

# 9 things to love about O.C.

What's not to love about Orange County?  
Asks Angelika Volkman

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## Shopping

Retail Therapy, as some like to think of it, is the norm in the OC. Locals and visitors alike flock to Fashion Island (dogs on leashes allowed), the Irvine Spectrum, and other prime places to drop money on fashion, food, and fun. South Coast Plaza is the premiere destination for ultra-luxury shopping – it is the highest volume mall in sales and is one of the largest malls in the U.S. Beautiful outdoor shopping areas with fountains, the latest couture, and interesting restaurants bring singles and families out for the day, the evening, or on their lunch hour.

## The Beaches

"Surfin' Safari," "Surfin' USA," "Surfer Girl," "Good Vibrations"... The Beach Boys' songs crystallized a part of California culture that was more than just a moment in time, but a way of life. And for good reason. We've got nine beaches and 42 miles of coastline. There's Huntington Beach, the original "Surf City" that still churns out world-class surfers and rock bands. Laguna Beach, with its numerous art galleries and breathtaking ocean sunsets year round. And Newport Beach, with whale watching, boating, harbor cruises, water sports, fishing, bikini shops and, of course, great burgers, fish restaurants, and local characters – celebrities and otherwise.



## Dynamic Business Community

Locals play hard and work hard. Orange County, at the heart of California's Tech Coast, is where industry and innovation come together in some of the most successful companies in the nation and abroad. Where Fortune 500 is a reality, not a buzzword.



Diversity is a demographic reflective not only of the population but of the range of businesses – from professional services to technology to the sciences... But what else would you expect from the 32nd largest economy in the world?

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## Location

What can we say? Averaging 292 sunny days a year, the sky's the limit on things to do in your spare time. Live in Orange County and you can enjoy just about any climate or type of sport, leisure and cultural activity that you can think of. The area is near the mountains or only a couple of hours drive from the wine country. You're a mere hour away from either San Diego or Los Angeles and only 3½ hours from Las Vegas. In no other place can you ski in the morning, surf the waves in the afternoon, and take in the nightlife – all in a single day.



## Amusement Parks

Disneyland, California Adventure, and Knott's Berry Farm are not just a part of childhood fun... adults love them, too! People come from all over the world to our theme parks, and it is the thing to do when family and friends drop in from out of town. The fast rides are a thrill, but who can resist the colorful joy and sweet voices of It's A Small World After All, or the Haunted Mansion, the Pirates of the Caribbean, and shaking hands with Mickey Mouse at Disneyland? Or how about California Adventure, where you can visit the Mission Tortilla factory and eat fresh, homemade tortillas, taste wines from Napa Valley, or go on Soaring Over California – a fabulous ride where you feel like you're hang gliding over the Golden State. And then there's America's very first theme park, Knott's Berry Farm. Come splashing down the Log Ride on a warm day, and you start to feel like you're going back in time, into the 19th Century Gold Rush era, complete with homemade jams, funnel cakes, and juicy fried-chicken dinners. »





St Regis Resort, Monarch Beach

### Five-Star Resorts, Spas, and Spa Resorts

Ideal getaways exist for those who are looking to revive, exhale, and be pampered. But it's often a matter of balance and health as much as it is indulgence. Business deals are made on the golf course. Workaholics as well as mothers and daughters hit the spas. And men's day spas are starting to pop up here and there. But whatever your reason for going, Orange County offers some of the premiere spas and resorts in the world. With Five-Star Resorts and spas such as the Ritz Carlton (Dana Point), the St. Regis Resort (Monarch Beach) and Montage Resort & Spa (Laguna Beach), and the Surf & Sand Resort and Spa (Laguna Beach), you're reminded over and over again that it's all about you.

### Quality of Life

For the most part, suburbia rules. No less than three of the safest cities in the U.S. are in the OC with some of the top schools in the nation. Kids can ride around on their bikes. Churches, temples, and synagogues abound. The air is clean. The cultural arts are thriving, with a performing arts center, various symphonies, and museums and art galleries in abundance. And harsh city life just isn't part of the scene here. Instead, the area is bustling with industry, cultural diversity and entertainment yet with a small-community feel, boasting no fewer than 57 separate towns and cities. It's a place where locals enjoy a vibrant yet relaxed lifestyle with a focus on family, community, and the outdoors. Orange County truly is a prime spot – mild climate year-round, beautiful sunsets and all.



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### Nature All Around Us

OK, we might not have the forest right outside our doors, but it's pretty close. City parks and nature preserves are all around, and there's always some place to go when you get the urge to explore outdoors. Whether it's bird-watching in Bolsa Chica or a trek through one of the wilderness parks on the weekend, hikers, bikers and those who want to commune with nature have access to great trails – no less than 357 miles! – to choose from.

### Youth Culture

Young and old are part of a bonafide youth culture – it doesn't matter whether you're 12 or 60. Trends are set here, with a ripple effect like no other. Surfing and skateboarding are beyond hip, taking cool to another dimension. As the OC is home to several skate parks and rock-climbing gyms, extreme sports have become a slice of life here – snowboarding, skimboarding, motocross racing, and mountain biking to name just a few. So, it's only natural this is the birthplace of cutting-edge extreme-sport fashion companies like Roxy, Quiksilver, Oakley, Vans shoes and many more. In fact, you could be wearing something of ours right now and not know it. 

