 9. JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK

Go for the Instagramable family shots, but stay for the quiet respite from the city. While you won't quite be off the grid, this 3,200-square-kilometre protected park is drivable and will give your little explorers the chance to see rugged rock formations, fields of prickly cactus and the infamous bendy limbs of the Joshua tree. On your way back to Palm Springs, pop into Pappy & Harriet's in Pioneertown for live music, chili nachos and cheese fries. If you're lucky, you may even see some locals pull up on horseback and "park" in the back stables.

## HERE COMES THE SUN

THIS CITY DOESN'T HAVE TO GO OUT OF ITS WAY TO LURE FAMILY TRAVELLERS. HERE'S HOW TO ENJOY THE MORE THAN 100 KM OF BEACHES AND KILLER CLIMATE.



### 1. Discover "The Jewel"

You can get a heavy dose of Southern California beach culture—and all the sunset selfies—without leaving La Jolla (the "jewel"). The posh community has such splendid shores that wild animals refuse to cede them to humans. You'll find piles of sunbathing sea lions around La Jolla Cove and the nearby Children's Pool, a beach protected by a concrete breakwater that was designed as a wave-free swim area in the 1930s but has since been claimed by seals. Kids go wild for the cuddly-looking marine mammals, but it's important to give them space! If your kiddos are five and up, book a kayaking tour with Everyday California. At low tide, you can paddle into La Jolla's sea caves, carved into a sandstone cliff just east of La Jolla Cove. Only one of the seven caves is accessible from land, which you can access via a century-old tunnel leading from the Cave Store.

### 2. Hit the Zoo(s)

San Diego County boasts not one but two world-class zoos. The San Diego Zoo is centrally located in Balboa Park, just north of downtown. It's home



to an astonishing number and array of animals, including the largest koala colony outside of Australia and some of the rarest and most endangered monkeys on Earth. Its sister attraction, the San Diego Zoo Safari Park, is about 48 kilometres away in Escondido, but don't let the distance deter you. Its relative remoteness and expansiveness (1,800 acres!) set it apart from typical zoos, giving animals such as giraffes and rhinos room to roam and engage in natural behaviours.



### 3. Explore Balboa Park

The San Diego Zoo isn't the only draw to Balboa Park. With more than a dozen museums and multiple performing arts venues, it's no wonder Balboa Park is billed as the nation's largest urban cultural outdoor space. Start with a stroll around the lily pond near the entrance to the Botanical Building. It's hard to resist snapping pics as kids scramble after koi and ducks; the site dates to the early 1900s, but it was made for Instagram. Inside the building, which is free to the public, you'll find more than 2,000 plants, including "scratch and sniff" varieties like chocolate mint. The neighbour-

ing Timken Museum of Art, known for its mid-century modern architecture and collection of Old Master paintings, also offers free admission. Got a kid who's obsessed with dinosaurs? There's a museum for that (San Diego Natural History Museum). Crazy about cars? There's a museum for that, too (San Diego Automotive Museum). If it's planes, trains or rocks, Balboa Park has you covered with the San Diego Air & Space Museum, the San Diego Model Railroad Museum, and the San Diego Mineral & Gem Society, respectively. Have we mentioned the Fleet Science Center, with its Tesla coil and giant dome theatre? Needless to say, it's easy to fill a day or two at the park, which is also studded with playgrounds and hiking trails.

### 4. Let Them Jump on the Beds

On the odd rainy day, there's no better place to take shelter than The New Children's Museum. Check the schedule of workshops at the Innovators LAB, a makerspace geared toward children ages six to 13; dabble in painting or clay sculpting; or explore the large-scale art installations such as *Whammock!*, a hammock-like jungle gym made with 65 kilometres of nylon rope. Kids never want to leave the world of No Rules...Except, a large room filled with mattresses, more than 160 tire-shaped "pillows," and joyous squeals. Yes, parents can bounce, too.



### 5. Lego Your Worries

With SeaWorld to its south and Disneyland to its north, Legoland California works hard to keep up with the Joneses. The resort in north San Diego County boasts dozens of rides and attractions, an aquarium, a water park open in the summer months, and two hotels. It caters to young kids and you'll find four-year-olds on even its wildest coaster, Technic. Legoland's most unique and charming attraction may be Miniland USA, an expansive display of some 32 million bricks made into models of San Francisco's Golden Gate bridge, the Las Vegas strip and a slew of *Star Wars* scenes.

### 6. Get Your Sea Legs

San Diego has a rich maritime history—it's home to most of the US Navy's Pacific fleet—and the best place to soak it up is aboard a ship. Start by visiting the USS Midway Museum, a decommissioned warship home to 30-plus restored aircraft. Kids can climb into cockpits and curl up on a sailor's bunk. A short walk along the bay brings you to the Maritime Museum of San Diego and its impressive collection of ships, including the world's oldest active sailing ship and deepest-diving submarine. Pint-sized pirates may also enjoy a sail on a replica tall ship.

### 7. Take a Hike

Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve offers low-effort, high-reward hiking. Take the Beach Trail or longer Broken Hill Trail, which deposit you onto Torrey Pines State Beach, where you can sunbathe, build sandcastles, spot dolphins or watch paragliders soar overhead. **TP**

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