



An American Tour: 70



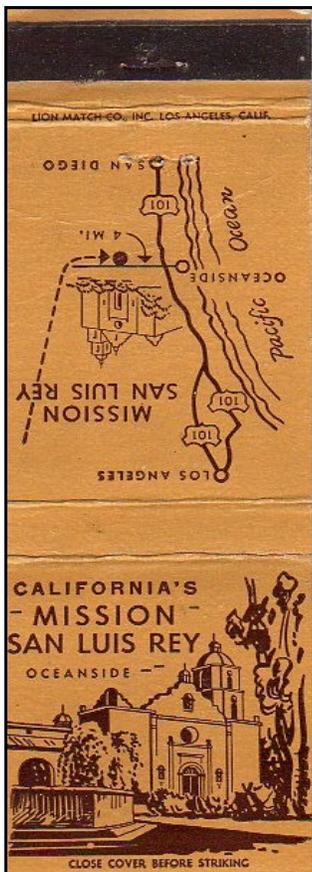
California's *Mission San Luis Rey*

Mission San Luis Rey de Francia is a former Spanish mission in the present-day city of Oceanside, California. The mission was founded on June 13, 1798 by Padre Fermín Lasuén, and was the eighteenth of the Spanish missions established in California. Named for Saint Louis, the mission lent its name to the Luiseño tribe of Mission Indians.

The current church, built in 1811, is the third church on this location. It is a National Historic Landmark, for its pristine example of a Spanish mission church complex. Today the mission complex functions as a parish church of the Diocese of San Diego as well as a museum and retreat center.

At its prime the Mission San Luis Rey's structures and services compound covered almost 950,400 acres , making it one of the largest of the missions, along with its agricultural land grant property beyond.

The first season's episodes of the *Zorro* TV series were filmed here in 1957. Walt Disney added a skull and crossbones to the cemetery entrance. In 1998, Sir Gilbert Levine led members of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and, with the special permission of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, the ancient Cappella Giulia Choir of St. Peter's Basilica, in a series of concerts to commemorate the 200th Anniversary of the founding of the mission. These festival concerts constituted the first-ever visit of this 500 year-old choir to the Western Hemisphere. The concerts were broadcast on NPR's "Performance Today". In February 2013, a seismic retrofitting was completed.



Today, Mission San Luis Rey de Francia is a working mission, cared for by the people who belong to the parish, with ongoing restoration projects. Mission San Luis Rey has a Museum, Visitors Center, gardens with the historic Pepper Tree, and the original small Cemetery. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mission_San_Luis_Rey_de_Francia]

