WEEKEND GETAWAY TO OCEANSIDE

Orange Coast

DIY DESSERTS
BACK BAY KAYAKING
AUSSIE MEAT PIES
GOURMET S'MORES
DANCE VENUES
ADULT MILKSHAKES
BIKE TRAIL
FINISHING SALTS
IMPROV COMEDY
TAKE-OUT CHICKEN

Best of 2013!

CELEBRATING 88 DAZZLING FINDS

PERFECT ICE CUBES
ALBACORE BURGER
SMALL-PLATES MENU
OPEN-SKY CINEMA
SEAWEED SOAK
TIMELESS TOYS
SERIOUS BIKE SHOP
FAMILY FARM
YUMMY SMOOTHIES
and many more!

POST-MONKEY BIZ DESIGNER PAUL FRANK'S LIFE AFTER JULIUS
Gettin' Out

Here's the very best from Orange County's parks and bays. Just add sunscreen.

FAMILY

IRVINE REGIONAL PARK

Activities abound in California's oldest regional park: the Orange County Zoo, hiking and equestrian trails, pony rides, ball fields, Irvine Park Railroad, barbecues, and more. Canopies of mature sycamores and oaks, and spectacular views of the Santa Ana Mountains melt away urban stresses. ➤ Irvine Park Road, Orange, 714-973-6835, oc-parks.com/irvinepark

TREES

CARBON CANYON REGIONAL PARK

There's a 10-acre grove of coastal redwoods, the largest SoCal grouping, about a mile along the hiking trail here. Planted in 1979, many of the trees have grown to 100 feet. In the early morning, the air is especially sharp and clean. ➤ 6442 Carbon Canyon Road, Brea, 714-973-3160, oc-parks.com/parks/carbon

FREE DANCE TRAINING

→ Founded 30 years ago, THE WOODEN FLOOR provides free dance training for hundreds of low-income children. But its purpose and goals are more expansive and community related: academic tutoring, counseling, family services—even college scholarships. The students' annual late-May recital features commissioned works by celebrated choreographers. 1810 N. Main St., Santa Ana, 714-541-8314, thewoodenfloor.org

CYCLING

ALISO AND WOOD CANYONS WILDERNESS PARK

Our pal and Register outdoors writer David Whiting compares these trails to a ski resort for mountain bikers—bumpy hills to double black diamonds. For a trail that combines easy riding with a slobber-knocking workout, we recommend the Rock-It Loop. ➤ 28373 Alicia Parkway, Laguna Niguel, 949-323-2200, oc-parks.com/parks/aliso

STROLL

SOKA UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

Founded on the principles of educator, Buddhist leader and anti-war activist Tunesaburo Makiguchi (1871-1944), the university offers astounding tranquility. On most weekends, visitors can enjoy the walkways, gardens, fountains, and expansive hilltop views in solitary peacefulness. Free parking and dog friendly. ➤ University Drive, Aliso Viejo, soka.edu

KAYAK

NEWPORT BAY CONSERVANCY

The conservancy's two-hour guided kayak trips ($25) are a fun and communal way to see Newport Beach's Back Bay. It's a perfect voyage for beginners, and your guide will direct you away from the sandbars while helping you identify all those skimmer (that's a bird, folks), willets, egrets, and great blue herons. ➤ Reservations: 949-223-2269, newportbay.org

IMPROV COMEDY JUGGERNAUT

SPECTACLES IMPROV ENGINE features some of the best comedic talent in the county. There are weekly shows, and an annual festival, all at Stages Theater. Six teams of performers employ a variety of improv styles. They also offer drop-in classes for those wanting to delve into the art of improvisation. 400 E. Commonwealth Ave, Fullerton, spectaclesimprov.com

FRIENDLY TRIP

ECOLOGY CENTER aims to inspire good environmental practices through production, building, and teaching, and reaches its goals through classes in urban biodiversity, composting, renewable energy, and more. Located in the historical Congdon greenhouse, the center's Tools for Change stewardship store sells self-serve kits. 622 S Alipere St, San Juan Capistrano, 949-445-7523, ecenter.org

BUDGET SPA

→ It's not particularly tranquil at SPA. Treatments take place in what amounts to a cupboard within a large, brightly lighted room, and the therapists are as non-None as they come. But when the brisk full-body scrub is over, your skin is wrinkle-free and soft like velvet, and you'll have spent just $30. Pay an extra $35, and...