

# Cabrillo

NATIONAL MONUMENT • CALIFORNIA

Four hundred years ago Europeans were sailing the seas to search out the secrets of their New World, so recently discovered. Fascinated by the unknown and lured by tales of legendary cities of gold, of shorter routes to the Orient's riches, of strange and beautiful Amazon-like women on the "Isle" of California, the more enterprising risked all in the attempt to gain fame and fortune.

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One of these was Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, a mariner of Portuguese birth who was recruited by Pedro de Alvarado, Governor of Guatemala, to explore the yet unknown lands to the north. After Alvarado's untimely death, Antonio de Mendoza, Viceroy of New Spain, helped Cabrillo to obtain two small ships—the *San Salvador* and the *Victoria*—and sent him on the expedition that would make him the first explorer to visit the west coast of what is now the United States.

The expedition sailed from Navidad, on the west coast of Mexico, on June 27, 1542. After 3 months at sea—with frequent stops ashore to avoid bad weather, to take on wood and water, and to interrogate the Indians—it reached the site of present-day San Diego. On September 28 the ships passed by Point Loma and on into San Diego Bay, a "closed and very good port," which Cabrillo then called San Miguel. Going ashore at Ballast Point, a small spit of land jutting into the harbor, Cabrillo claimed the land for the King of Spain. While here they learned from the Indians of armed and

mounted Spaniards to the east (probably part of the Coronado expedition, which had set out 2 years earlier).

Cabrillo and his men left San Diego on October 3 and continued north, passing Catalina and San Clemente Islands, Point Conception, and Monterey Bay. Beyond Point Reyes, storms drove the ships out to sea. Turning south, they sailed to San Miguel Island, one of the Channel Islands, where on January 3, 1543, Cabrillo died from injuries sustained in a fall several weeks earlier.

After Cabrillo's death, the expedition continued under Bartolome Ferrello. Turning north again, it sailed to, and probably beyond, what is now the southern boundary of Oregon. Storms and dwindling supplies, however, forced Ferrello to turn south. After a brief stop at San Diego again, the expedition succeeded in reaching Navidad in the spring of 1543.

*Cabrillo's voyage, while representing but an incident in the many land and sea explorations by which Spain gained a foothold in the New World, provided the Spanish with a new knowledge of the Pacific coast, its climate, and its people. It uncovered no cities of gold or great civilizations, but it did serve as an incentive to the Spanish to continue their investigation of the Pacific coast and helped to open the way for others, in centuries to come, to settle the land, to build cities from the ocean's edge to the mountains, and to fulfill the promise of the new discovery.*



CABRILLO STATUE, CARVED BY ALVARO DdBREE OF PORTUGAL



### THE OLD POINT LOMA LIGHTHOUSE

The old lighthouse, built in 1854, was one of the first eight lighthouses authorized for the west coast by the U.S. Lighthouse Board. Starting in 1855, it served for nearly 40 years as a beacon for passing ships. Fog often obscured the light because of its great height, and in 1891 the lighthouse was abandoned and a new one whose light could be seen more easily by ships at sea was built. The 1891 lighthouse is still active and is operated by the U.S. Coast Guard. The old lighthouse, empty and deserted for many years, has been refurbished to the period of its heyday. Information is available on a tape-recorded message at the lighthouse plaza.

### THE CALIFORNIA GRAY WHALE MIGRATION

From December through February, hundreds of 35- to 50-foot gray whales migrate from the Arctic Ocean to the quiet lagoons of Baja California, where they mate and bear their young. At one time, the parade of these great mammals almost came to an end because of extensive whaling operations, but, fortunately, an international whaling agreement in 1937 prevented the extinction of these docile giants. Today telltale 10- to 15-foot spouts can be seen just beyond the kelp beds from the whale-watching station. A tape-recorded message at the station explains the migration in greater detail.

### NATURAL FEATURES

From the walkways and overlooks you can enjoy magnificent views of San Diego harbor, the Mexican and California coastline, and the Pacific Ocean. On the coastal side of Point Loma are tidepools protected in their natural state and filled with starfish, sea anemones, crabs, sea hares, and other marine life. Tidepools are best observed during low tides in the winter months. The marine life in these pools exists in a delicate balance; please do not disturb or remove any of the sea life.

### ABOUT YOUR VISIT

The monument is open daily all year from 9 a.m. to 5:15 p.m., except during the summer season when the hours are extended to 7:45 p.m. To reach the monument, follow Rosecrans Street to Canon Street (Calif. 209), turn left onto Catalina Boulevard, then go through the gates to the U.S. Navy Electronics Laboratory Center and continue to the tip of Point Loma. There are no camping or eating facilities beyond the Navy gates. Posted speed limits must be strictly observed.

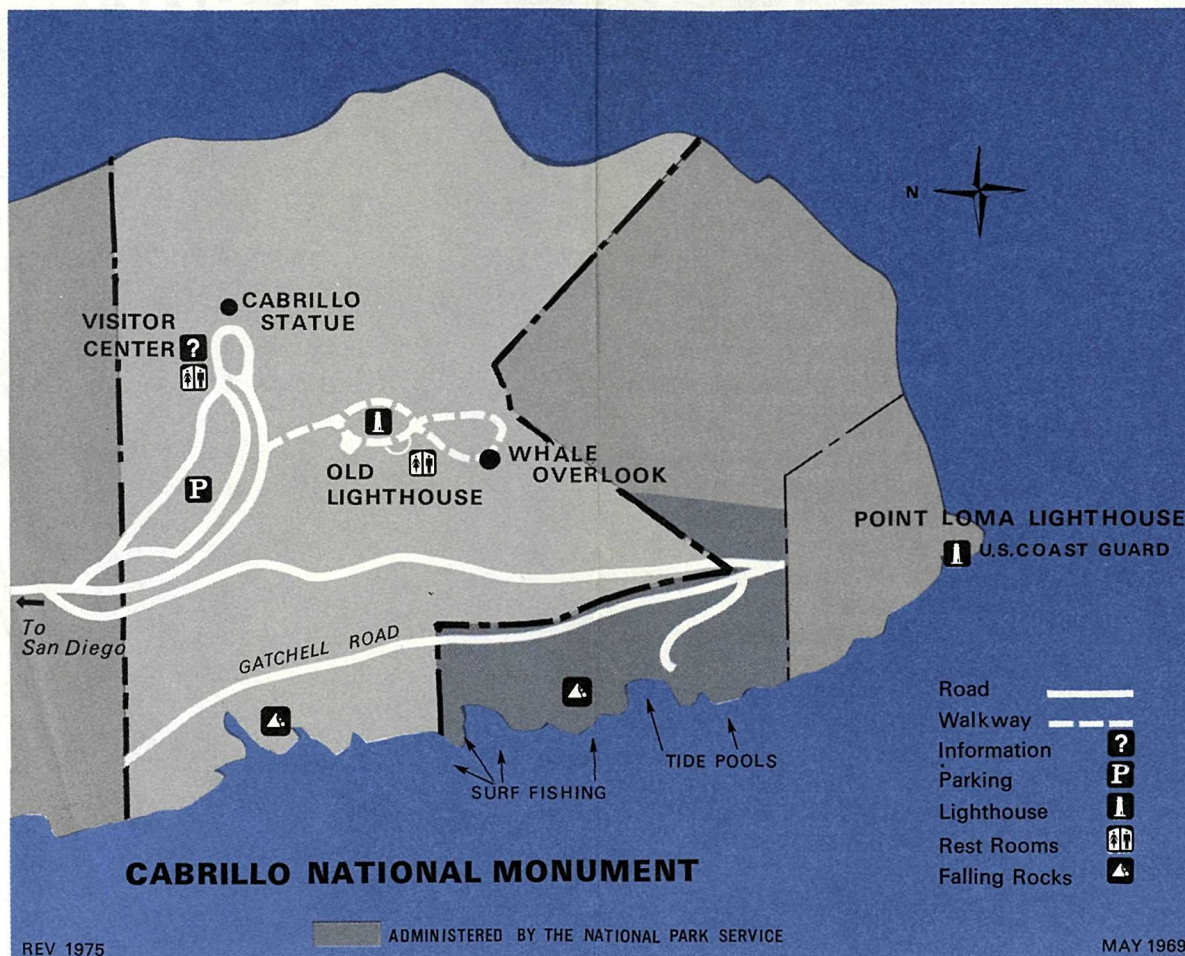
Stop first at the visitor center, where exhibits explain Cabrillo's historic voyage and where programs about the monument are presented daily. The glass-enclosed View Building in the visitor center complex offers a spectacular view of the harbor and city of San Diego. Publications and other interpretive materials are sold at the visitor center.

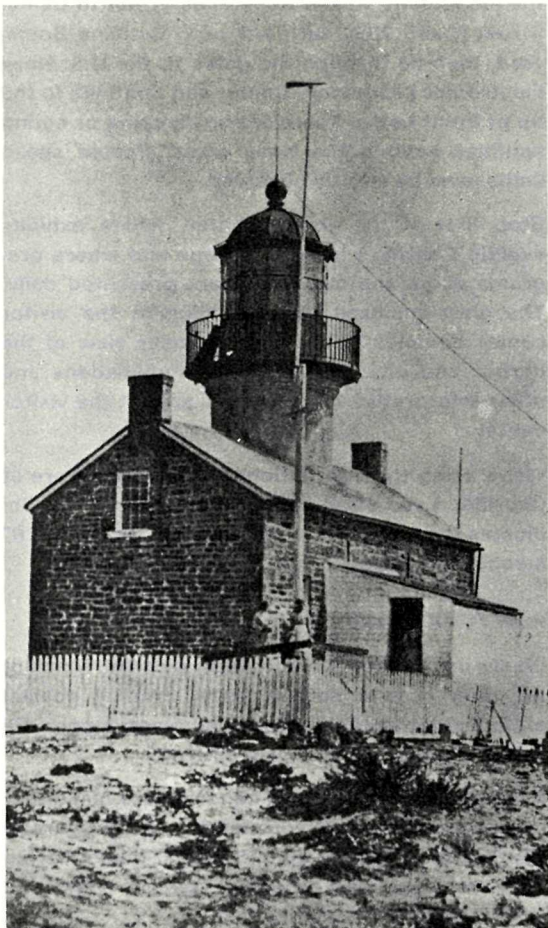
We're using the international sign system here at Cabrillo. A red slash across the face of a sign indicates the activity is prohibited. For example, "R" means "no parking."

### FOR YOUR SAFETY

Please use caution while visiting Cabrillo. Much of the park is in a natural state. Eroding coastal cliffs and loose rocks pose a constant danger. Be safe; stay back from edge of cliffs.

Barnacle-encrusted rocks can cut bare feet. Wear rubber-soled shoes if you visit the tidepool areas. Leather soles slip on the wet rocks. When leaving your vehicle, keep valuables out of view and vehicle locked. Enjoy your visit.





OLD LIGHTHOUSE IN 1860'S

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### ADMINISTRATION

Cabrillo National Monument is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Box 6175, San Diego, CA 92106, is in immediate charge.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

**National Park Service**  
**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

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