

# Get ready for a beach blanket vacation in Marina del Rey

*Desert Sun (50,661); MyDesertSun.com (150,000 visitors/mo)*

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*Rent a boat or take a cruise from Fisherman's Village in Marina del Rey. / Courtesy Photo*

You won't find any historic relics in Marina del Rey. Indeed, it stands as one of the younger communities in Southern California. It took more than 100 years for the vision of a harbor to be realized. However, in April 1965, Marina del Rey was formally dedicated and the largest manmade recreational harbor in North America was open for business.

Bordered by Los Angeles on three sides, 1.26-square-mile Marina del Rey is often swept up into the identity of its better known neighbors, Venice and Santa Monica. But the tiny city definitely stands alone on appeal, with no better time to visit than summer when its offerings rev up like the bevy of yachts anchored in its impressive marina. A South Seas ambiance permeates the golden sands of its main beach with swaying palms frame an azure lagoon. It is no wonder that the founding fathers gave it street names like Bora Bora and Tahiti.

## **Beaches, trails**

Marina Beach, known affectionately as "Mother's Beach" due to its calm surf, is a sun worshipper's paradise with a dazzling lagoon, golden sand, volleyball courts and picnic/barbecue areas. For some intimate beach

time, head to a secluded strip of white sand on a tranquil cove at nearby Playa del Rey Beach. The amazing Los Angeles Coastal Bike Trail, a paved waterfront bikeway that connects beach communities for 22 spectacular miles, runs through the entire waterfront of Marina del Rey.

### **'Beach Party' concerts**

Marina del Rey's free summer concerts at charming Burton W. Chace Park include "Symphonic Thursdays" and "Pop Saturdays"; all concerts begin at 7 p.m. so that concert-goers get the added bonus of watching the sun set over the water. The series closes on Aug. 27 with a concert by Frankie Avalon. Bring a blanket and your picnic supper. Information: [www.visitmarinadelrey.com](http://www.visitmarinadelrey.com).

### **Sunset regattas, water buses**

It is difficult to plan a trip to Marina del Rey that does not involve the ocean, from virtually every water sport to deluxe cruising. Gondolas D'Amore, offering romantic, moonlit gondola rides, comes complete with soft music and flickering oil lamps. Dinner, caviar and reflexology may be arranged. Information: (310) 736-7301; [www.gondolasdamore.com](http://www.gondolasdamore.com).

Catch a one-of-a-kind opportunity to enjoy a sailboat race from a variety of viewing points this summer — from waterside restaurants to parks with the Sunset Series Regatta. The California Yacht Club in Marina del Rey is hosting the events every Wednesday at 5:55 p.m. through Sept. 8. Information: [www.calyachtclub.com](http://www.calyachtclub.com).

You don't see many people walking in L.A., but in Marina del Rey cars are replaced by water buses. The Water Bus returns each summer on weekends and holidays and shuttles passengers for \$1 to seven popular stops, from Fisherman's Village to Marina Beach.

### **Champagne and oysters at sunset**

Sundown is a theme in Marina del Rey, even with restaurants. Café del Rey is celebrating its 20th anniversary on the 20th-27th of both July and August with a special fare that toasts that magical time of the day. The café's "Sundown Soiree" features a special pairing of Pierre-Jouet champagne and half-dozen oysters for \$20. Information: [www.cafedelreymarina.com](http://www.cafedelreymarina.com).

### **Prime rib on Tuesdays**

If you have a yearning for prime beef, catch "Prime Rib Tuesday" dinner specials at the Waterfront Restaurant located at the Marina del Rey Hotel. Executive chef Ernie Gallegos, who gained fame as the mastermind behind the Don Chow taco truck in Los Angeles, joined the restaurant earlier this year. His \$12.95 Tuesday special includes garlic mashed potatoes and seasonal veggies. Information: [www.marinadelreyhotel.com](http://www.marinadelreyhotel.com).

### **If you go**

**Marina del Rey Convention & Visitors Bureau, (310) 305-9545; [www.visitmarinadelrey.com](http://www.visitmarinadelrey.com)**