



An American Tour:
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Southern California's Santa Catalina Island

People have been living on Santa Catalina Island for at least 7,000 years. Archaeologists have found evidence of increasingly complex material cultures. At the time of first European contact, it is thought that the people living on Santa Catalina Island called their island Pimu and themselves Pimungans. After Spanish colonization, their apparently flourishing population declined drastically. As the mission system altered the economic landscape of Southern California, the Pimungans' trade and social networks were disrupted. In the aftermath of this enormous culture shock, their society could no longer sustain itself. By the mid-1820s, the few Pimungans left had migrated or were moved to the mainland.

Santa Catalina Island was awarded by to Thomas Robbins as a land grant in 1846. Robbins established a small ranch on the Island, but sold it in 1850, just two years after California became a part of the United States as the result of the Treaty of Guadeloupe Hidalgo. In 1849, the discovery of gold brought people from all over the world to California. Santa Catalina had its own mining flurry. As time passed, the lovely coves began to be dotted with tents in the summertime as the more adventurous mainlanders sailed across the channel to picnic on the shore and escape the heat of California's inland valleys. Santa Catalina Island was developing into a vacation destination.



Santa Catalina Island has served as the location for the filming of over 500 motion pictures, documentaries, television programs and commercials over the past 90 years. The Catalina Casino is without a doubt Catalina Island's most recognizable landmark. Built in 1929, the Casino – which is actually not a gambling hall but “place of entertainment” – played host to dozens of Big Bands through the 1930s and 1940s. Their are attractions galore in this little piece of the Mediterranean of the California coast: The Tuna Club, Green Pleasure Pier, Catalina CC & Golf Club, Zane Grey Pueblo Hotel, and much, much more.

If you're in the area, Catalina is a great day's jaunt out into famed California's sun and fun!

