



Best Pacific Beach Bars for the Young or Young at Heart



By **Katie Dillon**
San Diego Local Expert

As the name implies, Pacific Beach is on the beach between La Jolla and Mission Beach. The clientele you'll find here usually skews young--college age and slightly older. The bars are all extremely casual in nature with perhaps the exception of trendy hotel Tower 23's **JRDN**, where a nice dress wouldn't be too out of place. The rest of the bars have subtle differences that make them stand out from one another. Some are OK for families during the day but not at night because of loud music and those who like to over-imbibe.

Lahaina rests directly on the sand and has been a popular watering hole for decades as host to sun-soaked locals and tourists who'd like to party throughout the day and into the night. Go directly from the beach to here, no need to change clothes at all.

For upscale eats in a contemporary dive bar setting, **The Duck Dive** is a major player on the PB bar scene. Locals love duck fat fries, clean bathrooms (can be rare in Pacific Beach) and other gourmet eats.

Or, check out Crushed, brand new to the PB scene with it's trendy ambiance, great value eats and craft beer.

In addition to bars, Pacific Beach has casual shopping and, of course, the beach. It isn't for everyone, but it's fun for those who prefer the low-key atmosphere.

10 Pacific Beach Bar and Grill

If you've spent the day on the beach and are looking for some local nightlife, head for the casual, laid-back Pacific Beach Bar and Grill where you'll find a retractable roof that allows for enjoying balmy San Diego nights. There are 20+ beers on tap and a host of TVs tuned to popular sports games, as well as a menu that's got classic favorites, from cheeseburgers and pizzas to nachos and french fries. Just be prepared for the young beach crowd that can get a bit rowdy on weekends. Prices are low and there's happy hour during the week, too. (858-272-4745)

9 Pacific Beach Ale House

Fans of Pacific Beach Alehouse rave about the rooftop seating area and delicious beer on tap. It's a brewery that uses only premium ingredients and hops harvested around the world in their 8 signature beers. Favorites include the Whitewash Wheat which is a Belgian-style white beer or the PB Porter which is a dark ale with hints of toffee and roasted chocolate. Have a look at the tanks through floor to ceiling windows PB Alehouse has a lodge-like vibe too it with wooden booths. The food on offer (sauces and even desserts) is also infused with a bit of homemade beer. ((858) 581-2337)



8 The Duck Dive

This gastropub in Pacific Beach conveniently-located on Mission Boulevard draws in a ton of walk-in traffic for a good reason. The atmosphere is of a casual beach lounge that offers an elevated drinking experience by offering classic cocktails, craft cocktails and local beer. This isn't typical bar food. Favorites include baked brie, Dive caprese salad, herb-crusted rib eye, barbecued rotisserie style chicken sandwich, tableside s'mores and more. Happy hour is Monday-Friday from 4-7pm. There's a small dance floor and music which can be loud, at times. The interior is contemporary with nice bathrooms (rare, in Pacific Beach). It's a block away from the beach. ((619) 858-0322)



7 Bub's Dive Bar

Three blocks away from the beach, Bub's Dive Bar serves cheap drinks and amazing food that's unlike your average bar. There are salads and hearty sandwiches along with a weekend brunch paired with \$1 mimosas and a Bloody Mary bar. Bub's is credited with bringing back the crispy tater tot kicked up a notch with fancy toppings. Toss the shells from free peanuts on the ground and check the place out on Wing Wednesday where buffalo wings are 1/2 price washed down with \$12 pitchers of Bud Light (be aware that this is a busy night). They've even got a rewards card for frequent visitors and jukeboxes that blast fun music. ((858) 270-7269)

6 Tavern at the Beach

Located in a historic building in Pacific Beach just 5 blocks away from the beach, newly-renovated Tavern is a local favorite. Garage doors roll up to let in the coastal air and the option to sit outside. The ambiance is festive, especially at the new tables with taps on the walls that allow guests to serve themselves. Over 40 TVs with premium satellite packages make this a go-to spot on game day. The food is gourmet pretzel-related but well-rounded with sandwiches, salads and bar snacks. Though loads of craft beer is available, specialty cocktails are, too. Check online for daily specials. ((858) 272-6066)



5 Cass Street Bar & Grill

This is one place in Pacific Beach that draws in a mixed-age crowd all day long and well into the evening. Cass Street Bar and Grill is rarely empty with people coming for a casual drink, a game of pool or shuffleboard or perhaps a quick bite to eat. Order through the window and take the plate to our table. Favorites include chicken baguette, cioppino, and the teriyaki steak sandwich. Note that this is a beer-only establishment, basically, as they don't have a hard liquor license. Sake-based cocktails are on offer, however. This bar is off the main drag in a more residential neighborhood. ((858) 270-1320)

4 Lahaina Beach Club

Beachfront Lahaina is a great place to be, especially in the summer. You can step from the sand straight into the bar, which means it does get crowded during peak times with heavy drinking by some as the norm. Lahaina is on the edge of Pacific Beach where it meets Mission Beach and near a ton of other bars within walking distance. It's a cash-only bar but there's an ATM inside. Service is cheerful with a reasonably-priced food menu, too. Guests like the fish tacos and breakfast items. It's a pretty typical Pacific Beach bar crowd so know that going in. ((858) 270-3888)

3 Jordan (JRDN)

JRDN is beach-front Tower 23 Hotel's 10,000 square foot contemporary oceanfront steak and seafood restaurant, featuring casually sophisticated cuisine. If you need a hip and trendy place that's less hectic than Gaslamp options, here's your place. Lounge with your companions, listen to live music and enjoy a specialty cocktail along with ocean breezes. JRDN has indoor/outdoor seating right on the Pacific Beach boardwalk which makes for excellent views and people watching. The clean, simple but modern decor includes color-changing lights and a giant water wall. It's probably the hippest place in Pacific Beach to have a drink and you can even bring your laptop because there's WiFi. (858-270-5736)

2 PB Shore Club

Literally just steps from the sand, PB Shore Club is a perfect place to take a break from soaking up rays or watch an incredible sunset. The menu has an emphasis on Mexican food such as surf & turf quesadillas, lobster tacos, California burritos and more. In fact, they are known for delicious fish tacos--a San Diego tradition. Breakfast is a new addition. The drinks are large with \$4 Pacifico and Budweiser served in a schooner. The space isn't huge, which means it can get crowded. Try to grab a seat along the area with open windows to enjoy the ocean breezes. (858-272-7873)



1 Crushed

The rapid rise to success of Crush is proof that gentrification can be well-received in Pacific Beach. The all-day eatery and watering hole is open daily at 8:00 a.m. and will feature brunch food (omelets, flatbreads, sliders and more with a Mexican, Italian and Spanish flair), mimosas and breakfast beer drinks. The owners brightened up the space before opening, adding things like a beach-themed mural and maple communal tables. Wine and other craft beers are available, too. But people go for the food as much as they do for drinking. There is also a kids menu and most dishes are priced under \$10. ((858) 230-6567)



About **Katie Dillon**

Katie Dillon originally moved to the seaside community of La Jolla to attend UC San Diego. When the opportunity presented itself, she and her husband set off for a 7 year stint overseas as expats in London and Hong Kong. After traveling the world, they returned to the La Jolla sunshine, with a young daughter in tow. Katie now writes a lifestyle site called La Jolla Mom and is the author of a book called, "Flying With Kids." Her work can be seen on NBC San Diego, Red Tricycle, Yahoo! Shine and Have Family Will Travel, a Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts blog.