



## FACT SHEET

**HISTORY** Catalina Island Company (then Santa Catalina Island Company) was incorporated in 1894 by William, Joseph and Hancock Banning, whose father, Phineas, was one of Southern California's pioneering legends. The three brothers, who had purchased Catalina in 1892, placed the island and other assets into their new corporation, with the goal of making Avalon an exciting and sustainable resort destination.

Like previous owners of Catalina Island, including the founder of Avalon, George Shatto, the Bannings were relatively successful in their endeavors. Over the next two decades, they built roads, hotels and several tourist attractions, but a fire in 1915, which consumed half of Avalon's structures, including six hotels, brought their company to the brink.

The brothers attempted to rebuild, opening Hotel St. Catherine in 1918 in beautiful Descanso Canyon, but mounting debt forced them to sell a large number of shares of their company a year later to a real estate development firm. One of the investors in that firm was chewing gum magnate William Wrigley, Jr., who purchased his interest without ever having seen the island.

During their first visit to Catalina in 1919, William and his wife Ada Elizabeth, along with their son and daughter, stayed at Hotel St. Catherine. The beauty of the island so enchanted the Wrigleys, they became determined to make the island an enduring part of their family's legacy. Mr. Wrigley eventually gained full interest in the Santa Catalina Island Company, and set about investing millions to build many of Catalina's most endearing tourist attractions, including the Catalina Chimes Tower, Bird Park and iconic Catalina Casino.

A consummate marketer, Wrigley was always looking to create publicity for Catalina. In 1921, he brought his beloved Chicago Cubs to Avalon, where they would hold spring training for the next 30 years. Wrigley also welcomed Hollywood to Catalina, which was often transformed into a backdrop for many movies of the 1920s and 30s, including "Mutiny on the Bounty," which won the Oscar for best picture in 1932. Eventually more than 500 movies, TV shows, documentaries and commercials have been film in and around the island over the years.

When William Wrigley Jr. died in 1932, ownership of the company transferred to his son Philip Knight Wrigley and daughter Dorothy Wrigley Offield. In 1972, the Wrigleys and Offields created the Santa Catalina Island Conservancy, then a private charitable foundation, and three years later deeded 88% of Catalina's interior and coastline to the foundation. The Santa Catalina Island Conservancy thrives to this day as a non-profit organization. Its mission is 'to be a responsible steward of its lands through a balance of conservation, recreation and education.'

Under the stewardship and guidance of third and fourth generation descendants of Ada and William Wrigley Jr., the Catalina Island Company continues to offer a complete resort destination experience, including hotels, restaurants, a spa, water sports, camping, and a host of land and sea tours, activities and adventures that showcase Catalina's culture, history, rugged wilderness and unique marine ecosystem.

**DESTINATION** Most people who travel to Catalina visit the island's two communities: the city of Avalon near the east end of the island and Two Harbors near the west. Incorporated June 26, 1913, **Avalon** is the southern-most city in Los Angeles County, with approximately 4,000 residents tucked into 2.9 square miles of Avalon Canyon. A picturesque harbor, narrow streets and hillside homes give

this idyllic seaside community a Mediterranean feel. Visitors can stroll along the waterfront from the ferry terminal at Cabrillo Mole to Descanso Beach just west of the iconic Catalina Casino. Along the way, a wide variety of restaurants, bars, hotels, spas, retail stores, art galleries, specialty shops, tourist attractions and other activities offer visitors seemingly endless opportunities to discover island fun, romance and adventure.

Dozens of campsites, miles of hiking and biking trails and a protected marine reserve make unincorporated **Two Harbors** a popular spot for adventure lovers and water sports enthusiasts of all kinds. Two Harbors is also a favorite destination among southern California boaters, offering more than 700 mooring sites in secluded inlets and harbors, including Isthmus, Fourth of July and Cherry Coves, Emerald Bay, Howland's and White's Landings, Little Geiger, Moonstone, Hen Rock, Buttonshell, Catalina Harbor and Wells Beach.

**SPA** Located in Avalon's historic El Encanto building, **Island Spa Catalina** blends 15,000 square feet of stress-free space into the island's only experiential spa, offering unique signature treatments that tap restorative powers of local plants and marine extracts to rejuvenate your mind and body. Amenities include an ocean-view relaxation deck, retail shop, nine treatment rooms, soaking pool, Jacuzzi, dry sauna, eucalyptus steam room, and men's and women's lockers and shower facilities.

**ACCOMMODATIONS** Only 14 steps from the beach in the heart of Avalon, **Pavilion Hotel** offers 95 rooms and suites tastefully appointed in coastal casual style. The central courtyard, with tropical landscaping, cozy fire ring, and comfortable chaise lounges, is a great place to relax and watch the world go by.

Guests enjoy a full breakfast buffet every morning at Avalon Grille and complimentary wine receptions every evening. Other amenities include Discover the Casino tour, use of bicycles, access to Descanso Beach Club, luggage service to and from the ferry terminal in Avalon, WiFi, daily housekeeping, hair dryers and more.

**Mt Ada**, a Forbes Travel Guide 4-star hotel, offers incomparable views from its majestic perch high above Avalon Bay. Formerly the home of William Wrigley Jr. and his wife Ada, this one-of-a-kind island escape features six en suite guest rooms on the upper level, each beautifully appointed to reflect the elegance and charm of a bygone era. On the lower level, the comfortable living room and cozy den with bar and fireplace offer a relaxed ambiance reminiscent of a private residence. The spectacular wrap-around terrace is a great place to spot one of the island's bald eagles.

Guests enjoy a host of complimentary amenities, including hot breakfast, a selection of appetizers and fine wines served every evening, a 24/7 Butler's Pantry stocked with assorted goodies, a golf cart, access to Island Spa Catalina's facilities, Behind the Scenes tour of historic Catalina Casino, and round-trip transportation from the ferry, heliport or airport.

Newly renovated in 2019 and centrally located a block from the beach and across from the Tour Plaza, **Hotel Atwater** offers guests a relaxing escape from the hustle and bustle of mainland life. The welcoming lobby, with island-inspired décor, historical design elements and comfortable seating areas, is a great place to meet and share island experiences.

Guests enjoy a full breakfast buffet every morning at Avalon Grille and complimentary wine receptions every evening in the lobby. Other amenities include Discover the Casino tour, use of bicycles, access to Descanso Beach Club, luggage service to and from the ferry terminal in Avalon, WiFi, daily housekeeping, hair dryers and more.

**DINING** **Avalon Grille** features premium Angus beef, local fish and farmstand vegetables, artfully crafted into a variety of regional and original dishes for an elevated casual dining experience steps from Avalon Bay. The central bar serves fine wines, micro-brews and signature cocktails.

**Descanso Beach Club** offers a relaxed open-air setting that defines the laid-back island lifestyle.

Just a short stroll past historic Catalina Casino, Descanso Beach Club features Avalon's only beachside restaurant and bar, serving a variety of appetizers, burgers, wraps, sandwiches and salads, as well as signature dishes and classic Catalina cocktails, like the famous Buffalo Milk.

## EVENT VENUES

Built in 1929 at the direction of William Wrigley Jr., **Catalina Casino** has been the island's focal point of entertainment and glamour since the days of big bands and ballroom dancing. The Casino features the world's largest circular ballroom, with a 50-foot ceiling, Tiffany-style chandeliers and room for up to 2,500 dancers on its original hardwood floor. An elevated stage, vintage bar and sweeping Avalon Bay views from a wrap-around veranda complete the ambiance of Avalon's premier event venue.

**Avalon Theatre** on the Casino's lower level is the first designed specifically for talking motion pictures. Exquisite murals adorn the 50-foot walls of this 1,184-seat theatre. A large stage, huge screen, legendary acoustics and state-of-the-art Dolby surround sound system make this the perfect venue for large corporate events and industry conferences.

A short stroll along the waterfront past Catalina Casino, **Descanso Beach Club** features one of Southern California's last private beaches to offer public access. Private cabanas, chaise lounges, a huge bar and 7,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor restaurant and meeting space make this beachside venue a popular choice for destination weddings. When reserved in its entirety, Descanso Beach Club can accommodate up to 3,000 guests, including a private outdoor lawn with room to seat 450.

Located at Descanso Beach Club, **Catherine's Terrace** is a state-of-the-art facility, with a professional-grade catering kitchen and 1,900 square feet of indoor space that can accommodate up to 250 guests for meetings, events, weddings or other gatherings. Large retractable doors open to an oceanview terrace with romantic gazebo.

**Catalina Country Club** was once the clubhouse for William Wrigley Jr.'s Chicago Cubs, which held spring training in Avalon Canyon from 1921-51. This historic venue has undergone a unique renovation to preserve its Spanish Colonial ambiance and large collection of sports memorabilia. Several indoor and outdoor spaces can accommodate 15 to 120 guests. Individual rooms or the entire facility can be reserved for meetings and events.

## ACTIVITIES

**Descanso Beach Club** is a secluded getaway, where both locals and visitors go to enjoy smooth sand, fantastic drink specials and seasonal weekend entertainment. It's the only place in Avalon where friendly staff serves a great selection of appetizers, entrées and signature cocktails, like the famous Catalina Buffalo Milk, to your table, cabana, chaise lounge or beach towel. Descanso Beach Club also offers a wide range of on-site activities, including snorkeling and kayak rentals.

**Descanso Canyon** is home to a number of adventures, including the **Zip Line Eco Tour**, which takes you down five separate lines as much as 300 feet in the air at speeds approaching 30 mph. During this two-hour adrenaline-charged tour, guides provide insight and information on the topography, animals and plants that make Catalina Island's ecosystem so unique. Another Descanso Canyon favorite is the **Catalina Aerial Adventure**, where you can climb, swing and crawl through a network of challenging obstacles suspended in a grove of eucalyptus trees.

**Catalina Falconry Experience** is a seasonal activity and one of the few places in Southern California where you can have a trained bird of prey land on your outstretched hand.

Catalina Island Company's **land tours** range from 40 minutes to more than four hours. Search for bison, fox and other wildlife in the island's interior aboard an open-air biofuel Hummer or eco-friendly electric bus. Experience Avalon's charm on **Avalon Scenic Drive**, a narrated excursion through the hills and streets of Catalina's largest city. Learn the history of **Catalina Casino** on three unique walking tours of Avalon's iconic landmark. Each tour offers a different perspective of this art deco masterpiece, including back-stage looks at rarely seen rooms.

Catalina Island Company's **ocean tours** offer unique looks into one of the world's most diverse

marine ecosystems. **Undersea Expedition** takes you on a journey into Lover's Cove Marine Preserve, where you can see a huge variety of sea life from your own personal porthole. On the **Ocean Expedition**, guests go in search of dolphins and sea lions off the Catalina coast aboard a speedy Ribcraft boat. For more than a century, visitors have witnessed Catalina's world famous marine aviators taking flight on the **Flying Fish Voyage**. On **Discover Two Harbors**, guests cruise along the coast to the rustic village of Two Harbors, where they can explore more than a dozen land and sea activities, grab a bite at Harbor Reef Restaurant, and relax on the beach in an oceanview palapa or lounge chair at Harbor Sands.

**Golf Gardens** miniature golf course has been a much-loved fixture of Avalon for nearly 40 years, and is the ideal spot for an afternoon of family fun. Surrounded by lush gardens less than one block from the beach, its unique 18-hole design is considered one of the most beautiful and challenging courses in the world by mini-golf enthusiasts.

## TWO HARBORS OFFERINGS

**Banning House Lodge** was built in 1910 by the pioneering Banning brothers as the summer home. Surrounded by palm trees on a hill above Two Harbors, the Lodge has been artfully restored and transformed into a charming, Craftsman-style bed and breakfast, offering sweeping views of the Isthmus and Catalina Harbor. All 12 guest rooms have private baths and are individually decorated to capture the character of an early 20th century lodge. The Common Lodge and Sun Room offer cozy places to read a book by a roaring fire, while the beautifully trellised courtyard is the perfect spot to relax with a cool drink and enjoy the beautiful island vistas. Guests enjoy complimentary continental breakfast, served daily in the Lodge dining room. Van shuttle service to and from Two Harbors village is included.

Generous portions, friendly service, casual island atmosphere and large harbor view patio make **Harbor Reef Restaurant** a favorite Two Harbors gathering place. Guests enjoy a hearty selection of appetizers, salads and burgers, as well as steaks, ribs, chicken and seasonal specials featuring line-caught local fish. Open for lunch and dinner year round. The patio is open for lunch during the summer months.

**Harbor Reef Saloon** is the heart of the West End social scene. Its patio bar is the place to visit with old friends or meet new ones. Patrons can dance under the stars to DJ tunes on most weekends starting Memorial Day through Buccaneer Days in late October. Catalina's classic Buffalo Milk, a Saloon specialty, is known worldwide.

**Harbor Sands** is a South Pacific-style getaway on the shore of Isthmus Cove, where guests can enjoy signature food and beverages served to their oceanview palapa, lounge chair or dining table. A BBQ venue with catering and bar services is an ideal spot for group events.

**Two Harbors Dive and Recreation Center** is a one-stop shop for all your land and sea adventure needs, including snorkel gear, kayaks, SUP boards, mountain bikes and more.

**Two Harbors Moorings:** Situated on a narrow strip of land called the Isthmus of Catalina, the village of Two Harbors is named for the two inlets—Isthmus Cove and Catalina Harbor—that flank it on either side. Crystal clear water, sweeping island views and hundreds of moorings tucked in and around its many secluded coves make Two Harbors a boater's paradise. Moorings can be booked in advance at [VisitCatalinaIsland.com/MooringRez](http://VisitCatalinaIsland.com/MooringRez).

## GETTING TO CATALINA

While some fly to Catalina on helicopters and airplanes, by far the most popular mode of transportation is by **Catalina Express** ferry boats from San Pedro, Long Beach and Dana Point, or on the **Catalina Flyer** ferry from Newport Beach.

For Catalina Express reservations, call 800.429.4601 or book online at [CatalinaExpress.com](http://CatalinaExpress.com).

For Catalina Flyer reservations, call 949.673.5245 or book online at [CatalinaInfo.com](http://CatalinaInfo.com).

For reservations on IEX Helicopters, call 800.228.2566 or book online at [IEXHelicopters.com](http://IEXHelicopters.com).

## CLIMATE

Catalina boasts a temperate climate, with average annual temperatures between 54° and 75° F.

Average annual rainfall is less than 13 inches. Ocean temperatures range from the low 50s in winter to the low 70s in summer.

#### **FUN ISLAND FACTS**

- A young Norma Jean Baker, later known as Marilyn Monroe, lived in Avalon for a year with her first husband James Dougherty, a Merchant Marine stationed there during World War II.
- Over the years, Catalina hosted many big name stars, including John Wayne, Laurel and Hardy, Charlie Chaplin, Mary Pickford, Errol Flynn, Judy Garland, Henry Fonda. More recent visitors include Barbra Streisand, Nicolas Cage, Rob Lowe, Justin Timberlake and Taylor Swift.
- To generate publicity for Catalina, the island's new owner William Wrigley Jr. brought his beloved Chicago Cubs to Avalon in 1921, where they would hold Spring Training for the next 30 years.
- Founded in 1898, the famed Catalina Tuna Club is the oldest big-game saltwater fishing club in the world and is often credited with giving rise to modern sport fishing.
- In 1542, Spanish explorer Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo became the first European to land on the island, which he named San Salvador after his flagship. In 1602 on the eve of Saint Catherine's day, Cabrillo's countryman Sebastian Vizcaino spotted the island and re-named it Santa Catalina.
- Some notable dignitaries have visited Catalina throughout the years, including U.S. Presidents Ronald Reagan, Richard Nixon, Herbert Hoover and Calvin Coolidge. In 1929, British statesman and future Prime Minister Winston Churchill caught a 188lb. marlin off the coast of Avalon in less than 20 minutes.
- Famed World War II General George S. Patton, who spent summers on Catalina as a young boy, met his beloved wife Beatrice here in 1902 when he was 16.
- The pueblo-style Avalon home of avid sportsman and author Zane Grey is now a popular hotel, featuring rooms named after titles of his western novels, including *The Vanishing American* and *Riders of the Purple Sage*.

#### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Instagram: @VisitCatalinaIsland  
Facebook: @SantaCatalinaIsland  
Twitter: @VisitCatalina  
#VisitCatalinaIsland #WrigleyCentennial

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