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**RELEASE AT WILL**

## **CATALINA ISLAND HAS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE**

Catalina Island, which lies just 22 miles off the coast of Southern California, defies the concept of niche travel. This is not a destination of narrowly defined recreational appeal. It is truly for everybody – couples, families, adventure seekers, art enthusiasts, eco tourists. Whatever activities you're seeking – or even if you just want to settle into a beach chair with a good book – you'll find your heart's desire here.

After disembarking from one of Catalina Express' speedy boats to the island, every visitor is sure to find a wealth of possibilities for fun, relaxation and enrichment.

### **Just for two**

Catalina has been a romantic getaway since Al Jolson sang about finding his love in Avalon nearly a century ago. The lodging options range from cozy bed and breakfasts and charming cottages to well-appointed condos, beachfront hotels, and four-star accommodations and suites. Tandem bikes can be rented in Avalon for a leisurely ride around town. But a hand-in-hand stroll along the waterfront is every bit as appealing. Avalon is a pedestrian-friendly town, with no motor vehicles allowed in a broad stretch of the waterfront district. A walkway stretches from the Catalina Express boat moorings to Descanso Beach, a mile away. Along this route, couples can poke into quaint shops for island gifts, or linger at any number of establishments for a drink or a bite to eat. Another popular stop is Lloyd's Confectionary, for an ice cream cone to accompany the walk out to the Casino and Descanso Beach. Slip beneath the crystal-clear waters of aptly named Lover's Cove for some snorkeling. Browse for a keepsake of your visit at the Catalina Festival of Art in the fall. Or splurge on a stay at the romantic Inn on Mt. Ada, which perches on a hilltop above Avalon and the bay. This is

the luxurious former home of William Wrigley Jr., who once owned the island, and every stay includes use of a golf cart. The views are breathtaking, and the accommodations are four-star. Not surprisingly, Catalina Island is an irresistible destination for weddings and honeymoons.

### **Bring the Whole Clan**

Visitors from age 9 to 90 can be quite content here, making the island a popular escape for families. Bikes may be rented at the waterfront for a pedal up the canyon to the Wrigley Memorial and Botanical Garden. Tours leave regularly for the island's interior, where everyone in the group will be on the lookout for Catalina's iconic bison, who graze placidly on the hillsides. Dad might want to try his hand at the oldest golf course in Southern California – a 9-hole, par-3 layout that was established in 1892. Mom will want to browse the shops along Crescent Avenue for island gifts. Grandparents might enjoy Catalina's rich history, which is presented on a tour of the Casino or a visit to the Catalina Island Museum. And everyone in the family is sure to enjoy a guided kayak-and-snorkel tour along the coast to Frog Rock, which includes a picnic on the beach.

### **Spirit of Adventure**

Are you ready for this? A zip line that stretches 1,100 feet, propels you 300 feet above Descanso Canyon and reaches speeds of 45 mph! Safely operated by the Santa Catalina Island Company, it awaits thrill-seeking visitors to Catalina Island, and is just one of many adventures available on the island. Other options include parasailing, Hummer/Jeep tours of the interior, kayaking along the picturesque coast, hiking to the top of a rugged mountain ridge for unparalleled views of the island, the ocean and the Mainland, a stand-up paddleboard rental, or a bicycling excursion from Avalon to Two Harbors.

### **A Feast of Art**

The beauty of Catalina Island has been enchanting artists for decades, and it has been a popular place to film movies since the silent film era. Art is celebrated in a number of special events, offered throughout the year. There are art shows and sales,



film festivals, special museum exhibits, wine festivals, ballroom dances, and, for the foodies, the Taste Around Avalon.

### **Eco Sensibilities**

Catalina Island represents a fascinating crucible of ecological diversity. A number of plants that are indigenous to the island can be found nowhere else in the world. The same is true of the Catalina Island fox, which has made an impressive recovery from near-extinction. The Catalina Island Conservancy is the steward of the island's natural world, and it has a number of offerings that provide visitors a glimpse into this impressive biodiversity. Its naturalists lead the popular Jeep Eco Tour into the interior, which can be booked for a two-hour excursion up to a full day, with a hike built into it, if you wish. In summer, the Conservancy also offers guided hikes Friday through Tuesday. And some of the most exciting news is 11 bald eagle chicks have hatched this spring in seven Catalina Island nests. These new additions to the Island's eagle population continue one of Catalina's outstanding conservation success stories. Eagle cams placed at some of the nests make it possible for the public to watch the birds on their personal computers. The live feed can be found at [www.iws.com](http://www.iws.com).

### **About Catalina Island and Catalina Express**

Located 22 miles off the coast of Southern California, Catalina Island is accessible by boat from three ports via Catalina Express: San Pedro, Long Beach and Dana Point. Catalina Express offers up to 30 daily departures and year-round service to Avalon and Two Harbors, transporting nearly one million passengers annually. It offers comfortable airline-style seats and grouped table seating. Traveling to Catalina Island in as little as one hour, each vessel was designed and built/purchased specifically for comfort and speed. Catalina Express is an unparalleled resource in Southern California, and one of the world's most respected ferry fleets. For information and reservations, call 800-429-4601, or visit [Catalina Express](#).

[Catalina Island's](#) clear blue waters and Mediterranean climate and ambiance are a Shangri-La. This laid-back island town is chock full of places to eat, drink, shop. Catalina has a wealth of natural and cultural resources, unique animals and plants found nowhere else on earth. Sightseeing opportunities are numerous and varied from escorted tours around town, adventure rides into the interior, jeep eco tours, hummer rides, to zip lines, rock climbing and undersea adventures. Independent activities are plentiful, camping, hiking, snub, diving, snorkeling, kayaking, spa treatments, beach lounging, golf, motor boating, parasailing, fishing, boat rides down the coastline and more.

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