



For traveling seniors who want to recall childhood days of enjoying their miniature railroads, this is the place to go.

The San Diego Model Railroad Museum is located in Balboa Park, on the lower floors of the Casa de Balboa. Celebrating its 100th birthday, the building was featured in the 1915 Pan Pacific celebration. That year, San Diego joined other cities marking the opening of the Panama Canal. The Model Railroad Museum was created in 1982. Visitors accustomed to model railroads in small, cramped basements are amazed at the size of the museum. It consists of more than 28,000 feet, and features hundreds of examples of individual miniature trains, some with long lines of authentic-looking passenger and boxcars.

Surrounding the trains are dioramas of mountains, beaches, city scenes and desert train routes. For the very young and hobbyists, there are also exhibits of toy trains, some dating back more than a century.

Inside town buildings' lighted windows, miniature families may be observed eating, sleeping, bathing and dancing. There's even a tiny outhouse behind one of the buildings building with a miniature occupant in it.

The museum is sponsored by several local miniature and model railroad clubs, and volunteers update the exhibits. One recent addition features a train along its track near the Pacific Ocean, complete with sandy beach and surf dotted with surfers and shark fins.

Some exhibits are stationary displays of authentic scaled-down replicas of real trains from today and yesterday. Other lively miniatures feature all the train noises, running on various track widths, lights and sights that can delight kids from ages one to 100.

The San Diego Model Railroad Museum is at 1649 El Prado in Balboa Park, San Diego, CA 92101, sdmodelrailroadm.com. Visitor hours are Tuesday to Friday from 11 am to 4 pm; Saturday and Sunday from 11 am to 5 pm; and closed Mondays.