



Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo is as mysterious as the waters he explored. While much is unknown, we are certain about this: Cabrillo was the first European to set foot on the west coast of what is now the United States. His expedition brought Spain's first great era of exploration to a close.

Cabrillo set out on his epic voyage of exploration 50 years after Columbus landed in America. Commanding three vessels, he sailed north from Mexico into unknown waters. He was to claim land for the king of Spain, discover a route to Asia and the Spice Islands, search the uncharted coast for the Strait of Anián (a mythical passage from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic), chart the coast, and search for gold. Cabrillo National Monument was established in 1913 to commemorate the life and exploration of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo.

Cabrillo was born on the Iberian Peninsula, but no one knows for certain where he was born or is buried. In the early 1600s Spanish historian Antonio de Herrera wrote of him as Portuguese. Cabrillo's original navigational log was lost, and the details of his voyage and the circumstances of his death come from a summary account compiled after the expedition returned to Mexico.

Cabrillo came to the Americas by 1510. He gained prominence as a crossbowman in the conquest of the Aztec capital Tenochtitlán (Mexico City) by Hernán Cortés. Later, he joined Pedro de Alvarado to conquer and settle Guatemala. Ambitious and well educated, Cabrillo became a wealthy landowner and a shipbuilder. After Alvarado died in a native uprising, Antonio de Mendoza, viceroy of New Spain, gave Cabrillo command of the vessels *San Salvador*, *La Victoria*, and *San Miguel*. On June 27, 1542, sponsored by Antonio de Mendoza, Cabrillo and his

crew sailed north from Navidad to "discover the coast of New Spain."

Un puerto cerrado y muy bueno
On September 28, 1542, Cabrillo's flotilla entered a harbor that he described as "a closed and very good port." Coastal sage scrub covered the hills and valleys. Cabrillo stepped ashore on a silvery strand of beach and named the area San Miguel, the site of modern San Diego. He stayed in San Miguel six days to wait out a storm, then resumed his voyage up the coast. They sighted the islands of Santa Catalina and San Clemente, which Cabrillo named San Salvador and La Victoria, after his vessels. A day later the expedition turned toward the mainland, into what is now San Pedro Bay. The summary log recounts that the horizon was smoky. Cabrillo named it Bahía de Los Fumos—Bay of Smokes—which is today's Los Angeles.

Unsolved Mystery

In November the expedition stopped for water on the island Spaniards had dubbed Isla de la Posesión, one of the Channel Islands. Exactly what happened is a mystery. One account says that Cabrillo, while rushing to aid his men during a fight with Chumash Indians, jumped from a boat and broke his leg. Another version notes that he had broken his arm near the shoulder on an earlier visit to La Posesión. Whatever happened, complications ensued—with fatal results. On January 3, 1543, his goals of exploration unfulfilled, Cabrillo died. The cause of death was probably infection.



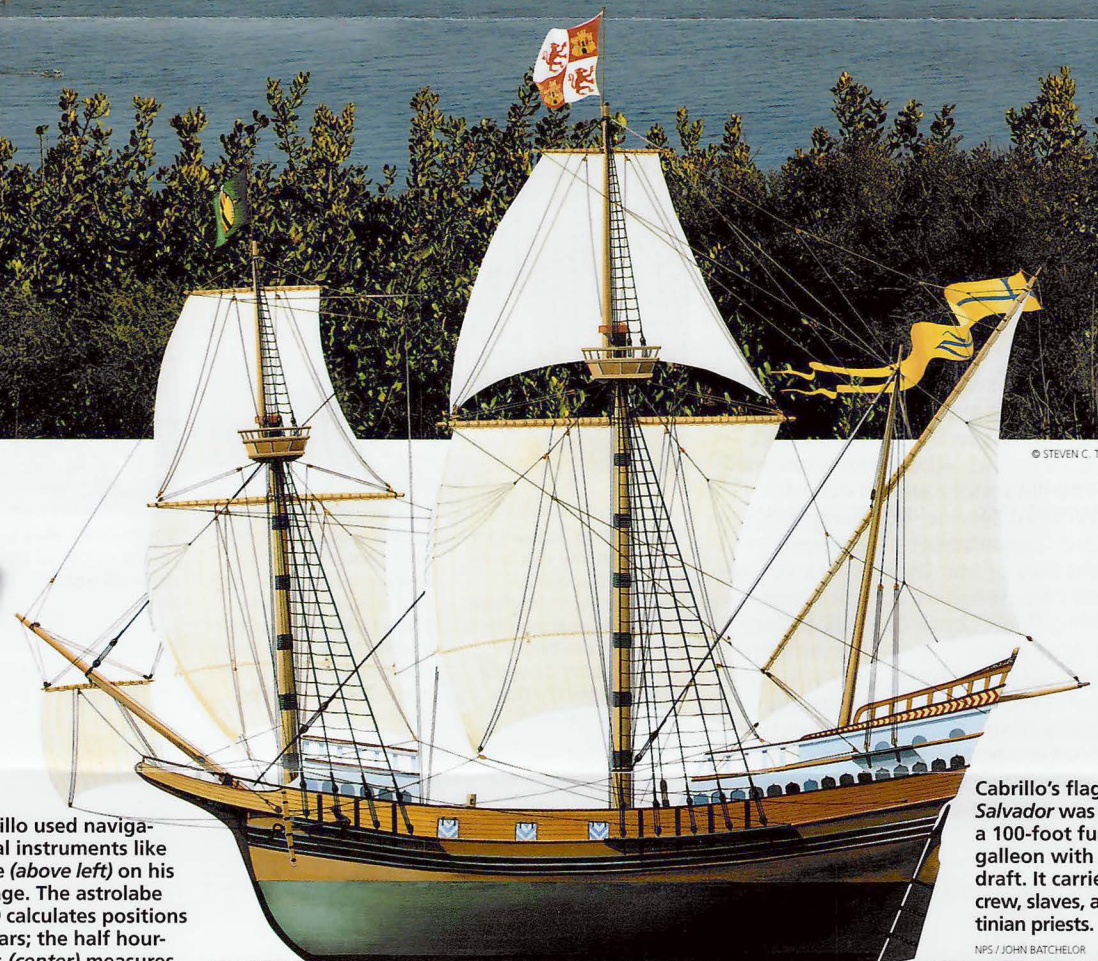
Many people believe this stone (above) once marked the grave of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo. Found on Santa Rosa Island in 1901, it is etched with a cross, stick figure of a man, and the letters JR.

COURTESY LOWIE MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY, U OF CALIF, BERKELEY; POTTERY (RIGHT) © CLIFF DICKEY



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Cabrillo used navigational instruments like these (above left) on his voyage. The astrolabe (left) calculates positions of stars; the half hour-glass (center) measures time; and the quadrant (right) determines your position at sea.



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Cabrillo's flagship *San Salvador* was apparently a 100-foot full-rigged galleon with a 10-foot draft. It carried officers, crew, slaves, and Augustinian priests.

NPS / JOHN BATCHELOR

Kumeyaay Indians



Sailing north, Cabrillo knew that the land he was to claim for Spain was occupied. Entering this harbor, he saw Kumeyaay ('Ipai and Tipai) Indians on shore. Some wore their long hair in braids and with feathers or shells. Some of the men wore capes made of sea otter, seal, or deer skin.

By mimicking men with lances on horseback and painting themselves to show armor, the Kumeyaay communicated that other Spaniards, who were now several

days' journey inland, had killed many Indians.

But Cabrillo gave the Kumeyaay gifts, saying he wouldn't harm them. They looked prosperous, he observed, and fished far out to sea in reed canoes. Kumeyaay lived well by understanding and managing their environment. They made pottery (far left), baskets, and abalone and other shell jewelry that they traded to their neighbors.

1857 KUMEYAAY ENGRAVING (LEFT) COURTESY SCHOTT, ARTHUR, SORONV, & CO., NY

Planning Your Visit



Enjoying the Park

Visitor Center Stop first at the visitor center, open daily, for park information, exhibits, films, panoramic harbor views, and foreign language and Braille brochures. The Cabrillo Store, run by the Cabrillo National Monument Foundation, offers publications on area cultural and military history, plants and animals, and Cabrillo and other explorers.

Seeing the Park The park is open for day use only. There is an entrance fee. It is an easy walk from the visitor center to the Cabrillo statue, Coast

Defense Exhibit, Old Point Loma Lighthouse, assistant keeper's quarters and lighthouse exhibit, and Kelp Forest and Whale Overlook. To visit the tidepool area, drive to the park road and look for the signs. Self-guiding exhibits along walkways and at overlooks explain the area's plants, animals, and history. The park has no food service, but you are welcome to picnic on park benches.

Bayside Trail This trail (2.5 miles roundtrip) descends about 300 feet through native coastal sage scrub, passing rem-

nants of the defense system that protected the harbor during World Wars I and II. No restrooms, drinking water, or beach access.

Accessible The visitor center, films, exhibits, Kelp Forest and Whale Overlook, and harbor overlooks are accessible to visitors with wheelchairs. A pass to drive to the lighthouse is available at the entrance station or visitor center. Service animals are welcome.

Firearms For firearms regulations check the park website.

More Information This is one of over 390 parks in the National Park System. To learn more about parks and National Park Service programs in America's communities, please visit www.nps.gov.

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In an emergency call 911.

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For a Safe Visit

Please be alert and observe these safety tips and regulations:

Cliffs and Tidepools Sandstone cliffs are very dangerous. Stay back from edges—they can give way and falls can be fatal. Tidepool rocks are slippery and barnacles sharp; wear sturdy non-slip shoes. Driving to the tidepool is best; the road has no shoulder and steep drop-offs.

Protected Federal law prohibits removing, collecting, or damaging plants, animals, fossils, shells, rocks or cultural artifacts. Do not release

plants or animals in the park. Take your recyclables and trash with you when you leave the park or put them in the bins provided. Smoking is permitted only in parking areas.

Trails Stay on trails to prevent erosion and protect sensitive plants.

Wild Animals Beware of rattlesnakes and biting animals. Do not put your hands or feet in places you cannot see. Do not feed wildlife.

Pets Please leave pets at home. If you bring pets, they are allowed

only in tidepool areas and must be on a six-foot leash at all times. Pets left in vehicles even for a short time may suffer heat stroke and die.

Thefts Thefts can happen wherever you travel. Don't tempt thieves: Lock your valuables out of sight or keep them with you.

Getting Here The park is in San Diego at the end of Point Loma (see map at right).

By Bus: Public buses make daily trips, Monday through Friday only, to the park (ex-

cept the tidepool area) from the Old Town Transit Center, transferring at Shelter Island.

By Vehicle:
• From southbound I-5 take Rosecrans Street (Calif. 209) exit; turn right on Cañon Street; turn left onto Catalina Blvd.
• From northbound I-5 take Pacific Highway to Barnett, turn left on Rosecrans Street.
• From westbound I-8 take Rosecrans Street exit; turn right on Cañon Street; turn left onto Catalina Blvd. Follow the signs to the park.



Exploring Cabrillo Today



Tidepools are filled with a diversity of living things. Plants and ani-

mals that live here are sensitive to handling and trampling.

TIDEPOOL © TOM GAMACHE; (RIGHT) © PHILIP ROULLARD

Life on the Edge: the Rocky Intertidal Zone

Tides control the rhythm of life along the ocean's shore. Marine plants and animals living here in the rocky intertidal zone have adapted to harsh conditions of pounding surf, intermittent exposure to sun and drying wind, and sharp changes in temperature, oxygen, and salinity. Here are shore crabs, spongy dead man's fingers, bat stars (*left*), surf grass, sea hares, and other plants and animals.

Cabrillo National Monument has one of the best preserved rocky intertidal areas open to the public on southern California's coast. This marine habitat's survival depends on the health of the

ocean and land around it. Changes in one environment alter the other: oil spills, erosion and sediment buildup, trash, and polluted runoff can destroy the tidepools.

Survival of the plants and animals in the rocky intertidal zone also depends on you. Please walk gently. To remove a plant or animal from its environment, or even to move it from one side of a tidepool to the other, could kill it. All forms of life in tidepools are protected by federal law and should not be disturbed or removed. Please observe the natural behavior of these creatures in their native environment rather than handling them.



If disturbed, sea anemones curl in their tentacles and shrink to a ball.
NPS / DAN RICHARDS



Adult gray whales weigh from 20 to 45 tons and may grow to 50 feet long. Their cruising speed is two to four miles per hour. They can dive deeper than 200 feet and can stay underwater for as long as 20 minutes.

NPS / SALVADOR BRU

Watching Gray Whales

Gray whales pass Point Loma on their yearly round-trip migration of 12,000 miles. They leave summer feeding grounds in the Arctic in September and return to the Baja California Sur bays, where females bear calves.

In spring they head north; cows with calves are last to leave the lagoons. The herd that passes here was so heavily hunted that by the 1920s only a few thousand remained. National appeals and protection by international treaties saved them from extinction. Now over 25,000 gray whales migrate this route. Viewing is best in January and February. Watch for their spout, or blow, beyond the kelp beds. When a whale surfaces to breathe, it exhales a plume of air and water about 15 feet into the air.

A Coastal Mediterranean Ecotype

Plant communities on Point Loma—coastal sage succulent scrub, southern maritime chaparral, southern coastal bluff scrub, and southern foredune scrub—are among the few remaining protected stands of this ecotype. This blend of aromatic sages, low-growing shrubs, succulents, flowers, and grasses was home for abundant native mammals, birds, amphibians, and reptiles.

Development has swallowed over 70 percent of this ecotype in southern California. Hundreds of native species are endangered, threatened, or extinct—the nation's longest such list. The National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Navy, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Veterans Affairs, and City of San Diego work to preserve these rare, sensitive communities. The resulting Point Loma Ecological Conservation Area hosts diverse species: peregrine falcon, red-tailed hawk, gray fox, California ground squirrel, cottontail, western fence and side-blotched lizards, Anna's hummingbird, southern Pacific rattlesnake, coyote, western red bat, California trapdoor spider, and wart-stemmed Ceanothus.



Bayside Trail follows an old U.S. Army roadway through the coastal Mediterranean ecotype. This plant community is unusual here because it has a number of succulents like prickly pear and dudleya. Also

growing along the trail are toyon, lemonade berry, encelia, black sage, and chaparral broom. Native plants are often unable to compete with non-native invaders; do not release plants or animals into the park.

NPS



Buckwheat adds variety to the colors of the hill-sides all year.

NPS



Costa's (*above*), rufous, and Allen's hummingbirds may be seen dur-

ing migration. Anna's hummingbirds live here year-round.

© PHILIP ROULLARD



Indian paintbrush grows in the sandstone cliffs.

© FRANK S. BALTHIS

Defending the Harbor

Point Loma forms a natural protective barrier at the entrance of San Diego Bay. A sandstone rampart jutting into the sea, the peninsula rises 422 feet and provides strategic views of the harbor and ocean. In 1852 the U.S. government recognized this important landmark and designated the area as a military reserve. In 1899 the War Department dedicated Fort Rosecrans and, over the years, built a series of gun batteries.

During World Wars I and II military facilities on the point provided vital coast and harbor defense systems. Between 1918 and 1943, the Army built searchlight bunkers, fire control stations (*right*), and gun batteries. The largest guns were at Battery Ashburn, west of the park entrance, where two 16-inch guns could fire 2,300-pound shells nearly 30 miles out to sea. The military also painted the Old Point Loma Lighthouse olive green and used it as a command post and radio station.



Fire control stations helped batteries direct their gunfire. The top bunker served as a battery command post. The bottom bunker was used as a base-end station,

where observers could track enemy targets and relay their positions to the command posts and gun batteries. This information was used to aim the guns accurately.

© CLIFF DICKEY



Robert Israel was Cabrillo's lightkeeper for 20 years. He worked 70 hours a week to operate and maintain the light, leav-

ing little leisure time. Free time was often spent with cards and conversation in the kitchen.

© CLIFF DICKEY



Kerosene, a lamp oil used here, gave light for long evenings.

© CLIFF DICKEY



The parlor served as the keeper's office and was where the family entertained guests. Above the mantel is a shell

picture made by Maria Israel. She often sold them for extra income.

© CLIFF DICKEY

Old Point Loma Lighthouse

It is a reminder of different times: of sailing ships and oil lamps and the men and women who tended these isolated coastal lights. It was a demanding job. A dedicated keeper was on-duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with no vacations. In 1851 the U.S. Coastal Survey selected this headland as the site for a navigational aid. The crest stood 422 feet above sea level and over-

looked the bay and ocean. At the time it seemed like the ideal location.

Builders completed the lighthouse in 1854, and in 1855 installed a Fresnel lens, the best technology of that day. At dusk, November 15, 1855, keeper James P. Keating lit the oil lamp for the first time. For the next 36 years, except on foggy nights, the light welcomed sailors to San Diego harbor. The lamps were rated to be seen at 26 to 28 miles, but mariners reported seeing the light from 30 to 32 miles. One report, unconfirmed, claimed to see the light from 39 miles away. Eleven keepers and 22 assistant keepers, including two women, Eliza Jenkins and Maria Israel, tended the light.

But what seemed like the right location had a serious flaw. Fog and low clouds often obscured the light. On March 23, 1891, keeper Robert Israel extinguished the lamp for the last time. Boarding up the lighthouse, Israel, with his wife Maria and their family, moved into a new light station at the bottom of the hill.

The assistant keeper's quarters (*right*) and old Point Loma lighthouse (*far right*).

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