<!DOCTYPE html>

<html lang="en" dir="ltr">

<head>

<meta charset="utf-8">

<title>Santa Cruz Island</title>

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<main><p>On the 4th of July 2019, after learning about uninhabited islands off the coast of Ventura, I sailed off to Santa Cruz. Santa Cruz is one of the five islands that comprised the Channel Islands National Park. The other four are Anacapa, Santa Rosa, San Miguel, and Santa Barbara. All of these islands and the other Channel Islands (San Clemente, San Nicolas, and Santa Catalina) were designated as a [biosphere reserve](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Channel\_Islands\_National\_Park) by UNESCO in 1976.</p>

<p>Along with other travelers—some day trippers; some overnighters, I braved the hour boat ride in the choppy Pacific Ocean. We encountered a red buoy sheltering young sea lions and massive ships as they made their journeys on the Separation Zone, aka freeway of the ships. It was particularly interesting to see the Disney Cruise Ship, which towered the Hyundai cargo ship nearby.</p>

<img src="https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/science/sentinel-site-program/channel-islands/CINMS\_SS.jpg" alt="Separation Zone" width="700">

<p>Before reaching Santa Cruz, we were greeted by <em>Anacapa</em>, the smallest island of the archipelago with a total area of 1.14 square miles.\*\*CITE wikipedia\*\*. Beyond the horizon lies the biggest island, Santa Cruz, with a total area of 96.51 square miles. \*\*CITE wikipedia\*\*</p>

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<section><h2>History of Occupation</h2>

<p>The Channel Islands including Santa Cruz were inhabited by the Chumash and Tongva tribes. San Miguel itself was believed to have been continuosly inhabited by the Chumash tribe for over 12,000 years. Archaeologist Phil Orr in 1959 discovered ancient human remains, <em>Arlington Springs Man</em>, on Santa Rosa Island, which radiocarbon dating revealed as 13,000 years old find. The date was particularly interesting in terms of migration in the Americas. At that time, the oldest known was the Anzick Boy, aged [12,700 years](https://www.realclearscience.com/blog/2018/04/17/six\_of\_the\_oldest\_human\_remains\_found\_in\_the\_us.html), which proved the north to south land migration through Russia-Alaska land bridge. The <em>Arlington Springs Man</em>, named after the excavation site, would change this course.</p>

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\*\*QUOTE\*\* "Arlington Springs Man 'lends support for a theory that the earliest peoples to enter the Western Hemisphere may have migrated along the Pacific coast from Siberia and Alaska using boats.'" -- John R. Johnson, Curator of Anthropology at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

<p>There is little evidence whether the Arlington Springs Man is the ancestors of the Chumash and Tongva peoples, but the tribes flourished in the islands from as early as [11,000 years ago](https://www.nps.gov/chis/learn/historyculture/nativeinhabitants.htm) as archaeological site in San Miguel Island suggest. In Santa Cruz along 11 Chumash village sites were excavated.</p>

<p>The Tongva peoples occupied the southern island of Santa Barbara. But unlike the Chumash, the Tongva did not seem to have permanent settlements--perhaps due to drought and more rigid landscape.</p>

<p>Historical habitation drastically changed during of the Spanish conquest of the Americas which included the a big portion of the United States.</p>

<p>Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo landed on San Miguel Island in 1542 on behalf of Spain to convert the natives to Christianity.</p>

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<h2>Restoring Santa Cruz</h2>

\*\*QUOTE "Once on the brink of ecological collapse, Santa Cruz Island is a portrait of what southern California used to be like before the footprint of man." -- [The Nature Conservancy](https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/united-states/california/stories-in-california/santa-cruz-island-anniversary/)

<p>I just recently finished reading T.C. Boyle's When the Killing's Done. The novel touches on the complicated issue of ecological restoration projects. When Nature Conservancy and the National Park Services acquired the Channel Islands National Parks in 1980, the aim was to restore the islands to their original ecological state. Santa Cruz after going through series of cattle and sheep ranches and even had a vineyard at one point was going to be rehabilitated. The cattles and sheeps were eliminated and vineyards vanished. Workers were sent back to the mainland. What remained were empty buildings and rusting cars and machineries--but also feral pigs, which were introduced into the island in 1850s by the Chumash tribe. In 2005, NPS and The Nature Conservancy announced their plans to completely eradicate feral pigs from the island "to save the endangered island fox and nine rare plants from extinction and protect archaeological sites" (https://www.nps.gov/chis/learn/news/feral-pig-eradication-begins-on-santa-cruz-island.htm).

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