

Ten Tips for Staying at the Crystal Cove Cottages



Our family has been trying to snag a coveted cottage at Crystal Cove for over two years. Booking one of these historic homes turns out to be a mix of planning, persistence and dumb luck. Over the Christmas break we were able to stay at Cottage #19A with friends staying in two other cottages. Now that we have our first vacation there in the books I feel obligated to

share some tips on how to get a cottage and then how to make the best of your stay.

1.) **Booking the cottage** Because the cottages are state owned you need to book yours through Reserve America six months in advanced. If you miss that window try to keep your eye out for cancellations (72 hrs in advance) by checking the website or better yet, set a request on the Reserve America's website that will notify you when a cottage becomes available during the preset times you select. Also, when the forecast says rain, you're more than likely to find 1-2 cancellations. Keep in mind in California, the rain never lasts more than a few hours.

2.) **Ruby's Shake Shack offers packed lunches "To Go."** The Shake Shack is perched right above the cottages and offers a specular view if you want to eat there, but we took our lunch "To Go." The nice people at Ruby's pack up our lunches into individual lunch bags for easy dining on the beach.



3.) **Bring games.** There is no Wi-Fi at the cottages and no TVs in the rooms. It's the perfect place to unplug and play some old-fashioned board games or beach games like corn hole or smash ball. Don't forget your football!



4.) **Rent a bonfire from the Beachcomber.** The only way to have a fire on the beach at Crystal Cove is to rent one from the Beachcomber. They will set it up – even the chairs for up to 12 people– and get it roaring for your group. For more info on the go to their website ->> [here](#).



5.) **The coffee situation in the morning.** If you're like my husband and me, you need to know in advance the coffee situation on any trip. There is a small coffee maker in the room but you can go to the check-in counter in the morning and get a carafe filled with coffee – free of charge – to take to your room or if you're lucky enough to have a patio, enjoy your java there. You can also grab a coffee from Ruby's or the Tiki Bar at Beachcomber. Lots of options so you're good.



6.) **Bring extra blankets.** There are extra blankets in the rooms but it gets chilly at night at the beach. Each of us brought our own throw blanket to take outside and cuddle in and then use on top of the bed. We ALL used them.



7.) **Heaven for sea glass collectors.** Crystal Cove offers some of the most beautiful sea glass in SoCal. You ARE allowed to

collect: sea glass, driftwood (up to 50lbs.) but keep in mind you ARE NOT allowed to collect shells, sand, rocks, any living creatures, or anything out of the tide pools.



8.) **Hit Trader Joe's before checking in.** The Crystal Cove Trader Joe's is just minutes from the Crystal Cove Cottages.

Some of the cottages have kitchens – a few have stoves – but all have refrigerators. Grab pre-made salads, supplies for sandwiches and healthy snacks at TJ's. But keep in mind whatever you bring you'll have to carry to your cottage (or load on a cart).

9.) **Pack simply.** I can't stress this enough. You should not only embrace the laid-back vibe at the cottages but for practical reasons: simplicity is the key to packing for a stay at the cottages. Wear jeans more than once. Wear your hair in a ponytail. Don't bring a massive amounts of makeup. Pack small meals and snacks. Also, don't have a lot of loose items. Pack everything into bags or suitcases. You'll either need to transfer them onto the cart that takes you to your cabin or walk your things down from the parking lot. Either way, you want it all to be concise and secured.

10.) **Become an advocate for The Crystal Cove Alliance.** Their mission is to renovate and preserve for future generations the Historic District's unique cultural, natural and historic resources and to make these values available for the enjoyment and education of all. There is a wealth of information on their website ->> [here](#). This is a must-read before your trip!





