

Catalina Island on a College Budget



Szilvia Gogh / Courier

The owner and waitress of the Pancake Cottage restaurant, Muriel Wilhite has kept this Catalina Island favorite open for more than 30 years. Customers from all over California gather for home-cooked meals and old-fashioned diner service. A tourist's favorite spot that does not scare off the locals. The customers are among the island's 3,500 visitors who come in the regular time of the year. Breakfast is served all day.

Arriving

As a college student, we all face the challenge of getting the best experience without spending our rent money in the process. Luckily for us who have monetary restrictions, there is a solution in a magical place called Catalina Island.

It is just 22 miles off the coast of Southern California where you can have a refreshing, heavenly experience under a \$100.

You can relax on postcard beaches and hike the tranquil mountains or just wander the charming streets. One, who travels to Italy or Malta enjoys the same feeling, but spends considerably more. Catalina, with its

Mediterranean charm, can provide your much-needed getaway on a budget.

Travel time to Avalon, the island's only city is one hour from San Pedro, Dana Point or Long Beach. You might want to consider taking your bicycle to enable you to have an amazing ride. It costs \$6 extra, but guarantees a lot of fun.

Catalina is "low budget friendly," but of course, you can still find places on the island for those who want to "do it up." For many college students, these options are important. You can find public restrooms, showers in several locations, and free showers are available on the beach.



Golf carts are the preferred mode of transportation for residents of Avalon. Golf carts are available for rental on the island.

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The Sights

For added convenience, lockers are available for storage while you enjoy your day at the beach, your snorkeling experience in the "Dive Park" front of the casino building or while you simply wish to stroll the cobble stoned streets of Catalina without your heavy luggage.

There are also taxis, shuttle buses, bicycles or golf carts to get around for one who does not care for walking.

Catalina Island is famous for several reasons, from some of which the mosaic tiles, the "Dive Park" and the golf carts that the locals use for transportation. Only a square mile in size, Avalon is a perfect place to walk around and slow down a little bit after our hectic everyday life on the main land.

The view at the harbor is breath taking at any given time of the day. The sunrise while sipping one's coffee can be just as enjoyable as the daytime scene when tourists lay on the beach and giggle or the sunset scene, when one can relax with a margarita in a beachfront bar.

If you can only spend a day on Catalina, make sure to explore the underwater diversity of the island either by taking a glass bottom tour or by snorkeling above the kelp forest in the "Dive Park."

The experience guarantees you to see at least the bright orange Garibaldi, the California State marine fish. If you are lucky, you might get to see some barracuda, sheephead, moray-eel, horn shark or even some dolphin.

You can rent mask, fin and

snorkel right at the "Dive Park" which is located at the front of the casino building. Catalina Dive Supply has an air fill station there to provide certified divers or people who want to try scuba for the first time.

The Rest

If you are not into the marine life, here are some other ideas: go hiking, rent a golf cart and enjoy the mountain routs, have a lunch and few drinks at one of the seaside restaurants, play golf, visit the botanical gardens, rent a kayak, be pampered at a spa or watch a movie at the Avalon Theatre in the legendary Catalina Casino. The possibilities are endless!

As far as food: The best breakfast place is called the Pancake Cottage.

A mom and pop's place on Catalina Avenue, where you can eat the fluffiest waffle or scrambled eggs from 7 a.m.

There are great lunch places right at the edge of the water. Whether you like Italian, Mexican or seafood, you can choose from several dining experiences.

A great place to go is Antonio's Pizzeria where everybody throws the peanutshells on the floor. The most popular bars are the Luau Larry's, the El Galleon Karaoke Bar and the Marlin Bar, where the locals hang out.

Szilvia Gogh

Staff Photographer



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Tourists can visit many breath-taking attractions, such as the Catalina Yacht Club, located on a pier on the island.



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Along with the beautiful sights and sounds of Catalina Island, individuals can experience different cultures through the types of food available at the many restaurants.