

ORANGE COUNTY

Neighborhood Guide

Seal Beach · Huntington Beach · Newport Beach
Laguna Beach · Dana Point · San Clemente

*Local insight on the cities, lifestyle, pricing, and neighborhoods
shaping coastal OC.*

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WHY THIS GUIDE EXISTS

I've lived and worked along the OC coast for years — and I've also spent 12 years living outside of California before coming back. That perspective changes how you see this coastline. Every city here has its own personality, its own price floor, and its own type of buyer. The MLS won't tell you any of that.

This guide breaks down six cities from Seal Beach to San Clemente — what they're actually like to live in, who they're right for, what you'll pay, and where the real opportunity is. No generic market reports. Just what I'd tell a close friend over coffee.

When you're ready to talk specifics, I'm one call away.

THE CITIES

Seal Beach

Old-town charm meets laid-back coastal living

Huntington Beach

Surf City USA — where the lifestyle IS the neighborhood

Newport Beach

Prestige, harbor views, and the OC's most coveted addresses

Laguna Beach

Artist's colony turned world-class coastal escape

Dana Point

The harbor town hitting its stride

San Clemente

Spanish Village by the Sea — the southernmost gem

SEAL BEACH

Old-town charm meets laid-back coastal living

THE VIBE

Seal Beach is the hidden gem that locals fight to keep a secret. It feels like a 1950s beach town that somehow survived — a two-block Main Street, a classic wooden pier, and a community where everyone still waves at each other. It sits right on the LA/OC border, which means better pricing than most OC coastal cities without sacrificing a single ounce of beach lifestyle. If you want small-town soul with easy freeway access, this is the one.

AT A GLANCE

MEDIAN PRICE	AVG DAYS ON MKT	LIFESTYLE	COMMUTE LA
\$1.1M–1.6M	18–28 days	Walkable, tight-knit	~35–45 min

IDEAL FOR

- First-time coastal buyers
- Buyers priced out of Newport/Laguna
- Remote workers who want walkability
- Families valuing top-rated schools
- Investors (low turnover = stable rents)

LOCAL FAVORITES

- Eisenberg's Deli on Main
- Crema Café (best morning coffee)
- Nick's Deli (cash only, legendary)
- The Seal Beach Pier at sunset
- Old Town farmers market (Saturdays)

TRAVIS'S TAKE

— Travis Schloderer

HUNTINGTON BEACH

Surf City USA — where the lifestyle IS the neighborhood

THE VIBE

HB is unapologetically itself. You get 10 miles of uninterrupted beachfront, a world-famous surf culture, and a city that throws a Fourth of July parade better than anywhere in America. The downtown strip (Main St & PCH) is packed year-round with restaurants, fire pits, and people who genuinely love where they live. It's one of the most accessible coastal markets in OC — condos still under \$700K, single-family homes near the water pushing well past \$2M. The city spans a huge area, so neighborhood matters enormously here.

AT A GLANCE

MEDIAN PRICE	AVG DAYS ON MKT	LIFESTYLE	COMMUTE LA
\$900K–2.2M	14–25 days	Energetic, surf-culture	~45–60 min

IDEAL FOR

- Buyers wanting coastal access at lower entry
- Investors (short-term rental opportunity)
- Families who want space + beach lifestyle
- Active, outdoors-oriented buyers
- Condo buyers entering the OC market

LOCAL FAVORITES

- Dukes on PCH (ocean views)
- Fred's Mexican Café (downtown)
- The Bungalow (best happy hour)
- Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve
- HB Pier — longest concrete pier on West Coast

TRAVIS'S TAKE

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NEWPORT BEACH

Prestige, harbor views, and the OC's most coveted addresses

THE VIBE

Newport Beach is aspirational OC. The harbor is dotted with yachts, Balboa Island is a postcard, and neighborhoods like Harbor Island and Lido Isle carry some of the most exclusive residential real estate in California. But Newport also has everyday luxury — world-class shopping at Fashion Island, exceptional dining at every price point, and a community of successful professionals who actually use their boats. The real estate here is hyper-neighborhood-specific: Peninsula, Newport Heights, Corona del Mar, and the Back Bay all have distinct price points, buyer profiles, and lifestyles.

AT A GLANCE

MEDIAN PRICE	AVG DAYS ON MKT	LIFESTYLE	COMMUTE IRVINE
\$2.2M–8M+	20–45 days	Affluent, polished	~15–20 min

IDEAL FOR

- Luxury move-up buyers
- Boating / harbor lifestyle buyers
- Executives relocating to OC
- Vacation home / 2nd home buyers
- Investors targeting premium rentals

LOCAL FAVORITES

- The Cannery Restaurant (waterfront)
- A Restaurant (locals' favorite)
- Bear Flag Fish Co. on Balboa Island
- Balboa Fun Zone & Ferry
- Crystal Cove State Park (tide pools)

TRAVIS'S TAKE

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LAGUNA BEACH

Artist's colony turned world-class coastal escape

THE VIBE

Laguna Beach is the most visually stunning city on the OC coast — full stop. The terrain is dramatic: bluffs, coves, tide pools, and canyon hillsides that frame ocean views from almost every angle. It's been an artist colony since the early 1900s and that DNA is everywhere — galleries, the Pageant of the Masters, boutique restaurants tucked into canyon walls. Real estate here is driven almost entirely by views and walkability to the village. Homes with white-water views trade at a serious premium, while canyon homes offer privacy at more accessible prices.

AT A GLANCE

MEDIAN PRICE	AVG DAYS ON MKT	LIFESTYLE	COMMUTE IRVINE
\$2.5M–6M+	25–50 days	Artistic, boutique	~25–30 min

IDEAL FOR

- Buyers prioritizing views and scenery
- Retirees wanting walkable village life
- Second-home and vacation buyers
- Creatives and artists
- Buyers who value small-town community

LOCAL FAVORITES

- Nirvana Grille (locals' spot)
- The Cliff Restaurant (ocean views)
- Zinc Café & Market (breakfast)
- Pageant of the Masters (summer)
- Treasure Island Beach & tide pools

TRAVIS'S TAKE

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DANA POINT

The harbor town hitting its stride

THE VIBE

Dana Point is in the middle of a genuine renaissance. The harbor redevelopment has transformed a sleepy marina into a destination with new restaurants, boutique hotels, and a vibrant waterfront scene. Meanwhile, neighborhoods like the Lantern District have attracted a younger, design-conscious crowd that's driving both demand and energy. It still has that uncrowded, unhurried feel that's genuinely different from busier Newport and HB — but that's rapidly changing. This is the market to watch for 5-year appreciation.

AT A GLANCE

MEDIAN PRICE	AVG DAYS ON MKT	LIFESTYLE	COMMUTE IRVINE
\$1.4M–3.5M	20–35 days	Upscale-casual	~30–35 min

IDEAL FOR

- Buyers wanting less traffic than Newport
- Boating and harbor lifestyle seekers
- Buyers catching the upside of revitalization
- Families wanting a calmer coastal pace
- Move-up buyers from inland OC

LOCAL FAVORITES

- Turk's (best burgers in South OC)
- Waterline (harbor-front dining)
- Wind & Sea Restaurant
- Dana Point Harbor whale watching
- Doheny State Beach (great for families)

TRAVIS'S TAKE

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SAN CLEMENTE

Spanish Village by the Sea — the southernmost gem

THE VIBE

San Clemente is OC's best-kept secret. The architecture is genuinely Spanish colonial — red-tile roofs, whitewashed walls, and streets that climb dramatic hillsides above the Pacific. The downtown (Avenida del Mar) is walkable, unpretentious, and full of surf shops, coffee roasters, and taco stands that have been there for decades. It's 90 minutes from LA but only 30 minutes from San Diego, which gives it a genuinely Southern California feel that's hard to find further north. Prices are meaningfully below Newport and Laguna for comparable coastal access.

AT A GLANCE

MEDIAN PRICE	AVG DAYS ON MKT	LIFESTYLE	COMMUTE IRVINE
\$1.2M–3.0M	22–38 days	Surf-town, Spanish archi.	~35–45 min

IDEAL FOR

- Surfers and ocean-sport enthusiasts
- Families wanting space and great schools
- Remote workers who love South OC pace
- Buyers wanting Newport/Laguna lifestyle for less
- Investors targeting vacation rental demand

LOCAL FAVORITES

- Fisherman's Restaurant (sunset institution)
- Kona's Coffee & Cafe (open mic culture)
- The Cellar (wine + cocktails, Avenida)
- T-Street Beach (world-class surf break)
- San Clemente Pier walk at golden hour

TRAVIS'S TAKE

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Thinking About Moving to Coastal OC?

I help buyers find the right lifestyle — not just the right property.

[SCHEDULE A CONSULTATION](#)

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Serving Seal Beach · Huntington Beach · Newport Beach
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