

In Memory of Brain Wilson, the Beach Boys and [Surfin U.S.A.](#)

Brian Douglas Wilson (June 20, 1942 – c. June 11, 2025) was an American musician, singer, songwriter, and record producer who co-founded [the Beach Boys](#). Often [called a genius](#) for his **novel** (new, unusual) approaches to [pop](#) composition and **mastery** (control, knowledge) of recording techniques, he is widely **acknowledged** (recognised) as one of the most innovative and significant songwriters of the 20th century. His best-known work is distinguished for its high production values, complex [harmonies](#) and orchestrations, [vocal layering](#), and introspective or **ingenuous** (very imaginative, clever) themes. Wilson is also known for his once-high vocal **range** (array, variety of tone) and lifelong struggles with [mental illness](#). He is considered one of the greatest [pop] musicians of all time.

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brian_Wilson).

Formed in 1961, the *Beach Boys* were originally three brothers, a cousin and a friend. [Surfin U.S.A.](#) was their first hit in 1963, and reflected the southern California youth culture of surfing, cars and romance – called the "[California sound](#)". The band was critically **acclaimed** (applauded, hailed) and commercially successful. When the Beatles arrived in the United States in 1964, beginning the "[British Invasion](#)", the Beach Boys came under strong competition, but managed to continue being successful. *Surfin U.S.A.* is emblematic of their style – happy, very white and privileged, but also much more complex musically than it seems.

If everybody had an ocean (ooh)
Across the U.S.A. (ooh)
Then everybody'd be surfin' (ooh)
Like Californ-i-a (ooh)
You'd see them wearing their **baggies** (ooh)
Huarache sandals too (ooh)
A bushy bushy blond **hairdo** (ooh)
Surfin' U.S.A. (ooh)
You'd catch 'em surfin' at Del Mar (inside, outside, U.S.A.)
Ventura County line (inside, outside, U.S.A.)
Santa Cruz and Trestles (inside, outside, U.S.A.)
Australia's Narrabeen (inside, outside, U.S.A.)
All over Manhattan (inside, outside, U.S.A.)
And down Doheny Way (inside, outside)
Everybody's gone surfin'
Surfin' U.S.A.
We'll all be planning that route (ooh)
We're gonna take real soon (ooh)
We're **waxing down** our surfboards (ooh)
We can't wait for June (ooh)
We'll all be gone for the summer (ooh)
We're on surfari to stay (ooh)
Tell the teacher we're surfin' (ooh)
Surfin' U.S.A. (ooh)
Haggerty's and Swami's (onside, outside, U.S.A.)
Pacific Palisades (inside, outside, U.S.A.)
San Onofre and Sunset (inside, outside, U.S.A.)
Redondo Beach, LA (inside, outside, U.S.A.)
All over La Jolla (inside, outside, U.S.A.)
At Waimea Bay (inside, outside)
Everybody's gone surfin'
Surfin' U.S.A.
Everybody's gone surfin'
Surfin' U.S.A.

Baggies: surfing shorts

Huarache: a label, brand of sandals

Hairdo: a haircut, a hair style, the way hair is brushed

To wax a surfboard: to put wax on it to make it slide more easily in water

Haggerty's and Swami's beaches etc. – all different beaches in southern California



Brian Wilson au New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival en 2012.