

There are plenty of reasons to head to San Diego for a midsummer getaway, but escaping the desert heat is tops. Take in cool breezes, fresh ocean views and a world of activity at your fingertips.



STAY: this year, skip the traditional beachfront resort and position yourself in the center of the downtown San Diego action. Steps from the popular Gaslamp Quarter, a modern city hotel like Sè San Diego offers a chic home base for a weekend away.

The moment you enter the lobby, your heart beat slows and your body temp drops as the comfortable, cool atmosphere takes over your senses. Ocean-inspired, the lobby blends watery wall colors and textures with actual sea life, such as the stingray front desk (it looks like a unique type of leather). The hotel staff allow you a moment to soak it all in as you sip a complimentary cocktail upon arrival. Once in your guest room, the fresh, aquatic décor continues. Crisp white bedding, hardwood floors, natural stone bathrooms and views of the San Diego Bay are so refreshing. But don't spend too long gazing out your wall-to-wall windows, as there is much to do at Sè.

Head to the fourth floor where a truly hip scene awaits. A zero-edge pool, surrounded by sleek wood decking and plush lounge chairs, is great for the swimming set, but the large outdoor bar area makes for quite the afternoon and evening lounge scene. At night, the indoor Siren Uber Lounge opens up to the pool deck, and the real party begins. But if it's relaxation you need, Sè Spa, downtown's first real day spa, is a little piece of heaven on earth. The coed spa lounge is a plus for couples, as is the Studio Sutra couple's lounge, complete with a soaking tub, double steam shower and day bed. It's these modern luxuries and truly gorgeous interior designs that make every space at Sè something to behold.



PLAY: August is the ideal month for a San Diego vacation, since it's also time for the horse races at the historic Del Mar Thoroughbred Club, home of the famed Seabiscuit-Ligaroti race and stomping ground of Hollywood legends like Jimmy Durante, Lucille Ball and Bing Crosby. The season runs from July 22 through Sept. 9 with numerous special events and varied ticket prices.

Sailing on the Pacific is another blood-pumping activity to be experienced in San Diego, especially when you're sailing on the Stars & Stripes USA-11, the yacht Dennis Conner raced in the 1992 America's Cup. Hop aboard this 78-foot sailboat and head out on the water with Captain Lynn Hanna and his crew, but don't expect to just sit back: Passengers on this three-hour tour get the opportunity to steer and perform other tasks as the ship tacks and jibes through the water. The best possible way to enjoy the scenic San Diego skyline is by boat, with the helpful crew pointing out attractions on shore, like the red roofs of the Hotel Del Coronado, the original San Diego lighthouse and the USS Midway Museum. An invigorating experience, this is a rare, don't-miss treat that will quickly cool you down, San Diego-style.



DINE: San Diego has become a true foodie city, especially when including the town's delicious outskirts like La Jolla and Del Mar, where luxury eats abound. Starting out early, get your coffee and crepes at Café Chloe, just a short walk from the Sè Hotel. This adorable bistro is French-inspired and serves three meals a day, plus afternoon tea, but breakfast on the quaint patio is a special experience.

For lunch, head straight to La Jolla for George's at the Cove Ocean Terrace, a contemporary rooftop patio perched far above the bay, with infinite ocean views. Enjoy a George's Bloody Mary while watching the seals play below, and chow down on the fish tacos or the various sandwiches and salads. The food here is fantastic, but the atmosphere is divine.

Come nightfall, start the evening back downtown with drinks at the lounge at Suite and Tender, the Sè Hotel's fabulous restaurant. (Take note

that they have a great happy hour from 5 to 8 p.m. with half-price cocktails.) Then head to Del Mar's award-winning Sbicca—you'll want to reserve a table on the terrace, which offers a romantic vibe with ocean views. With the sea in sight, try Chef Susan Sbicca's numerous fish selections. The crab cakes and tuna tartar are perfect starters and both the halibut and seafood orzo dish are recommended entrées. This popular eatery is a real treasure for those who love food, and is the ideal way to dine on any midsummer night.

TAKE NOTE:

Café Chloe

619.232.3242, www.cafechloe.com.

Del Mar Thoroughbred Club

www.dmtc.com.

George's at the Cove

858.454.4244, www.georgesatthecove.com.

Sail USA-11

619.255.4705, www.sailusa11.com.

Sbicca

858.481.1001, www.sbiccabistro.com.

Sè San Diego

619.515.3000, www.sesandiego.com.