



—VISIT—
PACIFICA
—A Pretty Cool Place—

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Feeling Crabby? It's Dungeness Crab Season at Pacifica Pier

Are you feeling crabby? Well, now is the time to pack up your traps and gear because according to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (<https://wildlife.ca.gov/Fishing/Ocean/Regulations/Fishing-Map/northern>), the 2020 recreational fishery season for Dungeness Crab (*Metacarcinus magister*) is now open. (Commercial crabbing is on hold due to precautions for whale migration safety).

Where's the best bet to capture these tasty crustaceans? Try Pacifica Municipal Pier, which is open from 4am to 10pm, there's no fishing license required and it's FREE!

So, why is the Pacifica Pier on the top of the list for crabbing? It's not just for sport; it's part of this unique beach front town's "nature." Pacificans and the neighboring communities are united by their passion for sport fishing. Residents and visitors alike get into sort of a "tailgate" mode, setting up camp, arranging the picnic and rolling their carts filled with crabbing gear along the Pier, including everything from buckets, coolers, blankets, fishing poles, crabbing nets to squid, chicken and other bait.

Most days, the Pier is filled with individual fishermen as well as entire families who are all set in crabbing mode with the creature comforts to chill out and take in the Pacifica outdoors. Sea lions, whales and sharks are often sighted off the Pier.

Gear: There are many ways to catch crabs, including using a heavy fishing pole with a snare trap on the end; a crab basket that closes when a crab goes in; a weighted crab net; or a crab pot.

Bait: Squid, chicken, shrimp, anchovies and fish heads.

Rules: Each person is allowed to keep up to 10 Dungeness crabs per day and each must be at least 5¾ inches. There is no overhead casting.

Facilities: Pacifica Pier has cleaning stations, benches, bathrooms, as well as a cafe that also sells bait (Chit Chat Café, 2100 Beach Blvd.) near the entrance of the pier.

Contact: The California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Domoic Acid Fishery Closure Information Line at (831) 649-2883 is a great resource for the status of the Dungeness crabs each season.

The Process:

Crabbing is not difficult...it just requires a little patience. After loading the bait into the bait box, you simply drop the net into the water, holding onto the rope on the other end. You'll wait until the hoop reaches the bottom and then tie off the end of the rope to the Pier. Once you've lowered your hoop, simply wait about 20 minutes for the crabs to discover your bait. While you wait, sit back and enjoy the scene. Keep in mind not to drop the hoop too close to the Pier pillars as it can easily get tangled. If your hoop does get caught, don't give up right away as there are ways to get your hoop untangled.

Once The Crabs Are Caught:

The Pacifica Pier offers a station for cleaning your catch on the spot or you can keep your crabs in a bucket/cooler filled with water and clean them once you get home.

How To Cook Dungeness Crab:

You will want to first boil the crab for about seven minutes per pound in a covered pot and then rinse in cold water until the crab is cool enough for you to handle. Then break off the apron, which is between the back legs and carapace, the large shell of the crab. Rinse the crab again to remove all guts. Next, remove the gills (from both sides of the body) and the mandible, which is the mouthpiece of the crab. Again, rinse to clean the guts. Finally, turn the crab upside down and break it in half. The crabs are so fresh that you don't need to add much to them. Simply serve with a lemon wedge or melted garlic butter and enjoy with your favorite bottle or wine and sourdough bread.

General Fishing Information about the Pacifica Pier

Pacifica is home to one of the best fishing piers in the state. Because of the number and quality of the fish caught off Pacifica's shores, the Pier has earned a number one ranking among anglers in the Bay Area. Although fishing can be good year-round, many consider the summer months to be the best when salmon and striped bass can be caught. No admission is charged and no fishing license is required at the Pacifica Municipal Pier.

Hours:

Open daily from 4am to 10pm, unless closed due to inclement weather, high surf, repairs, etc.

Prohibited:

Alcohol
Smoking on the pier
Biking on the pier
Overhead casting
Dogs ~~on the pier~~, except service dogs
Glass containers

Directions

Travel Highway 1 to Pacifica, take the Paloma Avenue/Francisco Boulevard exit, take Paloma west to Beach Boulevard, turn left and travel south to the pier.

History

The Reverend Herschell Harkins Memorial Pier (a.k.a. the Pacifica Municipal Pier) was built in 1973 and designed in part to serve as the support structure for the city's now-obsolete sewer outfall line. The 1,140 feet long "L" shape pier has been closed for repairs and re-opened several times over the last decade or so. It is currently considered in good shape, though it shows the result of its age and the heavy use it receives.