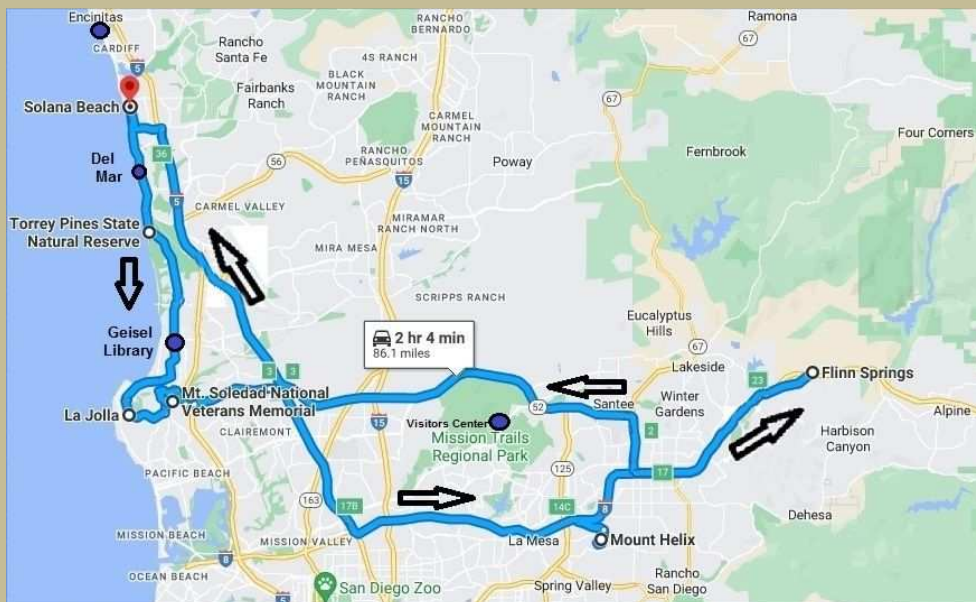


Drive CENTRAL SAN DIEGO COUNTY – starting from Solana Beach



Sunset Cliffs - Unfortunately... it's further south in San Diego (city) ☹️

San Diego is beautiful and the weather is perfect. Still, it is a vast county and relatively unexplored as most are drawn only to its beaches and coastline.



Our drive starts with a 'home base' in Solana Beach and then journeys south along the coast to La Jolla. From there we'll take the 'road less traveled' inland toward the little roadside town of Flinn Springs. The return trip completes the loop returning past Mission Trails Regional Park and back into San Diego's Carmel Valley along the I-5.

Besides the drive itself, the above map's black (with blue center) dots indicate a few highly recommended 'excursions' if one has the time?

A first excursion might be to visit ENCINITAS. It's a small but lively town which retains the feel of California coastal cities from years gone by...



ENCINITAS - Downtown and the Self-Realization Fellowship Temple (Swami's)

The SRF temple has a great view of the coastline with Swami's Beach just below.

One of the best family beaches in California has to be Moonlight Beach. Grassy area overlooking a great white sand beach. Full facilities including a modern lifeguard building. And it has retained its cove-like geology!



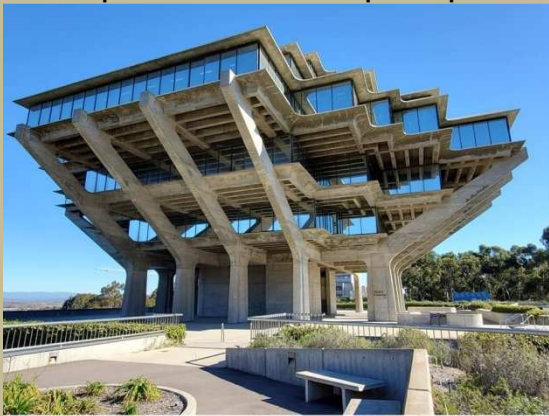
The 2nd 'excursion' is a dinner spot. Just south of Solana Beach is the recommended Sbicca restaurant in Del Mar. If you time it right, you can walk down the neighborhood block to Seagrove Park for the sunset.



The drive itself begins by heading south to **Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve**. There is a great short loop walk atop the cliffs past boulders and pines, all the while getting views of the river valley back to the north and the coastline in both directions. This is first trailhead entering from the north. This Guy Fleming Trail is great for a driving trip in that it's a quick park and hike experience.



Continuing south is a 3rd recommended excursion. It could be a relatively quick stop except that it's on the UC San Diego campus and parking is very tricky! Even if you can find parking, it may not be easy to find the Geisel Library. The library itself has cool architectural designs. Look for Dorothy's Wizard of Oz house stuck on a rooftop. And take a few steps down the serpent path that connects to the lower campus level.



Geisel Library - UCSD



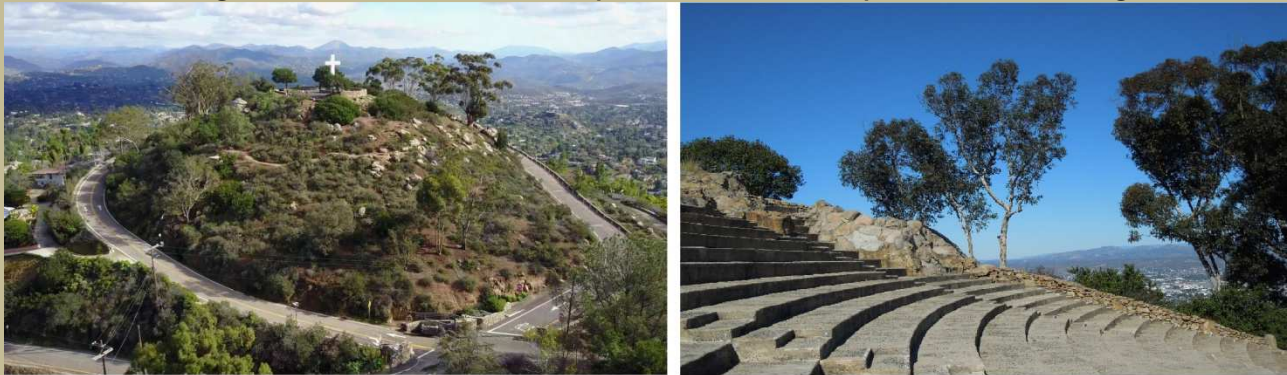
Next is **La Jolla**. You did plan this visit on a weekday to avoid overflow crowds?



A few miles away is the **Mount Soledad National Veterans Memorial**. It's just the top of a small neighborhood hill a few miles away, but it may be the best Veteran's memorial in California.



Inland we'll try to find parking at the top of **Mount Helix** in La Mesa. Again, we're not in any mountain range but rather on a hilltop in a suburban part of San Diego



Mount Helix + an amphitheatre with views!

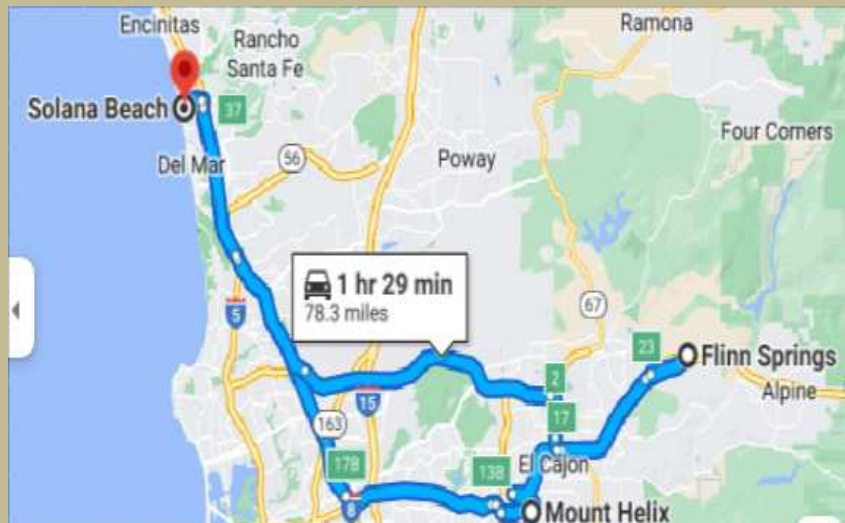
Our turnaround point is further east, **Flinn Springs**. Not sure it's a 'town' (the sign did say population 49!), but on the roadside is Summers Past Farms (Herbal Gardens & Gifts). Fun place to stop and relax or walk the grounds and visit their gift shop.



The return trip travels yet another route through central San Diego County. Before hooking up with major freeways to get back to Solana Beach there's one last possible detour. With everything so close together. It might be a 2-day 'drive'. If so, there might be enough time drive into **Mission Trails Regional Park**. The park is huge but there's a Mission Trails Loop which starts out from the Visitors Center. It's short with very little elevation gain.



Day 1 would be an 'out and back' trip from Solana Beach to La Jolla and Mt Soledad returning to home base. **Day 2** would have you go inland first taking the 405 Fwy south to La Mesa's Mount Helix Park. Continue east to Flinn Springs and return via S2 past Mission Trails Regional Park picking up the 405 Fwy north.



And there's more San Diego out there!