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Why Little Italy is the Perfect Family Neighborhood

If you're looking for a day of family fun that's beyond the typical park outings and indoor play spaces, we've got your guide to one of the most family-friendly spots in town. Since its days as a fishing community for Italian immigrants, Little Italy has evolved into a thriving San Diego neighborhood. The rich culture and history is reflected in its old world charm, colorful cafes, and numerous diverse attractions. Today it boasts impressive public art displays, and is host to over a dozen festivals year round. Read on for why we consider Little Italy to be the perfect setting for a day of family fun!



Photo Credit: [Little Italy Association](#)

Explore Little Italy

A visit to Little Italy isn't complete without a stroll through the [Farmer's Market](#), one of the best in San Diego. Every Saturday, from 8 a.m. – 2 p.m., you can browse more than 150 booths with unique products ranging from delicious fruits and vegetables, cheese, bread, flowers, artisan crafts, and much more. The farmer's market is the perfect venue for teaching kiddos about the food that they eat, and many vendors are generous with samples. But if the samples just aren't enough to satisfy hungry tummies, check out the hot food vendors! Kids can pick from paninis, crepes or something exotic such as Thai food. Get here early, as this market attracts a huge crowd!



Photo Credit: [Little Italy Association](#)

If you've got little ones who need a break from the Farmers Market, check out [Amici Park](#). Here you'll find bocce ball courts (bring your own bocce balls), a small amphitheater and a large grassy area to run around in. Since the grass playing field is located next to an elementary school, the public is welcome to enjoy the space when school is not in session. Don't miss the quaint, public art installation titled "Recipe for Friendship" complete with checkerboard tablecloths made from Italian glass mosaics.



Photo Credit: Marissa Mullen

Got a firetruck lover? Future firefighters can hop aboard a real fire engine at [The Firehouse Museum](#). A favorite among kids, this small museum once served as the home to the fire station in Little Italy. Today, it houses relics such as a 1903 Metropolitan Steamer and other fire station nostalgia that kids are sure to love. We love that entrance is free for kids. And don't miss the few gift items for sale.



Photo Credit: Jack M. via [Yelp](#)

Beat the Heat

The weather is warming up, and that means splash time at the [Waterfront Park](#). This park features two separate water areas on both sides of the County Administrative building, as well as a cool playground. Kids can test the waters and dip their toes in the giant shallow pools, then run through the fountains that spray overhead. The water feature — combined with innovative play equipment at the playground and a lovely view of the ships — will keep kids occupied for hours. The recent addition of three playful, whimsical sculptures from world renowned artist Niki de Saint Phalle provides yet another reason to visit and some great photo opps.



Photo Credit: Stacy J. via [Yelp](#)

Where to Eat

If the Farmer's Market didn't fill you up, there's no shortage of restaurants and great food in Little Italy. What kid doesn't love pizza? [NaPizza](#) is a newer establishment that is quickly gaining attention for its unique concept and gourmet flair. Not only do they serve square pizza, but they also are committed to using only organic, locally sourced ingredients. Don't forget to save room for a slice of Nutella pizza for dessert. Nestled in the heart of Little Italy is local favorite, [Landini's Pizzeria](#). This nofrills neighborhood eatery specializes in New York style "pizza by the slice." For the picky eaters, there is a variety of toppings to choose from, as well as an impressive selection of delicious pasta dishes.



Photo Credit: Vicki S. via [Yelp](#)

If the kids have been extra good, take them for a treat! You can't go wrong with refreshing gelato or a piping hot Italian chocolate at [Pappalecco](#). And it's hard to resist the cannolis at [Caffe Italia](#).



*Photo Credit: Kevin W.
via [Yelp](#)*

Once you've got your pizza and treats in hand, head over to the [Piazza Basilone](#) to eat your goodies. This charming outdoor space was designed for [The Little Italy Association](#) and named for Italian American war hero, Gunnery Sergeant John Basilone. This cozy spot is the ideal place for families to gather, eat and relax. Numerous celebrations throughout the year are also held at this spot. Take advantage of the café seating or the amphitheater and watch the kiddos enjoy the fountain!



Photo

to Credit: [Little Italy Facebook Page](#)

Have you been to Little Italy? What is your favorite family activity to do there? Tell us in the comments!
— Marissa Mullen