

An Interview with Diane Pritchett

Executive Director, Costa Mesa CVB

Q: Where is the City of Costa Mesa?

A: Costa Mesa, California is located in the heart of The OC (Orange County) between Newport Beach and Anaheim and midway between Los Angeles and San Diego. Costa Mesa has the advantage of being in a coastal region while offering immediate freeway access to all of Southern California's attractions and is minutes away from John Wayne Airport.

Q: What does Costa Mesa offer tourists?

A: A person can stay in Costa Mesa, stroll in a pedestrian-friendly environment to world-class shopping and award-winning restaurants, and then enjoy an evening of premier entertainment in the Theater & Arts District, which includes the Orange County Performing Arts Center, South Coast Repertory and the newly opened Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall. The city is also convenient to all Southern California's major attractions, such as Disneyland, Disney's California Adventure, Knott's Berry Farm, Legoland, Sea World, the San Diego Zoo, Universal Studios, Six Flags Magic Mountain, The Getty Museum of Art, professional sports venues, and much more.

Golfers will be delighted with the area's excellent courses. The Costa Mesa Country Club is open to the public and offers 36 holes to suit all levels of play, while the private Mesa Verde and Santa Ana Country Clubs have reciprocal privileges with a number of clubs in the United States and abroad. Many other professional quality golf courses are minutes away, as is the beach for a fun day of swimming, surfing or sailing.

Q: What airport serves Costa Mesa and what transportation options are available to visitors?

A: John Wayne/Orange County Airport sits at the Costa Mesa border and is served by major airlines. Tourists can take advantage of the several major car rental agencies or taxi service at or near the airport. The major hotels also offer convenient complimentary airport shuttle service. Train travelers can take advantage of a nearby Amtrak station, and, of course, Costa Mesa is freeway-close to all of Southern California.

Q: What kind of shopping is available in Costa Mesa?

A: In Costa Mesa's South Coast Metro, tourists will find a shopping experience like no other – at world-class South Coast Plaza. With more than two million square feet hosting many marquee retailers, South Coast Plaza is considered a destination unto itself and attracts visitors, royalty and celebrities from around the world. For a refreshing break, shoppers can dine at a variety of delightful cafes and restaurants. Other shopping venues are easily accessible, too.

Q: What about accommodations?

A: Costa Mesa offers a variety of accommodation options from deluxe hotels with resort amenities and extended stay hotels, to charming European-style facilities. Choose from hotels include the Ayres Hotel & Suites, 800.322.9992 or 714.549.0300; Costa Mesa Marriott, 800.228.9290 or 714.957.1100; Hilton Orange County/Costa Mesa; 800.HILTONS or 714.540.7000; Holiday Inn Costa Mesa, 800.HOLIDAY or 714.557.3000; and Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites, 800.HOLIDAY or 949.631.6000. The list continues with Ramada Limited & Suites Costa Mesa, 866.493.0064 or 949.645.2221; Residence Inn by Marriott, 800.331.3131 or 714.241.8800; The Westin South Coast Plaza, 800.WESTIN1 or 714.540.2500 and the Wyndham Hotel/Orange County, 800.WYNDHAM or 714.751.5100.

Q: Are there many restaurants in Costa Mesa?

A: Costa Mesa has one of the richest mixes of restaurants found anywhere – more than 100, in fact. Besides establishments found at the major hotels and shopping areas, the city is home to many award-winning restaurants, as well as a number of cafes, health food restaurants and eateries specializing in a variety of cuisines to suit all palates.

Q: Why is Costa Mesa considered an art and cultural center?

A: A “City of the Arts,” Costa Mesa is home to the Theater & Arts District, which includes the 2,000-seat Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall, the 3,000-seat Orange County Performing Arts Center (The Center), Tony Award-winning South Coast Repertory (SCR), plus over 80 restaurants. The Center is a year-round showcase for professional performances of music, opera, dance, musical theater, and other special attractions. The Orange County Philharmonic Society brings top entertainment to the District, such as the world-renowned Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, and most recently, the **Kirov Opera, Ballet and Orchestra**. The new concert hall is home to Orange County’s acclaimed Pacific Symphony. Broadway productions, internationally known performers, and stellar ballet and modern dance companies appear here frequently. The Center has been the regional home for the New York City Ballet, the New York City Opera and the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

Directly across the street from The Center and the concert hall, South Coast Repertory is on the cutting edge of creative drama, and is one of America’s leading resident theaters for the development and production of new plays. Costa Mesa is also home to the unique “California Scenario” sculpture garden created by Isamu Noguchi, and a stunning variety of indoor and outdoor contemporary sculptures and other art works by prominent artists, including Richard Serra, who’s newest piece, The Connector, is erected adjacent to the new concert hall.

Q: How about Costa Mesa’s nightlife?

A: In Costa Mesa, a pleasant day turns into a delightful evening. In addition to our cultural events, Costa Mesa has a variety of nightspots and coffeehouses to suit all tastes and ages, and is truly an “18-hour” destination for work and play.

Q: How far is Costa Mesa from Disneyland and other Southern California attractions?

A: Costa Mesa is the ideal “home base” for visitors to Southern California. Disneyland, Disney’s California Adventure and Knott’s Berry Farm are an easy freeway drive of about 20 minutes. Newport Beach is right next door; Laguna Beach, 15 minutes; Hollywood, 45

minutes; Legoland is just 60 minutes away; and Sea World in San Diego and snow skiing in mountain resorts are about 90 minutes away.

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Q: What time of the year is best for a visit to Costa Mesa?

A: Costa Mesa enjoys sunshine 95 percent of the year, with an average temperature of about 70°F – perfect for shopping, sightseeing, golf, or a trip to the beach at just about any time of the year.

Q: Are there any historical sites to visit?

A: Yes, particularly the Diego Sepulveda Adobe Estancia. It was built by the padres of San Juan Capistrano between 1823 and 1828 as a way station for vaqueros herding California mission cattle. Each room inside the adobe represents a different period of Costa Mesa's history.

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Web Site Address: www.costamesa-ca.com