Exploring Southern California (SoCal)
Helpful Tips
Contents

Introduction .........................................................................................................................3
General Information ............................................................................................................3
   Customs .........................................................................................................................3
   Currency .......................................................................................................................3
   Tipping ..........................................................................................................................4
   Electricity .....................................................................................................................4
Getting Around ..................................................................................................................5
   Noteworthy theme parks up to 3 hours away from Irvine ..............................................5
   Famous Beaches and Beach Cities in SoCal .................................................................7
   Major Metropolitan Areas nearby Irvine ......................................................................7
Introduction
Orange County California is home to beautiful beaches, wonderful cities, and great weather. Situated in the heart of Orange County, Irvine is 45 miles south of Los Angeles and 75 miles north of San Diego.

General Information

Customs

The USA tends to be an informal place. The general preference for informality in the United States is directly related to the value placed on equality. Appropriate business attire depends on the job, the industry, the particular company, and to some extent, on the region in the United States. Speaking broadly, informality seems to increase as one moves westward. In recent years, business attire has grown more informal across the country.

Currency

Currency: US Dollar (USD; symbol $) = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of $100, 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1. Coins are in denominations of $1, and 50, 25, 10, 5 and 1 cents.
Tipping

For employees in some service industries it is common and expected practice to offer a tip on top of the bill as long as service is not below average. Following are some common tipping guidelines:

- waiters: 15% of bill before tax, 20% at a 5-star restaurant or for large parties (at a fancy restaurant check to make sure service is not included in the bill)
- taxi drivers: 15% of total bill, no less than 25 cents
- pizza delivery person: $1-2 for short distance, $2-3 for longer distance
- airport skycap - $1-2 per bag

Unlike many countries, service is usually not included in the bill with the exception of large parties (typically six or more people). If you're with a large party, be sure to check your bill just in case. 15% - 20% is often automatically charged for a large party (six or more).

Tips are usually not expected at concierge, but always appreciated. The more difficult the request, the higher the tip. $5.00 and up per request is good.

Electricity

**Voltage:** 120 V

**Frequency:** 60 Hz

**Plugs:** Type A North America/Japanese 2-blade plugs and Type B American 3-pin plugs (two flat blades plus a round grounding pin)
Getting Around
While public transportation will be provided to the conference venue and there are plenty of shops and restaurants around UC Irvine, tourists who intend to see all the golden state has to offer should consider renting a car. Rentals can be arranged at the airport, hotel concierge and the Internet. All estimate times in this guide assume you will be driving to the listed attractions.

Websites such as Google Maps, Yahoo Maps and MapQuest are invaluable to find your way as well as a good GPS.

Noteworthy theme parks up to 3 hours away from Irvine
The following is a list of the most famous theme parks nearby Irvine

- Disneyland – 35 minutes
• **Knott’s Berry Farm** – 45 minutes
• **Legoland** – 1 hour
• **San Diego Zoo** – 1.5 hours
• **Sea World** – 1.5 hours
• **Universal Studios** – 2 hours
• **Six Flags Magic Mountain** – 3 hours
Famous Beaches and Beach Cities in SoCal

- Newport Beach – 20 minutes
- Laguna Beach – 25 minutes
- Manhattan Beach – 1.5 hours
- Santa Monica Beach – 2 hours
- Zuma Beach – 2.5 hours

Major Metropolitan Areas nearby Irvine

- Los Angeles – 2 hours
- San Diego – 1.5 hours
- Las Vegas – 7 hours (2 hours flying)
- San Francisco – 8 hours (2 hours flying)