

OFFICIAL VISIT GUIDE 2026

the USS Midway Museum

San Diego · From 35.84€

https://ussmidway.visit-tickets.com/en/ · Skip-the-Line Tickets & Official Prices



History & Experience

ORIGIN & HISTORY

A Legacy of Naval Power

GOOGLE 4.8 ★★★★★ 53 285 reviews

TIQETS 4.8 ★★★★★ 1 229 reviews

The USS Midway stands as a colossal testament to American naval power, commissioned in **September 1945** just days after the end of World War II. Originally named after the pivotal Battle of Midway, this Essex-class carrier was designed to project force across the Pacific with unprecedented speed and firepower. Its construction marked a transition era where aircraft began to dominate warfare over traditional battleships, embodying the shift toward air superiority. The ship's initial design featured a distinctive angled flight deck modification that revolutionized carrier operations, allowing for simultaneous takeoffs and landings.

During the Cold War, the Midway served as a floating symbol of freedom, participating in numerous conflicts including the Korean War and the Vietnam War. It underwent massive structural changes, most notably the **SCB-110 modernization** between 1967 and 1970. Engineers widened the hull by 13 meters on each side to accommodate heavier jet aircraft, transforming it into one of the largest carriers of its time. This extensive overhaul extended its operational life significantly, proving its adaptability in an ever-changing military landscape.

For over five decades, more than **4,500 crew members** lived aboard this steel giant, creating a unique community at sea. The ship logged millions of miles and supported countless missions, earning numerous battle stars and commendations. Its longevity is unmatched; no other American aircraft carrier has served for such an extended period. The Midway witnessed the evolution of aviation technology, from propeller-driven fighters to supersonic jets, adapting its decks and systems to meet new challenges.

Decommissioned in **1992**, the Midway was preserved as a museum rather than scrapped, offering the public a rare glimpse into naval history. Located in San Diego, it serves as both a memorial and an educational resource. Visitors can explore original spaces like the engine rooms and officers' quarters, preserving the authentic atmosphere of life at sea. Today, it remains a living museum, honoring the veterans who served while educating future generations about the complexities of maritime warfare.

THE EXPERIENCE

Stepping onto the flight deck, you are immediately struck by the sheer scale of the vessel under the bright California sun. The vast expanse of gray steel stretches before you, dotted with restored aircraft that seem ready for takeoff. A gentle breeze carries the faint scent of salt and jet fuel, enhancing the realism of the experience. As you look out over San Diego Bay, the city skyline provides a stunning backdrop, contrasting modern urban life with historical military might.

Inside, the atmosphere shifts to a more intimate and immersive environment. Dimly lit corridors lead to recreated scenes of daily life, from bustling mess halls to quiet officer cabins. Sound effects of alarms and engine roars punctuate the silence, transporting visitors back to active duty days. The tactile nature of the exhibits invites exploration, making history feel tangible and immediate rather than distant or abstract.



PREPARING FOR YOUR VISIT

Practical Information

ADDRESS

San Diego Waterfront · Direct access via tram (Blue/Orange/Green line) stop Maritime Museum.

OPENING HOURS

Open daily from 10am to 5pm. Strict last admission at 4pm. Closed on Thanksgiving and Christmas.

PRICING

Children under 5 free. Discounts for seniors and military personnel. {promo}.

VISIT DURATION

Allow a minimum of 3 to 4 hours to comfortably explore every level of the aircraft carrier, from the engines to the crew quarters. Last admission is at 4pm.

PHOTOS

Photography is allowed everywhere without flash. Enjoy the panoramic view from the flight deck ('Island') for memorable shots of the bay.

AUDIENCE

Ideal for families and aviation enthusiasts. Note: some areas feature narrow ladders not suitable for very young children or guests with reduced mobility.

HOW TO GET THERE

Access & Transportation

Metro

: Broadway Pier — 4 min à pied

Santa Fe train station (8 min) · San Diego International Airport (12 min)

Bus

: (bus) — 9 min à pied

Santa Fe train station (11 min) · San Diego International Airport (18 min)

Car

Santa Fe train station (5 min) · San Diego International Airport (11 min)

Bike

Santa Fe train station (5 min) · San Diego International Airport (14 min)

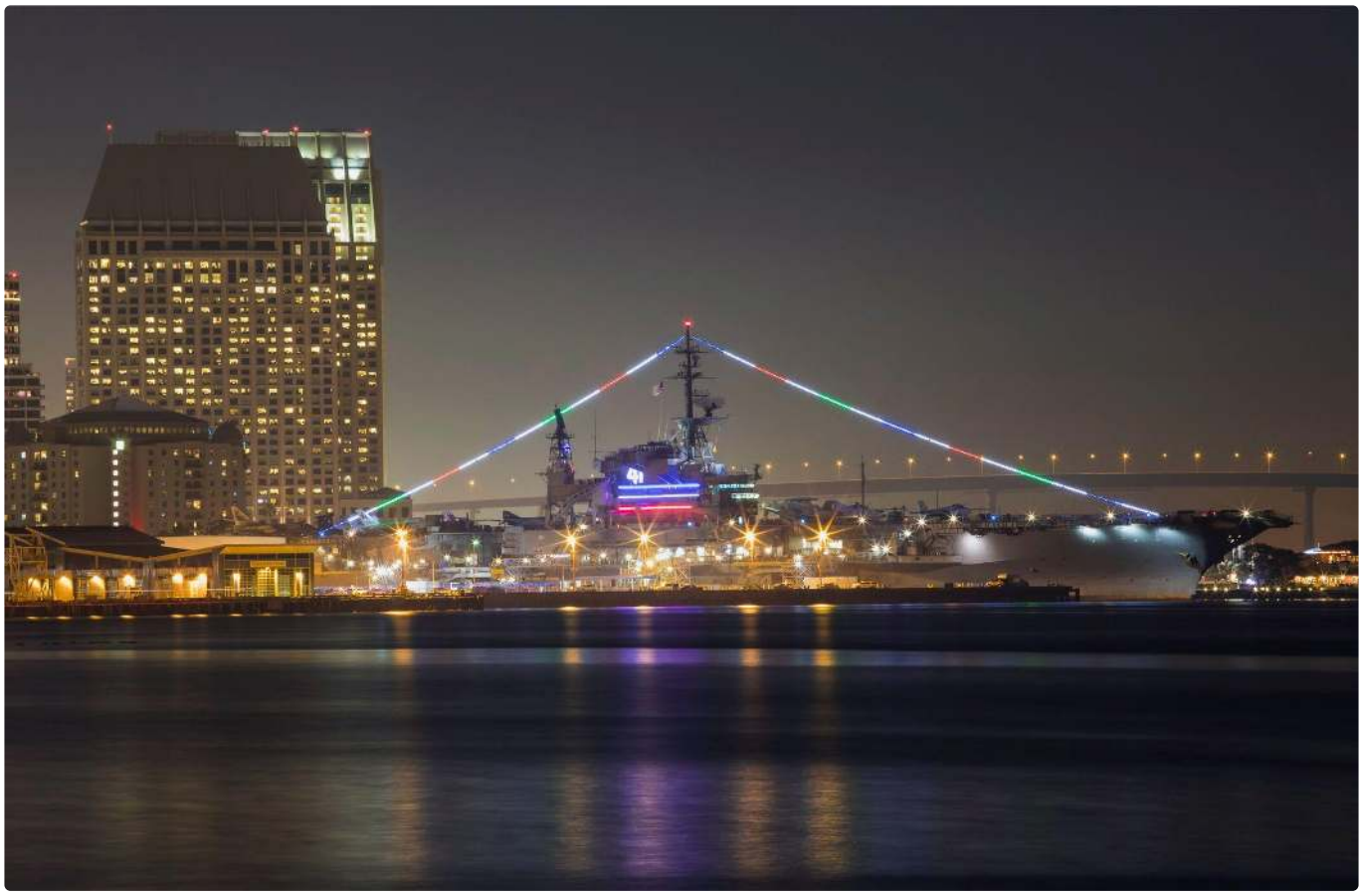
LOCALISATION

Où se trouve the USS Midway Museum ?



📍 910 N Harbor Dr, CA — 92101 San Diego

🌐 32°42.824′ N, 117°10.508′ O



ORGANIZATION

Organization

Flight Deck (Top Level)

The highest level features the iconic flight deck with over 30 restored aircraft, including the F4U Corsair and A-6 Intruder. Interactive displays explain carrier operations, while sound simulations recreate the chaos of landing sequences. Visitors can walk among these machines, gaining perspective on their size and complexity.

Hangar Deck (Middle Level)

Below the flight deck lies the hangar, housing additional aircraft and exhibits detailing maintenance procedures. Here, you'll find detailed models and photographs illustrating how planes were repaired and prepared for missions. The space feels industrial yet meticulously organized, reflecting the precision required in naval aviation.

Below Deck (Lower Levels)

Descending further reveals the inner workings of the ship, including engine rooms, crew quarters, and command centers. Narrow ladders lead to cramped spaces where sailors lived and worked, offering insight into daily life aboard. Original furnishings and artifacts bring authenticity to these preserved areas.

ACCESSIBILITY

♿ **Accessibility for people with reduced mobility**

Adapted routes available but areas limited by historical stairs.

👨‍👩‍👧 **Families**

Ideal for families, simulators, and captivating aircraft for children.

🎧 **Audio guide**

French, English, Spanish



Must-sees

SELECTION

Must-See Exhibits & Aircraft

01 Flight Deck

F4U Corsair

This legendary fighter plane played a crucial role in WWII, renowned for its inverted gull wings and powerful engine. Observe its sleek design and robust build, symbols of aerial dominance during the war. Its presence evokes memories of daring dogfights over the Pacific.

> 💡 Pilots nicknamed it 'Ensign Trap' due to its challenging handling characteristics, requiring skilled maneuvers to master.

02 Top Level

Bridge ('Island')

The bridge offers commanding views of San Diego Bay and serves as the nerve center for navigation decisions. Inside, replicas of radar screens and communication equipment highlight the technological advancements used during service. This vantage point underscores the captain's responsibility.

> 💡 From here, captains coordinated complex operations involving hundreds of personnel and multiple aircraft simultaneously.

03 Below Deck

Officers' Quarters

Preserved with remarkable fidelity, these private spaces showcase the living conditions of senior officers. Furniture, personal items, and decor reflect mid-century styles adapted for maritime environments. Walking through them provides a humanizing glimpse into leadership roles.

> 💡 Unlike many museums, these quarters remain largely unchanged, maintaining historical integrity.

04 Below Deck

Engine Room

Explore the heart of the ship where massive boilers generated steam to propel the vessel forward. Detailed explanations accompany visual aids demonstrating mechanical processes. The heat and noise simulated here convey the intensity of working below deck.

> 💡 Crew members endured extreme temperatures while ensuring continuous operation, showcasing their dedication.

05

Flight Deck

Catapult & Trap Talks

Interactive presentations demonstrate how aircraft launched and landed safely on moving decks. Animations illustrate physics principles behind catapult launches and arresting gear functionality. These sessions clarify technical aspects often misunderstood by casual observers.

> 💡 Early attempts resulted in frequent accidents, leading to significant improvements in safety protocols.

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Hangar Deck

Battle of Midway Immersive Theater

This multimedia presentation recreates key moments from the decisive WWII battle using projections and sound effects. Viewers witness intense combat scenarios unfold around them, enhancing emotional engagement. Educational content supports understanding of strategic outcomes.

> 💡 The film incorporates archival footage alongside dramatizations for maximum impact.

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Interactive Area

Flight Simulators

Hands-on simulators allow visitors to experience piloting various aircraft types under guided instruction. Realistic controls and visuals make this activity particularly appealing to aviation enthusiasts. Booking ahead ensures availability given high demand.

> 💡 Many participants report feeling genuinely immersed despite knowing they're stationary.

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Midship

Jet Shop Café 41

Located strategically within the museum, this café offers refreshments amidst the exhibits. Enjoy coffee or snacks while surrounded by aviation memorabilia. It serves as a convenient spot to rest during longer visits.

> 💡 Named after a specific location on the ship, it adds thematic consistency to dining options.

TIPS

Essential Visitor Tips

TIMING

Arrive exactly at 10am opening time to enjoy uncrowded access to the flight deck and capture pristine photos before tourist rushes arrive.

BILLET

Book tickets online in advance, especially for weekends, to guarantee entry and skip potential queues at the ticket counter.

PARCOURS

Start from the top flight deck and work downwards systematically to avoid backtracking and manage energy levels effectively throughout the visit.

PHOTO

Head straight to the Bridge ('Island') for unparalleled panoramic views of San Diego Bay, ideal for memorable snapshots against the city skyline.

PAUSE

Take a break at Jet Shop Café 41 midway through your tour to recharge batteries without leaving the premises, keeping momentum going.

ENFANTS

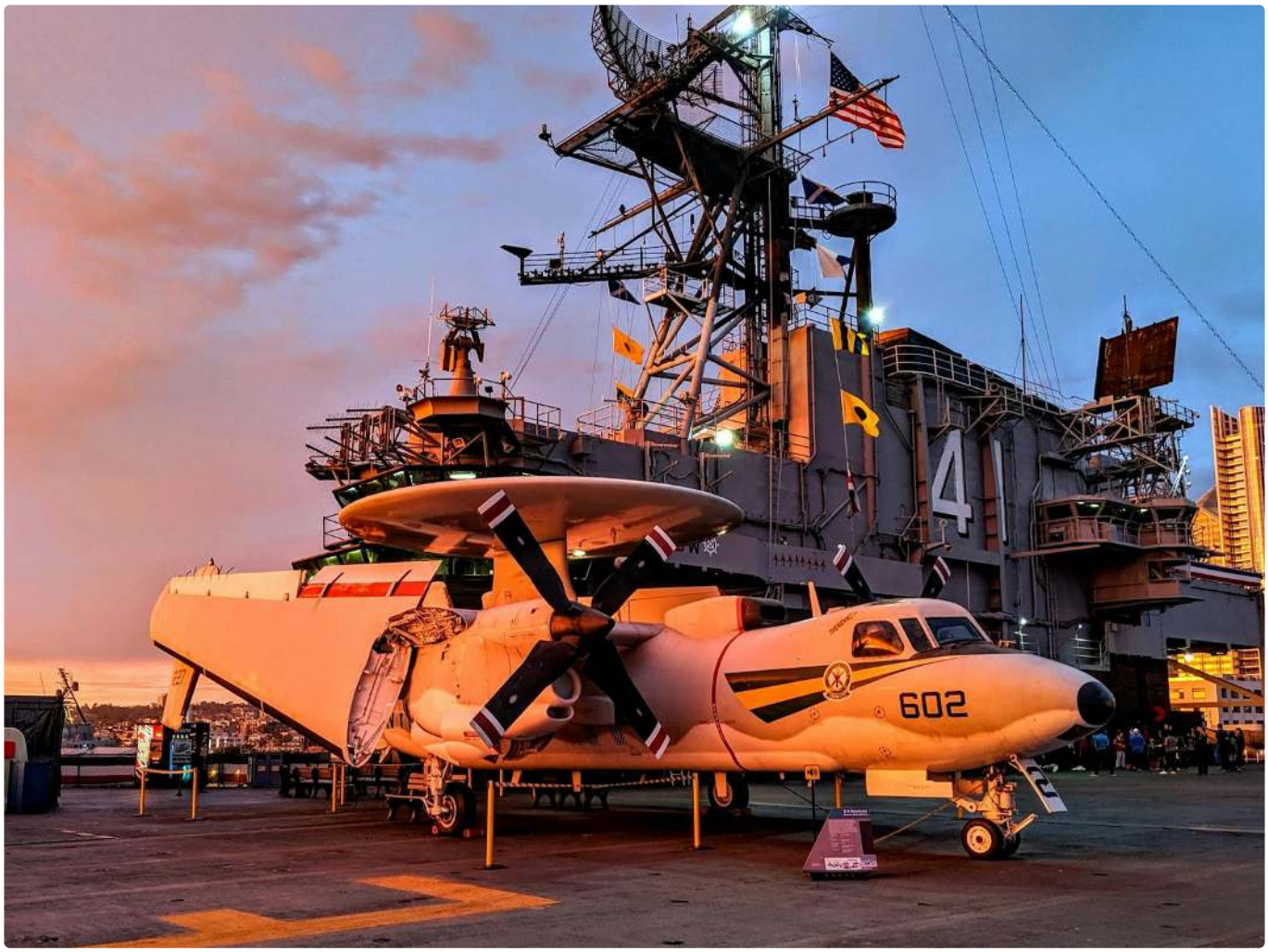
Engage children early with interactive flight simulators and colorful aircraft displays to maintain interest during potentially lengthy indoor sections.

AUDIOGUIDE

Rent the audio guide upon entry; it significantly enriches comprehension of technical functions and historical contexts otherwise difficult to grasp independently.

CONFORT

Wear sturdy shoes with grippy soles since metal surfaces can be slippery or hot underfoot, ensuring physical comfort enhances overall enjoyment.


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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQ

Should I book USS Midway tickets in advance?

Yes, online booking is highly recommended, especially on weekends and during peak season. It guarantees your entry and helps you avoid the often long physical queues at the USS Midway Museum ticket window.

Can I cancel or modify my reservation?

Conditions vary depending on the ticket purchased. Always check the cancellation policy before buying. Some tickets offer free cancellation up to 24 hours before the visit, providing great flexibility.

Are there any discounts available?

Preferential rates are available for children, seniors, military personnel, and local residents. Check the official website for current offers and verify if you are eligible for a specific discount.

How long does it take to visit the USS Midway?

Allow at least 3 to 4 hours for a complete visit including the audio guide and interactive exhibits. A half-day is ideal to comfortably enjoy all levels without rushing.

What are the opening hours and last admission time?

The museum opens at 10am and closes at 5pm. Last admission is strictly at 4pm. Arrive early to maximize your exploration time, avoid late disappointments, and fully enjoy the outdoor exhibits before closing.

DID YOU KNOW?

Anecdotes & curiosities

Record-Breaking Service Life

The USS Midway holds the record for longest-serving American aircraft carrier, operating for over **50 years**. Commissioned in 1945, it remained active until 1992, adapting continuously to evolving military needs.

Massive Hull Expansion

Between 1967 and 1970, engineers widened the hull by **13 meters** on each side during SCB-110 modernization. This allowed accommodation of heavier jet aircraft, extending its operational relevance dramatically.

Proximity to Maritime Museum

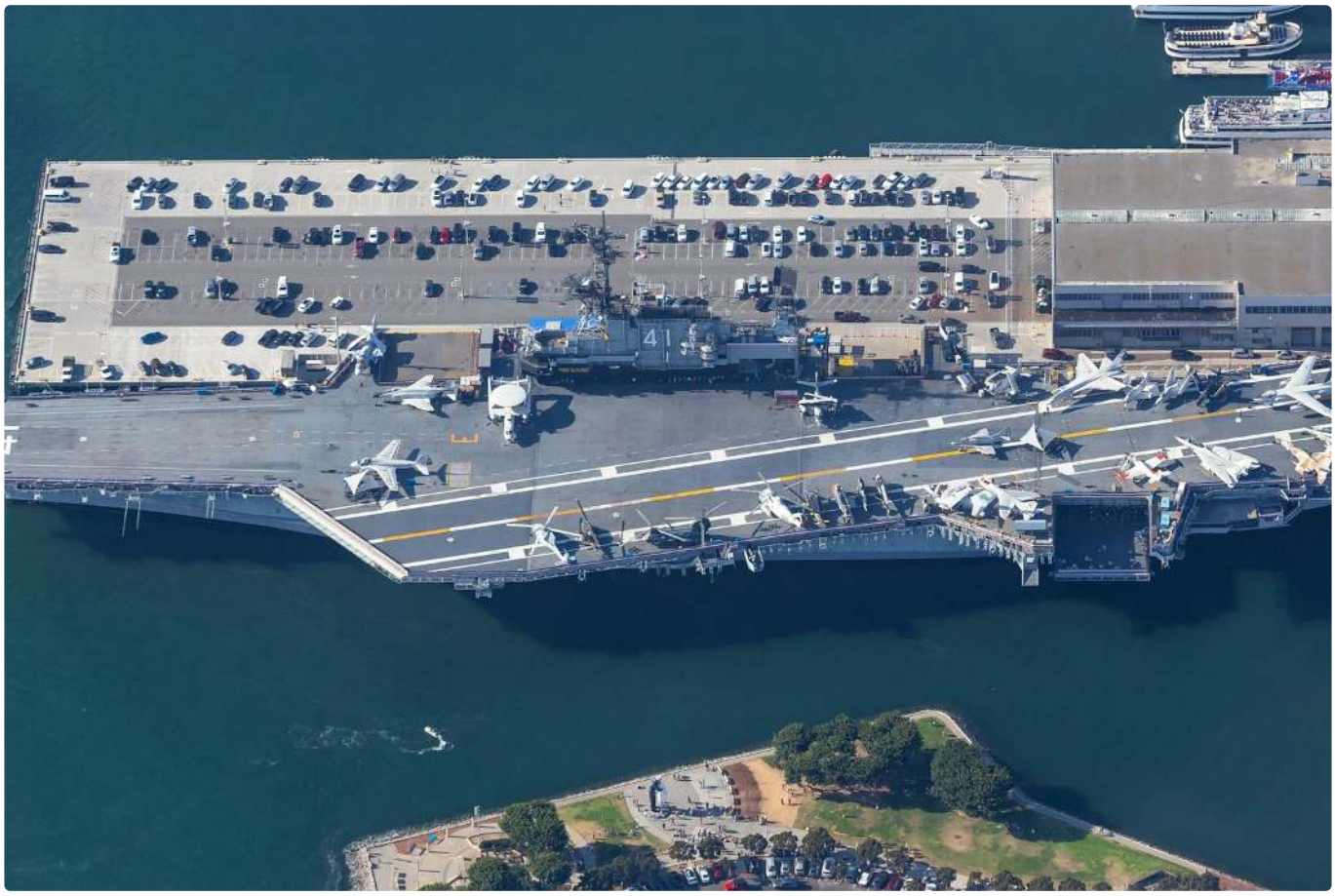
Located adjacent to the **San Diego Maritime Museum**, visitors can compare two distinct eras of US Navy history seamlessly. This geographical advantage facilitates comprehensive learning experiences.

Preserved Officers' Quarters

Unlike typical naval museums repurposing private spaces, the Midway retains original **officers' quarters** with exceptional fidelity. Authentic furnishings offer rare insights into leadership lifestyles aboard.

AROUND THE MUSEUM

San Diego's waterfront offers a vibrant setting beyond the museum walls. Just steps away, the **San Diego Maritime Museum** houses historic vessels like the Star of India, providing complementary context to naval history. For dining, head to the lively **Gaslamp Quarter**, known for its diverse restaurants and nightlife along Market Street. After exploring, stroll along the scenic **Embarcadero Walk** for panoramic views of the harbor and docked ships. These nearby attractions enhance your visit, creating a full-day itinerary rich in culture and relaxation.



Visiting the USS Midway is not merely a tour but a journey through time, connecting you with the bravery and ingenuity of those who served. Standing on the bridge, overlooking the bay, you gain a profound appreciation for the strategic importance of naval power. This experience leaves an indelible mark, inspiring awe and respect for the sacrifices made in defense of freedom. Let the echoes of history guide your steps as you explore this floating monument.