

# Savor San Diego

No longer just a conservative Navy town, sunny San Diego has transformed into a vegan wonderland. With an endless array of plant-based dining options, cruelty-free boutiques and non-stop stretches of smooth, sandy beach perfect for picnics, it's hard to imagine a more veg-friendly town. The mild, Mediterranean-like climate, long harvest season (which means an abundance of fresh produce—there are 30 certified farmers' markets throughout San Diego county), and cool, multi-cultural vibe make San Diego an ideal year-round destination. *By Paige Newman*



## MuyBuenoBurritos

With such close proximity to Mexico, San Diegans have many choices for South of the Border flavors. **Rancho's** in North Park is famous for its plentiful veggie options—from tamales to tofu scramble—and their adjoining vegan market with raw food items galore, killer empanadas and fresh juice bar. At their funky Ocean Beach location you'll find colorful Mexican décor and a soothing plant-filled patio. After chowing down on blue corn and avocado enchiladas, diners can mosey over to the beach for a sunset promenade.

→ **Rancho's North Park:** 3918 30th St.

→ **Rancho's Ocean Beach:** 1830 Sunset Cliffs Blvd.

## SweetDreams

Down the street from People's, **Stephanie's Bakery** specializes in vegan wedding cakes but also serves many delicious baked goods. Don't miss the chocolaty Black Forest Strudel, vegan cheese and pepperoni pizza, or meatless BLT on the ever-expanding menu. Enjoy treats in the charming café before walking a few blocks west to "Dog Beach" to watch poodles running wild.

→ **4879 Voltaire St.;** [stephaniesbakery.com](http://stephaniesbakery.com)





## Spread the Love

In trendy North Park, **Spread** restaurant dishes up "nouveau comfort food" with a focus on fresh, organic produce and artsy presentation. Customers sit in space-age chairs that hang from the ceiling, while edible flowers adorn beautifully presented meals such as lavender guacamole with grilled fruits and vegetables, and Thai vegetable pizza with spicy peanut coulis. They also sell nut spreads to go. Try the dark chocolate ginger peanut or white chocolate cantaloupe almond.

→ 2879 University Ave.; [spreadtherestaurant.com](http://spreadtherestaurant.com)

## Shop for a Cause

Next door to Sipz is the **Animal Protection and Rescue League Thrift Store** filled with affordable clothes, CDs and other fun household items. Proceeds fund a soon-to-be-established animal sanctuary for farmed animals.

→ 5497 Clairemont Mesa Blvd.; [aprl.org](http://aprl.org)

## VegantoGo

**Kung Food Express Café**, vegan, buffet-style restaurant across from lovely Balboa Park, offers weekend brunches with tofu sausage and pancakes, and community events filled with music, chair massages and smiles. For lunch and dinner try the "chicken" pot pie, homemade soy ice cream, or decadent pies and cakes, often raw and sans wheat. The drive-through window fulfills every vegan's guilt-free fantasy, dishing up yummy meat-free bacon cheeseburgers and french fries.

→ 2949 5th Ave.; [kung-food.com](http://kung-food.com)



## Follow that Trend

At the **All Vegan** retail store in the hip University Heights district, there's a little something for everyone. Stylish vegans will appreciate a big selection of non-leather shoes and animal rights shirts, gourmet chocolates, clean-burning candles, wallets, backpacks and other fun items made from recycled materials.

→ 4669 Park Blvd.; [allveganshopping.com](http://allveganshopping.com)

## Thaitalian

**Sipz Fusion Café** offers Vietnamese, Thai, Chinese and, to keep you guessing, Italian food. Bring your appetite and dig into big portions centered on savory soy meats, like tasty "Chicken" with Basil. Most dishes and all cakes are vegan. Try the Boba "Slusheez" (with tapioca balls bouncing at the bottom), in flavors like green apple and lychee.

→ 5501 Clairemont Mesa Blvd.; [sipz.com](http://sipz.com)

*Southern California native Paige Newman teaches English as a second language in San Diego, the land of eternal avocados and sunshine.*



## Organic by the Beach

At **People's**, a vegetarian food co-op in an environmentally responsible building in Ocean Beach, you'll discover the most beautiful organic produce for miles. They serve a wealth of healthy comfort foods like soy macaroni and cheese, chocolate chip cookies and hot soups in the upstairs deli, where they also feature live musicians and educational workshops.

→ 4765 Voltaire St.; [obpeoplesfood.coop](http://obpeoplesfood.coop)



## HotDog!

Gay-friendly Hillcrest is home to **Earth Food**, an outdoor vegan hot dog stand that serves up chili dogs and veggie meatball subs in creative, ecologically sound corn husk wrappers. They also sell natural drinks, chips, and ice cream for folks on the run.

→ 3900 9th Ave.; [earthfoodcart.com](http://earthfoodcart.com)