

# 805

LIVING



# ENDLESS SUMMER

# Off the Mainland

WATER ACTIVITIES ASIDE, THIS CHANNEL ISLANDS GETAWAY IS FULL OF SURPRISES.

**H**ead to the ports of Long Beach or San Pedro and board the **Catalina Express Ferry** ([catalinaexpress.com](http://catalinaexpress.com)) for a pleasant hour's voyage to this vacation destination. Once debarked, look no farther than straight ahead to rent a golf cart or bike from the rental shops on the waterfront. The downtown area is imminently walkable, and cars are frowned upon, so why not travel like a native?

## Stay

Charming motels and private rental units abound, but for renowned lodgings opt for the granddaddy of them all: **The Inn on Mt Ada**, the former 1921 Georgian Colonial mansion of

chewing gum magnet, Chicago Cubs owner, and primary Catalina developer William Wrigley Jr. *The Forbes Travel Guide* four-star hotel offers six period-decorated guest rooms, including Wrigley's private suite.

Across from the beach is the tropically themed 73-room **Pavilion Hotel**, which offers complimentary breakfast and a late-afternoon wine and cheese reception. Originally opened in 1920, **Hotel Atwater** is slated to reopen on August 11. One block from the beach, the completely renovated 95-room hotel now exudes a contemporary vibe while honoring its history.

## Do

The first thing anyone sees upon approach to the island is the iconic **Catalina Casino**,

an imposing 12-story circular structure built in 1929. Despite the name (*casino* originally meant gathering place in Italian), gambling never took place here. Rather, the Art Deco and Mediterranean Revival masterpiece served as a glamorous spot where movers and shakers danced to big band greats such as Tommy Dorsey and Harry James in the massive ballroom. Tour the premises with Frankie, who gives all the ladies a swing dance lesson, and watch a first-run film in its majestic **Avalon Theatre**, which houses



The circular Catalina Casino (left, on the far side of the bay) is an iconic landmark in the city of Avalon and home to a historic 1,184-seat movie theater (below). Pavilion Hotel guests gather in the courtyard (above), where full hot breakfasts and evening wine and cheese receptions are enhanced by ocean views.



THE CATALINA ISLAND COMPANY; OPPOSITE: FROM TOP: THE CATALINA ISLAND COMPANY; COURTESY OF CATALINA ISLAND MUSEUM





Visitors (left) navigate one of five Catalina Aerial Adventure courses at Descanso Beach Club. Marking the 100th year since William Wrigley Jr. envisioned the island as a resort destination, a Catalina Island Museum exhibit (below) chronicles the ensuing transformation.

suspension bridges, swinging balance beams, zip lines, and hanging logs.

Trace the island's history at *Wrigley's Catalina: A Centennial Celebration* exhibit in **Catalina Island Museum** and find out how notables like Marilyn Monroe, Natalie Wood, and Charlie Chaplin impacted the area's fame. Stop in the



the original 1929 pipe organ that played for audiences back in the day.

Little-known fact: Wrigley Jr. was the first baseball club owner to bring a major league sports team out west for spring training. His Chicago Cubs practiced on the island from 1921 to 1951, so be sure to take a tour of their **training field**.

Exhilaration is an understatement on a **Catalina Zip Line Eco Tour**, which offers five lines—the longest at 1,100 feet—that traverse breathtaking natural terrain. Nervous about flying over a canyon? Try it at night.

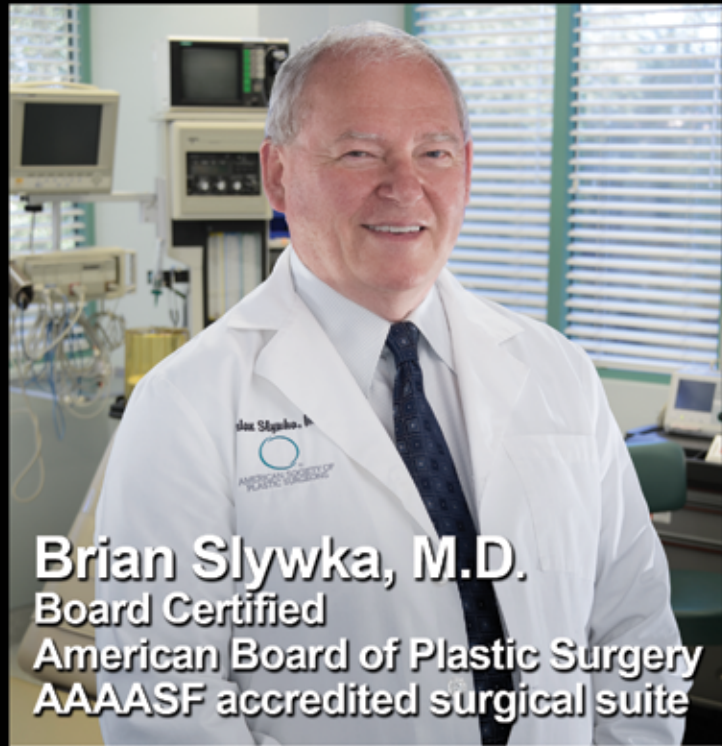
Adults and kids 7 and over can attempt the challenging ropes courses of **Catalina Aerial Adventure**. The creative configurations include

museum gift shop to peruse an impressive array of locally crafted jewelry. However, Catalina is famous for its tiles that adorn many of the town's structures. Visit Silver Canyon Pottery to make purchases and take a tile-making class.

Ambitious hikers can see a variety of wildlife in the hills—Catalina island foxes, bald eagles, mule deer, and even bison, whose ancestors were taken to the island for a 1924 movie shoot and left behind. For safety, it's best to view the bison on a narrated driving tour such as **East End Adventure**. ♦

*For information on accommodations, tours, and attractions check out [visitscalinaisland.com](http://visitscalinaisland.com).*

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