

Vista, California

Fabulous features

Although she turned 40 in 2003, Vista isn't looking her age. The city is only seven miles from the Pacific Ocean, and seems to have it all. Why else would the population have nearly tripled in the past 20 years? Who wouldn't want to be in the "climatic wonderland of the United States," where the average daily temperature is 74° Fahrenheit? Children here go to top schools and have their pick of fun recreational activities. Vista boasts six times the national average number of parks within its 18 square mile border.

And speaking of schools, Vista has an excellent school system, that was made even better with the passing of a \$140 million construction bond in March of 2002. Students often seek transfers into Vista's high schools because of its strong International Baccalaureate program.

Strict zoning has kept Vista's rolling hills and pleasant rural surroundings intact. Housing is readily available, with open designs and lush California vegetation. The days are picture perfect here, so head to the gorgeous state parks and beaches, or even go shopping in Mexico. If you're lucky, there might be a Vista on your horizon.

Possible drawbacks: All roads lead to Vista, but with accessibility also comes traffic congestion during rush hours. Weekday commuters can spend about 45 minutes traveling to San Diego.



- ▶ Local Population: 94,000
- ▶ County: San Diego
- ▶ Population of surrounding metropolitan area: 3,000,000
- ▶ Region: Southern California
- ▶ Closest metro area: San Diego, 35 miles
- ▶ Median home price: \$487,000
- ▶ Median household income: \$48,373
- ▶ Best reasons to live here: The absolutely perfect climate, strong job and business growth, great schools, wonderful outdoor recreation, and a strong community spirit.

50 Fabulous Places to Raise Your Family

Climate

Elevation 340'	Average temp. high/low (°F)	Average precipitation		Average no. days precipitation	Average humidity (%)
		rain (")	snow (")		
January	68/45	3.1	0	7	58
April	72/50	0.9	0	5	59
July	82/61	0.2	0	0	66
October	78/56	0.4	0	2	64
Number of days 32°F or below: 0			Number of days 90°F or warmer: 3		

Earning a living

Economic outlook: The Vista Business Park will continue to grow over the next several years, adding square footage to the existing park, and increasing employment to approximately 19,000 employees working in the 650 national and international companies. Vista's retail sectors continue to look strong and, with the completion of the existing Vista Village project, should help generate 700 jobs and more than \$500,000 in sales tax revenues. Several other retail projects are in the works and will be under construction in the near future. The city is revitalizing several historic areas, such as South Santa Fe and Mercantile, and hopes to develop additional residential and commercial uses for the area. The unemployment rate is 3.5 percent and expected to remain low.

Where the jobs are: The majority of businesses are manufacturing, education, and government. The largest employers are Vista Unified School District, Watkins Manufacturing Corporation, and the San Diego Superior Court.

Business opportunities: Vista has experienced the greatest economic boom in its history in retail sales and employment growth. The city's success in luring anchor stores such as Costco, Wal-Mart, Sam's Club, and Target Greatland has resulted in impressive sales tax revenues. Vista is easily accessible to more than 500,000 people living within a 10-mile radius. The Vista Economic Development Association notes their success with a 1,200-acre site developed in South Vista called the Vista Business Park. Initially, the association projected a 25-year time-table to develop the Business Park. But by 1999, original expectations were exceeded by a remarkable 10 years!

Local real estate

Market overview: Housing opportunities range from garden apartments to ocean view estates. Condominiums average between \$170,000 and \$290,000, while single-family home prices range from \$250,000 to more than \$1,000,000.

Average rent for a two-bedroom apartment: \$950 per month

Other areas to consider: Camp Pendleton is a Marine Base of 200 square miles. San Marcos is a highly educated community with heart. San Diego, a strong tourism base with Sea World and the San Diego Zoo, brings in many new families. Most relocate because of the mild climate and great schools. From downtown skyscrapers to suburbs in rolling hills, the fresh air and cleanliness of San Diego will reel you in.

What things cost

ACCRA's national comparisons: Overall living costs for the nearby San Diego area are 45 percent above the national average. The major culprit is housing at a high 116 percent above the national average, followed by health care at 19 percent above, groceries at 14 percent above, and miscellaneous goods and services at 16 percent above. Only utilities are below average at 4.5 percent.

Utilities: Phone: \$35 per month; water: \$53 per month; electricity: \$60 per month; natural gas: \$40 per month

The tax ax

Sales tax: 7.75 percent

Property tax: Established through Proposition 13 as 1 percent of the purchase price plus limited locally approved bonds.

State income tax: Varies from 1 to 9.3 percent based upon income level.

Making the grade

Public education overview: The Vista Unified School District services 18 elementary schools, six middle schools, and six high schools. One of the many shining stars in this district is the commitment to technology. With more than 1,300 computers in the district and access to the Internet, more than 700 staff have e-mail accounts. Several schools develop and maintain their own Webpages. The school district has published their Educational Technology Plan. In 2002, the city passed a school construction bond supporting the construction of three new elementary schools, and upgrading of all school facilities. Several schools have earned National Blue Ribbon Award and California Distinguished School honors. The district offers a fully implemented International Baccalaureate program in the high schools. Ongoing programs such as Resolving Conflict Creatively Program are presented in a majority of classrooms. After-school tutoring is offered for students who need assistance with learning.

Class size (student to teacher ratio): 22:1

Help for working parents: The Children's Initiative provides after-school care in the San Diego County area.

Boys & Girls Club: There are two centers currently available.

School year: Mid-August to mid-June, check with schools whether single-track, modified traditional calendar or three-track year round schedule. Children must be 5 years old on or before December 2 to begin kindergarten.

Special education/programs for gifted students: The gifted and talented program is available for gifted and talented students. English language development and special education programs are offered. "Advancement Via Individual Determination" is an elective class for students who would like to prepare for college.

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Nearby colleges and universities: California State University at San Marcos, Mira Costa College, National University, Palomar College, and the University of Phoenix are all located in the Vista area.

Medical care

Hospitals/medical centers: Vista has access to some of the most outstanding healthcare facilities in the United States. Tri-City Medical Center, a 385-bed, acute-care district hospital offers a full range of primary care and medical-surgical services including emergency medicine, cardiovascular, and imaging services. Tri-City Medical Center has been designated as one of “100 Top Hospitals: Regional Benchmarks for Success” three years in a row by HCIA Mercer.

Specialized Care: The Vista Community Clinic is a private facility that provides quality healthcare where economic, social, or cultural barriers exist. The center has a full spectrum of both treatment and prevention services.

Crime and safety

Police: Although overall crime rates have risen slightly in the San Diego County area, Vista’s crime rates have decreased due to the close working relationship between the sheriff’s department and the Vista community. In addition to the main station located in the San Diego courthouse, the Vista sheriff’s department maintains three neighborhood policing teams. Volunteer participation throughout the community is seen in the senior patrol, reserve deputy, and Explorer cadet programs. Vista has managed to achieve the greatest decreases in crime during the last six years of any of the 18 cities in the county of San Diego.

Fire: The Vista fire department has 63 suppression personnel divided among three shifts, including three battalion chiefs. Services include: firefighting, rescue, hazardous materials incident responses, and emergency medical services at the EMT and Paramedic level, with emergency transport. Tips on wildfires and wildfire season are a must-read for residents who live in the surrounding hills.

Let the good times roll

Family fun: Vista’s central location offers quick accessibility to the Pacific ocean, mountains, Mexico, and world-famous attractions including the San Diego Zoo, Wild Animal Park, SeaWorld, Legoland, and Disneyland. Buena Vista Park and Guajome Regional Park are just two of the many places to play. Or get wet at the Wave Waterpark, the only family aquatic center in North San Diego County. Krikorian Premier Theaters, a magnificent 16-screen stadium-seating venue, opened in late 2003 and is part of the Vista Village Center, a variety of popular retail stores and restaurants. A farmers market is held each Saturday.

Sports: Sports fans travel 40 minutes to San Diego to watch professional games, such as the San Diego Padres (MLB), and the San Diego Chargers (NFL). Just 90 minutes away is Los Angeles, with additional professional teams as well as college sports. More than 20 public and private golf courses are located within a 45-minute drive.

Arts and entertainment: The Moonlight Amphitheatre, and the recently renovated Avo Playhouse, draw thousands of Southern Californians each year to experience award-winning productions. The Rancho Buena Vista Adobe provides students and visitors with hands-on educational and research programs of local history. The Antique Gas & Steam Engine Museum evokes nostalgic memories of rural lifestyles and family traditions.

Annual events: Highland Games at Brengle Terrace Park, Fourth of July at Brengle Terrace Park, Moonlight Stage Productions, Easter Egg Hunt at Brengle Terrace Park, Holiday Parade, Annual Duck Race, and the local farmers market.

Community life

Vista residents take a very active role in community life. Rotary, Soroptimist, and Elks organizations are popular, as is the Women's Club. The Public Arts Commission sponsored a city-wide utility box beautification project called "Vista in Bloom." The project involved painting designated utility boxes in Vista. Local artists designed and painted the boxes.

The environment

The Volunteer Vista Program is an active group and supports a variety of areas and issues. Coastal breezes help keep the air quality clean, while minimal manufacturing in the area helps to keep pollution down.

In and around town

Roads and highways: I-5, I-15, state highway 78, 76

Closest airports: San Diego International Airport is 37 miles south. John Wayne Airport in Irvine is 45 miles north, and Los Angeles International Airport is 93 miles north. Nearby Palomar and Oceanside Municipal airports handle smaller planes and provide frequent flights to Los Angeles.

Public transportation: The North County Transit District provides bus service.

Average daily commute: 26 minutes

More Information

Vista City Hall
600 Eucalyptus Avenue
Vista, CA 92085
760-726-1340
www.ci.vista.ca.us

The Wave Waterpark
161 Recreation Drive
Vista, CA 92085
760-940-9283
www.thewavewaterpark.com

Vista Unified School District
1234 Arcadia Avenue
Vista, CA 92084
760-726-2170
www.vusd.k12.ca.us

San Diego Gas and Electric Company
8330 Century Park CP31D
San Diego, CA 92123
800-411-7343
www.sdge.com

Vista Chamber of Commerce
201 Washington Street
Vista, CA 92084
760-726-1122
www.vistachamber.org

Southwestern Bell
101 West Broadway, Suite 1440
San Diego, CA 92101
800-750-2355
www.sbc.com

Moonlight Stage Productions
PO Box 1988
Vista, CA 92085
760-724-2110
www.moonlightstage.com

Vista Irrigation District
1391 Engineer Street
Vista, CA 92081
760-597-3100
www.vid-h2o.org