

# Catalina

*The island of romance*

Late last year, a group of sixty Catalina Island stakeholders gathered in an ocean view room overlooking Avalon Bay to discuss how they wanted to position themselves to the world. The consensus? Love was the key word.

There's the love people bring to the island: immortalized in a song long ago as "the island of romance," it's where many visitors had a first date, proposed or even exchanged vows. And there's the love the island brings to the world: residents noted that wherever they go, when they say they're from Catalina Island, the most common response is, "I love Catalina." A new slogan was born: Love Catalina Island.

The Catalina Island Tourism Authority made preparations to launch this image on Valentine's Day, February 14, 2020. Then along came a global pandemic.

By March 20, the island was fully closed to non-essential travelers. Hundreds of jobs were lost, and a number of businesses ultimately closed permanently. By mid-June, things were opening up again—restaurants and stores could offer in-person dining and shopping, hotels could begin booking leisure travel, and tour and activity companies could resume operations, all within California state guidelines.

Without the original full February fanfare, the island did get their new slogan back on track with an online "Summer of Love" virtual concert series, while the Catalina Island Museum now has a full program of virtual events.

A visit to their website will give you the latest information on what's available in person, along with special offers from lodging, activities, dining, shopping and other tourism partners.

You'll find you can dine al fresco at the beach, enjoy beach and undersea activities, parasailing, hiking, bison tours, falconry, Hummer tours, ziplining

and more.

Catalina Island is also a compelling place for the remote work and distance learning so many of us now have as a way of life.

And yes, love is alive on Catalina, where you can currently book an Island Romance Package including round-trip transit, Avalon sightseeing, a 15-minute helicopter tour, a bottle of wine and a box of chocolates.

Find details on what's open and the latest Catalina Island packages at LoveCatalina.com, where you can also get your hands on their free 80-page *Catalina Island Visitors Guide*, either by direct download or by mail, with detailed descriptions of accommodations, restaurants, shops, services and activities.

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