



## CRUISING WITH CALIFORNIA YACHT CLUB

This is a guide to cruising in local waters, including suggestions that will help members without boats to participate.

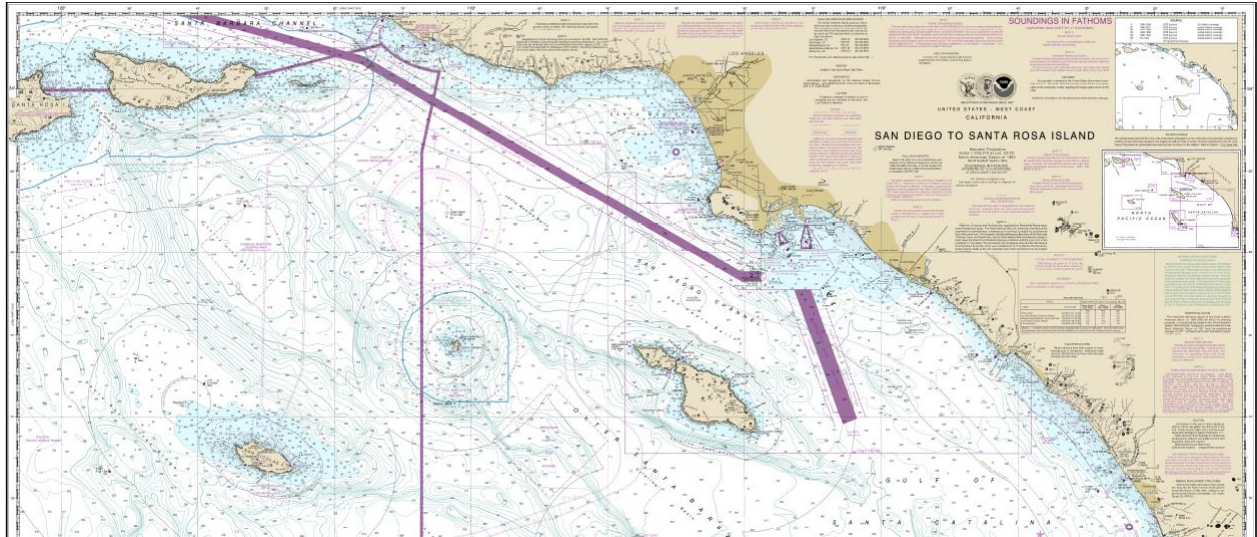


Family Cruise 2015

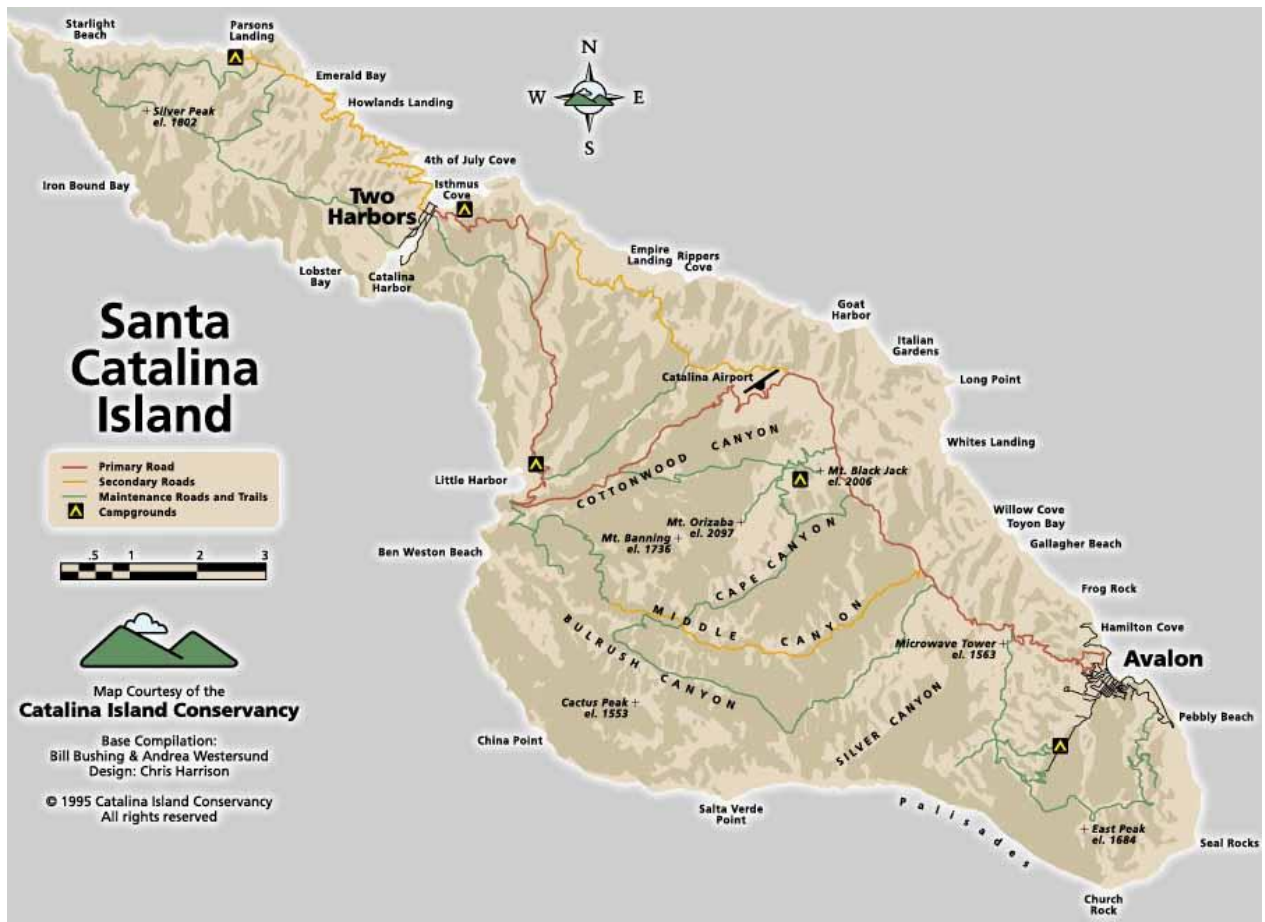
For further detail please go to our website; [www.calyachtclub.com](http://www.calyachtclub.com) – Club Activities - Cruises

There are a surprising number of choices, so come on out and seek your own adventure which can be within only a few hours of the marina.

## Cruising with California Yacht Club



Above is part of NOAA chart 18740 that shows our local coastline with Catalina in the center.



Let's begin with some basic information for those who have just moved to Los Angeles for the first time. Fortunately our climate is really suitable for cruising and we can offer a wide variety of destinations to people with either a powerboat or a sailboat. However, if you are not an experienced sailor then please seek detailed instruction before heading offshore even for a coastal cruise as safety should always be paramount and this modest document is only intended as a guide for those who have already ventured offshore and are familiar with the multitude of challenges faced. It does not purport to teach seamanship nor instruct in coastal navigation.

If you don't fit into the experienced category are you confined to the mainland?

Certainly not! So we will start by exploring the choices for club members who wish to embark on a nautical adventure without any prior boating experience. First and foremost our club cruises are divided between the offshore events usually to coves and harbors on Catalina, or the coastal cruises that take us to ports and yacht clubs along the coast anywhere between San Diego and Santa Barbara. Although we don't normally go beyond Newport Beach or Channel Islands Harbor if the event is only for a weekend.

The island of **Santa Catalina** is the principal attraction offshore. There are only two communities on the island; one at the Isthmus, also referred to as Two Harbors, and the other is the city of Avalon. The Isthmus is easy to find on a chart because it is the "narrow piece of land connecting two larger areas". The city of Avalon is on the north shore near the east end of the island. There is year round ferry service to both these destinations in high speed comfortable ferries. San Pedro is home to one of several mainland ferry stations and the closest to the island. Here is another map showing the coastline with the principal harbors by name.







The distance from San Pedro to **Two Harbors** is about twenty miles. There is a bed and breakfast at the Isthmus, the Banning House. The Banning family owned the island before Wrigley bought it and they built a small house (which now has 12 bedrooms) for their private use. Yes, you do need to book a room! There is one restaurant, one village store, etc. and so much island charm. In fact it is hard to believe you are still so close to the metropolis when visiting this rural island charmer while seated outside with an after dinner drink at the Harbor Reef restaurant (above) looking back at the distant loom of the lights from Los Angeles. There are plenty of moorings here and a small community that lives here all year round. The fuel dock serves gas and diesel and provides pump out.

Catalina Harbor is the harbor on the south side of the island only half a mile across the Isthmus. It provides sheltered moorings in a spectacular natural setting. The passage here does add an hour to most peoples' journey. "Once upon a time in a harbor far away" California Yacht Club had an outstation in Catalina Harbor on Ballast Point. We held many successful cruises at this location but we have moved on to Howlands Landing and this is now our outstation.

**Avalon** is a song, but more importantly it is a city that was incorporated in 1913 and is the only city anywhere on the Channel Islands. For many it is a mystical place where William Wrigley lived, developed property and trained the Chicago Cubs in the winter. It has a landmark casino which must be visited by all who travel here. It was a favorite haunt for movie stars all the way back to the days of silent pictures and Charlie Chaplin was a frequent visitor. Ferries have plied the route to Avalon for over a 100 years and the pace doesn't slacken to this day. This is the one metropolis on the island with a very busy tourist season that has an impact on mooring availability. Ashore there is a wide selection of hotels to choose from and many have been recently refurbished. If you have trouble finding a room by phoning the hotel try an agency as rooms are allocated to agents and could still be available. Numerous

restaurants offering a variety of cuisine are waiting to serve you. Arriving by yacht you must approach the Avalon Harbor Patrol launch outside the harbor and request a mooring. They do not assign moorings by radio here. There is a fuel dock and pump out facility.



Avalon with the Wrigley Mansion (Mount Ada) top left

There are numerous other interesting anchorages on Catalina that provide moorings and some of them are included below. As a general rule you can use VHF channel 09 to request a mooring although some coves are private. The moorings on the island are almost always owned by the company that is part of the Catalina Conservancy and have been leased to individuals, but if available can be rented by the public for specific days. They have a mooring reservation system but it has a three night minimum. Our club cruises are typically for two nights (Friday and Saturday).



Howlands Cruise 2014





**Howlands Landing** (above) is the California Yacht Club's new outstation on Catalina that we have an agreement with Los Angeles Yacht Club to use. The agreement allows us all year access to the beach facility that they have now nurtured since 1945. Actually LAYC members cruised there before the war so they have a long storied history with this beach. This is a special place that has been very carefully maintained so as not to spoil the natural beauty of the surrounding area. There is a dinghy dock which we are allowed to use if there is no ferry incoming to the camp. There are heads, a wet bar, a BBQ, picnic tables, a volley ball court and a beautiful private beach. The moorings are available to us through a special reservation system that is administered by LAYC from Memorial Day through Labor Day. Situated approximately 30 miles due south of us it is an easy passage from Marina del Rey.

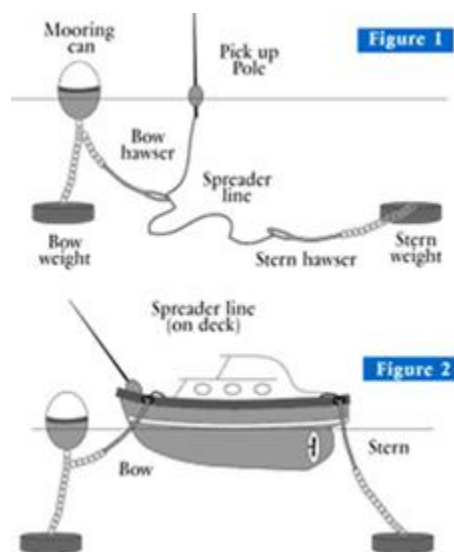
4<sup>th</sup> of July Yacht Club (right) is a private club in the cove which is adjacent to Two Harbors. The club has been used as a destination for many of our cruises.



Emerald Bay is one of the closest Catalina coves to our yacht club in Marina del Rey. It is next to Howlands, approximately 30 miles due south of CYC and is an easy crossing on most days of the year. There are plenty of moorings but limited beach access.

White's Cove is halfway between Two Harbors and Avalon and is home to several yacht club outstations. It has one of the longest beaches on the island with moorings.

Little Harbor is on the island's south side and as the name implies very small.



**Mooring on Catalina** – All the island coves and harbors use the same mooring system. There is a mooring can with a pick-up pole. You should approach carefully so that you don't over-shoot the can. When the crew on the bow has the pole stop immediately, firmly cleat the bow, then work the sand-line back down the boat to the stern and pull the required amount of line in to secure the boat, cleating the stern firmly when you are satisfied with the length. To cast off, drop the stern line and give it time to sink before engaging the engine, then cast off the bow and be careful not to foul the mooring tackle as you leave. Sea state is a consideration and along the north shore it is generally better to moor on the west side of any cove. Catalina Harbor has sheltered water but a strong breeze on most evenings.

**Tides and current** – There is normally current running from north to south down the California coast, but locally at only one or two knots. Rise and fall of the tide varies through the month of course, but is seven feet or less in most local harbors.

### **Coastal cruises and destinations**

Whether you cross to the islands or transit the coastline it is critical that you understand how much container ship traffic is moving through the area. If you have AIS it will show most vessels, but always be prepared for traffic that is not in the shipping lanes and private vessels that do not have AIS.

San Diego is the last stop before you need papers to enter Mexican waters. It is one of the largest natural harbors in the state with many excellent yacht clubs and marinas that we can use for moorings. Downtown is right in the harbor with a cornucopia of attractions for visitors.

Oceanside has a marina that will provide sailors with moorings.

Dana Point like Marina del Rey is a man-made harbor. They have both slips and an anchoring area. Anchoring is next to the Marine Institute where the tall ship Pilgrim has a permanent slip. The harbor includes restaurants and there are also hotels.

Newport Beach is a long natural harbor extending far into the surrounding countryside with several excellent yacht clubs, among them Bahia Corinthian YC, Balboa YC and Newport Harbor YC. There are several excellent restaurants that can be easily reached by dinghy.

Long Beach is protected by an eight mile long man-made breakwater and is large enough to have many container terminals. In fact, the combined ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles form the largest commercial port in the nation. There are many yacht clubs and marinas spread through the length of this harbor and countless options for sailors to find slips and enjoy going ashore.

San Pedro is the original port tucked in at the west end of Los Angeles harbor and has a long history attached to it. It is now home to the battleship USS Iowa which is open to the public. Cabrillo Marina is the yachting harbor here where both Los Angeles YC and Cabrillo Beach YC have their clubhouses.

King Harbor is the closest harbor to Marina del Rey, about eight miles down the beach. There are yacht clubs, restaurants and a bustling community. King Harbor YC is a favorite of many.

Marina del Rey is our home port, protected by the detached breakwater.

Channel Islands Harbor is the first significant harbor north of the marina. There are several yacht clubs. Typically the wind is stronger up here than in Santa Monica Bay so prepare for challenging conditions when transiting this part of the coast.

Ventura is a few miles further north from Channel Islands Harbor providing more clubs and facilities for sailors to use.



**Santa Barbara** (above) is one of the gems of the entire California coast. Whether you travel by car or boat this delightful city is just gorgeous and a visit should be on everyone's bucket list. Santa Barbara YC is an excellent yacht club dating from 1872. There are harbor department slips available for cruisers on most weekends. State Street and downtown are within walking distance of the harbor, making this a fabulous place to visit in your boat, or car. Hotel choices are too fabulous to list in this modest guide (Biltmore anyone? ☺).



The Channel Islands is the name for the group of islands off Channel Islands Harbor of which Santa Cruz is the largest. You have to understand that there is no community here and no slips or moorings for public use. Thus serious cruisers will get an opportunity to practice their anchoring skills when visiting here. Pacific Corinthian YC or Santa Barbara YC both have members who routinely transit to these islands for many weekends during summer.



Santa Cruz Island

**Scuba Diving:** California Yacht Club has a very active scuba diving group. It's the perfect way to get scuba certified, to obtain advanced dive training, and to enjoy the fellowship of other CYC members who love to dive. In addition to traveling with other CYC members to those scuba "bucket list" tropical locations like Mexico, the Caribbean and the South Pacific, CYC Scuba Divers regularly organize local diving during the club's cruises to Catalina. Among our membership are snorkelers, free divers, and dive students, as well as certified open water divers and all advanced levels of divers, on through and including senior instructors.

For more information, contact: Barbie Blecher [714.746.3640](tel:714.746.3640) [barbie@gwscuba.com](mailto:barbie@gwscuba.com)

**Fishing by Randy Sprout:** If you are planning to fish Catalina Island or even troll by the local kelp patties in late summer, it can be very productive. The key is to use the lightest weight line for the conditions offered. Bouncing the sandy bottoms for Halibut with live sardines I never go over 15 pound test line. Trolling a **Rapala® Saltwater X-Rap®** behind my boat or off the back of a sailboat, I never go over 30 pound test line. Great fishing is found on the front of Catalina at the 80 foot deep areas in front of Emerald Cove and the areas just past the East end called the Silver Canyon. Yellow Tail and White Sea Bass can usually be caught right there on the border of the deep blue water and the bright green water. Locally the best lure to explore that lone floating kelp paddy is a silver diamond jig on 15 pound test line. Yellow Tail and Dorado really go nuts for these things!

***So we can offer two very different alternatives.*** By land; if you do not have a boat follow our cruise schedule and reserve for any landside cruise, then book a hotel as your “cruising yacht”. From San Diego all the way to Santa Barbara it is an easy drive to reach any of our cruise destinations.

By sea; if the cruise is to Catalina then ask for advice on how best to get there and use the ferry and shore-boat service if necessary. Each island location has different facilities to offer. Some can offer accommodation but others do not. If you already own a boat then sign up for the event and we will see you there. If not then please find for a way to join us on some of our events either on the island or on the mainland. Maybe a friend could take you?







### *Other resources*

The Cruising Guide to Central and Southern California: Golden Gate to Ensenada, Mexico, Including the Offshore Islands Kindle Edition  
by Brian Fagan

YouTube video on picking up a mooring ball in Catalina: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t0nqZs7uB2E>

Boating on the West Coast: <http://www.boatus.com/seaworthy/magazine/2012/october/Boating-On-The-West-Coast.asp>

Good for current boating news: <http://www.thelog.com/>

And of course, [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)





Avalon with the Casino in the background viewed from Mount Ada

***"It's a wrap"!***

Always remember that when you return to California Yacht Club on Sunday afternoon there is an informal dinner available in our dining room with a relaxed dress code, where you can meet and greet other cruisers to swap stories and "wrap" your weekend with CYC style.



Prepared by David Collins/Peter Webster/Mike Blecher/Randy Sprout