

Southwest Airlines Terminal Tour: San Diego International Airport Terminal 1



If you find yourself flying into, out of, or on a layover at the San Diego Airport, I'm jealous. Any airport that greets you with palm tree-lined streets when you step outside is "A-OK" in my book. I've spent a few weeks every summer for the past five years working in San Diego, so I've navigated the San Diego Airport many times. If you're traveling to the San Diego Airport Southwest Terminal in the near future, here are a few things you need to know about San Diego airport food, amenities, and more.

Navigating the Southwest Airlines San Diego Terminal

One of the best things about the Southwest San Diego Airport Terminal is its size. While several airlines occupy Terminal 1, the gates are grouped into small clusters with dedicated security lines

for each one—this means you might need to exit and re-enter security as you make a connection, but that also translates to shorter lines and less walking (or running, if you're late, like I often am) to get to where you're going. The downside is that each gate area has fewer food and retail options. Not to worry though, read on to discover the simple solution that lets you enjoy the convenience of the smaller San Diego Airport Southwest Terminal, while still having access to everything the whole airport has to offer.

Terminal Food and Restaurants

Because there are a limited number of San Diego Airport restaurants by each gate, your food options may SEEM limited. The reality is the ENTIRE AIRPORT is your oyster. The last time I flew out of San Diego, a Southwest Employee gave this tip to another passenger, and it's my duty to pass it on to you now:

If you download the app [At Your Gate](#), you can have access to dining and retail stores throughout the airport. So if you're craving some San Diego Terminal 2 food or retail, but you happen to be in Terminal 1, never fear. Just open the app, and they will bring whatever you need right to you at your gate. You can get everything from full meals to coffee and donuts, phone chargers, and even MAC makeup delivered right to your seat in about 20-30 minutes.

If you'd rather pick up your food in person, the most variety can be found before you pass through security. Once you're at your gate, you'll typically find a market with various grab-and-go snacks, a sit-down restaurant/bar option, and fast food or fast-casual options.

Terminal 1 Pre-Security Dining Options

- Ciao Gourmet Market: Grab-and-go offerings that include organic, vegan, gluten-free, kosher, and fair trade options
- Emerald Express: A fast, casual Chinese menu that includes traditional breakfast items and some special selections for the more adventurous traveler
- Jack in the Box: Fast food burgers
- Pacifica Breeze Cafe: A sit down option that features gourmet, chef-crafted fare

- Ryan Bros. Coffee: Open 24 hours and offers coffee, tea, frappes, pastries, sandwiches, salads, and breakfast
- Starbucks: An American coffee shop staple

Terminal 1, Gates 1A, 1, and 2 Dining Options

- Ciao Gourmet Market: Grab-and-go offerings that include organic, vegan, gluten-free, kosher, and fair trade options
- Craft Brews on 30th St: A bar and lounge with seasonal and year-round selections of local microbrews, and a fresh, all-natural, locally-sourced menu featuring wholesome and healthy cuisine

Terminal 1, Gates 3-10 Dining Options

- Bankers Hill Bar & Restaurant: A sit-down restaurant where farm-to-table meets comfort food, with a full bar and extensive drink menu
- Ciao Gourmet Market: Grab-and-go offerings that include organic, vegan, gluten-free, kosher, and fair trade options
- Einstein Bros. Bagels: A great place to grab a coffee, fresh-baked bagel, snack, or signature sandwich
- The Counter Custom Built Burgers: A fast, casual restaurant with beef, natural turkey, and veggie burgers you'd swear came from an upscale restaurant

Terminal 1, Gates 11-18 Dining Options

- Peet's Coffee & Tea: It opens at 4:30 a.m., so it's a great choice to fuel up on your drink of choice before your flight
- Urban Crave: A quick casual restaurant that serves authentic street food like burgers, hand-cut fries, hot dogs, and breakfast burritos

Retail Therapy

If you're looking to grab some souvenirs, last-minute essentials, or just do a little retail therapy, there are several places to shop around the Southwest gates in the San Diego Airport Terminal. The majority of the stores are pre-security, so if you're looking for something in particular, you may want to get your shopping done before you head to your gate. Or, you can use the app [At Your Gate](#) and get retail purchases from either terminal delivered right to you.

Terminal 1 Pre-Security Retail Stores

- Bay Books of Coronado: This compact version of the favorite Coronado bookstore features books by local and national authors, games, toys, and even LEGOS
- Shades of Time: Pick out a new pair of sunglasses here to see your vacation in a whole new light
- Stellar News Express: A place to grab reading material, snacks, and beverages for your trip
- Tech on the Go: Headphones, cords, chargers, cases ... if you need it for your tech gear, you'll find it here
- The Beach House: Flip flops, cover-ups, beach towels, and anything else you'll need to go straight from the tarmac to the sandy shores
- Where Traveler: This beefed-up newsstand features the essentials and more, like books, magazines, snacks, Samsonite luggage, and maps and guides to help you get to know the best parts of San Diego

Terminal 1, Gates 1A, 1, and 2 Retail Stores

- 10 News: A selection of books, magazines, electronic accessories, snacks, and all the last minute travel necessities you forgot to pack

Terminal 1, Gates 3-10 Retail Stores

- Best Buy Express: Chargers, no-contract cell phones, noise-canceling headphones, you can find all the premium gadgets you need for your trip in this convenient vending machine
- Hudson News: This iconic airport store carries a selection of books, magazines, snacks, beverages, and beauty, tech, and travel essentials

Terminal 1, Gates 11-18 Retail Stores

- Best Buy Express: Chargers, no-contract cell phones, noise-canceling headphones, you can find all the premium gadgets you need for your trip in this convenient vending machine
- KUSI News: You'll find souvenirs, health and beauty aids, snacks, toys, beverages, and activities and this local newsstand

Family Bathrooms

No matter which gate at the Southwest Terminal San Diego you're at, you'll find you're never far from a bathroom. That comes in handy when you land and you've been holding it for the last hour because two sleeping passengers next to you made it nearly impossible for a quick trip to the bathroom. Hypothetically speaking, of course.

Nursing mothers looking for a little peace and quiet can make their way to the area by gates 3-10, or gates 11-18 to find a dedicated lactation room. This may require you to go through a security checkpoint, but again, the small gate areas mean the lines are relatively short at all times.

Traveling with Pets

If you brought a service animal or the family pet along on your trip, you can find a pet relief area past the security checkpoint by Gates 1A and 1 in the San Diego Airport Southwest Airlines Terminal. If you have more time and want to walk it out, there are additional pet areas located in Terminal 2.

Connectivity

I always have a hard time getting a strong cell signal close to airport gates. The good news is you will find complimentary Wi-Fi in the Southwest Airlines San Diego terminal. All you have to do is log in, and you get a complimentary two-hour session. If you need more time, you simply refresh your session after two hours. The Internet speed is fast enough that you can download and stream movies, or take care of any other business you might need to.

Wander Around Here

If you have a longer layover on your way to Mexico, or some other destination, you may want to leave your gate area to wander the airport a bit more. There are some spas that offer massages, mani/pedis, and other relaxation services in Terminal 2 by gates 26 and 36, as well as the [Airspace Lounge](#) where you can purchase a day pass to gain access to areas to work, relax, shower, and eat.

If you'd like to make your layover more of a cultural experience, [click here to discover](#) public art, art exhibitions, and even performing arts in the San Diego Airport Southwest Airlines Terminal and other airport terminals.

Whether you have a lot of time or are in a hurry, the area around the Southwest gates in the San Diego Airport Terminal has a lot to offer. While you get the feel and convenience of a small-town airport, you also have access to all the amenities of a large one.

Rental Cars

All rental car companies are located off-site from the San Diego Airport Terminals at the designated Consolidated Rental Car Center. Free shuttles run frequently to take travelers to and from the airport and the center. The shuttle stops are easy to find and located outside the main doors and across the street.

Have you traveled through the San Diego airport? Give us your best tips in the comments and be sure to visit the [San Diego](#) section of our Discussion Forums for more information about traveling to this great California destination.