

Top Beaches 2026: Tripadvisor Travelers' Choice Awards World's Best

Isla Pasion in Mexico Claims World Top Spot, While La Jolla Cove in California Rises to No. 1 in the U.S.; New "One of a Kind" Category Celebrates World's Most Unique Coastal Treasures

NEEDHAM, Mass., Feb. 17, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- Tripadvisor®, the world's largest travel guidance platform, today announces the 2026 Travelers' Choice® Awards: Best of the Best Beaches. Based on comprehensive analysis of millions of traveler reviews from the past 12 months, these awards celebrate the world's most extraordinary coastal destinations. Awards span multiple categories including best in the [World](#), [United States](#), and the newly introduced "[One of a Kind](#)" beaches.



The 2026 awards showcase diverse coastlines, from Mexico's pristine [Isla Pasion](#) named best in the world to California's marine sanctuary [La Jolla Cove](#) claiming the U.S. top spot. Explore the full list here: <http://tripadvisor.com/TravelersChoice-Beaches>.

"For many travelers, the beach is the main event," said Laurel Greatrix, chief communications officer at Tripadvisor. "Based on millions of trips, reviews, and opinions, these awards highlight the very best beaches in the world — making it easier to decide where to go and how to spend your time once you're there."

From secluded coves to bustling shorelines, each beach has earned its place through firsthand traveler feedback. The comprehensive rankings not only help travelers discover their ideal beach destination, but also showcase the best tours and activities in the area.

Top 10 Beaches in the World for 2026

1. [Isla Pasion – Cozumel, Mexico](#)

- *Good for:* Private island oasis, crystal-clear waters, marine life encounters, snorkeling which travelers can book through this [Catamaran Snorkel Adventure to El Cielo and The Money Bar Beach](#) experience.
- *Best time to go:* November-April
- *Unique features:* Protected coral reefs, sea turtle nesting sites, exclusive day-trip destination

2. [Elafonissi Beach – Crete, Greece](#)

- *Good for:* Pink sand phenomenon, shallow lagoons, protected nature reserve, and can be easily accessed from Chania through the [Elafonissi Beach Trip from Chania](#) tour.
- *Best time to go:* May & September
- *Unique features:* Rare pink sand created by crushed shells

3. [Balos Lagoon – Kissamos, Greece](#)

- *Good for:* Turquoise lagoon waters, dramatic landscapes, Instagram-worthy vistas like this [Balos & Gramvousa Luxury Catamaran Sailing Cruise from Kissamos](#) experience.
- *Best time to go:* April-June, September-October
- *Unique features:* Former pirate hideout, protected Natura 2000 site

4. [Eagle Beach – Eagle Beach, Aruba](#)

- *Good for:* Pristine white sand, watersports paradise, activities like this [3-Hour Electric Scooter Island Tour in Aruba](#) divi.
- *Best time to go:* April-August
- *Unique features:* Sea turtle nesting ground, iconic Fofoti trees

5. [Praia da Falésia – Algarve, Portugal](#)

- *Good for:* Ochre cliffs with spectacular views that can be experienced during this [Benagil And Dolphins Tour](#).
- *Best time to go:* April-October
- *Unique features:* Dramatic red cliff formations

6. [Banana Beach – Ko He, Thailand](#)

- *Good for:* Crystal-clear waters and vibrant coral reefs with amazing snorkeling that travelers can book through this [Banana Beach Snorkeling Adventure](#).
- *Best time to go:* November-March
- *Unique features:* Part of Racha Islands, premier diving destination

7. [La Jolla Cove – California, USA](#)

- *Good for:* Sea lion colonies, underwater park, kayaking adventures like this [Sea Caves Kayak Tour](#).
- *Best time to go:* March-May, September-November
- *Unique features:* Protected marine reserve, year-round wildlife viewing

8. [La Pelosa Beach – Sardinia, Italy](#)

- *Good for:* Caribbean-like waters, ancient watchtower views that can be experienced through this [Half Day Catamaran Tour to La Pelosa with Aperitif](#) tour.
- *Best time to go:* June-September
- *Unique features:* 16th-century Torre della Pelosa

9. [Manly Beach – Sydney, Australia](#)

- *Good for:* Surf culture, beachside promenade, a scenic [Sydney Harbour Ferry Ride](#).
- *Best time to go:* September-May
- *Unique features:* Historic surfing beach, pine tree-lined Corso

10. [Boulders Beach Penguin Colony – Simon's Town, South Africa](#)

- *Good for:* African penguin sanctuary, granite boulders that travelers can experience during this [Table Mountain, Boulders Penguins and Cape point Day Tour](#).
- *Best time to go:* September-April
- *Unique features:* One of few mainland penguin colonies globally

Introducing the "One of a Kind" Beach Category

For 2026, Tripadvisor introduces a new category celebrating beaches offering unique experiences beyond the traditional sun and sand. South Africa's [Boulders Beach Penguin Colony](#) leads this list, where visitors can see endangered African penguins in their natural habitat.

Top 10 "One of a Kind" Beaches for 2026

1. [Boulders Beach Penguin Colony](#) – South Africa (wild penguins)
2. [Isola Bella](#) – Sicily, Italy (ancient Greek theater views)
3. [Bamburgh Beach](#) – United Kingdom (medieval castle backdrop)
4. [Sleeping Bear Dunes](#) – Michigan, USA (450-foot sand dunes)
5. [Parque Nacional dos Lençóis Maranhenses](#) – Barreirinhas, Brazil (lagoons)
6. [Anakena Beach](#) – Easter Island, Chile (Moai statues)
7. [Wai'anapanapa State Park](#) – Hawaii, USA (black sand, lava tubes)
8. [Hopewell Rocks](#) – Canada (world's highest tides)
9. [Bahía Bioluminiscente](#) – Puerto Rico (glowing waters)
10. [Hot Water Beach](#) – New Zealand (volcanic hot springs)

United States Beach Excellence

California's [La Jolla Cove](#) ascends to the pinnacle of U.S. beaches for 2026, recognized for its extraordinary marine biodiversity and year-round accessibility. This protected underwater park offers unique opportunities for wildlife encounters, from playful sea lions to migrating gray whales.

Top 10 Beaches in the United States for 2026

1. [La Jolla Cove](#) – California (marine sanctuary excellence)
2. [Clearwater Beach](#) – Florida (Gulf Coast perfection)
3. [Poipu Beach Park](#) – Hawaii (family-friendly paradise)
4. [Waikiki Beach](#) – Hawaii (iconic surf culture)
5. [Lanikai Beach](#) – Hawaii (powdery sand, offshore islands)
6. [Siesta Beach](#) – Florida (quartz sand phenomenon)
7. [Punalu'u Black Sand Beach](#) – Hawaii (volcanic wonder)
8. [St. Andrews State Park](#) – Florida (pristine dunes)
9. [Santa Monica State Beach](#) – California (urban beach icon)
10. [Honeymoon Island State Park](#) – Florida (natural Florida beauty)

Methodology

The 2026 Travelers' Choice Best of the Best Beaches are calculated based on the quality and quantity of reviews, specific to each award subcategory from travelers globally on Tripadvisor between November 30, 2024, through December 1, 2025.

About Tripadvisor

Tripadvisor, the world's largest travel guidance platform*, helps millions of people each month** become better travelers, from planning to booking to taking a trip. Travelers across the globe use Tripadvisor's website and app to discover where to stay, what to do and where to eat based on guidance from those who have been there before. With more than a billion reviews and contributions, travelers turn to Tripadvisor to find deals on accommodations, book experiences, reserve tables at delicious restaurants and discover great places nearby.

Tripadvisor LLC is a wholly owned subsidiary of Tripadvisor, Inc. (Nasdaq: TRIP). The subsidiaries of Tripadvisor, Inc. own and operate a portfolio of travel media brands and businesses, operating under various websites and apps.

* Source: SimilarWeb, unique users de-duplicated monthly, January 2025.

** Source: Tripadvisor internal log files

SOURCE Tripadvisor

For further information: northamericapr@tripadvisor.com

<https://tripadvisor.mediaroom.com/2026-02-17-Top-Beaches-2026-Tripadvisor-Travelers-Choice-Awards-Worlds-Best>