

STEAL ME!

WESTJETMAGAZINE

VOLEZ-MOI!

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**CALIFORNIA'S
ORANGE COUNTY**

**HOW TO
HELI-SKI IN B.C.**

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Hawaiian
HOLIDAYS
CHOOSE THE ISLAND THAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU

ROAM

DANA POINT **27** TORONTO **30** KELOWNA **32** BARBADOS **34**



3 DAYS IN
**DANA
 POINT**

This oft-overlooked Southern California gem is an easy, breezy place to enjoy whales, beaches and surfing.

Located halfway between Los Angeles and San Diego, Orange County's Dana Point is just a one-hour drive from either metropolis, making it the perfect option for an easy escape. With a population of 34,000, this coastal community has all the amenities of a larger city, but its vibe is that of a laid-back beach town. Friendly locals, gorgeous ocean views, alfresco dining and water sports galore—all of these elements (and more) combine to make this the perfect SoCal spot for an active family vacation or a casual couple's getaway.





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DAY ONE

MORNING Start your trip with a whale- and dolphin-watching safari with Captain Dave's.

The ultra-friendly tour company offers a variety of tour options, but our pick is the *Manute'a* catamaran, which is equipped with underwater viewing pods. If you're not claustrophobic, get on your hands and knees in the pods and pretend like you're swimming alongside the mischievous dolphins. You'll be out for two and a half hours and the crew is determined to find the best views of as many different species as possible.

AFTERNOON Enjoy a quick lunch on the patio overlooking the harbour at Coffee Importers, then head to the Ocean Institute, a non-profit marine science and maritime history centre that has long hosted students on field trips but is now open to the public. New exhibits here highlight the underwater life beneath the Dana Point Headlands. Kids will also enjoy the interactive displays and the play area featuring massive tide pool animals. **NIGHT** Watch the sun set from the indoor/outdoor OverVue lounge at the Laguna Cliffs Marriott Resort & Spa. There's live entertainment Friday and Saturday nights, which you can enjoy with a cocktail or dinner. The lounge food is great for sharing, from Cajun devilled eggs and fried calamari to spicy ahi tuna poke.

DAY TWO

MORNING & AFTERNOON

Start your morning with some pancakes at Stacks Pancake House (try the banana macadamia nut option), then spend your day soaking up the sun at one or more of the area's soft sandy beaches. For surfing, Salt Creek Beach has the biggest swells, while Doheny State Beach has great tide pools to explore. Capistrano Beach has volleyball and basketball courts, as well as a cycling path.

NIGHT Balance your low-key day at the beach with a high-end meal. The best fine dining around is at Stonehill Tavern at the St. Regis Monarch Beach resort. Even if you aren't a guest here, it's worth making a special trip for supper. Executive Chef

FOR GREAT SURFING, SALT CREEK BEACH HAS THE BIGGEST SWELLS.

Raj Dixit is a master with California produce and fresh seafood. From the first snack on the menu—crispy togarashi kale chips—through to the final miniature ice cream cones, each bite is a surprise and a delight.

DAY THREE

MORNING Work off last night's meal with a yoga class. Every morning, members of the Dana

Point community come together at 10 a.m. to do yoga in Lantern Bay Park. "I Heart Yoga in the Park" is a donation-based class that welcomes all ages and



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PHOTOS: CAPTAIN DAVE'S BY BARRY CURTIS; SURFING BY WEST IMAGERY; LAGUNA BEACH BY DAVID TOSTI/WWW.VISITLAGUNABEACH.COM

skill levels. Bring your own mat, towel and water and join more than 60 yogis in sun salutations and downward dogs. **AFTERNOON** Dana Point's newly revamped town centre, completed in September, features an array of independently owned boutiques, restaurants, cafés and bars, including a few mom-and-pop surf shops. Chow down on quiche or a French baguette sandwich at Bonjour Café & Bistro before browsing for surf gear at Killer Dana. Rent a bike from Bicycle Religion and take a ride along the harbour or up the bluffs. **NIGHT** Enjoy dinner at Craft House. First-time restaurateur Blake Mellgren's neighbourhood spot offers a crave-worthy menu with dishes ranging from Thai chicken wings to

cauliflower steak, as well as boutique California wines and a spacious patio. Save room for the baked-to-order milk and cookies topped with vanilla ice cream. Afterward, walk off the calories with a stroll to the Sampson Overview Gazebo off Blue Lantern Street for the most romantic ocean view in town. —Amber Gibson

GETTING THERE
WestJet flies to Los Angeles 32 times a week from Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton, and to Anaheim once a day from Vancouver.

- 1 Surfing at Salt Creek Beach
- 2 Whale-watching on Captain Dave's safari tour
- 3 Morning yoga session in Lantern Bay Park
- 4 Fine dining at Stonehill Tavern

MUST DOS

NEARBY CITIES TO EXPLORE



NEWPORT BEACH
Shop outdoors at Fashion Island and spend a night at the glamorous Island Hotel next door. For a more casual visit, cruise the harbour in a Duffy Boat with a picnic lunch and take a self-guided walking tour of tiny Balboa Island. (45 kilometres/28 miles away)



LAGUNA BEACH
Kayak and snorkel at more than 20 hidden beaches and coves in this coastal getaway. The artsy community has more than 100 art galleries and boutiques, an art museum, and public sculptures and murals galore. Plus, you can tour working artists' studios in Laguna Canyon. (13 km/8 miles away)



CARLSBAD
A LEGOLAND California Resort theme park, SEA LIFE Aquarium and K1 Speed go-kart track make this a fun place for families. Don't miss the dazzling array of jewels displayed at the Gemological Institute of America. (51 km/32 miles away)