

from the editors of *Convene*

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5 Things You Didn't Know About Long Beach

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1. [The Long Beach Arena](#)'s new 45,000-square-foot Pacific Ballroom is incredible — and allows meeting planners to truly think outside the box.



This state-of-the-art, flexible meeting space is equipped with LED lighting, cutting-edge audio capabilities, plus a flexible “flying” ceiling grid that allows event planners to completely transform the ballroom. “We wanted to create a sense of space,” said Michael Ferguson, the project’s design consultant and director of the Los Angeles Office for Theatre Projects Consultants. “It’s meant to be a blank canvas, so people can create the space they want.”

2. Long Beach is home to the ship that helped end WWII.



[The Queen Mary](#) is a 77-year-old ship, once used as an ocean liner, that transformed into the largest and fastest troopship at the start of WWII — capable of transporting 16,000 troops at 30 knots. Winston Churchill, who traveled on the Queen Mary three times during the war, once said that without the ship's aid, "the day of final victory must unquestionably have been postponed." The Queen Mary is now used as event and hotel space, and has served as the set of several Hollywood films.

3. This Southern California destination sees snow once a year.



At least artificial snow. [CHILL](#), a winter-filled event held at the Queen Mary every November, includes a six-lane ice-tubing slide, an ice skating rink, and an entire ice castle, housed inside the [giant dome that was once home to the Spruce Goose](#) and now doubles as event space.

4. The city is full of delicious foods that span the gamut — from grilled cauliflower steaks at [James Republic](#) to authentic chilaquiles at the [Hotel Maya's Fuego](#) to good ol' fried snickers at CHILL.





5. Long Beach moonlights as a mini-Venice.



[Gondola Getaways](#) are a great way to explore a different side of Long Beach. Cruise the canals of Naples Island on authentic Venetian gondolas and take in all of the eclectic architecture that makes up Long Beach. During the winter holidays, the houses that line the canals are decorated and lit up at night, creating a beautiful backdrop for tours.