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CATALINA ISLAND FACT SHEET:

FUN AND RELAXATION OFF THE COAST OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

- LOCATION:** Located 22 miles off the coast of Southern California, Catalina Island is accessible by Catalina Express boats from three ports: San Pedro, Long Beach and Dana Point.
- Most residents live in the quaint city of Avalon, while others reside in the secluded isthmus village of Two Harbors. Avalon is clean and safe and offers the quintessential beach town experience, and many opportunities for island adventure, romance, eco tourism, art experiences and family fun.
- WEATHER:** Catalina Island has a temperate climate, and average annual precipitation is low – a little over 12 inches. Summers are dry and warm. The ocean water temperature ranges from the low 70s in summer to the low 50s in winter.
- BEST TIME TO VISIT:** Weather is seldom an issue in Southern California, and Catalina Island is an attractive destination year-round, with alluring special events and natural attractions. Many of Catalina’s annual visitors venture to the island in summer, but others select other seasons for special events, promotions, fewer crowds and the best travel deals.
- HOW TO GET THERE:** While some fly by helicopter or airplane, by far the most popular mode of transportation to Catalina Island is by boat. In its 33-year history, Catalina Express has ferried more than 22 million passengers to and from Catalina. It is the preferred mode of transportation for 95 percent of visitors to the island. The fleet of eight high-speed, high-tech vessels carries passengers over the 22 miles in about an hour, sometimes less, with up to 30 scheduled departures per day. Sleek fiberglass hulls and state-of-the-art stabilizers smooth out 90 percent of the ocean’s roll, and high-tech navigational equipment and radio communications systems provide for safe channel crossing.

Catalina Express offers frequent departures from Long Beach, San Pedro and Dana Point. The Express goes direct from the mainland to Avalon and Two Harbors at the Isthmus. For boat reservations, call 800-429-4601 or book online at www.CatalinaExpress.com.

The Commodore Lounge upgrade is available on the high-speed catamarans. Lounge passengers enjoy priority boarding, comfortable seating in a more intimate environment and a complimentary beverage with packaged snack served by cabin attendants.

The Captain's Lounge upgrade for up to eight passengers is available for private bookings on some boats. Located on the top deck directly behind the captain, it includes a complimentary bottle of champagne.

WHAT TO SEE: Avalon, a laid-back island town of 3,736 people, is reminiscent of the seaside villages that hug hillsides overlooking the Mediterranean. It is chockfull of opportunities to eat, drink, shop, or just stroll along the waterfront and enjoy the island-village vibe. The broad beachfront walkway stretches from the Catalina Express mooring dock to Descanso Beach – a mile away. Catalina has a wealth of natural and cultural resources, unique animals and plants found nowhere else on earth. Development is minimal, so the landscape gives the visitor an idea of what Southern California must have looked like hundreds of years ago. On a tour to the interior, it's also possible to see an unusual sight: buffalo grazing on the hillsides. In 1924, 14 American bison were brought to the island for the filming of a movie. They remained, and are like island mascots today.

WHAT TO DO: Sightseeing opportunities are numerous and varied, from escorted tours around town, adventure rides into the interior, jeep eco tours and hummer rides, to zip lines, rock climbing and undersea adventures. Independent activities are plentiful, including camping, hiking, bicycling (including tandems), scuba (and snuba) diving, snorkeling, kayaking, spa treatments, beach lounging, golf, motor boating, parasailing, fishing excursions along the coastline and more. Diving is a must on Catalina, where the pristine waters are home to bright-orange Garibaldi fish, vibrant Sheepshead and sea lions. Hop aboard a Glass Bottom Boat, a semi-submersible “submarine” or a stand-up paddleboard. Flying Fish Tours are also popular. (They began when Capt. MacAvey took some folks out to see seals at night and shined his flashlight; the flying fish were attracted to the beam.)



WHERE TO STAY:

Catalina offers the overnight visitor everything from tent-site camping to cozy beachfront hotels and bed and breakfasts, from family friendly inns to well-appointed condos, from charming cottage vacation rentals to elegant four-star boutique hotels. There are luxurious ocean-view suites and comfortable beach bungalows. Catalina Express partners with 21 properties that together offer a variety of lodging options coupled with boat transportation, tours, meals and more.

ISLAND EVENTS:

Special events are held throughout the year on Catalina Island. The Catalina Chamber of Commerce keeps an updated calendar on its website www.CatalinaChamber.com. Among the special events are the Rubber Ducky Derby, Art Fair and Exhibition, Ballroom Dances in the Casino, Summer Concert Series, Rugby Festival, Skateboard Festival, Silent Film Benefit, Taste Around Avalon, Restaurant Week, Flying Fish Festival, Catalina Island Film Festival, Summer Beach Bingo, Kid's Fishing Derby, Fourth of July Golf Cart Parade and Fireworks, Marlin and Billfish Tournaments, Air Show, Wine Festival, Art Festival, Jazz Trax Festival, Fall Fest, Halloween Parade, Marathon, Half-Marathon, Eco-Marathon and Triathlon, Swing Dance Festival, Film Institute, and Holiday Open House.

Did you know ...?

FUN FACTS:

- Marilyn Monroe lived on the island for a year during World War II when her husband at the time, James Dougherty, was stationed in Avalon with the Merchant Marine.
- Other Hollywood visitors over the years have included John Wayne, Laurel and Hardy, Charlie Chaplin, Mary Pickford, Errol Flynn, Judy Garland, Henry Fonda ... and, more recently, Barbra Streisand, Nicolas Cage, Rob Lowe, Justin Timberlake and Katy Perry.
- The Chicago Cubs conducted spring training on the island from 1921 to 1951. Chewing gum magnate William Wrigley Jr. owned both the island and the team at the time.
- Modern sport fishing can be traced to the Catalina Tuna Club, founded in 1898. It is the oldest big-game saltwater fishing club in the world.
- Spanish explorer Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo was the first European to discover the island, in 1542. But it got its name from his countryman, Sebastian Vizcaino, who spotted the island on the eve of Saint Catherine's day in 1602 and named it after her – Santa Catalina in Spanish.
- It hasn't snowed on Catalina Island since 1949.



- Notable politicians to visit the island are U.S. Presidents Ronald Reagan, Richard Nixon, Herbert Hoover and Calvin Coolidge, as well Britain's Winston Churchill, who in 1929 caught a marlin in record time – under 20 minutes. Famed World War II General George S. Patton spent summers on Catalina as a boy.
- Zane Grey, author of western novels and an avid sportsman, built a pueblo-style home on a hill above Avalon. Today it is a hotel, with rooms named after some of his book titles (*The Vanishing American, Riders of the Purple Sage*).
- The Catalina Island Golf Course, a picturesque, 9-hole, par-3 layout that climbs into Avalon Canyon, dates to 1892, and is the oldest golf course in Southern California.

Catalina Express

Customer Contact Center

Toll-free (US) 800-429-4601

310-519-1212

www.Catalinaexpress.com for schedules, fares, packages,
booking

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