

## Surfin' U.S.A. (1963)

The Beach Boys

### LISTEN FOR

- Lyrics highlight hot surf spots
- Rich back-up vocals
- Ringing falsetto hook
- Surf-oriented instrumentals
- Modeled on "Sweet Little Sixteen" (Chuck Berry, 1958)

### CREATION

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*Songwriters* Brian Wilson, Chuck Berry

*Label, Record* Capitol 4932

*Musicians* Mike Love (lead vocal), David Marks (rhythm guitar), Brian Wilson (bass guitar, organ, vocals), Carl Wilson (lead guitar, vocals), Dennis Wilson (vocals, drums)

*Producer* Nik Venet

*Recording* January 1963

*Charts* Pop 3, R&B 20

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### MUSIC

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*Genre* Surf rock

*Form* Simple verse

*Key* E-flat major

*Meter* 4/4

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## LISTENING GUIDE

Time	Form	Lyric Cue	Listen For
<b>0:00</b>	<b>Intro (4)</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chuck Berry-style guitar intro with heavy reverb</li> </ul>
<b>0:03</b>  0:23	<b>Verse 1 w/refrain (16)</b>	"If everybody had"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead vocal with "oo" backups</li> <li>• Stop time with bass drum beats that continues.</li> <li>• Refrain.</li> </ul>
<b>0:27</b>  0:43  0:47	<b>Verse 2 w/refrain (16)</b>	"You'd catch 'em"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Backup vocals sing "inside, outside U.S.A."</li> <li>• Band plays in regular time to add rhythmic drive.</li> <li>• Falsetto hook "everybody's gone surfin'" gives impression of chorus</li> <li>• Refrain.</li> </ul>
<b>0:50</b>	<b>Verse 3 w/refrain (16)</b>	"We'll all be"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As verse 1, in stop time.</li> </ul>
<b>1:15</b> 1:32 1:35	<b>Verse 4 w/refrain (16)</b>	"At Haggerties"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As verse 2, regular time.</li> <li>• Falsetto hook.</li> <li>• Refrain.</li> </ul>
<b>1:39</b> 1:56 1:59	<b>Instr. verse w/refrain (16)</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electric organ solo, guitar solo.</li> <li>• Falsetto hook.</li> <li>• Sung refrain.</li> </ul>
<b>2:04</b>	<b>Outro (16)</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repeat of hook and refrain to fade.</li> </ul>

## LYRICS

If everybody had an ocean  
 Across the U.S.A.  
 Then everybody'd be surfin'  
 Like Californ-i-a  
 You'd seem 'em wearing their baggies  
 Huarachi sandals too  
 A bushy bushy blonde hairdo  
 Surfin' U.S.A.

You'd catch 'em surfin' at Del Mar  
 Ventura County line  
 Santa Cruz and Trestle  
 Australia's Narrabeen  
 All over Manhattan  
 And down Doheny Way

Everybody's gone surfin'  
 Surfin' U.S.A.

We'll all be planning that route  
 We're gonna take real soon  
 We're waxing down our surfboards  
 We can't wait for June  
 We'll all be gone for the summer  
 We're on surfari to stay  
 Tell the teacher we're surfin'  
 Surfin' U.S.A.

At Haggerties and Swamies  
 Pacific Palisades

San Onofre and Sunset  
Redondo Beach L.A.  
All over La Jolla  
At Wa'imea Bay.

Everybody's gone surfin'  
Surfin' U.S.A.

#### SOURCES

- Katherine Charlton, *Rock Music Styles: A History*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 2011), 78–80.
- John Covach and Andrew Flory, *What's That Sound*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2015), 144.
- <http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/beachboys/surfinusa.html>.