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|----------------------------------|--|
| 1 Albinger Archaeological Museum | 10 Laurel Theater (Rubicon Theatre Company)    |
| 2 Antique Trading Co.            | 11 Mission San Buenaventura                    |
| 3 Blue Moon                      | 12 Natalie's Fine Threads and Objects D'Funque |
| 4 Busy Bee Cafe                  | 13 Real Cheap Sports                           |
| 5 Capriccio                      | 14 Ventura County Museum of History & Art      |
| 6 Cycles-4-Rent                  | 15 Zoey's                                      |
| 7 Eric Ericsson's on the Pier    |  |
| 8 Grandtour Ventura              |  |
| 9 Great Pacific Ironworks        |  |



Patagonia's flagship store, and Real Cheap Sports, a sports-apparel and -equipment outlet that boasts a huge inventory of Patagonia overstocks.

**Chow Downtown.** The city's center presents several appealing choices for afternoon refreshments. Locals flock to Zoey's, a café tucked inside a Spanish-style shopping court, for panini sandwiches, tea trays loaded with savory treats, and awe-inspiring herbal lemonade. For something more substantial, check out Capriccio, a year-old Italian bistro that dishes



up pastas and sandwiches served on freshly baked focaccia. Busy Bee Cafe, a '50s-style diner, is a good choice if you are dining with children. The menu includes burgers and milk shakes, and every booth has its own jukebox.

If you want an ocean view with your meal, Eric Ericsson's, the only sit-down eatery on the Ventura Pier, has plenty of outdoor seating. Watch the sun set over the Pacific while you munch on shrimp cocktail, fried clams, and crab cakes.

**Natural Neighbors.** Though most places of interest in Ventura are located downtown, some of its most prized attractions, the five northern Channel Islands, are actually situated 14 miles offshore (see

"Island Escape"). And although a visit to the Channel Islands could take most of a weekend, you can get a taste of these natural wonders at Ventura Harbor: The Channel Islands National Park Visitor Center features a tide-pool tank, fossil exhibits, and an observation tower that offers panoramic views of the islands.

**Getting There.** If traveling north, exit U.S. Highway 101 at California Street and turn right. To park at the city's free garage, make a right on Santa Clara Street. The garage is the first building on the left. If traveling south, exit at Seaward Avenue and turn right. Then turn right on Harbor Boulevard, right on California Street, and right on Santa Clara Street. ☺

A free Cities of Ventura County map is available at your local Auto Club office.

## Island Escape



TIM HAUF

If you'd like to explore a deserted island and make it back to civilization in time for dinner, consider a trip to Anacapa Island, one of five islands that make up Channel Islands National Park just off the Central Coast. What awaits are two miles of flat nature trails and a 360-degree ocean view.

Island Packer Cruises leads partial-day and all-day excursions to Anacapa Island; boats leave from Ventura and Oxnard harbors for the 60- to 75-minute ride to Landing Cove, where the water is so clear you can see the sea's bottom at depths up to 60 feet. Visitors climb a short ladder from the boat to the dock, then up 153 steps to the islet's plateau. Aside from the park ranger's residence, the only buildings are a visitors' center (with restrooms), a storage shed, and a lighthouse built in 1932 that still warns ships away from the surrounding rocks.

Most of the vegetation is brown and dormant May through November. But in the spring, the yellow giant coreopsis is so vivid it can sometimes be seen from the mainland. And depending on the season, visitors might see whales and sea lions, as well as the endangered California brown pelican. Rest on a bench overlooking a bluff and soak in the panorama: You might decide that being stranded on a deserted island isn't such an awful fate after all.

Island Packer Cruises offers excursions year-round to Anacapa. Kayak tours and trips to the other Channel Islands are also available. For information, call (805) 642-1393 or access [www.islandpackers.com](http://www.islandpackers.com).

—Leslie Mieko Yap