CALIFORNIA'S

CENTRAL COAST

2010 VISITORS GUIDE

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COVER PHOTO BY NICHOLAS ROEMMELT

Bixby Bridge and Big Sur coastline

Salinas Valley vineyards

Welcome to the Central Coast

Of the world's great coastlines, none can compare to California's—for its truly unique combination of beauty, variety, and accessibility, recreational opportunities, and the extraordinary range of ways to enjoy the landscape, both indoors and out.

The Central Coast comprises seven counties, stretching from Ventura County just north of Los Angeles to Santa Clara County, just south of San Francisco. Those seven counties include more than 350 miles of coastline. That represents a little less than half of the state's total of 840 miles, but this is the segment that represents the principal transition from the broad, sandy, sunny beaches of Southern California to the rugged, rocky, fog-shrouded cliffs and bluffs of Northern California. On the Central Coast, you get the best of both worlds.

And the best, here, is very good indeed. It includes not just the supremely beautiful beaches and coastal scenery, but also incredibly charming towns and cities, both at seaside and inland; several of California's internationally renowned wine country regions; an astonishing selection of world-class food and dining; recreation ranging from surfing and sea kayaking to rock climbing, biking, horseback riding, and mountain hiking; sightseeing including one of the best highway drives in the world; and countless opportunities for exploration and discovery.

The Central Coast is a condensed, readily accessible version of everything people come to California for.

Wine buffs already know about California's Central Coast wine country. It wasn't the state's more famous northern wine region, but the Central Coast that wine guru Robert M. Parker said "will rule America" in quality of wines produced. And it's not just the quality of the wines that makes the wine country of the Central Coast so exceptional. The touring, too, is more relaxed and enjoyable; the roads are uncrowded, and many of the wineries and vineyards are still small enough that the winemakers themselves are often readily available to visitors—and may even be the ones pouring samples in the tasting rooms.

The most spectacular section of the California coast is the Central Coast.

PHOTOS OPPOSITE: DAVID GUBERNICK • THIS PAGE: DAVID GUBERNICK/MONTEREY COUNTY CVB

Fisherman's Wharf

The Central Coast has truly come into its own as one of California's very finest culinary destinations, combining superb food and wine with a comfortable, easygoing, relaxing, and relaxed atmosphere.

The chefs and restaurants of the Central Coast have, over the last several years, earned for themselves and for the region a reputation for genuine excellence, creating an outstanding local cuisine of fresh ingredients grown or raised in the area.

You will eat well here whether you care deeply about food or hardly at all. And there are attractions and activities in the Central Coast to satisfy just about any interest or appetite.

For history buffs, the Central Coast is home to more than half of the 21 Franciscan missions Fathers Junípero Serra and Fermín Lasuén built in California between 1770 and 1804. Most are now hugely popular visitor attractions. In 1957, film director Alfred Hitchcock used an embellished San Juan Bautista as the setting for the beginning and ending of *Vertigo* (the mission didn't actually have the bell tower—which, if you've seen the movie, is sort of an important part).

And it's hard to know who would not be fascinated by the sightseeing crown jewel of the region: William Randolph Hearst's vast, quixotic, never-completed estate, Hearst Castle. America's answer to Neuschwanstein Castle, Hearst Castle is a breathtaking spectacle, an oddity of history, culture, sociology, and architecture. Overlooking the Pacific Ocean from "La Cuesta Encantada"®—"The Enchanted Hill"®, it draws hundreds of thousands of visitors each year with its antiques, its spectacular beauty, its ambitious eccentricity, its hypnotic history, and the complex (and well-documented) phenomenon of its very existence.

The Central Coast contains a multitude of other (albeit smaller) cultural attractions, as well. Santa Barbara County alone is home to more than 50 museums, including the Santa Barbara Historical Museum, the nationally renowned Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, the waterfront Santa Barbara Maritime Museum, and the distinguished Santa Barbara Museum of Art, considered one of the nation's outstanding regional museums.

San Luis Obispo, home to the internationally respected California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly), is a diverse, vibrant, and sophisticated college town. (The "Poly P," visible on the hillside east of town, is one of the few hillside initials on the National Register of Historic Places and is an official navigational landmark for passing airplanes).

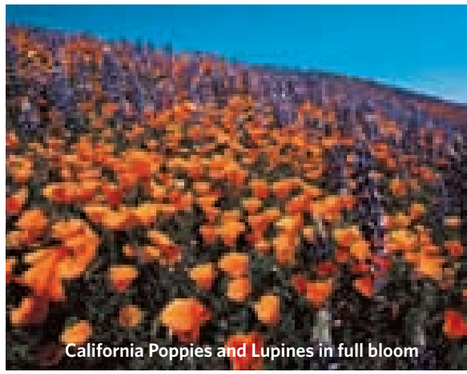
Santa Cruz charmingly combines the easygoing, hang-loose, play-hard attitude of its world-famous surfing community with the book-loving, cosmopolitan vibe of its equally esteemed university.

And Monterey, of course, is home to one of the world's most highly celebrated facilities, the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

Pacific Grove coastline

Monterey County golf

Sea Lions are frequently seen along the coast


California Poppies and Lupines in full bloom

PHOTOS OPPOSITE: MONTEREY COUNTY CVB • THIS PAGE L-R, TOP TO BOTTOM: JULIE ARMSTRONG • MONTEREY COUNTY CVB • DAVID T. GOMEZ • JEANETTE SKINZ

Carmel-by-the-Sea offers some of the most upscale shopping, gallery-hopping, and dining in California, made incredibly charming by its spectacular beachside setting and the irresistible ambience of its "fairy-tale" cottages, its pedestrian-friendly streets and easily walkable scale.

For nature lovers, the Central Coast is a paradise of another sort. From world-famous surfing beaches in Ventura, Santa Barbara, and Santa Cruz counties, to the rugged rocky cliffs and dense mountainous redwood groves at Big Sur, to the rolling, shifting landscape of Oceano Dunes, to the soft, warm inland valleys, this landscape welcomes exploration and enjoyment.

At Oceano Dunes State Vehicle Recreation Area, it's legal to drive right out onto the sand. Other stretches invite walking, beachcombing, swimming, fishing, and tidepooling.

The spectacular gathering of thousands of elephant seals near Piedras Blancas Lighthouse is one of *Sunset* magazine's "West at its best" recommendations. It's possible from hundreds of points along the shore in the region to view migrating whales in season. Much of the Central Coast lies along the Pacific Flyway; marshes and wetlands throughout the region draw flocks of migrating birds (in addition to supporting resident populations), attractions highlighted on the Central Coast Birding Trail. Equally spectacular are the hordes of Monarch butterflies that migrate in Pismo Beach November through February. And the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden is a 78-acre living exhibit of California flora.

Pinnacles National Monument is a landscape from another planet, a rocky and fascinating spectacle formed by the collapse of an extinct volcano. In Morro Bay, massive Morro Rock is a peregrine falcon sanctuary that also happens to be a fascinating oddity in its own right—a geological structure 50 acres at its base and 578 feet tall.

The Channel Islands National Park and The Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary is a breathtakingly unspoiled preserve of five islands 20 miles off the coast of Santa Barbara and Ventura counties, sometimes called "America's Galápagos." Boat trips leave from both counties for hikers, walkers, birders, divers, and many others.

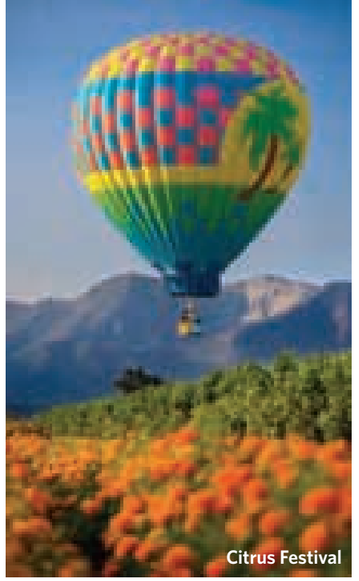
The Central Coast is a unique destination, replete with attractions and enticements. It's easy to reach, easy to wander, and impossible not to enjoy.

It is a perfect place for families, weddings, romantic getaways, relaxing weekends, recreation, sedate contemplation, wine tasting, fine dining, fishing, shopping, birding, cycling, surfing, photography, and so very, very much more.

The Central Coast is a place visitors love again and again.

Channel Islands National Park

Ventura County



Citrus Festival

Experience the true California lifestyle while enjoying famous surf spots, a budding wine region, historic ranches, seaside harbors, fresh seafood, majestic beaches, exquisite cuisine, miles of farmland, arts and culture. Explore Channel Islands National Park and Marine Sanctuary, "America's Galápagos" with unspoiled islands, unique wildlife and world-class diving.

Ventura County, the southernmost county of the Central Coast, is a fascinating mix of California attractions. The county is home to beautiful beaches, sun-warmed coastal cities, superb dining, matchless recreational opportunities (on both land and water), and glorious wildlife viewing. It also offers a glimpse into the region's rich cultural and agricultural history.

You will find activities of every kind, points of historic interest, and a multitude of attractions throughout the region. In Santa Paula, where Union Oil was born, the California Oil Museum chronicles the fascinating history of the area's oil industry, which was crucial to the development of the entire region. In Ventura, the Mission San Buenaventura was the ninth and last of California's world-famous chain of 21 missions founded by Father Junípero Serra himself and the Mission remains as the centerpiece of the vintage downtown cultural district. The town of Fillmore showcases a fully operational antique train, featuring vintage equipment, 1920s-era Pullman coaches, and restored dining cars. Oxnard is the county's largest city and heart of the new Ventura County Wine Trail with four wineries and also hosts the nationally acclaimed California Strawberry Festival and the Oxnard Salsa Festival.

Oxnard

Ventura

Simi Valley

Heritage Valley

Ojai Valley

PHOTOS: DAN HARDING

Channel Islands Harbor

Rancho Ventavo Wines

The California Strawberry Festival

OXNARD

Halfway between Malibu and Santa Barbara, Oxnard is both a relaxed beachside community and a sophisticated urban destination. The city welcomes travelers with an eclectic mix of rural experiences, multicultural flavors, and unique waterfront attractions. Visitors can slip off their shoes and spend the day walking along seven miles of sandy beaches, paddle away the hours kayaking at Channel Islands Harbor, take a sightseeing stroll in downtown's Henry T. Oxnard Historic District, or visit Oxnard's distinguished wineries, the perfect place to begin or end a tour of the Ventura County Wine Trail.

Superb weather makes outdoor activities like biking, golf, and tennis a year-round option. For something truly spectacular, head out for a day on Anacapa Island, only about an hour by boat from Oxnard.

Adventure seekers of all ages and abilities find everything they need at Marine Emporium Landing, where waterside fun and oceanview dining create an exciting harbor experience. You can kayak, jet ski, scuba dive, charter a fishing trip or an electric boat, scoot along the waterfront on a rented Segway®, or even cruise aboard the *Scarlett Belle* paddlewheeler or the tall ship *Bill of Rights* (both available for group bookings and special events). Two new restaurants—Moqueca Brazilian Cuisine and Sea Fresh (offering seafood, sushi, and oysters)—are but two of the Harbor's many enchanting and delicious dining options.

Nothing goes with great food like fine wine, and wine tasting is coming into its own in Oxnard with the new Wine, Chocolate and Cheese Tours. The Ventura County Wine Trail offers a scenic backroad adventure from Ojai to Moorpark, lined with boutique wineries and restaurants along the way. Stop by the California Welcome Center in Oxnard to pick up a copy of the Wine Trail map. Right in Oxnard, Herzog Wine Cellars is the largest producer of kosher wines on the West Coast, a state-of-the-art facility open for tours and tasting. Its on-site restaurant, Tierra Sur, specializes in Mediterranean-inspired kosher cuisine. Nearby, in downtown Oxnard's Heritage Square, Rancho Ventavo Cellars lets you sample some of the region's best red wines. A few steps away, popular La Dolce Vita serves gourmet Italian fare and offers monthly cooking classes.

Oxnard is also rich in cultural attractions. An emerging downtown arts scene is anchored by the iconic Carnegie Art Museum, showcasing fine art, photography, and decorative arts, with an emphasis on 20th-century California artists. The Woolworth Museum provides a nostalgic glimpse back to the 1950s and '60s, when the five-and-dime store was an integral part of American culture. Heritage Square, the crown jewel of downtown, brings together 15 restored historic structures relocated to a single city block and repurposed for a wide variety of civic and private uses; docent-led weekend tours spotlight the area's early farm history and Victorian-style architecture. At Channel Islands Harbor, the Ventura County Maritime Museum showcases an internationally renowned collection of maritime art and ship models, local maritime history, and guest-artist exhibitions. For car buffs, The Murphy Auto Museum displays an impressive collection of classic and special-interest vehicles.

Hailed as "California's Strawberry Coast" for good reason, Oxnard is surrounded by fields of strawberries and also plays host to the nationally acclaimed California Strawberry Festival, held the third weekend in May. Some 60,000 people attend the annual celebration. In late July, strawberries give way to spicy foods and sizzling entertainment when the Oxnard Salsa Festival takes center stage at Plaza Park in a two-day celebration of everything salsa: food, music, and dance.

Oxnard makes an ideal destination for weekend getaways and corporate retreats, with a variety of hotel options to choose from. Visitors are sure to find something to suit every taste and budget. The luxurious Embassy Suites Mandalay Beach Hotel & Resort is the only all-suite hotel in Southern California that sits directly on the beach. Nearby, at Channel Islands Harbor, the Hampton Inn is a great choice for waterfront value. Just off the 101 Freeway, the Courtyard by Marriott Oxnard, Residence Inn by Marriott, Hilton Garden Inn, and GrandStay Residential Suites all offer superior accommodations at affordable rates.

For regional maps, visitor information, tickets to local and area attractions, and souvenirs, stop by the California Welcome Center in Oxnard (1000 Town Center Drive), located at the Oxnard Boulevard exit of the 101 Freeway.

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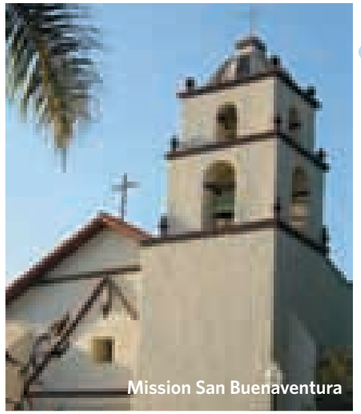

Mission San Buenaventura

VENTURA

The county's namesake city thrives as a "real" California beach town, embracing gentrification while maintaining an authentic connection to the past. Filled with an eclectic mix of restaurants, stores, boutiques, and open-air coffee houses, the city remains true to its heritage in its relaxed and diverse personality. That personality—in addition to the city's beachfront hotels, offshore islands, and cool climate—make Ventura an ideal getaway.

Named for Saint Bonaventure, the Saint of Good Fortune, Ventura today offers a wealth of attractions, recreational adventures, a scenic harbor, a downtown cultural district, distinguished dining, and many historic sights.

Downtown Ventura's Main Street combines the historic—vintage architecture and great antique stores—with the new: contemporary dining, wine bars, art galleries, and more.

Heightening the sense that a visit to Ventura can feel like a step back in time, city-sponsored walks led by local historians highlight Ventura's colorful and exciting past—including the ghosts who allegedly still haunt certain city buildings.

Pioneering legal-mystery novelist Erle Stanley Gardner lived and practiced in Ventura as a lawyer before earning literary fame as the incredibly prolific creator of Perry Mason. Gardner used many of Ventura's real buildings, locations, and characters in his stories and novels—and some of these were later copied or used again in the very successful *Perry Mason* television series, which starred Raymond Burr and ran from 1957 to 1966.

One of the city's historic fixtures is the 121-year-old wooden San Buenaventura Pier. Here, in the 1880s, the world's first oil tanker momentously burned and sank. Restored in 1993, locals and visitors alike enjoy strolling the pier's planks, eating seafood at its restaurant, and taking in the gorgeous views of the city, the sunsets, and the Pacific Ocean.

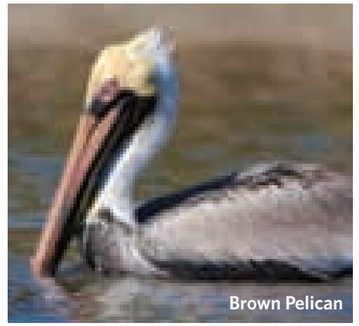
The city's rich past is also evident in its historic inns (which are complemented by many new and refurbished accommodations ranging from intimate inns to full-service beachfront hotels).

Just 14 miles offshore, the five protected islands of Channel Islands National Park and Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary are home to many plants and animals found nowhere else on earth; sea caves perfect for kayaking and scuba diving; and pristine beaches that hint at what California's native ecology once was.

The ecosystem of the park also makes whalewatching from Ventura Harbor a uniquely accessible experience. It's not

Ventura Harbor Promenade

Ventura Harbor Pirate Days


Brown Pelican

uncommon for boats to find themselves surrounded by hundreds of common, bottlenose, and risso dolphins as well as whales, seals, sea birds, and even orcas. The blue whale migration runs June through August, while the gray whale season officially begins December 26 and continues through the end of March, as the Pacific gray whale makes its 6,000-mile trek from Alaska to the warm waters of Mexico. Ventura visitors may see these majestic creatures for themselves aboard Island Packers' full- and half-day excursions to the waters of Channel Islands National Park.

Ventura Harbor is also home to a waterside promenade offering spectacular views, more than 35 shops and restaurants, and recreational opportunities from sport fishing, diving lessons, sailing, and harbor cruises to renting paddleboats, kayaks, and bicycles. A short drive from downtown, Ventura Harbor is a hub of activity with weekly concerts, festivals, and special children's activities.

In summer, Ventura's beaches bloom with festive yellow umbrellas. Inspired by the beaches of Italy, the Yellow Umbrella Company reserves spots for visitors, appoints the sites with beach chairs, umbrellas, and towels, and supplies snacks and souvenirs.

Ventura also boasts an impressive 13-mile-long coastal biking and walking trail that offers truly breathtaking views. The Ventura River Bike Trail links the ocean to Ojai as it follows an old rail system along the Ventura River, winding inland to Foster Park.

Downtown Ventura's hallowed ground is Surfer's Point, at the end of California Street (hence its nickname, "C Street"). This legendary surf spot attracts surfers from up and down the state and is a popular spot for regional surfing contests.

Ventura also offers a variety of options for golfers, including Olivas Links, voted one of *Golfweek Magazine*'s "Top Ten Municipal Courses in the Nation 2008/2009." The course boasts views of the Ventura Harbor, Ventura hillside, and the Channel Islands. Buenaventura Golf Course features large bent grass greens and emerald rye grass fairways, emphasizes course management, and is a shot maker's delight. Both courses provide golfers the opportunity to play in a temperate climate while enjoying coastal California beauty.

Part of the area's beauty is its abundant wildlife. Birdwatchers love the fact that Ventura lies on the Pacific Flyway and also the Central Coast Birding Trail and draws flocks of both resident and migratory birds, who rest or nest in sites including Channel Islands National Park and onshore wetlands.

Ventura is also home to an increasingly dynamic arts and culture scene. Biannual ArtWalks draw thousands of residents and visitors alike to tour some 75 studios, galleries, and shops throughout the 10-block historic downtown Cultural District, and westside arts enclaves, and browse works by more than 150 artists.

Another annual cultural highlight is the week-long Ventura Music Festival. Held in late April and early May in a variety of intimate, historic venues, the festival always features performances by superstars of classical music (in 2010, the roster will include Itzhak Perlman).

Ventura's Rubicon Theatre Company attracts prominent talent from Hollywood and Broadway. The Rubicon players and patrons enjoy the intimate setting of this 180-seat historic 1920s former church. Far enough from Los Angeles to offer visitors a quiet refuge and small-town charm, Ventura is nevertheless close enough to L.A. to draw gifted performers, and the Rubicon has attracted Carol Kane, Joe Spano, Stephanie Zimbalist, and many more. Before and after shows, theatergoers enjoy the city's galleries, expanding selection of gourmet bistros, coffee houses, and wine bars.

VENTURA VISITORS & CONVENTION BUREAU
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Ventura-USA.com/cc

PHOTOS L-R, TOP TO BOTTOM: GEORGE FULLER • VENTURA PORT DISTRICT • FRANK LEUNG

Sunset at the Ventura Pier

Fillmore & Western Railway

Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum

SIMI VALLEY

A historic agricultural town, Simi Valley is today a thriving community of more than 100,000 residents, routinely ranked among the safest cities in the United States. The best-known visitor attraction is the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum. The site celebrates Ronald Reagan's life and presidency through photographs, memorabilia, a replica of the Oval Office, a section of the Berlin Wall, an Air Force One exhibit, changing cultural exhibits, and the Reagan burial site. Also here, however, are Grandma Prisbrey's Bottle Village (a designated 20th Century Folk Art Environment also on the National Register of Historic Places), a truly unique assemblage of buildings and sculptures made from or adorned with innumerable recycled and discarded items collected over a quarter-century; and Rancho Simi, which includes part of the original adobe (the Rancho, too, is on the National Register).

HERITAGE VALLEY

Visitors can experience the natural wonder of Southern California's last pristine agricultural valley here, nestled along the banks of the free-flowing Santa Clara River. Heritage Valley comprises the communities of Santa Paula, Fillmore, Piru, and the National Historic Landmark of Rancho Camulos. The valley draws fans of both the old (beautiful historic trains and depots) and the brand new (farm-fresh foods and produce), and welcomes you with genuine down-home hospitality.

Santa Paula, "the citrus capital of the world," is a little town loaded with vintage charm and surrounded by lemon, orange, and avocado orchards. Milestones in the city's history are illustrated in a series of ten murals adorning buildings throughout the downtown area—and that history is further explored at the Aviation Museum of Santa Paula and the California Oil Museum. For the adventurous, the skies beckon with rides in the cockpit of a restored antique airplane or an early-morning flight in a hot-air balloon.

Minutes from Santa Paula, Fillmore embraces its turn-of-the-century small-town atmosphere and old-fashioned country charm. Pedestrian-friendly downtown is filled with antiques, home to the Fillmore Historical Society, and a walkers' paradise. Known as "the last best small town in Southern California," Fillmore is an eclectic mix of agriculture, history, and small industry. Visitors will find two unique gastronomic options here, Giessinger Winery and its bistro, and the Fillmore & Western Railway, which has been featured in hundreds of movies, TV shows, commercials, videos, and photo shoots. It offers a variety of memorable wine- and dinner-train experiences.

In the late 1880s, religious publisher David C. Cook relocated from his Illinois home to idyllic Piru for his health and essentially put the town on the map with two striking creations. The first was a "Second Garden of Eden," a ranch growing only fruits mentioned in the Bible. The second was the breathtakingly spectacular Piru Mansion (now the Newhall Mansion at Piru). The original burned to the ground in 1981 but has been meticulously recreated and gorgeously maintained. A private residence not open for tours, the mansion nevertheless is a beautiful companion piece to Piru's historic town square and train depot. Within minutes of downtown lie the recreational sites of Piru Creek and Lake Piru, ideal for a day of kayaking or world-class fishing. And at day's end, the 1888 Heritage Valley Inn is open to visitors, a century-old bed and breakfast.

To the east of Piru near the Los Angeles County line is the Rancho Camulos adobe, a National Historic Landmark and celebrated backdrop of Helen Hunt Jackson's 1884 novel *Ramona*. One of the oldest Spanish land grants in Ventura County, the Rancho Camulos Museum provides an authentic glimpse of early California history.

HERITAGE VALLEY TOURISM BUREAU
805.524.7500 • HeritageValley.net

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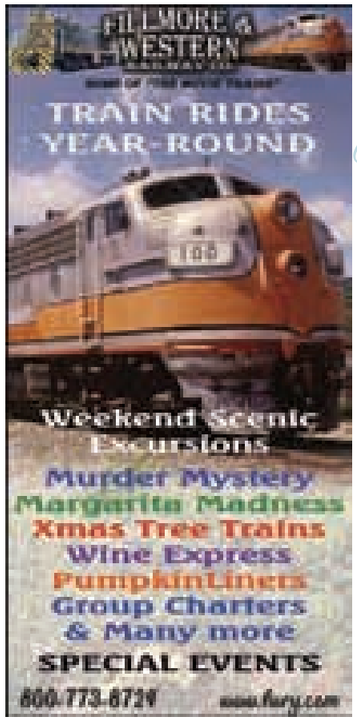
Fresh, sweet oranges in the sun



OJAI VALLEY

Just 90 minutes north of Los Angeles and 20 minutes northeast of Ventura along Highway 33, the Ojai Valley is home to interesting shops, world-class art galleries, fine dining, and spas and retreat centers.

The valley is so majestically beautiful that it stood in for the mythical paradise Shangri-La in the film *Lost Horizon*, filmed here in 1937. As befits a place named (by the indigenous Chumash Indians more than 1,000 years ago) for the moon, natural wonders are a principal attraction. The city sits encircled by the dramatic Topa Topa Mountains (watch at sunset for the famous "pink moment"), Los Padres National Forest, and nearby Lake Casitas Recreation Area.

In winter, Ojai is a photographers' dream. The sun is low, the air crisp and clear, and the shadows are long and dramatic. Bright green winter grass contrasts with deeply silver-gray mountains, and at night, black skies fill with stars.

In the spring, Ojai's hillsides blaze with poppies and wildflowers, and the days are as ideal for hiking canyon trails as they are for wandering the village streets. The city was recently named one of the U.S. Tennis Association's top three Best Tennis Towns in the country (the city's long history in tennis includes The Ojai®, an amateur tournament, inaugurated in 1896 and host over the years to champions Arthur Ashe, Billie Jean King, Jimmy Connors, and others).

During Ojai's summer, the sun is out for almost 14 hours each day, and cool mornings give way to warm afternoons and the scents of ceanothus and sage fill the air.

In autumn, the heat of summer ebbs, and daytime temperatures drop comfortably. Trees wear bright reds and golds, and summer grasses begin to let fall flowers show through. Roses give a final burst of buds, and the cool ocean air winds its way up the valley at night, bringing a welcome chill to the evenings as intense "pink-moment" sunsets contrast with abundant orange pumpkins ripening in the valley's agricultural fields.

Central Coast Tourism Council Members

Channel Islands Harbor
3900 Pelican Way, Oxnard, CA 93035
805.985.4852 • ChannelIslandsHarbor.org

The Clocktower Inn
181 E. Santa Clara Street, Ventura, CA 93001
805.652.0141 • ClocktowerInn.com

Country Inn & Suites Ventura
298 Chestnut Street, Ventura, CA 93001
805.653.1434 • CountryInns.com

Crowne Plaza Ventura Beach
450 E. Harbor Boulevard, Ventura, CA 93001
805.648.2100 • CPVentura.com

Embassy Suites Mandalay Beach Hotel & Resort
2101 Mandalay Beach Road, Oxnard, CA 93035
805.984.2500
MandalayBeach.EmbassySuites.com

Fillmore & Western Railway
351 Santa Clara Street, Fillmore, CA 93015
805.524.2546 • FWRY.com

Four Points by Sheraton
1050 Schooner Drive, Ventura, CA 93001
805.658.1212 • FourPoints.com/Ventura

Grandstay Residential Suites
2211 E. Gonzales Road, Oxnard, CA 93036
805.983.6808 • Grandstay.net

Heritage Valley Tourism Bureau
270 Central Avenue, Fillmore, CA 93015
805.524.7500 • HeritageValley.net

Marine Emporium Landing
3600 S. Harbor Boulevard, #127
Oxnard, CA 93035
805.985.5828 • MarineEmporiumLanding.com

Oxnard Convention & Visitors Bureau
1000 Town Center Drive, Oxnard, CA 93036
805.385.7545 • VisitOxnard.com

Pacific View Shopping Center
3301 E. Main Street, Ventura, CA 93003
805.642.8537 • ShopPacificView.com

Residence Inn by Marriott at River Ridge
2101 W. Vineyard Avenue, Oxnard, CA 93036
805.278.2200 • ResidenceInn.com/oxrri

Ronald Reagan Library & Museum
40 Presidential Drive, Simi Valley, CA 93065
800.410.8354 • ReaganLibrary.com

Ventura Harbor Village (Ventura Port District)
1583 Spinnaker Drive, Ventura, CA 93001
877.89.HARBOR • VenturaHarborVillage.com

Ventura Visitors & Convention Bureau
101 S. California Street, Ventura, CA 93001
805.648.2075 • Ventura-USA.com/cc

Ventura County Itineraries

VENTURA

DAY ONE

Start at the Ventura Visitors Center, where you can pick up maps and guidebooks, sign up for walking tours, or get some friendly expert help in planning your adventure. Next, stroll Ventura's recently revitalized historic downtown, home to a delightful variety of shops, restaurants offering one-of-a-kind dining experiences, parks, museums, wine bars, galleries, day spas, and eye-pleasing Art Deco, Craftsman, Neoclassical, and Victorian architecture.

A short walk from downtown is Surfer's Point, at California Street, beloved by boarding buffs up and down the state. Try the surf yourself (classes are available for beginners), or simply sit and take in the scene. Ventura's wooden pier provides excellent views of the city and the Channel Islands.

DAY TWO

Hop aboard an excursion out to Channel Islands National Park and Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, just 14 miles offshore, for hiking, kayaking, and diving adventures in one of the country's most pristine national parks. (In season, you'll enjoy abundant whale-watching opportunities en route.)

DAY THREE

Set aside some time to explore Harbor Village, a waterside promenade boasting more than 35 shops and restaurants. Then get your pulse rate up with harborside sport fishing, diving lessons, sailing, harbor cruises, or paddleboat or kayak rentals. Or jog, walk, skate, or cycle on the nearby beachside bike trail—13 miles of picturesque coastal beauty.

CULTURE & HISTORY

Downtown, the Fresh & Fabulous Café and Bakery, in the restored Woolworth Building, features retro vinyl booths and '60s-style lighting but contemporary healthy food for a one-of-a-kind dining experience. Adjacent to the café is the nation's only Woolworth Museum, featuring lunch-counter menus, memorabilia, original signs, and a 1940s photo booth. Journey further back in time at Heritage Square, just three blocks away, home to an impressive collection of late 19th- and early 20th-century houses.

OXNARD

FOOD & WINE

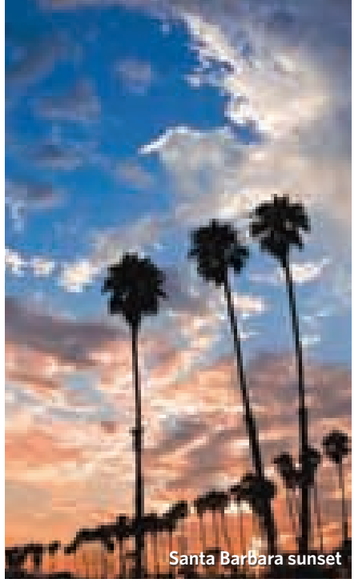
Central Coast wine tasting begins in Oxnard, the heart of the Ventura County Wine Trail. Begin your journey at Herzog Wine Cellars, the nation's largest producer of kosher wines and home to Mediterranean-inspired seasonal cuisine at Tierra Sur Restaurant. (In spring 2010, two new spots will open in Oxnard, Channel Islands Winery and MagnaVino Winery.) Downtown, in beautiful Heritage Square, sample some of the famous reds at Rancho Ventavo Cellars. Across the walkway is La Dolce Vita, a great spot for lunch, dinner, or chef-inspired monthly cooking classes.

WATERFRONT ADVENTURE

At the city's Channel Islands Harbor, fresh sea air, spectacular views, outdoor activities, and island adventure await. Marine Emporium Landing, Oxnard's number-one waterfront activity center, is the departure point for sportfishing charters, whale-watching trips, and scuba excursions to Channel Islands National Park and Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary. Two unusual vessels are docked at the Landing: the tall ship *Bill of Rights* and the *Scarlett Belle* paddle wheeler.

Mission Santa Barbara

Santa Barbara County


Santa Barbara sunset

Between Los Angeles and San Francisco, spectacularly scenic Pacific Coast Highway threads through a true must-stop for visitors: Santa Barbara County. Rich in beauty, colorful history, culture, and attractions, Santa Barbara is known as The American Riviera®.

At the southern end of the county, Carpinteria and Summerland exude small-town charm and are home to gorgeous beaches and plentiful antique shops. Just west, Montecito is known for its high-end boutiques, glamorous eateries, and celebrity residents.

Minutes west of Montecito, the city of Santa Barbara exemplifies the very best that the county has to offer: world-class dining and culture, eclectic shopping, outdoor adventures, architectural landmarks, and a deep—and deeply treasured—Spanish, Mexican, and Chumash heritage.

Just west of Santa Barbara is Goleta, site of the Santa Barbara Municipal Airport and the seaside University of California Santa Barbara.

Just over the Santa Ynez Mountains, visitors can experience a taste of Scandinavia in the entrancing Danish town of Solvang. Nearby Buellton is an ideal jumping-off point for wine country excursions. Los Olivos is filled with tasting rooms and galleries. Santa Ynez brings a touch of the Old West to the county's sophisticated wine country. And Los Alamos is home to wineries, antique stores, and a whole lot of authentic character.

To the north, right on the county line, sits Santa Maria, the county's fastest-growing city and the birthplace of legendary Santa Maria Style Barbecue. A must-see in nearby Guadalupe is the world-famous sand dunes (the filming location of Cecil B. DeMille's 1923 silent epic *The Ten Commandments*; the sets still lie buried beneath the sand). In the valley between Santa Maria and Santa Barbara lies Lompoc, "the City of Murals in the Valley of Flowers," home to boutique wineries and rugged beaches.

Carpinteria

Santa Barbara

Santa Ynez Valley

Solvang

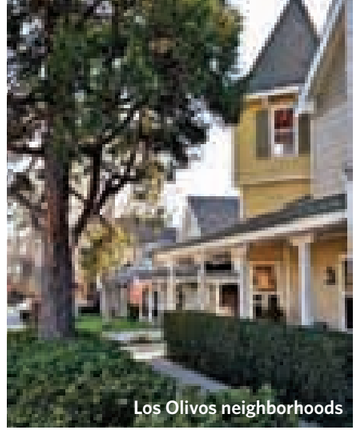
Buellton

Lompoc

Santa Maria Valley

PHOTOS OPPOSITE: GREG PANOSIAN • THIS PAGE: DAVE SCHRADER

Outdoor activities


Los Olivos neighborhoods

Farmers' markets

CARPINTERIA

Sleepy seaside Carpinteria presents the visitor with a dilemma: Do you tell all your friends about this coastal jewel? Or do you keep it a secret, not wanting to spoil one of the last classic California beach towns?

La Carpinteria (Spanish for "carpenter shop"), named by early explorers who saw Chumash Indians building tomols (canoes) here, is 10 miles south of Santa Barbara—but it feels a world away. Known as the home of the "World's Safest Beach," Carpinteria was also declared the Best Vacation Downtown by the California Planning & Development Report. The report praised the city's seamless transition along the main artery between downtown and the beach, tree-lined Linden Avenue. Benches dot the broad, shaded sidewalks; bike lanes and racks are plentiful and well marked; and—a surprising feature in the 21st century—there's abundant free parking.

Local merchants' immensely popular "First Friday" events offer some fun for everyone. From one end of town to the other, participating businesses stay open until 8 p.m. and offer special prices, tastings, refreshments, and other attractions (many businesses put out the welcome mat again for Saturday sales as well). The city's Seaside Shuttle increases its already convenient schedule of transporting visitors and locals between major hotels, all major shopping areas in town, the beach, and other popular community spots.

Carpinteria has long been famous as an avocado- and flower-growing capital, and has recently gained a well-deserved reputation as an eco-tourism destination. Its rural heritage and respect for the land is evidenced by the citizens' purchase of the Carpinteria Bluffs Nature Reserve, a 52-acre park great for hiking and picnicking—and a perfect location for observing the very active seal rookery below.

Thursdays, the city's Farmers' Market supplies area restaurants and families with the freshest local produce (exotic fruits are a microindustry).

The city boasts a year-round calendar of noteworthy events. In 2010, these include the Annual Rods and Roses Car and Flower Show (July 3), followed by the Independence Day Parade, held downtown on Linden Avenue; the 13th Annual Carpinteria Triathlon (September 26) which brings top-notch athletes to town; and, the following weekend, the 24th Annual California Avocado Festival (October 1, 2, 3), where everything is about the avocado in Carpinteria ("AvoFest" is one of the largest free festivals in the state of California).

A group of proud Carpinterians volunteer with the city's Host Program, generously sharing all the inside information on their hometown and offering invaluable assistance to visitors. The new visitor information kiosk is located in Seal Fountain Plaza, on Linden Avenue across from the Community Arts Center and serves as a resource even when the volunteers aren't on duty. Visitor information is also available at the Chamber of Commerce.

CITY OF CARPINTERIA
805.684.5405 • Carpinteria.ca.com

CARPINTERIA VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
805.684.5479 • CarpinteriaChamber.org

COASTAL VIEW NEWS
805.684.4428 • CoastalView.com

PHOTOS L-R, TOP TO BOTTOM: SANTA BARBARA CVB & FC • SANTA BARBARA CVB & FC • SANTA BARBARA CVB & FC / J. SINCLAIR • OPPOSITE PAGE: NIK WHEELER

Signature red-tile roofs of Santa Barbara

SANTA BARBARA

A city of whitewashed buildings with red tile roofs tucked between the mountains and the sea, laid-back Santa Barbara has an irresistibly sensuous allure. The city's architectural style and cohesive design aesthetic is iconic, and the city is equally well known for its pedestrian-friendly downtown, historic buildings and hotels, cultural events and festivals, thriving seafood industry, lush public parks, miles of beaches, and welcoming locals.

Visitors can smell, touch, and taste their way through the incredible variety of vineyards, farms, orchards, farmers' and fishermen's markets, artisan bakeries, cheese shops, chocolate boutiques, and restaurants. "American Riviera" cuisine showcases fresh, regional ingredients—including locally caught seafood and organically grown produce—which pairs magnificently with the wines produced by the more than 150 wineries in the region. The city's restaurant community combines excellent food with an ambience of casual luxury and hacienda hospitality in settings that are as evocative as the cuisine. Cooking classes and guided wine tours are abundant.

Santa Barbara County's diverse terrain and year-round temperate weather affords a multitude of activities—mountainside, seaside, or aerial. Whether you're paddling your kayak along the shores of Anacapa Island, biking down a curvy mountainous trail, or catching a wave off of one of the surf breaks, Santa Barbara County is an adventurer's paradise; biking, birding, hang gliding, boating, fishing, camping, whale-watching, hiking, horseback riding, skateboarding, rock climbing, snorkeling and diving, surfing, paddle boarding, volleyball, and tidepooling are just some of the many activities. Avid golfers will find something close to nirvana course-hopping Santa Barbara's championship facilities including Glen Annie Golf Club and Sandpiper Golf Course.

Santa Barbara is also a nature lover's dream, with more than 50 parks. Established in 1926, the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden is a 78-acre "living museum," with trails winding through a huge exhibit of native California plant life. The largest Moreton Bay Fig Tree in the nation, on Chapala Street next to the Amtrak station, is an Australian native planted here in 1874. Santa Barbara is awash with world-class gardens, orchid farms, and elaborately adorned estates, including Lotusland, Casa del Herrero, A.C. Postel Memorial Rose Gardens, Alice Keck Park Memorial Gardens, Santa Barbara Orchid Estate, Gallup & Stribling, and Rose Story Farms.

Twenty-five miles off the Santa Barbara shore is Channel Islands National Park, comprising the chain of Anacapa, Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa, San Miguel, and Santa Barbara islands. Boat service to the islands is available from Santa Barbara. And year-round whale-watching excursions departing from SEA Landing venture out as far as the islands.

From the shoreline to the Santa Ynez Mountains, Santa Barbara offers families countless offbeat treks, ocean adventures, and opportunities for getting up close and personal with Mother Nature. In addition to 100 miles of prime California coastline, hike-friendly mountains, nature preserves, recreational lakes, skateboard parks, and scenic bike paths, the region offers more than 20 interactive museums and child-friendly historic and cultural attractions, including three of California's 21 missions. Santa Barbara Zoo is set on 30 oceaview acres and is home to more than 500 animals. Underscoring the Zoo's dedication to preservation and conservation

The arts flourish in Santa Barbara

Alfresco dining

in the natural world, the new "California Trails" exhibit complex features threatened and endangered California natives like the California condor, Channel Island fox, bald eagle, California desert tortoise, and threatened reptiles and amphibians native to the nearby Los Padres National Forest.

Like the sun-washed towns that are its Mediterranean soulmates, Santa Barbara offers visitors a big dose of sophisticated culture to complement its abundant beauty. Few cities of Santa Barbara's size can match the quality and diversity of its artistic and cultural offerings, which include 50 museums and galleries and a wide range of stellar performance venues hosting world-class theater groups, opera and dance companies, chamber orchestras, a symphony orchestra, and more. Santa Barbara has truly earned its place as one of the top art colonies in the nation.

The Santa Barbara Museum of Art is one of the nation's outstanding regional museums, with important holdings of works by American artists and 19th-century French Impressionists, Asian art, classical antiquities, photography, contemporary art, modern European art, and prints and drawings. The Karpeles Manuscript Library features changing exhibits of rare documents. The Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History is a nationally renowned institution specializing in the natural history of California and the North American West Coast. Operated by the Museum of Natural History, the Ty Warner Sea Center offers a fascinating window into the marine life of the Santa Barbara Channel.

Visit the city's spectacular architectural landmarks on the Red Tile Walking Tour, a self-guided tour throughout downtown. A video podcast of the tour is available online at SantaBarbaraCA.com/podcasts. El Presidio de Santa Barbara State Historic Park is a favorite of history-minded visitors; it is the birthplace of Santa Barbara. This historic site features the original ruins and chapels of the early Spanish settlers. Mission Santa Barbara, the tenth of the 21 historic California missions founded by the Spanish Franciscans, was established here in 1786 and was known as "the Queen of the Missions." Inside and out, the historic Santa Barbara County Courthouse is one of the most beautiful public buildings in the United States.

The original "Hollywood," Santa Barbara was home to California's first major movie studio, Flying 'A' Studios (1910). In the past century, thousands of filmmakers have used Santa Barbara as a filming backdrop, and innumerable celebrities have come here to live, vacation (Charlie Chaplin built the Montecito Inn as a luxury retreat for his friends), and marry and honeymoon (the San Ysidro Ranch was the site of Sir Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh's wedding and the honeymoon of Jackie and John F. Kennedy; more recently, Gwyneth Paltrow, Sandra Bullock, Julia Roberts, and others have all selected Santa Barbara for weddings or honeymoons). For film buffs, the Santa Barbara Conference & Visitors Bureau and Film Commission offers free copies of the *Lonely Planet Santa Barbara Film Tour*, a guide to filming locations and other movie-related spots, and a *Sideways* movie tour map, which pinpoints 18 locations featured in the Academy Award–winning 2004 film.

Santa Barbara's surf culture may not be as prominent as some of its other assets, but the region has played and continues to play an influential role in the international surf scene. Current and former professional surfers Shaun Tomson, Tom Curren, Bobby Martinez, and Kim Mearig, and major brands Mr. Zog's Sex Wax and Al Merrick's Channel Islands Surfboards all call Santa Barbara home. Legendary surf spots Rincon, The Ranch, and Jalama—and living legends George Greenough, Bruce Brown, and Renny Yater also helped put Santa Barbara on the map. This rich history is preserved and explicated in the Santa Barbara Maritime Museum's permanent exhibit "Surf's

PHOTOS LEFT: JEAN SCHWEITZER • RIGHT: NIK WHEELER

Up!," a multimedia must-see featuring artifacts, photos, classic surfboards and other memorabilia, along with video clips and oral histories.

In the city's yacht harbor, more than 1,000 working and pleasure craft are moored, and restaurants, shops, and marine-supply stores skirt the perimeter. The flag-lined breakwater has a paved walkway offering views of the harbor, the city, and the mountains. Built in 1872 by John Peck Stearns, Stearns Wharf is the oldest operating wharf on the West Coast. In the 1940s, Hollywood actor James Cagney and his brothers were part owners. The landmark wharf is home to shops, wine tasting, a seafood market, a bait and tackle store, and several restaurants.

Some of the city's best shopping is downtown, along State Street and the open-air paseos (Spanish for "pathways") that wind off the street complete with cobbled arcades, fountains, lush palms, and cascading bougainvillea. Set right in the heart of downtown on State Street, Paseo Nuevo offers a variety of upscale retail outlets, boutiques, and restaurants. La Cumbre Plaza is a tranquil outdoor shopping center on upper State Street featuring a mix of retailers including Tiffany & Co. and Louis Vuitton. Additional upscale shopping can be found in Montecito, on Coast Village Road and in the Upper Village.

Every Sunday, the Arts & Crafts Show displays works by local artisans along a one-mile stretch of Cabrillo Boulevard east of Stearns Wharf. And on Tuesdays and Saturdays, downtown Santa Barbara hosts a colorful outdoor Farmers' Market, where local growers sell fresh fruits, vegetables, flowers, eggs, nuts, honey, and gourmet specialty products.

SANTA BARBARA CONFERENCE & VISITORS BUREAU AND FILM COMMISSION
805.966.9222
SantaBarbaraCA.com/CCGuide

Santa Barbara vineyards

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY WINE COUNTRY

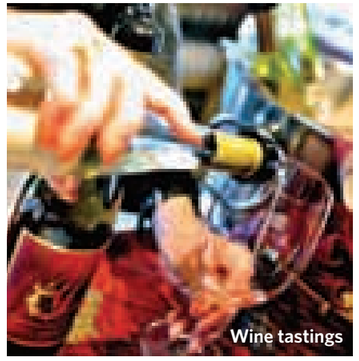
Santa Barbara County is a uniquely inviting wine destination, renowned for its distinguished vintages, quaint and intimate settings, friendly vintners, and down-to-earth vibe—as well as its starring role in the wine-infused 2004 comedy *Sideways*. Recognized as one of the world's premium wine-producing regions, the county is home to more than 150 wineries and some 24,000 acres of planted vineyards. Mountain ranges running along an unusual east-west orientation funnel cool air and fog from the ocean to the vines, moderating temperatures and extending the growing season to produce grapes of exceptional ripeness, flavor, and balance. The county's three American Viticultural Areas (AVAs)—Santa Ynez, Santa Maria, and Santa Rita Hills—are known for their superb pinot noir, chardonnay, syrah, viognier, and other cool-climate varietals.

Of course, wine is the perfect food beverage, simultaneously enhanced by and enhancing a good meal. So it should come as no surprise that here, where there is excellent wine, there is food to match. Santa Barbara Wine Country cuisine takes many forms, but it tends to be characterized by a balancing act that complements the flavors of the food with the character of the wine: the leather, dark fruit, and pepper notes of a syrah call beautifully for lamb or venison, while a crisp sauvignon blanc or pinot grigio embraces local oysters or steamed mussels, and a late-harvest zinfandel takes a dessert slice of chocolate cake over the moon. Santa Barbara's is a cuisine that reflects the seasons, the land, and the individual sensibilities of the chefs and the winemakers. The region's best chefs relish this challenge, and its best restaurants happily and expertly suggest felicitous pairings. Visitors will delight in the results.

Pierre Lafond

PHOTOS TOP: SANTA BARBARA CVB & FC • BOTTOM: SANTA BARBARA CVB & FC / J SINCLAIR

Historic Ballard Schoolhouse


Wine tastings

Fields of cultivated flowers

SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

The picturesque Santa Ynez Valley is the ideal place for visitors to refresh and renew while exploring rural country roads dotted with wineries, strolling streets that could have come straight out of a European village, touring the region on bike or horseback, golfing and much more. Located in the northern part of the county, the Valley includes six distinctive communities—charming rural Ballard, the bustling gateway city of Buellton, the Old West town of Los Alamos, the artistic enclave of Los Olivos, the turn-of-the-century village of Santa Ynez, and the Danish-founded city of Solvang. The valley offers more than 30 different types of accommodations—from country inns, luxury resorts, and full-service hotels to lodges and bed-and-breakfasts. Prices and special packages celebrate all seasons, themes, and special events.

One of the most popular visitor pursuits in the Santa Ynez Valley is wine touring and tasting. More than 70 world-class wineries in the area occupy more than 21,000 acres of vineyards, producing award-winning pinot noir, chardonnay, syrah, rhône, and other varietals. The 2004 Oscar®-winning wine and road trip movie *Sideways* was filmed partially on location here.

The restaurants of the valley provide delicious fare within range of every taste and budget, from plenty of wine country cuisine to classic American favorites. In charming downtown Solvang, the Danish foods and pastries are not-to-be-missed treats. Dozens of fruit and farm stands feature local produce (even lavender), and the Solvang Village Farmers' Market delights the senses every Wednesday.

The valley's vibrant cultural calendar includes the Taste of Solvang Restaurant Week and Food & Wine Festival in March, Vintners Festival in April, Independence Day Parade & Fireworks, Old Mission Santa Inés Fiesta in August, Danish Days and Los Alamos Old Days in September, Celebration of Harvest in October, Vaquero Show & Sale in November, and Solvang's Julefest in December. Every summer, the Pacific Conservatory of Performing Arts Theaterfest presents critically acclaimed live theater. Valley art and history are proudly displayed at a variety of venues including the Wildling Art Museum, Santa Ynez Valley Historical Museum & Carriage House, Elverhøj Museum of Danish History & Art, and the Vintage Motorcycle Museum. And shopping is a delight in the Valley, with scores of independent galleries, boutiques, and retail stores.

Surrounded by the Santa Ynez and San Rafael foothills and the Los Padres National Forest, the Santa Ynez Valley presents countless outdoor recreational opportunities. A picnic next to a waterfall is an easy walk at Nojoqui Falls County Park. Cachuma Lake Recreation Area offers picnicking, boating, fishing, nature cruises, and RV, tent, and yurt camping. Visitors can observe some exotic animals at Ostrich Land, Quicksilver Miniature Horse Ranch, and Alpacas at West Ranch. The Valley is well known throughout the equestrian world for its thoroughbred, Arabian, and Icelandic horse ranches and training and breeding facilities. Visitors who want to immerse themselves in the equine experience will want to check into Rancho Oso Guest Ranch & Stables.

Mission Santa Inés colonnade

PHOTOS OPPOSITE: L-R, TOP TO BOTTOM: GREG PANOSIAN • SANTA BARBARA CVB & FC • GREG PANOSIAN • THIS PAGE: SANTA YNEZ VALLEY VISITORS ASSOCIATION / DAVID RETZ

The Valley's scenic country roads and trails make this an extremely popular destination for bicycle touring, too. Lance Armstrong and several professional cycling teams train here, and the Valley has hosted part of the professional cycling's Amgen Tour of California for four years (and counting) as well as numerous amateur rides and training camps. The Chumash Casino Resort in Santa Ynez features round-the-clock gaming action plus world-famous entertainers in the Samala Showroom. Rancho San Marcos Golf Course is known for its enticing long fairways and magnificent tees. The championship Alisal River Course, just south of Solvang, is located on the banks of the Santa Ynez River against a mountain backdrop.

Come and discover for yourself that any time is the perfect time to visit the Santa Ynez Valley.

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VISITORS ASSOCIATION
800.742.2843 • 805.686.0053
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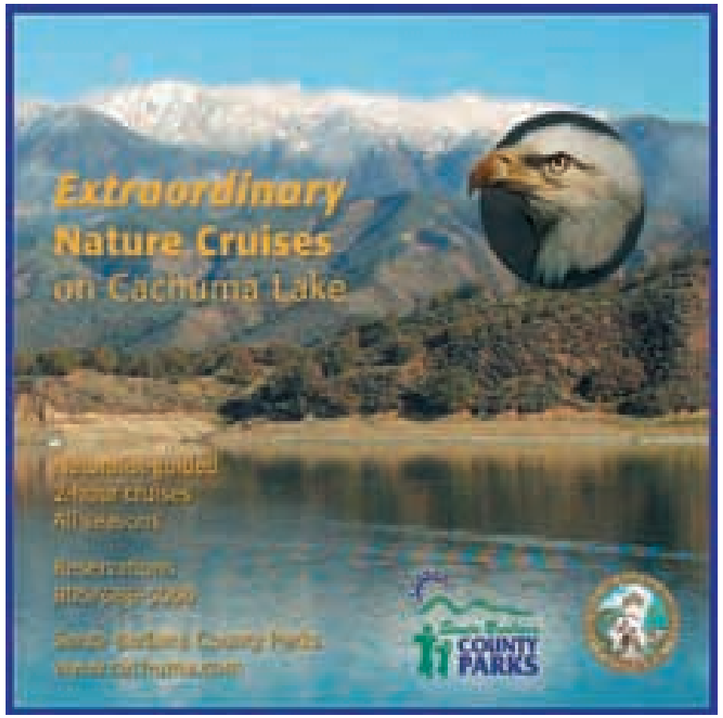

"Little Denmark"

SOLVANG

Affectionately known as "Little Denmark," Solvang was named by Orbitz Travel Worldwide as one of the "top 5 U.S. domestic destinations with international flair." This authentic Danish village features delicious Scandinavian dining, bakeries, European-style architecture, windmills, one-of-a-kind shops, picturesque parks, distinctive museums, and over a dozen world-class wine tasting rooms. Situated in the heart of the scenic Santa Ynez Valley wine country, Solvang is inland only 35 miles north of Santa Barbara.

Settled in 1911 by Danish-American immigrants, Solvang ("sunny field" in Danish) is a pedestrian-friendly Old World village. Scandinavian architectural details include half-timbered buildings, thatched and coppered roofs, and leaded windows. Windmills catch the breezes, and, welcoming visitors at the corner of Mission Drive and Alisal Road, there is even a "Little Mermaid" statue, a half-scaled version of the world-famous landmark in Copenhagen Harbor. With every step along the flower-lined streets and courtyards, Solvang feels as if the visitor has been transported to northern Europe without a passport.

Cultural attractions include the Elverhøj Museum of History & Art, the Hans Christian Andersen Museum, the Vintage Motorcycle Museum, and the national historic landmark 1804 Mission Santa Inés. The professional Pacific Conservatory of Performing Arts (PCPA) performs live dramas and exciting musicals in the 700-seat open-air Solvang Festival Theater from June through September each year.

Solvang brims with hundreds of unique shops featuring everything from collectibles, gifts, and antiques to Danish imports and handcrafted items, while gourmet restaurants, wine shops, bakeries, confectioneries, and ice-cream emporiums first pique and then satisfy appetites. Strolling between numerous wine tasting rooms is as convenient as it is enjoyable—making it simple and safe to enjoy the Valley's bounty without any driving.

Visitors always enjoy the Taste of Solvang Restaurant Week and Food & Wine Festival every March, the Scandinavian heritage celebration Danish Days the third weekend of September, and the Julefest Celebration during the December holiday season.

Visitors are welcome at 15 hotels, inns, and lodges offering accommodations to suit every taste and budget; many also offer special packages throughout the year. Solvang encourages visitors to stay awhile and enjoy the area's many pleasures—and to discover why Sunset magazine named Solvang one of the "10 Most Beautiful Small Towns in the Western United States."

SOLVANG
CONFERENCE & VISITORS BUREAU
800.468.6765 • 805.688.6144
SolvangUSA.com

PHOTO: SANTA BARBARA CVB & FC

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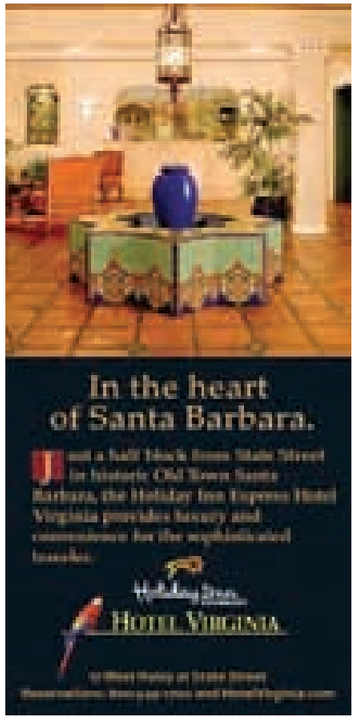


Fess Parker Vineyards

BUELLTON

For generations people have visited Buellton for the pea soup and the proximity to the nearby towns and attractions. Today, Buellton is a thriving community offering a wide variety of services and amenities, as well as everything for the traveler, from restaurants to a broad selection of accommodations (including camping).

Situated on Highway 101, Buellton is an ideal place for visitors to lay over and unwind before traveling farther along the Central Coast. As the gateway to the Santa Ynez Valley, Buellton is just minutes from Solvang, the "Danish Capital of America," historic California missions, the Chumash Casino Resort, beaches, and much more.

Nestled within the panoramic Santa Rita Hills AVA, Buellton is home to many award-winning wineries and vineyards throughout the bucolic countryside. The warm climate and beauty of this region make it the perfect destination for every wine connoisseur or enthusiast.

Buellton is also the site of some of the Valley's most beautiful parks and bike trails, making it a great place to unwind amid spectacular scenery. Also, new to Buellton, is PAWS Dog Park, the only off-leash facility in the Valley. And the city's beautiful botanical garden, which lies near the Santa Ynez River in River View Park, is a true hidden gem in the Valley.

So what are you waiting for? Visit Buellton today. This is where it all begins.

BUELLTON VISITORS BUREAU & CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
800.324.3800 • 805.688.7829
VisitBuellton.com

PHOTO: SANTA YNEZ VALLEY VISITORS ASSOCIATION / DAVID RETZ

Horseback riding is one of many outdoor activities

Succulent groundcover

LOMPOC

Situated in a peaceful valley between Santa Maria and Santa Barbara, Lompoc is famous around the world for its colorful flower fields, acres of vegetable crops, La Purísima Mission, and friendly small-town atmosphere. Its clear blue skies and gentle afternoon breezes offer the weary traveler a welcome respite.

The Lompoc Valley is now also recognized as the "Gateway to the Santa Rita Hills Wine Country." Wineries in the nearby hills produce some of California's most respected wines—especially award-winning pinot noirs. Wine tasting has become a favorite pastime of visitors as they sample locally produced varietals at wine-tasting events and in tasting rooms and wine bars. The small wineries in Lompoc's "Wine Ghetto" have made a name for themselves in the world of fine California wines, and some of these have their own tasting rooms. All have wines for sale at Sissy's Uptown Café, where customers also enjoy exceptional California cuisine.

The very popular Lompoc Valley Flower Festival is held the last full weekend in June. Celebrating the area's flower seed industry, the event draws thousands of visitors for a weekend of food, entertainment, arts and crafts, and the renowned flower show. Maps for self-guided tours of the flower fields, which bloom May through August, are available at the Lompoc Valley Chamber of Commerce.

The city's mural project, begun in 1988, now comprises more than 60 large outdoor murals, adorning buildings in and around Lompoc's historic downtown.

La Purísima Mission is considered the most completely and accurately restored Spanish mission in the world. Built in 1787, it was destroyed by earthquake in 1812, then relocated and rebuilt in 1813, with extensive rebuilding by Civilian Conservation Corps crews in the 1930s. The mission is open daily except Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. Twelve miles of maintained trails through the property invite hiking, biking, and horseback riding—and visitors and locals alike enjoy picnicking under the ancient oaks on the mission property.

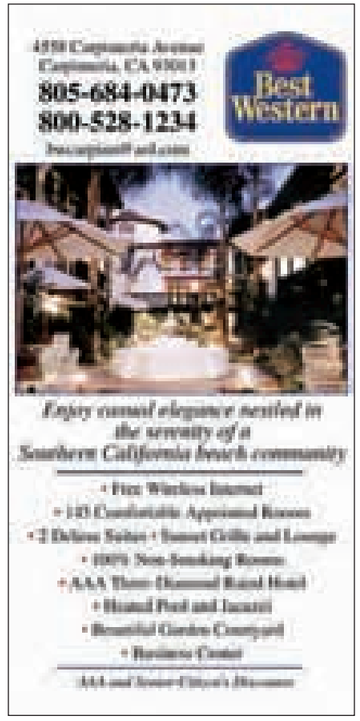
The Lompoc Museum, built as a Carnegie Library in 1911, includes a collection of Chumash and Native American artifacts, a gallery of pioneer history, and a seven million year old dolphin fossil discovered in the nearby "White Hills." The museum also operates the historic one-room schoolhouse in Artesia (open 2–4 p.m. the fourth Saturday of each month), which served the valley from 1876 until 1961.

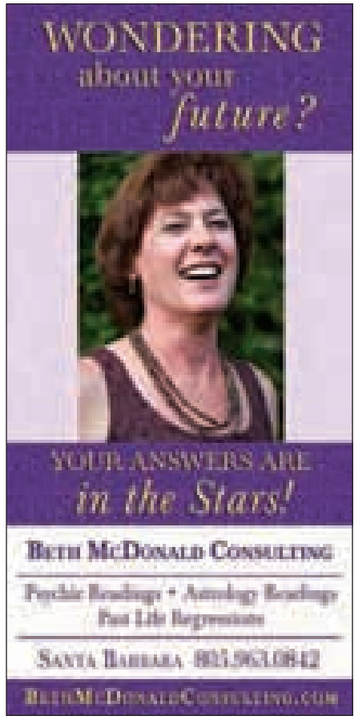
Lompoc's first two-story wooden residence, the 1875 Fabing-McKay-Spanne House, now owned and operated by the Lompoc Valley Historical Society, is a Victorian farmhouse, including a carriage house, museum room, blacksmith shop, and reference library.

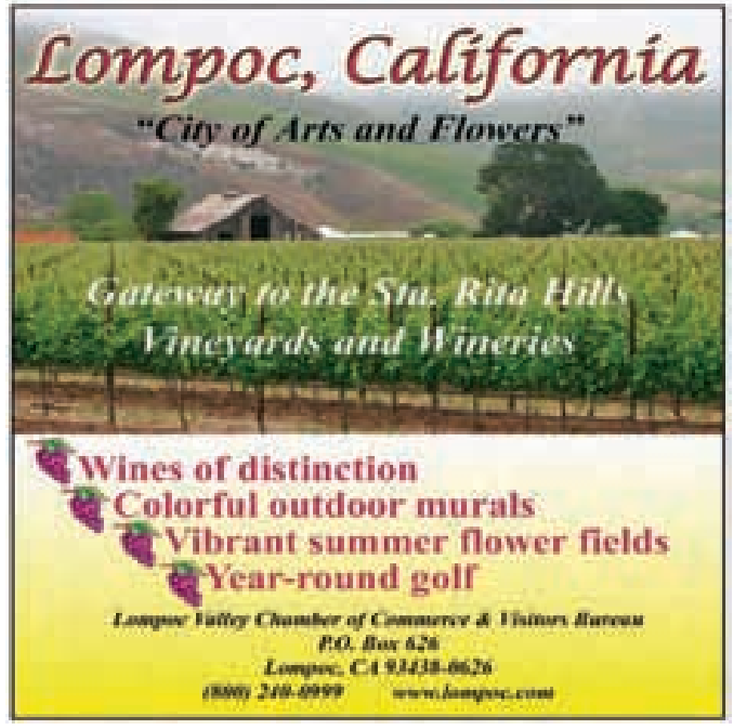
Jalama Beach County Park, accessible from Highway 1, offers scenic year-round camping, picnicking, windsurfing, and surf fishing. Miles of remote, pristine shoreline offer a respite from civilization (and, in another way, so does the famous, multi-napkin "Jalama Burger," from the Jalama Beach Grill).

LOMPOC VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & VISITORS BUREAU
800.240.0999 • 805.736.4567
Lompoc.com

PHOTOS OPPOSITE LEFT: SANTA BARBARA CVB & FC • RIGHT: JULIUS FEKETE







Green spring hillsides

SANTA MARIA VALLEY

Fine wine meets world-famous barbecue in the Santa Maria Valley, where chardonnay, pinot noir, syrah, and other locally grown standout varietals offer a perfect match for the rich culinary traditions of this coastal region in the northern part of the county.

The Santa Maria Valley's culinary heritage dates back to the mid 1800s, when local rancheros would host Spanish-style barbecues each spring for their vaqueros, or cowboys. Under the trees of this serene coastal valley, they would enjoy feasts that included beef barbecued over earthen fire pits. From this tradition was born Santa Maria Style Barbecue.

The traditional cuts of this distinctive barbecue are top-block sirloin and tri-tip (a cut that originated here). The meat is rolled in a mixture of salt, pepper, and garlic salt before being barbecued over coals of red oak, a native local species that contributes a smoky, hearty flavor. The traditional menu also includes slow-cooked pinquito beans—small pink beans that are also indigenous to the valley.

Fittingly, the Santa Maria Valley is home to several landmark barbecue eateries, including the Far Western Tavern restaurant, The Hitching Post, Shaw's Steakhouse, and Jocko's. To help plan your local barbecue experience, visit the Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce's barbecue blog at www.santamariavalleybbq.com.

Today, Santa Maria Style Barbecue offers a savory match with local wines. The valley boasts a rare transverse geography, an east-west orientation that channels cool air from the ocean directly into the valley. The result is one of California's longest grape-growing seasons, which ensures the development of complex, flavorful, and exquisitely balanced grapes. These conditions are also very favorable to strawberries and other remarkable local produce, all of which contribute to the Valley's rich agricultural legacy.

Local wineries with tasting rooms include Addamo, Cambria, Cottonwood Canyon, Foxen, Kenneth Volk, Rancho Sisquoc, Lucas & Lewellen, Byron, Riverbench, and Tres Hermanas. At the Costa de Oro Marketplace, visitors can sample not only Costa de Oro wines but also strawberries and other treats from the affiliated Gold Coast Farms.

The region boasts a remarkable diversity of golf courses, including several praised by *Golf Magazine* and *Golf Digest* for both their quality and their affordability. Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes are awe-inspiring mounds of shifting sands teeming with biological diversity. Visitors to the dunes are encouraged to begin their adventure at the Dunes Center in Guadalupe, which offers educational exhibits as well as guided hikes and walks.

Cultural highlights include the Santa Maria Museum of Flight, showcasing a unique collection of vintage aircraft and Hollywood props; live theater at the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts, Great American Melodrama, and Santa Maria Civic Theater; and ecological splendors at the Natural History Museum. Kids love the Santa Maria Valley Discovery Museum, 13,000 square feet of interactive exhibits and hands-on activities for children of all ages.

SANTA MARIA VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
800.331.3779 • 805.925.2403
SantaMaria.com

PHOTO: SANTA MARIA VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & VCB

Carpinteria

Day One

Do Downtown. At Carpinteria City Beach, begin your day with a swim or take a long walk on the beach. Then head up Linden Avenue, where galleries punctuate downtown's eclectic mix of boutiques, antique shops, surf-supply stores, and a variety of restaurants that cater to tastes both homespun and exotic (if you see one that especially intrigues you, call for dinner reservations). As the day winds down, head to the Island Brewing Company. A local favorite, this family-owned and -operated brewery offers beer tastings and a great view of the ocean. Now get dinner at any of the several choice restaurants.

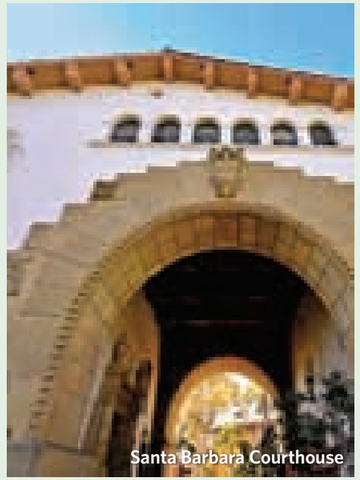
Day Two

Smell the flowers. Flower growing brings a rainbow of colors and fragrances to the Carpinteria Valley. Traveling north on Via Real, Seaside Gardens offers the experience of an "around-the-world" tour on four acres of botanical gardens. Island View Nursery is a gardener's paradise on 10 acres. A spectacular shopping destination, Island View offers discoveries from distinctive outdoor furnishings to lush indoor and outdoor plants. Also head to Gallup & Stribling and Westerlay Orchids for their famous showrooms featuring hundreds of orchids, beautiful arrangements, gifts, and more.

Day Three

Surf Santa Claus (Lane). The lane offers prized access to one of the best beaches in Santa Barbara County, but the assorted shops and restaurants here are intriguing even for non-surfers. Salt claims to have the "clothes you need to live in," Beach Grill is perfect for family outings, the Barbecue Company serves blues and brews, and Garden Market offers wines and gifts in addition to breakfast and lunch. The big "Kayak" sign leads to Paddle Sports of Santa Barbara for guided tours; paddle-board, surfing, and kayak lessons; and sporting gear rentals and sales. The Artful Angler can meet any fishing needs.

Delicious Danish pastries



Santa Barbara Courthouse

Santa Barbara

Day One

Take the Red Tile Walking Tour in downtown Santa Barbara's historic arts district and be mesmerized by the breathtaking architecture. Begin at the Santa Barbara County Courthouse, a graceful 1929 example of Spanish-Moorish architecture. Don't miss Mission Santa Barbara, the tenth of the California missions founded by the Spanish Franciscans—and the only one to be continuously occupied and used since its founding in 1786.

Day Two

Head to the wine country. Visit Richard Sanford's newest winemaking venture, Alma Rosa, learn about their sustainable organic growing practices and sample Mr. Sanford's Santa Rita Hills pinot noir. Enjoy a delicious lunch at the Los Olivos Café and Wine Merchant. End your wine tour at Sunstone Winery, a family-run operation that farms their 77-acre vineyards using organic, bio-sustainable methods, meeting all California Certified Organic Farmer standards. Sustainable Vine Wine Tours offers guided tours of organic and biodynamic wineries—in a biodiesel-powered van.

Day Three

At the beach, wake yourself up with a dip in the ocean—either surfing or kayaking. In the afternoon, rent a bike for cycling along the boardwalk—or, for the more experienced, conquer one of the nearby mountain trails. For the less adventurous who also would like to enjoy the outdoors, dozens of hiking trails cater to all levels of expertise.

Santa Ynez Valley

Day One

Spend a day exploring Solvang and environs (see Solvang itinerary).

Day Two

Do some delicious wine touring and tasting throughout the Valley, where you have more than 70 vineyards and tasting rooms to choose among. Go on your own or book a limo, van, or jeep tour with a professional area guide.

Day Three

Absorb local lore at the Santa Ynez Valley Historical Museum & Carriage House in Santa Ynez. Then meander through the wine tasting rooms, boutiques, and art galleries of Los Olivos plus the latest exhibits at Wildling Art Museum. Check out collectibles and western history in Los Alamos.

Day Four

Bicycle country roads or take a short hike into the Los Padres National Forest. Enjoy a guided nature cruise on Cachuma Lake. Tee off in style at The River Course at the Alisal or Rancho San Marcos Golf Course. Relax and enjoy the sunset and gaze at the stars in the clear night sky.

Solvang

Morning

Start with breakfast at an authentic Danish restaurant or bakery. Don't miss the popular aebleskiver—deliciously light, airy Danish pancake balls dusted with powdered sugar and served with raspberry jam. Stroll the village, hop aboard the historic horse-drawn Solvang Trolley, or rent a surrey cycle to pedal the flower-lined streets, enjoying the picturesque architecture (including several windmills) and looking for ornamental storks perched on roofs (they're considered good luck in Denmark—and in Solvang).

Afternoon

Savor a standout smorgasbord for a taste of frikadeller (meatballs), medisterpolse (sausage), and other delectable Danish favorites. Leave time for a tour of Solvang's more than 150 stores offering unique treasures, handmade lace, music boxes, clocks, antiques, porcelain, Danish arts and crafts, and much more. To explore Solvang's authentic Danish history, visit the Elverhøj Museum of History & Art, with its delightfully decorated period rooms, or the Old Mission Santa Inés, the 1804 national historic landmark offering self-guided tours.

Evening

Take a village wine tasting walking tour to enjoy some of the area's world-class vintages (and visit sites where segments of the Oscar®-winning *Sideways* were filmed). Take in a summer performance at the acclaimed PCPA Theaterfest's outdoor theater, or visit the nearby Chumash Casino for gaming, top-name performers, and other live entertainment.

Buellton

Morning

Wake up to a breakfast at Mother Hubbard's Restaurant, where you'll be served great food with a smile. Then enjoy a walk or relax at one of our beautiful parks and surrender to the calm and serenity of the panoramic views. Rent a bike and take a ride (or a drive) along our scenic country roads, winding through the Santa Rita Hills past vineyards and lavender fields.

Afternoon

Wine connoisseurs will want to venture out Santa Rosa Road and enjoy the Santa Rita Hills Wine Trail. Stop by Pattibakes Bakery and pick up a handmade picnic lunch to go—absolutely delicious. Or stay in town and shop. You'll find antiques, furniture, quilts, a large selection of souvenirs in Pea Soup Andersen's Restaurant and gift shop. Try a bowl of the famous Split Pea Soup or visit the Buellton Historical Society's History Room upstairs. East of Buellton is Ostrich Land, where you can actually feed the (large) birds. For a taste of high adventure, head to the Santa Ynez Valley Airport for a glider ride over the Valley by Windhaven Glider Rides. For a calmer pursuit, par-3 nine-hole Zaca Creek Golf Course is nestled in the Rancho de Maria subdivision.

Evening

Sample Buellton's wide selection of restaurants. Visit the Hitching Post II, made famous in the movie *Sideways*. Western-style AJ Spurs is famous for its Santa Maria Style Barbeque and collection of Western décor. Another favorite is the Firestone Brewery. After dinner, catch a movie at Parks Plaza Theater or try a game of pool at the Club House Lounge (in the Days Inn). The Winner's Circle Lounge (located at the Marriott) is a great place to revisit the day's events.

PHOTOS: OPPOSITE TOP: SANTA BARBARA CVB & FC • OPPOSITE BOTTOM: ANNA YU • THIS PAGE: KIRK IRWIN

Santa Barbara County Itineraries

Lompoc

Day One

Spend the day at La Purísima State Historic Park, stepping back to 1820 at California's most completely and accurately restored mission. Pack a picnic lunch and eat under the magnificent oaks. Bring your hiking shoes and enjoy a hike through the rural backcountry of the Mission.

Day Two

Enjoy a self-guided walking tour of Lompoc's collection of more than 60 outdoor murals, then step inside the Cypress Art Gallery to view smaller works by local artists. Visit the Lompoc Museum, housed in an original 1911 Carnegie Library Building, to learn about local history. Take the self-guided Heritage Walk through historic downtown. Be sure to visit the Friday Night Farmers' Market.

Day Three

Tour the local wine country (maps are available at the Chamber of Commerce) and taste some of the prize-winning wines of California's Central Coast. During the summer months, tour the vibrant open-air flower fields (maps at the Chamber) and the Friday Night Olde Towne Market.

Day Four

Enjoy beachcombing, sunning, or relaxing at Jalama Beach County Park. Don't miss the world-famous "Jalama Burger" at the Jalama Beach Grill. Remember plenty of napkins!

Santa Maria Valley

Day One

Hit the Santa Maria Valley Wine Trail for a day of wine tasting. Grab a gourmet picnic lunch at Dino's Deli for the road. Unwind at dinner with a taste of the world-famous Santa Maria Style Barbecue at one of several local restaurants specializing in this delectable local culinary tradition.

Day Two

Tee it up at one of the Valley's many award-winning golf courses, which are acclaimed for their quality and affordability. Rancho Maria Golf Course in Santa Maria is a beautiful 18-hole championship course. Marshallia Ranch is a unique 18-hole U.S. Air Force–owned course that is open to the public. In the evening, enjoy a theater performance at the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts, Great American Melodrama, or Santa Maria Civic Theater.

Day Three

Explore Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes, starting with the historical and educational exhibits at the Dunes Center in Guadalupe, which also offers guided hikes and walks. Next, enjoy the Santa Maria Museum of Flight, which features a unique collection of vintage aircraft and Hollywood props, then on to the Santa Maria Valley Discovery Museum's 13,000 square feet of interactive exhibits for children of all ages.

Santa Maria Valley Rancho Sisquoc Winery

Central Coast Tourism Council Members

Alisal Guest Ranch and Resort
1054 Alisal Road, Solvang, CA 93463
805.688.6411 • Alisal.com

Best Western Big America
1725 N. Broadway, Santa Maria, CA 93454
805.922.5200 • BigAmerica.com

Best Western Carpinteria Inn
4558 Carpinteria Avenue, Carpinteria, CA 93013
805.684.0473

Best Western Pepper Tree
3850 State Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93105
805.687.5511 • SBHotels.com

Best Western South Coast Inn
5620 Calle Real, Goleta, CA 93117
805.967.3200 • Santa-Barbara-Hotel.com

Beth McDonald Consulting
22 N. Voluntario Street, Suite B
Santa Barbara, CA 93103
805.963.0842 • BethMcDonaldConsulting.com

bouchon
9 W. Victoria Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101
805.730.1160 • Bouchon.net

Buellton Visitors Bureau & Chamber of Commerce
376 Avenue of Flags, Buellton, CA 93427
805.688.7829 • VisitBuellton.com

Cabrillo Inn at the Beach
931 E. Cabrillo Boulevard
Santa Barbara, CA 93103
805.966.1641 • Cabrillo-Inn.com

Casa del Mar Inn
18 Bath Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101
805.963.4418 • CasaDelMar.com

Carpinteria Valley Chamber of Commerce
1056-B Eugenia Place, Carpinteria, CA 93013
805.684.5479 • CarpinteriaChamber.org

City of Carpinteria
5775 Carpinteria Avenue, Carpinteria, CA 93013
805.684.5405 • Carpinteria.ca.us

Condor Express Cruises
301 W. Cabrillo Boulevard
Santa Barbara, CA 93109
805.965.1985 • CondorCruises.com

Embassy Suites—Lompoc
1117 N. "H" Street, Lompoc, CA 93436
805.735.8311 • EmbassySuitesLompoc.com

Fess Parker's DoubleTree Resort
633 E. Cabrillo Boulevard
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
805.564.4333 • FPDTR.com

Franciscan Inn
109 Bath Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101
805.963.8845 • FranciscanInn.com

Harbor View Inn
28 W. Cabrillo Boulevard
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
805.963.0780 • HarborViewInnSB.com

Holiday Inn Express Hotel Virginia
17 W. Haley Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101
805.963.9757 • HotelVirginia.com

Holiday Inn Express & Suites Carpinteria
5606 Carpinteria Avenue, Carpinteria, CA 93013
805.566.9499 • CarpinteriaExpress.com

Hotel Corque
400 Alisal Road, Solvang, CA 93463
805.688.8000 • HotelCorque.com

Hotel Santa Barbara
533 State Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101
805.957.9300 • HotelSantaBarbara.com

Inn on Summer Hill & Spa
2520 Lillie Avenue, Summerland, CA 93067
800.845.5566 • InnOnSummerHill.com

King Frederik Inn
1617 Copenhagen Drive, Solvang, CA 93463
805.688.5515 • KingFrederikInn.com

La Cumbre Plaza
121 S. Hope Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93105
805.687.3500 • ShopLaCumbre.com

Lompoc Valley Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau
111 S. I Street, Lompoc, CA 93436
805.736.4567 • Lompoc.com

Pacifica Suites
5490 Hollister Avenue, Santa Barbara, CA 93111
805.683.6722 • PacificaSuites.com

Pea Soup Andersen's Inn
Highway 246 & Avenue of Flags
Buellton, CA 93427
805.688.3216 • PeaSoupAndersens.com

Rose Café
1816 Cliff Drive, Santa Barbara, CA 93109
805.965.5513 • RoseCafe2.com

Sandman Inn
3714 State Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93105
805.687.2468 • TheSandmanInn.com

Sandpiper Lodge
3525 State Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93105
805.687.5326 • SandpiperLodge.com

Santa Barbara Conference & Visitors Bureau and Film Commission
1601 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
805.966.9222 • SantaBarbaraCA.com/CCGuide

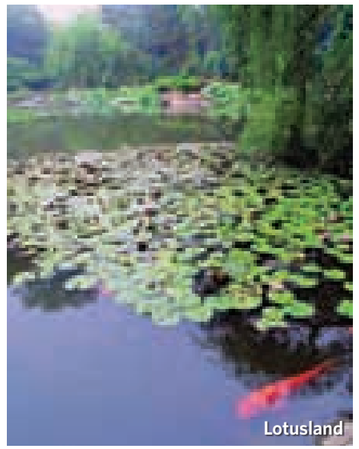
Santa Barbara County Parks Department
805.568.2461 • SBParks.org

Santa Barbara Ramada Limited
4770 Calle Real, Santa Barbara, CA 93110
805.964.3511 • SBRamada.com

Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation
123 E. Canon Perdido Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
805.965.0093 • SBTHP.org

Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce & VCB
614 S. Broadway, Santa Maria, CA 93454
805.925.2403 • SantaMaria.com

Grapes ready for harvest


Lotusland

Santa Ynez Valley Marriott
555 McMurray Road, Buellton, CA 93427
805.688.1000 • SantaYnezHotels.com

Santa Ynez Valley Visitors Association
P.O. Box 1918, Santa Ynez, CA 93460
805.686.0053 • SYVVA.com

Solvang Conference & Visitors Bureau
1511A Mission Drive, Solvang, CA 93464
805.688.6144 • SolvangUSA.com

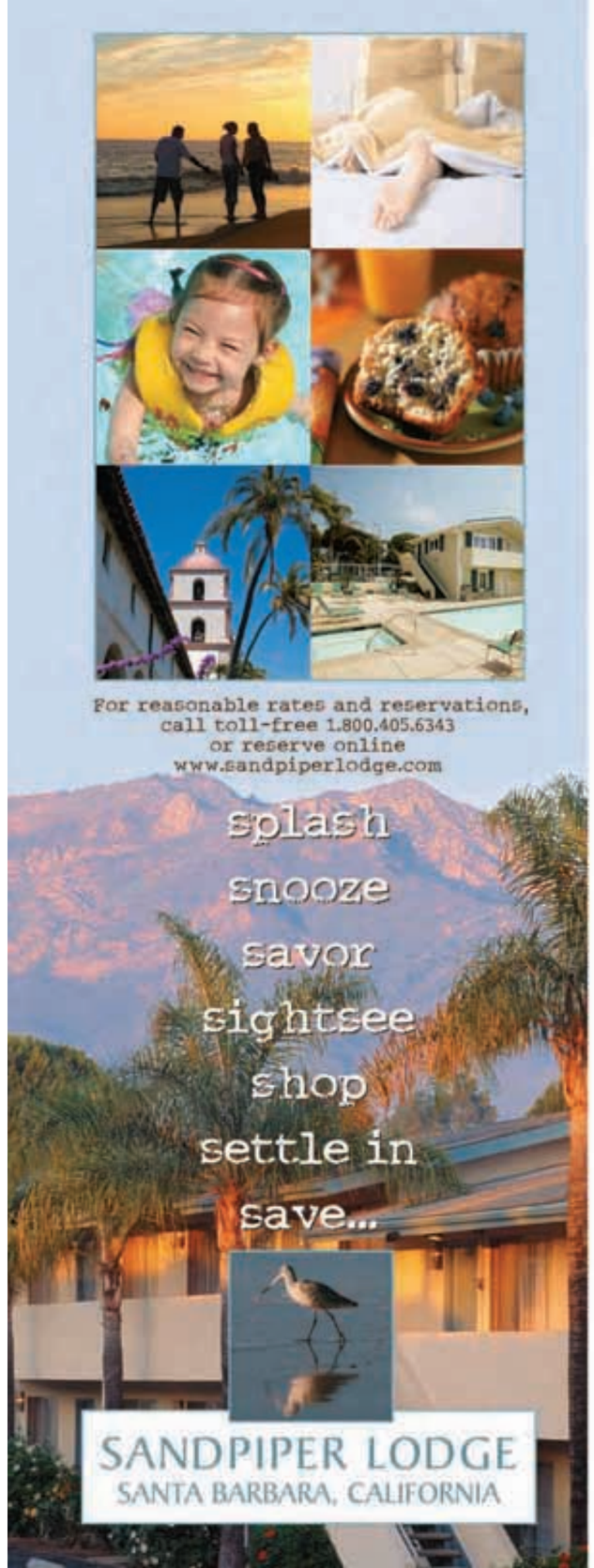
Solvang Gardens Lodge
293 Alisal Road, Solvang, CA 93463
805.688.4404 • SolvangGardens.com

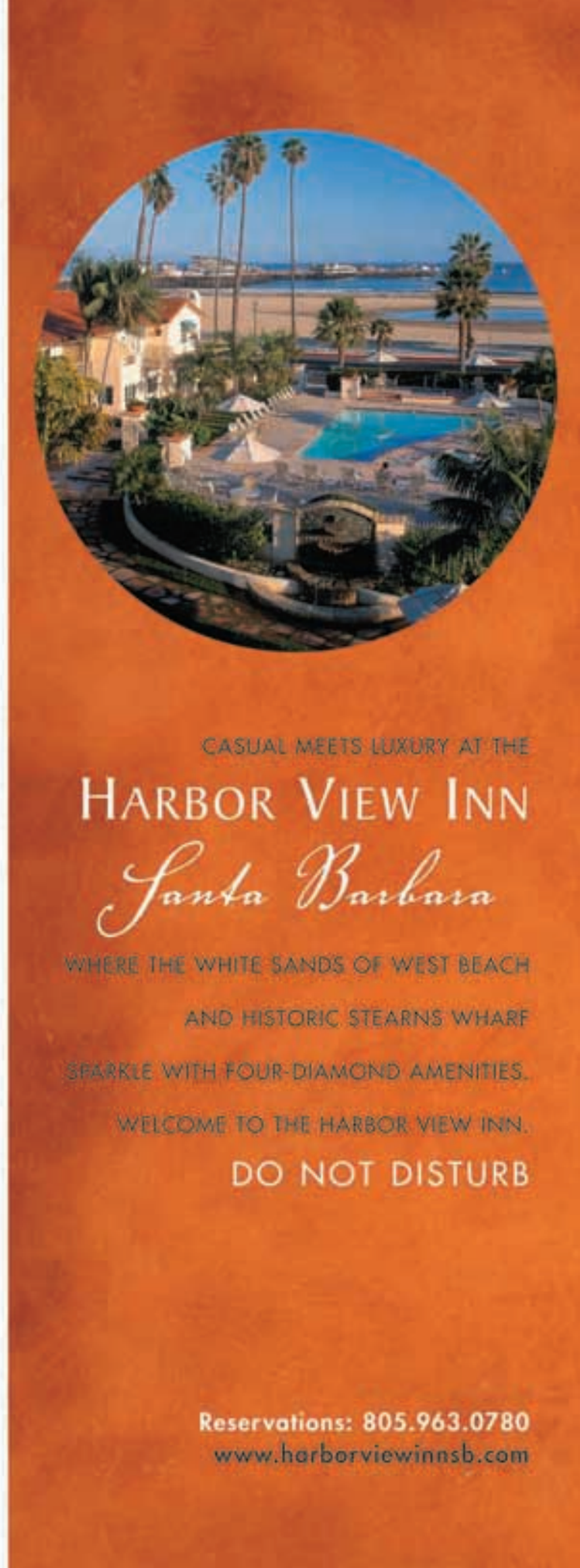
Upham Hotel & Country House
1404 De La Vina Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101
805.962.0058 • UphamHotel.com

Wildling Art Museum
2928 San Marcos Avenue, Los Olivos, CA 93441
805.688.1082 • WildlingMuseum.org

Wine Valley Inn
1564 Copenhagen Drive, Solvang, CA 93463
805.688.2111 • WineValleyInn.com

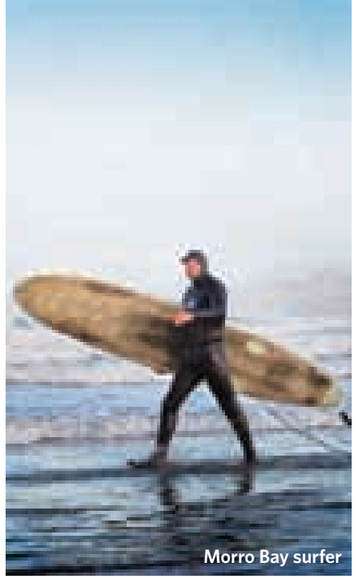
PHOTOS TOP: SANTA MARIA VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & VCB / ESCOBAR • BOTTOM: SANTA BARBARA CVB & FC





San Luis Obispo County views

San Luis Obispo County



Morro Bay surfer

The county is home to one of California's most fascinating and popular visitor destinations, Hearst Castle®; some of the state's most famous beach towns (and beaches); the haunting landforms of Oceano Dunes and Morro Rock; one of the most prestigious universities in the United States; endless recreation, art, culture, and elephant seals.

The county's reputation as a food-and-wine destination is based on the fact that the dining scene here has exploded with new restaurants showcasing innovative dishes prepared by chefs choosing local, organic, and sustainable ingredients. Area farms and orchards produce fresh, seasonal fruits, nuts, and vegetables, while local ranches raise natural beef, lamb, pork, and chicken—and, of course, local fishermen haul in the catch of the day from the Pacific Ocean right outside restaurant windows. Culinary delights served up by restaurants, cafés, and delis include oak-pit barbecued ribs and steaks, award-winning clam chowder in sourdough bowls, fresh-baked olallieberry pie, a curried chicken sandwich made famous by Oprah Winfrey, and much, much more.

And complementing the food are award-winning vintages produced by the many wineries dotting the environs of Paso Robles and San Luis Obispo.

Arroyo Grande
Grover Beach
Pismo Beach
Avila Beach
San Luis Obispo
Morro Bay
Atascadero
Cayucos
Harmony
Paso Robles
Cambria
San Simeon

PHOTO OPPOSITE: RYAN POLING • THIS PAGE: KEITH BERGHER / TIA ADVERTISING

Picturesque vineyards

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY WINE COUNTRY

San Luis Obispo County is the ideal destination for wine lovers. Wine is the county's primary agricultural product today, and is the third-largest wine-producing county in California. It is home to two distinct wine grape-growing regions—Paso Robles and San Luis Obispo—as well as more than 200 wineries and more than 100 tasting rooms featuring award-winning vintages and innovative wine grape–growing techniques.

Local wine production has deep roots in this county. Taking advantage of the warm Mediterranean climate they were accustomed to, the friars of both Mission San Luis Obispo and nearby Mission San Miguel were already producing their favorite sacristy and other wines in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Private wineries existed here by the mid 1800s, and two local wineries still produce wines from these original grapevines.

The marine influence of the Pacific Ocean makes our summers mild and our falls warm, resulting in an unusually long growing season. Combined with the region's rocky volcanic soils, these conditions produce fruit with intense varietal character and complex flavors that are characteristic of the greatest wine regions in the world.

Paso Robles is home to more than 200 wineries and 26,000 vineyard acres focusing on premium wine production. The distinct microclimates and diverse soils, combined with warm days and cool nights, make growing conditions ideal for more than 40 varietals from cabernet sauvignon and merlot to syrah, viognier, roussanne, and zinfandel—the area's heritage variety.

Everything about this region—the terrain; the people who welcome guests and travelers; the uncrowded, unhurried, unpretentious personality of San Luis Obispo itself—evokes a feeling of peace that is ideal for a supremely enjoyable wine-tasting getaway. The wineries in this region are mostly family-owned, well-known for their hand-crafted bottlings of pinot noir, chardonnay, syrah, grenache, viognier, zinfandel, and more.

An important benefit to visitors, due to the absence of crowds, is that local wine makers are better able to focus on education—supervised tastings or pairings of wine and food, matching wines with local artisan cheeses, special classes on blending wines (giving participants the option of bringing home their own unique blends), and more.

Local wineries are also firmly embedded in the local agricultural ecology. In many cases, the land has been family-owned for generations and is oriented for sustainable farming—carefully designed for the use and enjoyment of future generations.

Most tasting rooms are open Thursday through Sunday. Many local restaurants and wineries take pride in offering wine dinners, deliciously pairing local vintages with other wonderful fresh local products, including organic and heirloom vegetables.

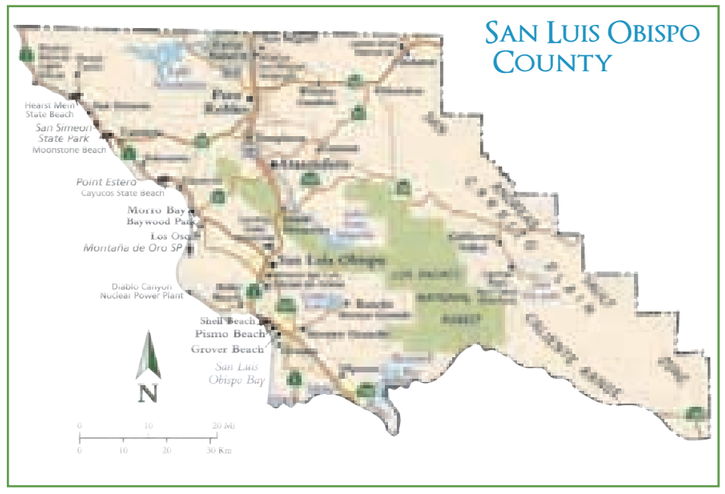


PHOTO: SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY CVB / AARON CLIP

You're invited to America's Castle

High above the Pacific, on a site he called The Enchanted Hill®, Mr. W.R. Hearst created his private retreat. Once accessible only to celebrities and famous guests, this magnificent estate is yours to explore.

Tours year-round • Souvenirs • Museum • Dining*
Large-format movie at Hearst Castle Theater

How will the splendor of Hearst Castle® inspire *you?*
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Tour groups are limited in size and fill quickly—
Advance Reservations Strongly Recommended.

HEARST CASTLE®

Hearst San Simeon State Historical Monument®
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California State Parks
Hearst Castle Theater
A Giant Screen Experience

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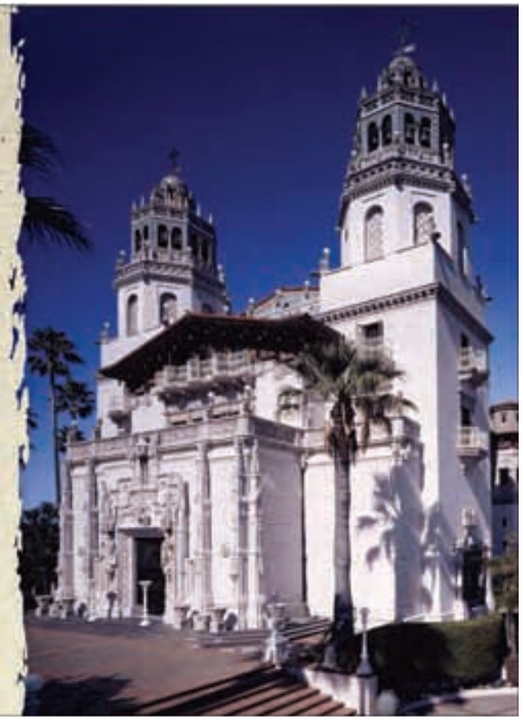


San Luis Obispo County
HEARST CASTLE®

Neptune Pool

SAN SIMEON became famous around the world beginning in the 1920s as the site of Hearst Castle®. Today, this is a truly unforgettable visitor destination.

As a boy, William Randolph Hearst had visited San Simeon in San Luis Obispo County many times with his family. After he gained wealth as a newspaper publisher, he chose this dramatic stretch of the coastal Santa Lucia Mountains as the place to build a fabulous estate, overlooking the Pacific Ocean. From his father, George, a miner, Hearst learned a healthy respect for and love of the land. From his mother, Phoebe Apperson Hearst, he acquired a passion for European art, Mediterranean architecture, fine craftsmanship and ornament, and precious antiquities. He considered San Simeon an homage to her.

Construction began in 1919 and continued for 28 years—and no expense was spared. Hearst built warehouses to support the construction of his castle. Exquisite treasures by the shipload made the long journey from Europe to the art auction houses of New York, Paris, and London and then on to the San Simeon Pier—priceless antiques, hand-carved ceilings, marble sculptures, and even full-grown trees. Steel beams and concrete structures assured safety from an earthquake—a rare precaution at the time. The spectacular Neptune Pool was twice enlarged and redesigned. Eventually, the estate encompassed some 165 rooms and 127 acres of gardens, terraces, pools, and walkways—one of the most magnificent estates in America and the setting for legendary parties during the Golden Age of Hollywood.

The eventual success of the project was a tribute to the perseverance of his talented building partner, San Francisco architect Julia Morgan. Hearst was more interested in the creative process of designing and building than he was in the actual completion of the project, and when he died, in 1951, the Castle was still unfinished.

Today, operated by California State Parks as a State Historical Monument, Hearst Castle® ("La Cuesta Encantada®," or "The Enchanted Hill®") is one of the most popular visitor destinations in California, welcoming hundreds of thousands of visitors annually.

ARROYO GRANDE

The southernmost large city in San Luis Obispo County is Arroyo Grande, idyllically surrounded by farms and flower fields. Situated only two miles east of the Pacific Ocean, just inland from the South County beach area, Arroyo Grande draws visitors who find a delightful network of country roads meandering through fruit orchards, pastoral farmlands, and hundreds of acres of premium wine-grape vineyards.

In September, the annual Harvest Festival includes a lively parade of community residents and spirited marching bands as well as agricultural exhibits, arts and crafts, food, and games. And one of the most popular events in the entire region is the joyous annual Strawberry Festival in May, when the city's streets fill with booths offering arts and crafts, tasty ethnic foods, games, strawberry treats of every imaginable variety, live music on several stages, and dancing.

Photographers eager to capture (and hikers desiring simply to enjoy) the striking beauty of the region roam the rolling hills of the picturesque Arroyo Grande Valley in search of the perfect view. Wildflowers bloom January though May, and plant growth is rapid and often luxuriant—especially in the canyon bottoms.

The quiet of the relatively rural setting also permeates the city. Arroyo Grande maintains a charming village character in its vibrant downtown shopping and dining district, a cluster of antique stores, gift shops, restaurants, and saloons. Right downtown, Arroyo Grande Creek is spanned by a rustic swinging bridge—the avenue of choice to reach "the village." In the city's neighborhoods, Arroyo Grande's historic past and sophisticated present combine in architecture ranging from unique and beautiful Victorians to highly contemporary structures.

Diversity is characteristic not just of the city's architecture but also of its varied attractions. This, after all, is a place where visiting families can enjoy everything from watching a vaudeville show and exploring 4,000 acres of sand dunes to negotiating that swinging bridge.

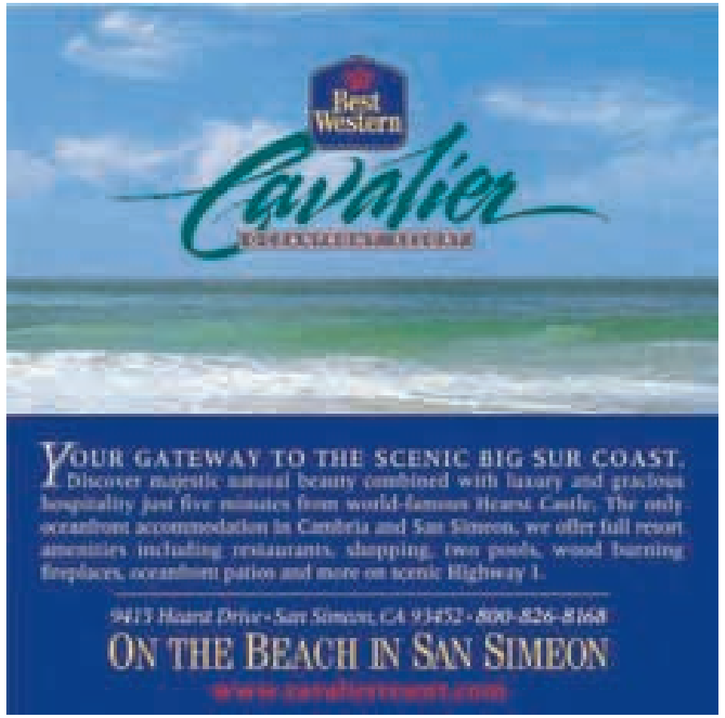
PHOTOS THIS PAGE: HEARST CASTLE • OPPOSITE: GREG PETERSON

Arroyo Grande

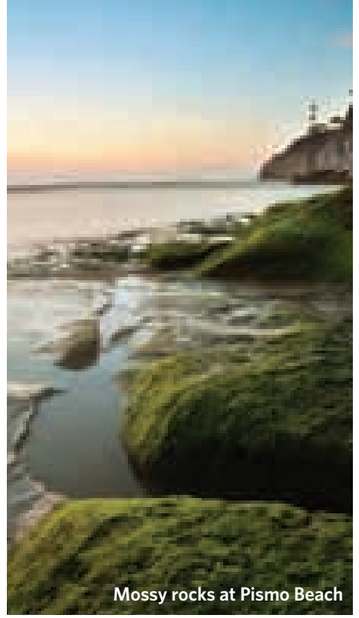
For outdoor activities, the Valley's Lopez County Recreation Area offers access to beautiful warm-water Lopez Lake for fishing, camping, picnicking, hiking, sailing, and just generally enjoying nature. The park has a number of campsites, a marina with launch ramp, boat rentals, a water slide open in the summer, group camps, picnic areas, and several miles of hiking trails. Fishing is excellent year-round, but a massive trout-stocking program sparks peak activity from October to May.

GROVER BEACH

At the peak of an inverted pyramid whose other points are Pismo Beach (see next page) and Arroyo Grande is the quiet community of Grover Beach, 2.25 square miles in area. This is the gateway to the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area (the entrance is just off Highway 1, minutes south of town)—an area of seemingly endless dunes as well as the only place in California where it's legal to drive on the beach along the Pacific Ocean coastline for miles. All-terrain vehicles can be rented for four-wheeling on the dunes.



Pismo Beach sunset



Mossy rocks at Pismo Beach

PISMO BEACH

Pismo Beach offers visitors another tranquil environment in which to sample some of the very best California has to offer—the incomparable combination of wine and waves. Just seven miles from the coast, visitors can sip award-winning wines in luxurious tasting rooms offering incredible views of the fertile valley and some of the Morros, a group of nine ancient volcanic mountains stretching from southern San Luis Obispo to Morro Rock.

Wine enthusiasts will especially appreciate the small boutique wineries, where friendly, knowledgeable staffs provide enjoyable, informative, and memorable tasting experiences. The region's temperate growing conditions are ideal for pinot noir, chardonnay, pinot blanc, syrah, and other varieties that thrive in cooler climates.

An outstanding way to sample Pismo Beach wines and food is during the Taste of Pismo, an event that combines tastings from local wineries with fabulous food from local restaurants. The dining is always outstanding here, from elegant oceanfront restaurants featuring fresh seafood and steaks, to quaint, cozy cafés offering more casual fare.

Pismo Beach is classic California, the perfect place for visitors to step back in time and enjoy the down-home friendliness of a cozy beachside community. Located on Highway 101 and the Pacific Coast Highway, the gorgeous setting offers everything from fast-paced action to complete serenity.

The beach, of course, is a primary attraction of Pismo Beach. Near-perfect year-round weather here averages 72° F. Soft sand and a wide shoreline make it an ideal place to explore tidepools, collect shells, fly kites, and build sandcastles. And water lovers can surf, bodyboard, and kiteboard.

Families can walk the downtown area or rent popular surrey cycles. Also for rent are Segway® human transporters. For visitors with disabilities, motorized carts and beach wheelchairs are available.

Horseback is yet another mode of travel, offering visitors an exhilarating way of drinking in unforgettable views of the shoreline. Horses suitable for all levels of riding, plus guided horseback beach tours, are available at the local stable.

No license is required to fish from the 1,200-foot-long Pismo Pier, which generally yields red snapper or lingcod. Visitors can rent fishing gear on the pier.

The city's clean ocean air lends a refreshing dimension to golf at Pismo's 9-hole beach course and putting green as well as at three nearby championship courses.

In its heyday, Pismo Beach was known as the Clam Capital of the World. Although overfishing (by both humans and sea otters) all but obliterated the clam population, a decade-long ban on clamming gave rise to a recovery. In homage to the bivalve, one highlight of the city's schedule of annual events is the two-day Pismo Clam Festival, featuring live entertainment, a Clam Chowder Cook-off, a colorful hometown parade, a volleyball tournament, and a surf competition. A highlight of the festival is a reenactment of an old Clam Dig (the "clams" are redeemed for money). In November, the spectacular Marching Bands Review brings together the best bands from throughout the state. Another annual highlight is the June Classic Car Show, which draws the hottest cars on the West Coast each year. More than 900 cars—hot rods to classic beauties—line the streets for the celebratory Cruise Night.

For shoppers, charming boutiques, galleries displaying the work of local artists, and antique shops beckon. And the Prime Outlets Center boasts more than 40 well-known retail stores for an unbeatable discount shopping experience.

From November through February, thousands of Monarch butterflies migrate to Pismo Beach, transforming an ordinary eucalyptus grove on Highway 1 into a black-and-orange winged wonderland. The butterflies hang in huge clusters in California's largest populated Monarch butterfly grove while docents lead free tours daily.

Dolphins, California brown pelicans, migrating whales, and Peregrine falcons are also regular guests at Pismo Beach. Visitors can see it all from the three-mile oceanfront boardwalk that stretches from the famous pier to beyond the butterfly grove.

For a breathtaking aerial view, travelers can take biplane or helicopter tours over the rolling hills, shoreline, historic lighthouse, and ever-changing sand dunes. All-terrain vehicles can be rented to go four-wheeling on the seemingly endless Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area, just minutes away.

It's all here—a gentle climate where sand, sun, sea, and sky converge to create the ideal getaway. California's perfect past is present in Pismo Beach.

PISMO BEACH
CONFERENCE & VISITORS BUREAU
800.443.7778 • 805.773.7034
ClassicCalifornia.com

PHOTOS: KEVIN RUSS

AVILA BEACH

Avila Beach, which enjoys nearly year-round sunshine, is generally considered the warmest beach in the county. The clear blue water and crashing waves are beloved by swimmers and body surfers. If the ocean is not warm enough, visitors can pay a visit to the natural mineral hot springs in the area and enjoy a soak in a redwood tub nestled on a secluded, tree-covered hillside.

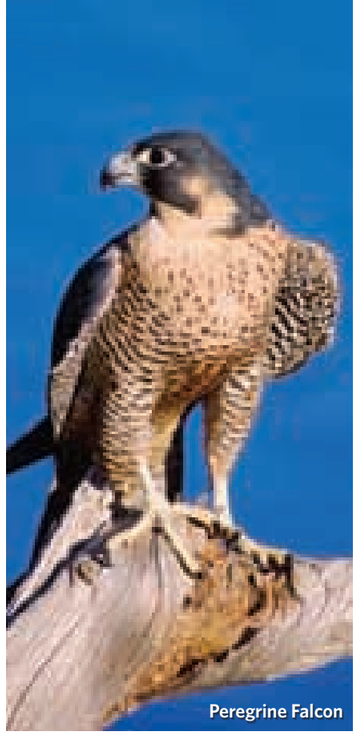
The city also offers sightseeing, pier strolling, deep-sea fishing, and the tranquility of the sun-drenched beach.

For golfers, gorgeous Avila Beach Golf Resort provides an atmosphere wonderfully enhanced by soft ocean breezes and the smell of the Pacific.

SAN LUIS OBISPO

This charming and vibrant city is the hub of San Luis Obispo County. It is home to world-renowned California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly), the magnificent Performing Arts Center, historic Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa, and a famous Thursday night Farmers' Market.

Morro Bay


Peregrine Falcon

Nestled among lush rolling hills and shadowed by ancient volcanic peaks, San Luis Obispo is rich in history, architecture, and small-town friendliness. Founded in 1772, the town began as Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa, the fifth of California's 21 historic missions. Parishioners continue to gather daily for services at the Mission.

Today, a delightfully lively downtown clusters around beautifully landscaped Mission Plaza. San Luis Creek meanders through the Plaza, making it an unexpected haven for quiet solitude and reflection. The progressive Art in Public Places project has placed art installations throughout the county, with special pieces displayed near the creek and plaza.

Around the plaza, tree-lined streets welcome visitors to a charming shopping district filled with stores, outdoor cafés, coffee houses, and more. On Thursday evenings, an open-air Farmers' Market fills four blocks of Higuera Street. An ever-changing roster of performers entertain, arts and crafts booths line the street, and fresh, seasonal produce and a variety of barbecued specialties from local restaurants await families and friends for an evening of enjoyment.

Throughout the year, San Luis Obispo hosts many festivals, special events, and celebrations. Popular events include the Roll Out the Barrels Wine Festival, Festival Mozaic, I Madonnari Italian Street Painting Festival, Jeep 48 Straight Mountain Biking World Championships, and Open Studios Tours.

For a bit of history, visitors can experience the captivating Victorian gardens and renovated, traditionally decorated Jack House, a historic treasure built between 1876 and 1880 on Marsh Street. The Dallidet Adobe, built in 1853, is a gracious state historical monument with various original trees and shrubs in its Mediterranean garden. It is located off Santa Rosa Street on Pacific.

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY VISITORS & CONFERENCE BUREAU
800.634.1414 • 805.541.8000
SanLuisObispoCounty.com

MORRO BAY

Morro Bay is a picturesque seaside village known for its ocean views, ideal climate, and a growing reputation for eco-tourism. The city is a perfect sanctuary for city dwellers who want to reconnect with the beauty of nature.

Visitors here find all the amenities of a first-rate resort destination. Golfers enjoy an oceanview 18-hole championship course, while visitors interested in fishing, boating, world-class surfing, hiking, kayaking, rock-climbing, biking, whale-watching, and more will find plenty of opportunities to indulge in those pursuits. Protected wetlands, bird sanctuaries, and plentiful sea life add to the area's natural beauty—and appeal.

The city's most prominent feature, Morro Rock, is a striking, dome-shaped volcanic peak at the northwest boundary of Morro Bay's harbor. It stands 578 feet high and covers 50 acres at its base. It is also a sanctuary for endangered Peregrine falcons.

Completely sheltered from the open ocean, Morro Harbor is delineated by a five-mile sand dune, which stretches from the beautiful Montaña de Oro State Park to Morro Rock. Sheltering boats of all sizes, from a small commercial fishing fleet and a variety of personal luxury vessels to individual kayaks and canoes, it is understandably a very popular destination for yachtsmen.

The harbor also embraces one of the largest and most fertile federally protected estuaries in California. It helps provide habitat to some 250 species of birds (including more than two dozen that are threatened or endangered). Among these are the Peregrine Falcon, the brant, the brown pelican, the black rail, and the snowy plover. As a major stop on the Pacific Flyway, Morro Bay is a bird-lover's paradise, drawing thousands of visiting waterfowl—and countless birders—every year.

PHOTOS LEFT: SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY VCB • RIGHT: JOHN PITCHER

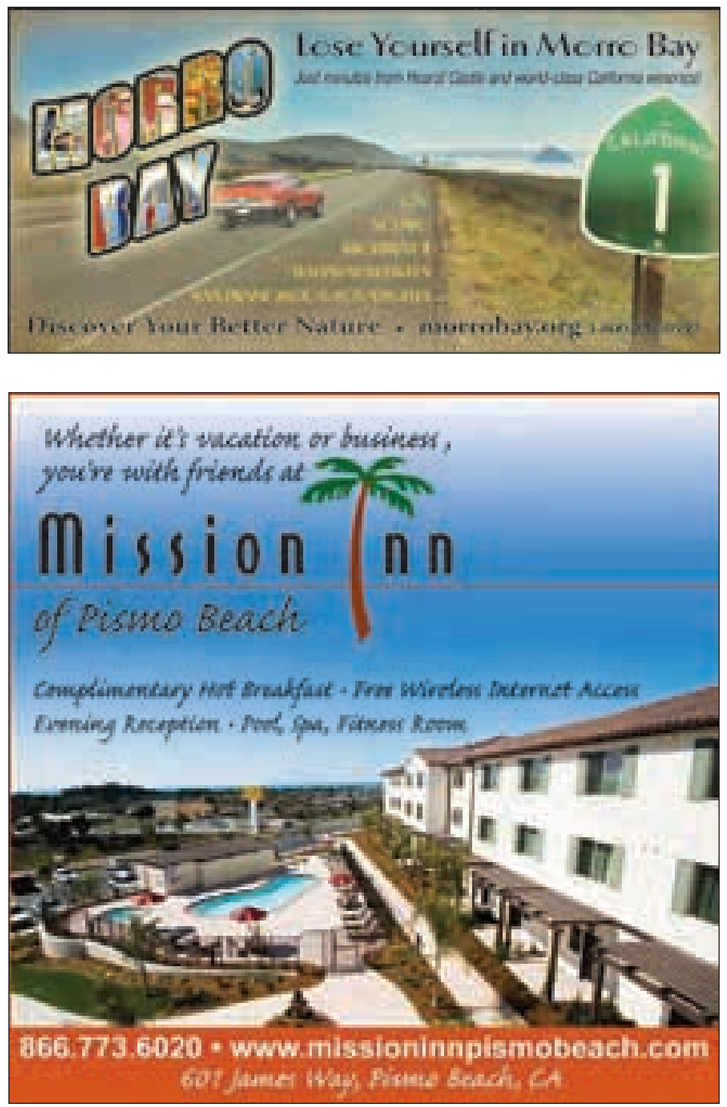
In contrast to the tranquil harbor, just to the north of the great rock, lies a vast stretch of pristine beach where ocean whitecaps come crashing ashore. This proximity of sheltered harbor and untamed open ocean within just a few hundred feet of each other is one of the truly unique aspects of Morro Bay. Surfers ride the breakers, while joggers, hikers, and nature lovers enjoy the other attractions of the beach—crisp air, sunshine, and miles of sand.

Nestled in the shadow of the towering rock is the Embarcadero, noted for shops, art galleries, outstanding restaurants, and oceanview accommodations. Here, the seafood, the sunsets, and the hospitality are unparalleled. Downtown and Morro Bay North are districts offering additional opportunities for shopping, dining, and lodging.

Morro Bay is also centrally located for side trips to other attractions in the area. It's just a short drive from world-famous Hearst Castle®, for example, and from more than 90 nearby wineries.

Just a few miles south of town are the charming communities of Baywood Park and Los Osos (Spanish for "The Bears"). Los Osos is the gateway to Moñtana de Oro ("Mountain of Gold") State Park, named for the golden fields of wildflowers that blanket the landscape each spring. This breathtaking 8,000-acre park offers visitors a wealth of natural beauty, over 50 miles of hiking, bicycling, and equestrian trails; camping; and surf fishing. Los Osos features numerous pristine wilderness preserves such as the magical Elfin Forest, Los Osos Oak Preserve, Sweet Springs Nature Preserve, and Audubon Overlook.

MORRO BAY VISITORS CENTER & CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
800.231.0592 • 805.772.4467
MorroBay.org



Atascadero fields

ATASCADERO

Founded in 1913, Atascadero (locally nicknamed "A-Town") was California's first planned community, the utopian brainchild of successful publisher Edward Gardner Lewis, for whom the segment of State Route 41 between Atascadero and Morro Bay (which Lewis built) is named. Today, it is a vacationer's paradise. Almost 20 miles inland, it has warmer, drier weather than the coastal cities, and it is the heart of a region filled with wineries, orchards, farms, public lands, four golf courses, three lakes, and the only zoo on the Central Coast.

For a glimpse of the city's actual history, visitors won't want to miss either of the town's two national historical landmarks or the historic and luxurious 1929 Carlton Hotel. The 1915 Printery was home to the first rotogravure presses west of Chicago, and the 1918 Atascadero Administration Building is a three-story Italian-Renaissance treasure built of concrete and bricks made with local clay and topped with a 40-foot dome. All three structures lie within the downtown Colony District, anchored by the lovely Sunken Gardens park (flanked by pedestrian malls and the site of the weekly farmers' market and other civic events). True to its visionary founding principles, the city is also home to the Skytherm House, a 1973 experiment in passive solar heating and cooling (donated to and now owned by the College of Architecture and Environmental Design at Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo).

At the southwestern corner of town, beautiful Atascadero Lake Park offers boating, swimming, wading, volleyball, athletic fields, a playground, picnicking, and more. The park is also home to Charles Paddock Zoo, a five-acre family favorite.

Atascadero is perfectly situated for touring the area's wineries. Visitors who are pressed for time but still want to pick up some Central Coast wines can do so at the Wine Outlet, in the Atascadero Factory Outlets shopping complex. For shoppers, the outlets are only one option. The city boasts everything from antique stores to surf shops, quaint storefronts to garden centers.

Travelers are welcome here in accommodations ranging from hotels and motels to two bed-and-breakfasts. And hungry visitors will find everything in Atascadero from pizza and burgers to ethnic choices to very fine dining.

ATASCADERO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & VISITORS CENTER
888.51.VISIT • 805.466.2044
VisitAtascadero.com

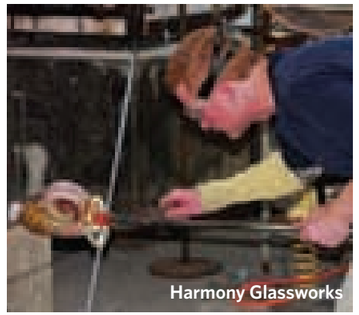
PHOTO: DENNIS SWANSON / STUDIO 101

CAYUCOS

Laid back and cool, energizing and fascinating, Cayucos is "The Coolest Beach Town in the United States" according to *Budget Travel* magazine's annual list of "America's Coolest Small Towns." This "cool" destination is nestled halfway between San Francisco and Los Angeles, between the Pacific Ocean and the rolling hillsides of California's Central Coast. It's the only beach town that has real life cowboys who still work their land that has been handed down through generations. Cowboys and

Sea cliffs of Cambria

Inlet of Lake Nacimiento


Harmony Glassworks

surfers unite to revel in the beauty of their community. It has been said Cayucos is not just a town or community but rather a family.

Cayucos boasts many great restaurants and wonderful accommodations for every budget. You can relax at the shore or hike the open land at the bluffs. Spend some time browsing through various shops—you are bound to find endless treasures. Cayucos is also known as the "antique capital of the Central Coast."

Born during the days of Spanish land grants, Cayucos grew up with sailing ships and steamers, rum runners and revenuers. Gamblers and seafarers met in the Old Cayucos Tavern, and adventurers and romantics of all kinds still meet there today, Cayucos, the tiny beach town that sits at the foot of the hills with its toes in the sand, awaits you. Cayucos will win your heart and keep you wanting to come back for more!

CAYUCOS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
805.995.1200 • CayucosChamber.com

HARMONY

The tiny town now called Harmony was founded in 1869 by Swiss-Italian immigrants as a dairy settlement, and was home to several dairy ranches and a creamery. A series of intense rivalries eventually resulted in a killing, at which point the parties came to their senses, called off their feud, and named the town in honor of the newfound amity.

Californians of a certain age fondly recall Harmony brand butter, and its distinctive golden color (and its promise never to go rancid), the result of traditional Swiss methods of purification. It closed in the mid 1950s, but at its peak, the creamery employed 10 and was renowned statewide.

Harmony's renaissance began in the 1970s when The Harmony Pottery (805.927.4293) opened, setting the stage for artists and traditional craftspeople, who have transformed the town into an artists' colony away from the pressures and technology of urban life. Many of the town's historic landmarks, including the main creamery, have been restored and repurposed as studios and shops. The pioneering Harmony Pottery was recently honored as one of the top 100 ceramics galleries in the country by *Niche Magazine*.

Another artistic mainstay is Harmony Glassworks (805.927.4248), which hosts live glassblowing demonstrations, offers classes, and contains a world-class gallery. Owner Eric Dandurand's work is considered highly collectable.

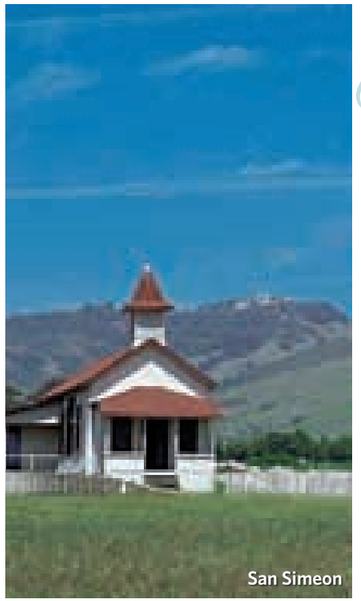
Harmony Cellars Winery (805.927.1625; 800.432.9239) produces award-winning wines. Owners Chuck and Kim Mulligan built their winery to reflect the unique country atmosphere of the surrounding area. Visitors enjoy the tasting room, the gift shop, and beautiful gardens.

A short walking tour through the town itself takes you past a historical mural, a wedding chapel with a magnificent hand-carved wine-barrel entrance, the preserved old creamery building and historic post office, several antiquities, and the gravesite of Mayor Freddie Cheenie Alfredo—a cat, once the symbolic mayor of Harmony.

Recently, Harmony Headlands State Park opened, offering public access to almost 800 acres of low, rolling coastal terrain, wetlands, ocean cliffs, rocky outcrops, native flora and fauna, and hiking trails.

TOWN OF HARMONY
805.927.4248

PHOTOS: OPPOSITE L-R, TOP TO BOTTOM: GREG PETERSON • SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY VCB • ERIC DANDURAND • THIS PAGE: SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY VCB


San Simeon

PASO ROBLES

Paso Robles anchors one of the most distinguished American Viticultural Areas in California and one of the great wine-country regions in the United States.

Paso Robles' long history and deep roots in agriculture are evident today in the vineyards that pour over the region's hills, producing some 40 varieties of wine grapes. There are more than 180 bonded wineries in the Paso Robles AVA, many of which have earned international acclaim for their quality and uniqueness. Visitors can sample the wares at scores of tasting rooms. Wine country tour companies will provide the transportation.

Paso Robles' restaurants have been receiving national media attention not only for the excellence of the food but also for the pioneering efforts many of the chefs are taking in the locavore movement. Visitors will find extensive use of locally grown produce and herbs; locally made olive oils, breads, and cheeses; and locally raised grass-fed beef.

In addition to wine and food, Paso Robles is rich in activities and attractions, offering something for just about everyone—a romantic getaway, a family outing, or outdoor adventure.

CAMBRIA

Cambria is famous for its gorgeous beach, its dining and wines, its shopping, its charm, its recreational opportunities, and its proximity to all the attractions of the region.

History buffs won't want to miss sites such as the Guthrie-Bianchini House, Old Santa Rosa Chapel, and the Santa Rosa Cemetery. The coastal scenery and wildlife spotting are also unparalleled, with crashing surf, spectacular sunsets, migrating whales, frolicking sea otters, enormous elephant seals tenderly cradling their newborn pups, Monterey pines towering over grassy knolls dotted with native wildflowers, and deer, raccoons, bobcats, and mountain lions.

Visitors can avail themselves of an enormous variety of seaside activities including fishing, photography, kite flying, swimming, diving, windsurfing, and kayaking. Just inland, options include cycling, hiking, skateboarding, and a gym with day rates. Offbeat Nitt Witt Ridge features an eccentric hermit's refuge built from odd pieces of junk. It's sometimes called the "poor man's Hearst Castle."

Considering the area's recreational splendors, invigorating coastal air, and extensive shopping venues, it's easy to work up an appetite in Cambria. Luckily, one of Cambria's principal attractions is its unbelievably vibrant dining scene. The ratio of restaurants to people makes the city a dream for both locals and visitors alike. But why does a village of 6,500 have so many outstanding eateries? Those familiar with the area know that it's because Cambria is blessed with a close proximity to family farms, wineries, cattle ranches, and coastal fishing—all of which inspire a collective appreciation for fresh, innovative cuisine.

This translates into a town teeming with cafés, bistros, wine bars, bakeries, sandwich shops, grills, pubs, and restaurants that focus on great food. From traditional hearty fare to international flavors, from elaborately stylized presentations to casual healthy plates, there's something for everyone here.

Cambria's eateries also win points for their ambience. Many are located in buildings once used for industry, or within restored Victorian-era homes, or in structures with Old West facades, or even funky shacks with a warm, cozy feel.

Cambria also offers a multitude of options for those who prefer their flavors on the go, such as picnicking along the breathtaking coastal bluffs, berry picking at local farms, or wine tasting at one of the tasting rooms or wine shops in town.

The rugged and rural landscape just east of Cambria is populated by organic farms, olive oil producers, and wineries, and the city makes a perfect gateway to the Paso Robles Wine Country (another unbeatable venue for picnics).

We invite you to see for yourself why Cambria is one of California's truly flavorful escapes.

CAMBRIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
805.927.3624 • CambriaChamber.org

SAN SIMEON

The natural bay at San Simeon provided San Luis Obispo County with its first seaport. Beginning with Mission San Miguel in 1797 and during the time of the Mexican rancheros, all goods were shipped in and out of this bay. By the 1860s, a lively whaling village had grown up around the bay and out onto the point.

Set atop the rolling hills in San Simeon is Hearst Castle® (see page 46), one of the most popular tourist destinations in California. Originally built as the private estate of art collector and publisher W.R. Hearst, it has become recognized around the world for its glamour, elegance, and authentic art pieces. Today it is a California State Park, open to the public daily for guided tours. Feel the allure of this fascinating country house, where Mr. Hearst entertained movie stars and business tycoons with lavish dinners, private film screenings, and glittering parties.

Central Coast Tourism Council Members

Apple Farm
2015 Monterey Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
805.544.2040 • AppleFarm.com

Arroyo Grande Chamber of Commerce
800 West Branch Street
Arroyo Grande, CA 93420
805.489.1488 • AGChamber.com

Atascadero Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Center
6904 El Camino Real, Atascadero, CA 93422
805.466.2044 • VisitAtascadero.com

Avila Village Inn
6655 Bay Laurel Drive, Avila Beach, CA 93424
805.627.1810 • AvilaVillageInn.com

Best Western Cavalier Oceanfront Resort
9415 Hearst Drive, San Simeon, CA 93452
805.927.4688 • CavalierResort.com

Best Western Colony Inn
3600 El Camino Real, Atascadero, CA 93422
805.466.4449 • AtascaderoBestWestern.com

Best Western Fireside Inn
6700 Moonstone Beach Drive, Cambria, CA 93428
805.927.8661 • BestWesternFiresideInn.com

Best Western Royal Oak
214 Madonna Road, San Luis Obispo, CA 93405
805.544.4410 • RoyalOakHotel.com

Bluebird Inn
1880 Main Street, Cambria, CA 93428
805.927.4634 • BluebirdMotel.com

Breakaway Tours & Event Planner
P.O. Box 535, Pismo Beach, CA 93448
805.783.2929 • Breakaway-Tours.com

Captains Cove Inn
6454 Moonstone Beach Drive, Cambria, CA 93428
805.927.8581 • CaptainsCoveInn.com

Cayucos Chamber of Commerce
P.O. Box 346, Cayucos, CA 93430
805.995.1200 • CayucosChamber.com

City of San Luis Obispo
990 Palm Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
805.781.7151 • SanLuisObispoVacations.com

Cliffs at Shell Beach
2757 Shell Beach Road, Shell Beach, CA 93449
805.773.5000 • CliffsResort.com

Cottage Inn by the Sea
2351 Price Street, Pismo Beach, CA 93449
805.773.4617 • Cottage-Inn.com

Edgewater Inn & Suites
280 Wadsworth Avenue, Pismo Beach, CA 93449
805.773.4811 • Edgewater-Inn.com

Edna Valley Vineyard
2585 Biddle Ranch Road
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
805.544.5855 • EdnaValleyVineyard.com

Embassy Suites Hotel San Luis Obispo
333 Madonna Road, San Luis Obispo, CA 93405
805.549.0800 • Embassy-Suites.com

Fogcatcher Inn
6400 Moonstone Beach Drive
Cambria, CA 93428
805.927.1400 • FogcatcherInn.com

Green Acres Lavender Farm
8865 San Gabriel Road, Atascadero, CA 93422
805.466.0837 • GreenAcresLavenderFarm.com

Hampton Inn & Suites Paso Robles
212 Alexa Court, Paso Robles, CA 93446
805.226.9988 • HamptonInn.com

Harmony
2180 Old Creamery Road, Harmony, CA 93435
805.927.4248 • HarmonyGlassworks.com

Hearst Castle
750 Hearst Castle Road, San Simeon, CA 93452
800.444.4445 • HearstCastle.org

Holiday Inn Express
1800 Monterey Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
805.544.8600 • HISanLuisObispo.com

La Bellasera Hotel & Suites
206 Alexa Court, Paso Robles, CA 93446
805.238.2834 • LaBellasera.com

La Cuesta Inn
2074 Monterey Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
805.543.2777 • LaCuestaInn.com

Los Padres Inn
1575 Monterey Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
805.543.5017 • LosPadresInn.com

Madonna Inn
100 Madonna Road, San Luis Obispo, CA 93405
805.543.3000 • MadonnaInn.com

Martin Resorts
MartinResorts.com
- **Avila Lighthouse Suites**
  550 Front Street, Avila Beach, CA 93424
  805.627.1900 • AvilaLighthouseSuites.com
- **Best Western Shelter Cove**
  2651 Price Street, Pismo Beach, CA 93449
  805.773.3511 • BWShelterCove.com
- **Best Western Shore Cliff Lodge**
  2555 Price Street, Pismo Beach, CA 93449
  805.773.4671 • ShoreCliff.com
- **Paso Robles Inn**
  1103 Spring Street, Paso Robles, CA 93446
  805.238.2660 • PasoRoblesInn.com
- **Pismo Lighthouse Suites**
  2411 Price Street, Pismo Beach, CA 93449
  805.773.2411 • PismoLighthouseSuites.com

Mission Inn of Pismo Beach
601 James Way, Pismo Beach, CA 93449
805.773.6020 • MissionInnPismoBeach.com

Moonstone Hotel Properties
MoonstoneHotels.com
- **Cambria Pines Lodge**
  2905 Burton Drive, Cambria, CA 93428
  805.927.4200 • CambriaPinesLodge.com
- **Pelican Cove Inn**
  6316 Moonstone Beach Drive
  Cambria, CA 93428
  805.927.1500 • PelicanSuites.com
- **Sea Otter Inn**
  6656 Moonstone Beach Drive
  Cambria, CA 93428
  805.927.5888 • SeaOtterInn.com

Morro Bay Visitors Center & Chamber of Commerce
845 Embarcadera Road, Ste.D,
Morro Bay, CA 93442
805.772.4467 • MorroBay.org

Pacific Plaza Resort Hotel
444 Pier Avenue, Oceano, CA 93445
805.473.6989 • PacificPlazaResort.com

Pacifica Hotel
2705 Spyglass Drive, Pismo Beach, CA 93449
805.773.0472 • PacificaHotelCompany.com

Peach Tree Inn
2001 Monterey Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
805.543.3170 • PeachTreeInn.com

Petit Soleil Bed & Breakfast
1473 Monterey Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
805.549.0321 • PetitSolielSLO.com

Pismo Beach Conference & Visitors Bureau
760 Mattie Road, Pismo Beach, CA 93449
805.773.7034 • ClassicCalifornia.com

Prime Outlets at Pismo Beach
333 Five Cities Drive, #100
Pismo Beach, CA 93449
805.773.4662 • PrimeRetail.com

San Luis Creek Lodge
1991 Monterey Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
805.541.1122 • SanLuisCreekLodge.com

San Luis Obispo County Visitors & Conference Bureau
811 El Capitan Way #200
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
805.541.8000 • SanLuisObispoCounty.com

Sandcastle Inn
100 Stimson Avenue, Pismo Beach, CA 93449
805.773.2422 • SandcastleInn.com

Sands Inn & Suites
1930 Monterey Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
805.544.0500 • SandsSuites.com

Sea Gypsy Motel
1020 Cypress Street, Pismo Beach, CA 93449
805.773.1801 • SeaGypsyMotel.com

Seaventure Resort
100 Ocean View Avenue, Pismo Beach, CA 93449
805.773.4994 • Seaventure.com

Shoreline Inn on the Beach
1 North Ocean Avenue, Cayucos, CA 93430
805.995.3681 • CayucosShorelineInn.com

Splash Café & Artisan Bakery
1491 Monterey Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401 805.544.7567
197 Pomeroy, Pismo Beach, CA 93449
805.773.4653 • SplashCafe.com

Spyglass Inn
2705 Spyglass Drive, Pismo Beach, CA 93449
805.773.4855 • SpyglassInn.com

San Luis Obispo County Itineraries

COUNTY

DAY ONE
Visit the elephant seals near Piedras Blancas Lighthouse before taking a tour of magnificent Hearst Castle® in San Simeon. Enjoy a picnic lunch overlooking the ocean at Leffingwell Landing Park on Moonstone Drive in Cambria. Walk the Cayucos Pier to check out the surfers. Shop for art and antiques in Morro Bay and Cayucos. Kayak Morro Bay for close-up birdwatching, then head over to Montaña de Oro State Park for a hike along the bluff tops.

DAY TWO
Enjoy a guided nature walk through the Oso Flaco Lake Natural Area at Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Preserve. Take a thrilling Hummer Tour on the Oceano Dunes, then visit winery tasting rooms in the Edna Valley to savor both the wines and the serenity of the vineyards. Stroll the boardwalk between Grover Beach and Pismo Beach to visit the Monarch Butterfly Grove (November to February). Wander out on the Pismo Pier to see if the fish are biting, then enjoy a bowl of clam chowder at a local restaurant.

DAY THREE
Explore the village of Arroyo Grande and walk through history by crossing the swinging bridge to the Heritage House Museum and the 1901 Santa Manuela Schoolhouse. Visit Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa in downtown San Luis Obispo, then stroll through Mission Plaza and along the creek. Now head downtown to Higuera Street for a visit to Bubble Gum Alley. Tour the back roads around Paso Robles and Atascadero for an agricultural adventure, visiting u-pick farms and roadside stands, shopping for field-fresh fruit and produce.

PISMO BEACH

MORNING
After a quiet stroll on the long, wide beach, boardwalk, or 1,200-foot-long pier, enjoy breakfast downtown or at a sidewalk café. Tee up at nearby championship golf courses, or play nine holes on the Pismo Beach oceanfront course. Look for a special treasure in a downtown gift shop or at the popular Pismo Beach Prime Outlets. Tour Oceano Dunes Preserve—the largest, most ecologically diverse, and most beautiful dune complex in California.

AFTERNOON
Enjoy an oceanfront lunch of fresh seafood or local favorites at a quaint downtown café or swing by a deli and pick up the makings for a picnic lunch. Pismo Beach is a great starting point for exploring the region's attractions, such as magnificent Hearst Castle® and the local wine country. Travel along scenic coastal roads and sample some of the world's best wines in nearby Edna Valley. Experience the famous sand dunes in a Hummer. Get a bird's-eye view of the area on a 1943 open cockpit bi-plane ride. Visitors from November to February can catch the spectacle of thousands of Monarch butterflies that flock to an ocean-front grove.

EVENING
Watch the sunset at one of the picturesque oceanview or downtown restaurants or clifftop lodging rooms. Whether dining on Mexican, Italian, Chinese, Thai, or good ol' American fare, tourists will find a nice bottle of wine in every price range to accompany their meal. For a more casual evening, cheer the hero and hiss the villain at The Great American Melodrama, a throwback to old-fashioned live melodrama.

MORRO BAY

MORNING
Enjoy a hearty (and early) breakfast in town, then play a round on our challenging 18-hole oceanside golf course.

Morning is the best time for kayaking the tranquil harbor waters—the wind is down, the sun is up, and conditions are perfect to view the beautiful waterfowl, the moored boats, and the giant sand dunes on the harbor's outer edge.

For the adventure without the exertion, rent an eco-friendly enclosed electric boat and take a picnic out on the water. Watch exotic sea life as you glide silently through the silky harbor.

AFTERNOON
For lunch, enjoy fresh seafood at any one of the myriad restaurants that specialize in delectable entrees at reasonable rates.

Next, visit the galleries as you browse our famous Embarcadero. Be sure to sample the local wines—and take home a bottle or two as a souvenir.

Then foray out to Morro Rock, a sacred Indian site and sanctuary for the magnificent Peregrine falcon. Meander our northern beaches; watch the board- and kite-surfers ride the waves as you play foot tag where huge ocean rollers meet the shore.

EVENING
Dusk is the most romantic time in Morro Bay. Dazzling sunsets paint the sky in brilliant blues and pinks. Toast each other as you watch the setting sun. In the afterglow, head off to one of our elegant gourmet restaurants within easy walking distance.

CAMBRIA

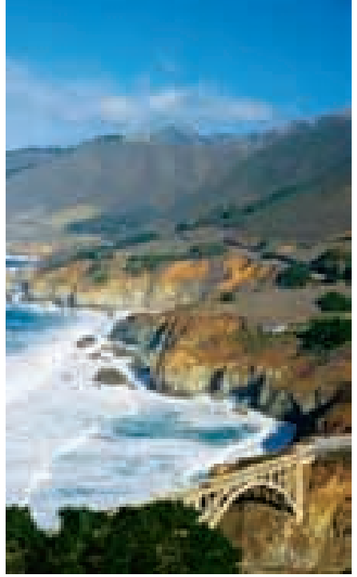
DAY ONE
Arrive around noon and enjoy lunch at one of our international restaurants or bistros. Refreshed, you'll be ready to stroll the streets and enjoy the many wonderful specialty shops and art galleries. Check into your hotel, enjoy a relaxing moment on the beach or in the forest. After dinner, visit Burton Drive and drop into a sweets shop, wine shop, or gallery.

DAY TWO
Make the short drive up to Hearst Castle, just six miles north of Cambria. You will be amazed at the fabulous castle architecture and many museum artifacts collected by William Randolph Hearst. After lunch at the Hearst Castle Visitor Center, head north just four more miles to view the California elephant seals. These up to 5,000-pound pinipeds—with large noses—are a rare and fascinating treat. Then take the scenic drive north just a few more miles to the foot of the scenic Big Sur coast.

DAY THREE
Pick up a wine map at the Visitors Center and head for the hills. More than 150 wine tasting experiences lie scattered throughout the foothills. Either drive at your leisure or arrange a guided wine tour. Back at your hotel, relax and watch the sunset from anywhere along scenic Moonstone Beach. Shops in the East Village are open for after-dinner shopping, or take in a play at the local theater or musical entertainment venues throughout the village.

Carmel beach

Monterey County



Some of the best features of coastal California can be found here—seaside restaurants, hillside vineyards, majestic redwood groves, world-famous golf courses, music and art festivals, and much more.

A visitor to Monterey County can enjoy several truly iconic California experiences. A drive down the cliff-hugging Highway One winds along the breathtaking Big Sur coastline—arguably the best road trip in the United States. Tucked-away tasting rooms offer samples of handcrafted wines—and the pourer might just be the winemaker. The county's sandy coastal stretches are the perfect venue for anything from a surfing lesson to a barefoot beach wedding. Several of the golf courses here are genuinely legendary—giving the visitor the unique opportunity to just hang out at the nineteenth hole and watch pros practice.

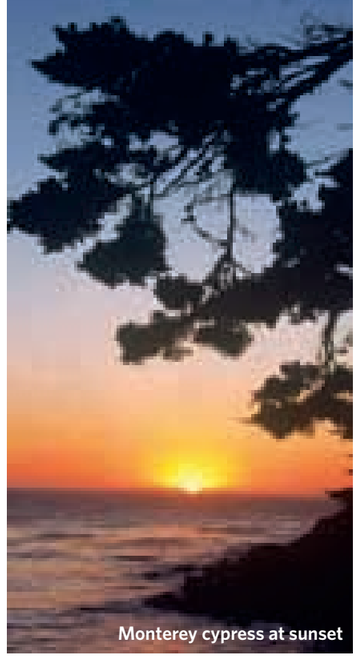
Among the county's many well-known landmarks are the internationally renowned Monterey Bay Aquarium; the Fisherman's Wharf and Cannery Row made famous by Salinas native son John Steinbeck; the phenomenal golf courses of Pebble Beach; the California wine country destinations of Carmel Valley, Soledad and Salinas Valley; the art galleries of gorgeous Carmel-by-the-Sea or buzzing Sand City; the wild trails of Big Sur; the surfing at Moss Landing; the hang gliders in Marina and Seaside; the fine dining in Del Rey Oaks; and the Victorian cottages and Monarch butterflies of Pacific Grove.

Monterey County is the perfect location for the perfect California vacation.

- Big Sur
- Carmel-By-The-Sea
- Pebble Beach
- Monterey
- Pacific Grove
- Sand City & Seaside
- Salinas & Salinas Valley
- Del Rey Oaks
- Marina
- Moss Landing

PHOTOS OPPOSITE: MONTEREY COUNTY CVB / KERRICK JAMES • THIS PAGE: RANDY WILDER

Carmel beach


Monterey cypress at sunset

Fairways along the beach

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary

PHOTOS OPPOSITE LEFT: MONTEREY COUNTY CVB / KERRICK JAMES • RIGHT: MONTEREY COUNTY CVB / JEFFREY GREENBERG • THIS PAGE LEFT: RANDY HWANG • RIGHT: MONTEREY

BIG SUR

The scenery in Big Sur, perching high above the Pacific Ocean at the very edge of the continent, cannot be done justice by secondhand account. It simply must be seen to be believed. About the least that may be said is that a table with a view is not hard to come by here. Neither, however, is a sense of well-being. Cliffs, rocks, redwoods, and effervescent surf create an epic backdrop for recreation, romance, and relaxed exploration.

Big Sur's hiking trails range from tranquil walks along a coastal waterfall and stream at Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park to miles-long ascents through redwood forest into the rugged wilderness at the Los Padres National Forest.

Big Sur has provided inspiration to photographers, painters, writers, and musicians. Henry Miller and Jack Kerouac chronicled the area in books, and Ansel Adams and Edward Weston captured Big Sur's rugged beauty in photographs. Longtime Carmel resident Robinson Jeffers tried to describe it in verse (his Big Sur poem "The Beaks of Eagles" was immortalized as a song on the Beach Boys' 1973 album *Holland*). Today, Big Sur is a world-famous art colony, a favorite of both local and international artists of every stripe.

CARMEL-BY-THE-SEA

Classic, cosmopolitan, and cool, the city of Carmel-by-the-Sea is as special as its white sand beach. The city's residents make their homes in the world-famous distinctive "Carmel cottages," and the town's 45 inns are mostly small, charming, and historic—perfect romantic getaways. That's one reason Carmel plays host to thousands of weddings—often on the white sand beach or at the 1770 Mission San Carlos Borromeo de Carmelo—and honeymoons each year.

Carmel was once—and, for many, still is—a bohemian haven, a mecca for artists, and a refuge for writers and intellectuals. The spectacular sunsets and the sea caves at Point Lobos inspired Robert Louis Stevenson in writing *Treasure Island*, and Jack London and George Sterling composed some of their best works here—as did poet Robinson Jeffers, who built the beautiful stone Tor House and Hawk Tower on barren, rocky Carmel Point in which to write (visitors today can tour the house and the gardens).

It is also the cultural hub of the region, home to the Carmel Bach Festival, the Carmel Music Society, and the Monterey Symphony. Many performances take place in the spectacular Gothic-inspired Sunset Center, which was recently renovated. The Pacific Repertory Theatre, the renowned Monterey Jazz and Monterey Blues Festivals, and the Carmel Art Festival further enliven the local cultural scene. Carmel also now hosts the world-class Concours on the Avenue, a car buff's fantasy in which 16 blocks of downtown and Ocean Avenue close to traffic and fill with foreign and domestic collector cars.

Cherished and preserved by local residents and city government, the town is a pedestrian-friendly labyrinth of enchanting continental ambience—specialty shops, restaurants, art galleries, boutiques, historic buildings, antique shops, and much, much more. No fast-food restaurants, neon signs, or parking meters clutter the landscape. To maintain the provincial charm of the one-mile-square village, the nature of merchandise is as closely monitored as the zoning regulations that separate the beach and the businesses by a few blocks. There are no commercial boardwalks, and the manicured gardens and Aspen-style architecture create an enticing ambience.

Carmel has long been famous for its shopping, and Ocean Avenue is both the entrance to and the heart of Carmel's principal shopping district. Ocean and the blocks that surround it are lined with unique shops both facing the main streets and nestling in myriad courtyards. Upscale shops clustered at Carmel Plaza, The Barnyard, and the Crossroads shopping centers offer even more opportunities.

Ten wine tasting venues also now dot the downtown, all within walking distance of one another. Monterey County wines are the stars at the Bountiful Basket and tasting rooms for Galante Vineyards and Cima Collina. For world-class pairings that put local (and many other) wines to excellent culinary use, Carmel's restaurants offer superb dining and award-winning wine cellars.

Close to local attractions such as Big Sur and Monterey, Carmel is the perfect base for a weekend, a week, or even longer. Many people visit and come back again (and again). And some never leave.

CARMEL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
831.624.2522 • CarmelCalifornia.org

PEBBLE BEACH

Even non-golfers can't help but appreciate the harmonious marriage of golf course topography and coastal majesty in and around Pebble Beach. From the legendary Lone Cypress to the famed 18th green of Pebble Beach Golf Links, a trip along 17-Mile Drive is spellbinding.

Pebble Beach hosts many noted golf tournaments throughout the year, including the Callaway Golf Pebble Beach Invitational, the Wal-Mart First Tee Open and the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am. In 2010, it will also host one of the most prestigious golf tournaments in the world, the U.S. Open Championship.

Though Pebble Beach golf tournaments attract much attention, they are not the only grand events held here. Pebble Beach Food and Wine is an annual celebration of the finest cuisine and wine the world has

Roseate Spoonbill featured in the "Hot Pink Flamingos" exhibit at the Monterey Bay Aquarium

Curious Magellanic Penguins at the Aquarium

to offer, and the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance is the premier internationally renowned classic car event.

MONTEREY

Few places on earth can live up to their own mythology, but Monterey is a notable exception. John Steinbeck, born and raised in nearby Salinas, was a frequent visitor, and drew considerable inspiration from area landmarks including, of course, Cannery Row, which he immortalized in his novel of the same name. Today, world-class restaurants, boutiques, and attractions have helped make Monterey a favorite destination for visitors from around the globe.

Whether it's the landmark Monterey Bay Aquarium, the Monterey Museum of Art, or one of our other fascinating museums; a Monterey whale-watching excursion; or a self-guided kayaking exploration of the bay, Monterey's activities can keep you busy from the moment you get up in the morning until you rest your head at night.

History buffs can walk the Path of History to see the classic buildings that remain from Monterey's period as California's state capital, while wine fans can stroll among the city's tasting rooms. Avid shoppers will find antiques in New Monterey, unique boutiques on Cannery Row, and upscale fashion and technology at the Del Monte Center. And beachcombers can find treasures along Monterey's beautiful sandy oceanfront.

PACIFIC GROVE

With one of the oldest continually operating lighthouses on the West Coast and a classic 1932 golf course partially designed by Jack Neville, Pacific Grove holds many old-fashioned charms. Ranked as one of America's best golf courses by the Zagat Survey, Pacific Grove Municipal Golf Links offers great play, low greens fees, and striking, sweeping views of Monterey Bay.

Pacific Grove also has a thoroughly modern focus on nature and sustainability. Its beaches, located right on the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, are perfect spots for kayaking or surfing.

Visiting the Point Pinos Lighthouse—not only the oldest continually operating lighthouse on the West Coast but also the oldest building in Pacific Grove—vividly evokes a bygone era when Pacific Grove was remote and wild.

During the fall or winter witness one of nature's most incredible spectacles, the annual migration of the Monarch butterflies. Tens of thousands of Monarchs descend on Pacific Grove in October, and take up residence in the pines and eucalyptus trees of the Monarch Grove Butterfly Sanctuary.

SAND CITY & SEASIDE

Sand City is blessed with an abundance of, well, sand. But this isn't your garden-variety beach. These dunes are the highest found on California's Central Coast.

Look above the dunes, and you'll see a sky full of paragliders. The same steady winds that lure hang gliders to Marina State Beach draw paragliders to this, its sister beach to the south. Sand City is one of the prime spots in the state for paragliding.

PHOTOS LEFT: MIKE LANDWEHR • RIGHT: THEO ALLOFS / MINDEN PICTURES

Steinbeck House

River Road sign

A short distance from the sandy dunes at the edge of Monterey Bay, an artists' community is transforming an old industrial neighborhood. Nearly 20 artists have set up studios in Sand City's West End. The artists, along with a number of restaurants and coffee houses, are creating a cool new vibe by the sea.

Nearby Seaside offers easy ocean access. This makes it a haven for people fond of outdoor pursuits, including kayaking, scuba diving, and parasailing. Surfers, rock climbers, and beachcombers all coexist on and find their own ways to enjoy the pristine stretches of coastal bliss in Seaside.

Seaside's Bayonet and Black Horse golf courses offer spectacular views of Monterey Bay. Once open only to members of the military, the course is now open to the public.

SALINAS & SALINAS VALLEY

At first blush, agriculture and literature might not seem to pair all that well, but not in Salinas. In addition to being the county seat and a hub of California's vibrant agribusiness industry, Salinas is most famous for being the ancestral home of Nobel Prize laureate John Steinbeck—and the site of the acclaimed National Steinbeck Center Museum.

Salinas is in the center of the agricultural region known as "California's salad bowl." Many Salinas restaurants take advantage of their proximity to the fields by prominently featuring farm-fresh, locally grown produce. The hub of the Salinas restaurant scene is Oldtown Salinas, just a few steps away from the Steinbeck Center. Oldtown is also the hub of the Salinas shopping scene, featuring unique boutiques and a number of art galleries.

This is an ideal spot for a wine country vacation, too, with several notable vineyards and tasting rooms—many of which offer sweeping views of both the valley and the hills beyond.

Salinas Valley is home to two of California's most historic establishments, the San Antonio de Padua Mission and the Soledad Mission; and also to the Red Rocks of Pinnacles National Monument, popular for camping, hiking through its turbulent, seismically-charged landscape, and wildlife spotting (see San Benito County for more).

DEL REY OAKS

Right next to the Monterey Peninsula Airport, Del Rey Oaks is nestled between the coastal sublimity of Monterey and the lush bounty of Salinas. The locals are happy to regale visitors with tales of local 19th century vigilante Matt Tarpy over a glass of some locally produced syrah in the Del Rey Oaks restaurant that bears his name, Tarpy's Roadhouse. Another popular destination here is the nature trail in the Frog Pond Preserve, perfect for a leisurely stroll.

MARINA

Ever-shifting sands and gentle Pacific breezes make Marina a perpetual "favorite places" nominee among outdoor enthusiasts. Sheltered from Monterey Bay by the sand dunes of Marina Dunes Natural Preserve, this destination is hugely popular with hang glider pilots and captains of all manner of wind-propelled craft.

Marina State Beach boasts an incredible array of unique Central California flora and fauna—a paradise for photographers. But the beach is also a premier hang gliding spot in Central California because of its steady winds, great launching area, and the wonderful views it affords. Marina also hosts the annual Festival of the Winds, the one time each year when hang gliders and giant kites outnumber raptors and songbirds along the coast.

Salinas Valley vineyards

MOSS LANDING

What started out as a wharf in 1866 is now a bona fide visitor destination. In addition to a quaint fishing village vibe, the area also boasts, all within strolling distance of one another, several antique shops, art studios, fabulous seafood markets, and delightful restaurants showcasing fish hauled straight from Monterey Bay—sometimes brought to your plate directly from the boat (with, of course, a brief stop in the kitchen).

For the more adventurous visitor, a diverse and one-of-a-kind ecosystem known as Elkhorn Slough Reserve beckons. Home to more than 340 species of birds and the famed California sea otter, Elkhorn Slough Reserve is an ecological jewel.

PHOTOS OPPOSITE LEFT: JEFFREY GREENBERG • RIGHT: MONTEREY COUNTY CVB • THIS PAGE: MONTEREY COUNTY VINTNERS AND GROWERS ASSOCIATION

Central Coast Tourism Council Members

Big Sur Lodge
47225 Highway 1, Big Sur, CA 93920
831.667.3100 • BigSurLodge.com

Carmel Mission Inn
3665 Rio Road at Highway 1, Carmel, CA 93923
831.624.1841 • CarmelMissionInn.com

Cypress Inn
Lincoln & 7th, Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA 93921
831.624.3871 • Cypress-Inn.com

Elegant Illusions
542 Lighthouse Avenue, Suite 5
Pacific Grove, CA 93921
831.649.1814 • ElegantIllusions.com

Flaherty's Seafood Grill
San Carlos & 6th, Carmel, CA 93921
831.625.1500 • FlahertysSeafood.com

Hahn Estates, Smith & Hook Winery
37700 Foothill Road, Soledad, CA 93960
866.925.7994 • HahnEstates.com

Inn at the Pinnacles
32025 Stonewall Canyon Road
Soledad, CA 93960
831.678.2400 • InnatthePinnacles.com

Monterey Bay Aquarium
886 Cannery Row, Monterey, CA 93940
831.648.4800 • MBayAq.org

Monterey County Convention & Visitors Bureau
150 Olivier Street, Monterey, CA 93940
831.657.6400 • MontereyInfo.org

Monterey County Parks Department
P.O. Box 5249, Salinas, CA 93915
831.755.4895 • Co.Monterey.CA.US/parks

Monterey Fireside Lodge
1131 Tenth Street, Monterey, CA 93940
831.373.4172 • FiresideMonterey.com

Monterey Plaza Hotel & Spa
400 Cannery Row, Monterey, CA 93940
800.554.8125 • MontereyPlazaHotel.com

Moonstone Hotel Properties
MoonstoneHotels.com
- **Carmel River Inn**
  26600 Oliver Road, Carmel, CA 93922
  831.624.1575 • CarmelRiverInn.com
- **Monterey Hotel**
  406 Alvarado Road, Monterey, CA 93940
  831.375.3184 • MontereyHotel.com

Village Corner Mediterranean Bistro
Dolores & 6th Avenue
Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA 93921
831.624.3588 • CarmelsBest.com

PHOTO: MONTEREY COUNTY CVB

Monterey County Itineraries

COUNTY

DAY ONE

Fly direct into Monterey Peninsula Airport, rent a car, and set out for adventure. Head to Carmel for a morning stroll along the beach and through the nearby galleries. Then motor along 17-Mile Drive to Pacific Grove, your base of operations.

Tee up at the Pacific Grove Golf Links, visit Point Pinos Lighthouse, and then check into a hotel overlooking Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

In the afternoon, take a leisurely drive to Carmel Valley for a round of wine tasting, then sit down to dinner at a world-class restaurant. Head back to your hotel and drift off to the sound of crashing waves and seals.

DAY TWO

Play by the Bay. Obtain a bird's-eye view by skydiving or hang gliding, or fly a kite from the breezy dunes at Marina State Beach. Then make like a sea otter by paddling a kayak on a self-guided tour of Monterey Bay or Elkhorn Slough.

Rent a bike and take the Recreation Trail through Cannery Row to the Monterey Bay Aquarium. Or, for a more sedate option, lock up the bike and take a discovery walk through the region's historic adobes. You might also drive to Salinas for a visit to the National Steinbeck Center. Enjoy a delicious seafood dinner and a glass of local pinot noir.

Then drive south on Highway 1 to check into one of Big Sur's cozy inns. Before you settle in, though, at dusk, take a short, easy hike to captivating McWay Falls at Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park. In the morning, bask in the rugged wilderness and pristine skyline only Big Sur affords.

CARMEL

AT DAWN

Walk your dog at Carmel Beach, jog along Scenic Drive, sip coffee by the sea, read the newspaper on your deck, stand in line for goodies at Carmel Bakery (it's worth it).

AT SUNSET

Wander the shore, serve cocktails on the deck, dine alfresco, build a bonfire on the beach, and wait for the famous "green flash" as the sun sinks into the sea, meet friends at a pub, bundle up for a performance at the outdoor Forest Theater.

AT NIGHT

Reserve a table at one of Carmel's many great restaurants, read *Treasure Island*, stroll the silent streets, attend the symphony, take in an art opening. Head to Mission Ranch for a drink, dinner, and (if you're lucky) a taste of owner Clint Eastwood playing the piano.

IN THE RAIN

Go for a walk, shop till it stops, linger over lunch at a bistro or café, meet for coffee, watch a movie, visit the art galleries, go antiquing, slip into a spa or salon, visit Mission San Carlos de Borromeo, read Franklin Walker's *Seacoast of Bohemia: an Account of Early Carmel* at landmark Harrison Memorial Library (one of the truly great rainy-day reading spots in the world), wander the Carmel Art Association, visit City Hall, take tea at the world-famous Tuck Box.

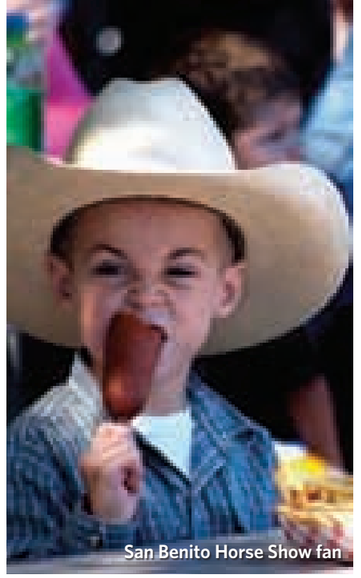
ON A CLEAR DAY

Pack a picnic to the beach, play golf in neighboring Pebble Beach, take a walking tour of the historic town or the fairy-tale Carmel cottages, tarry in Piccadilly Park, paint plein aire, tour Tor House, hang out at Devendorf Park, hike at Point Lobos, horseback ride, bicycle ride, play tennis, surf, snorkel, scuba, sail, or beach walk.

Monterey Harbor sunset

San Benito Horse Show

San Benito County



San Benito Horse Show fan

Lying like a saddle slung over California's Coast Range inland from Monterey, San Benito County is easy to overlook on a map. But it is rich in attractions for the adventurous visitor.

The county boasts its own accessible wine country, an 800-acre off-road motorcycle playground, championship golf courses, historic sites, recreational opportunities from hiking and camping to skydiving, fantastic shopping, and dining options that have made San Benito County one of the Central Coast's hidden culinary treasures.

The county is also home to more offbeat attractions and activities. Benitoite, California's State Gemstone, is, obviously, named for the county and the river and is found only in this immediate area (minutes south of the county line, you can dig for samples of the stone yourself, at the California State Gem Mine near Coalinga).

And California history buffs won't want to miss the California Historical Landmark of New Idria, a ghost town of the community that grew up around the quicksilver (mercury) mine that started here in 1854 and at one time was the second most productive mine in the United States. Mercury, of course, was integral to the extraction of gold from gold ore, and New Idria was a national treasure during the Gold Rush (it was also home to the world's first Gould Rotary Kilns, which revolutionized the technology of ore processing).

Mining wasn't the only economic support in the area, and San Benito's rural character is still in abundant evidence. The hills throughout the county are rich in ranches, farms, and orchards. Cattle still graze on the rolling terrain beneath oak trees, and fruit stands selling fresh local produce such as Blenheim apricots, strawberries, walnuts, and lettuces still line the back roads.

Visitors will also find the county a showcase of unique natural wonders. These include some awe-inspiring geologic formations of California's famous Calaveras and San Andreas faults and the surreal rock remains of an ancient volcano at Pinnacles National Monument.

Hollister

Pinnacles National Monument

PHOTOS: DANIEL CRESSMAN / *THE WEEKLY PINNACLE*

Wildflowers paint the view in spring

San Justo Reservoir

California Condor in the wild

HOLLISTER

Founded in 1872, Hollister is the center, and the central landmark, of San Benito County. Even so, Hollister proudly retains its small-town sensibility while also offering the contemporary amenities that visitors expect and deserve. The city's historic downtown area exemplifies this old-fashioned charm, filled with locally owned businesses and a variety of commercial and residential architecture tracing nearly 120 years of history. A self-guided historic walking-tour map (downloadable at DowntownHollister.org) highlights the historic standouts and identifies the many architectural styles on display in the lovely tree-lined neighborhoods.

But the appeal of downtown goes beyond architectural sightseeing. The array of shops, boutiques, and galleries specializes in everything from womenswear and accessories to gifts, home décor, outdoor equipment, fine art, and much more. And the restaurants downtown cater to appetites for gourmet sandwiches, fine dining, local and organic fare, pub grub, and more.

Downtown also plays host to the July 4th Hollister Motorcycle Rally, one of the biggest and most famous events of its kind. A gathering of bikers in 1947 ended in a riot that became the basis for the 1954 Marlon Brando movie *The Wild One*. Since then, the event has become considerably more genteel, and Hollister is today sometimes called "The Birthplace of the American Biker." A complete list of downtown events is available at DowntownHollister.org.

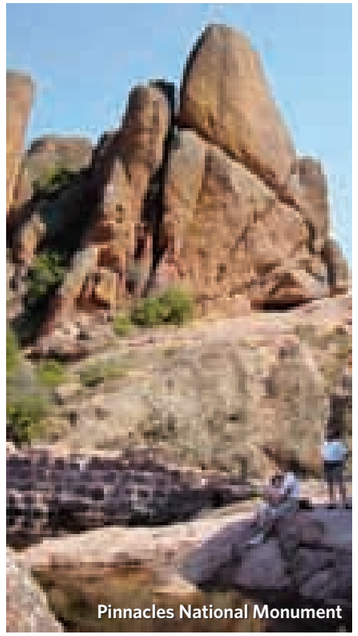
Dirt bikers and off-road cyclists, too, come to Hollister. The Hollister Hills State Vehicular Recreation Area (831.637.3874, OHV.Parks.CA.gov.), south of town, is a major draw—a 3,200-acre motorcycle activity center with 800 acres set aside for 4-wheel-drive vehicles. International competitions are held here, and amateur enthusiasts make it one of the busiest facilities of its kind anywhere. The SVRA also includes trails for mountain bikers and hikers, picnic areas, and campsites.

At the north end of town, Hollister Municipal Airport is a base for skydiving (Adventure Skydiving: 800.386.5867, 1800FunJump.com) and soaring (Bay Area Glider Rides: 888.GO.SOARN, 1888GoSoarn.com).

Continuing on Hwy 156 to Hwy 152, Casa de Fruta is a destination for all to see. This roadside Orchard Resort in the fertile Pacheco Valley between Monterey and Yosemite has welcomed visitors from around the world since 1908.

Swank Farm and Produce Stand sells fresh, locally grown produce year-round and in September and October operates corn mazes, a labyrinth, and nighttime Haunted Events (SwankFarms.com).

Golfers love the championship courses at San Juan Oaks (831.636.6127, SanJuanOaks.com) and Ridgemark Golf and Country Club (831.637.8151, Ridgemark.com), just south of town. The clubhouse restaurant at San Juan Oaks is open for lunch daily, and the eatery at Ridgemark serves until 7 p.m. daily. Both have event and meeting facilities. Ridgemark also offers lodging. Adjacent to San Juan Oaks is the 587-acre San Justo Reservoir, where visitors can engage in a variety of water sports on the 200-acre lake—from boating (there's a boat ramp) and fishing to windsurfing and sailing (831.638.3300).


Pinnacles National Monument

PINNACLES NATIONAL MONUMENT

Comprising 26,000 acres, Pinnacles National Monument (831.389.4485, NPS.gov/Pinn) is a truly otherworldly landscape of stone spires and crags formed by the collapse of an ancient volcano centuries ago. There are more than 30 miles of trails, rock faces to climb, caves to explore, and a variety of wildlife (including the California condor) to look for. The east entrance to the monument is open 24 hours a day, every day of the year, though some areas of the monument itself are periodically closed for wildlife protection.

While the park itself is day-use only, Pinnacles Campground (831.389.4462) has space for tents, RVs, and groups and is the ideal headquarters for exploring the Pinnacles and the southern part of San Benito County. A general store and a pool are both on site.

SAN BENITO COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
650 San Benito Street, Suite 130
Hollister, CA 95023
831.637.5315
SanBenitoCountyChamber.com

PHOTOS OPPOSITE LEFT: SHARLENE VAN ROOY • RIGHT TOP & BOTTOM: DANIEL CRESSMAN / *THE WEEKLY PINNACLE* • THIS PAGE: CCTC LIBRARY

San Benito County Itinerary

HOLLISTER

MORNING

Whether you want a hearty home-style country breakfast or a fine pastry and a latte, downtown Hollister has a morning spot for you. After breakfast, take some time to browse among the delightful shops and the outstanding architecture in the area (which is on the National Registry of Historic Places). For a little spookier sight, look for evidence of the Calaveras Earthquake Fault activity by Dunne Park—a very popular photo op.

AFTERNOON

Grab a picnic lunch downtown and head to the San Benito Wine Country south of Hollister, where you can learn about the area's wineries, grape varieties, climates, and appellations (Mt. Harlan, Paicines, Cienega Valley, and Lime Kiln Valley)—and, of course, taste some award-winning wines. Get some expert advice in picking up a wine that pairs well with your picnic, then find a spot to sit down and enjoy an unforgettable movable feast.

EVENING

Head south to Pinnacles National Monument for a delightful camping experience far from the city lights. If you didn't eat dinner in any of Hollister's outstanding local restaurants, after setting up your tent or RV, you may want to try nothing more ambitious than sitting close to the campfire, making s'mores, and marveling at the stars.

Central Coast Tourism Council Members

Hollister Downtown Association
455 San Benito Street #21
Hollister, CA 95023
831.636.8406 • DowntownHollister.org

San Benito County Chamber of Commerce
650 San Benito Street #130
Hollister, CA 95023
831.637.5315
SanBenitoCountyChamber.com

The famous Circus Trees of Gilroy Gardens

Santa Clara County

Wine grapes

Santa Clara County is probably most famous as the birthplace of the Silicon Valley, one of the most important economic and technological regions in the United States.

But Central Coast visitors will find that the south county cities of Gilroy and Morgan Hill—sometimes called "The Gateway to the Central Coast"—are eminently appealing in their own right, and boast a variety of attractions. They also make ideal stops between Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties.

Located in the beautiful Santa Clara Valley, between the San Francisco Bay Area and Monterey Bay, the gateway region is surrounded by some of the most beautiful open space in California. Outdoor recreational opportunities in the area include seven world-class golf courses, numerous lakes, and outstanding county, state, and national parks perfect for camping, hiking, mountain biking, and more.

Many of our locally owned restaurants specialize in dishes using the south county's most famous crops—garlic and mushrooms. And meals can always be delectably paired with our other famous local product, superb wines.

The Santa Clara Valley is one of California's oldest continuous wine-producing regions. French and Italian immigrants who settled here during the Gold Rush era recognized the rich soils and Mediterranean climate as the perfect New World home for their European grape varietals. Today, some 23 historic wineries dot the valley; many of them have distinguished themselves by winning numerous awards. Most are open for tasting daily—and the person pouring for visitors in the tasting rooms may very well be the actual winemaker.

Both Morgan Hill and Gilroy are home to small, affordable, and easily accessible hotels along Highway 101. There's also a cozy bed-and-breakfast in downtown Gilroy. In all, visitors will find a total of some 1,200 guest rooms in the area.

Gilroy

Morgan Hill

PHOTOS OPPOSITE: GILROY GARDENS • THIS PAGE: OLGA VASILKOVA

Gilroy Garlic Festival

GILROY

Garlic put Gilroy on the map. Known as the "Garlic Capital of the World," the city (and 4,000 devoted local volunteers) put on a rousing and world-famous garlic festival the last weekend of July. The pungent herb holds a mystery and attraction for many people, obviously, because now in its 32nd year, the Gilroy Garlic Festival draws more than 100,000 visitors. The Festival combines fabulous food, entertainment, activities, unique crafts, and a children's area.

Beyond the world-famous festival, one highlight of any visit to Gilroy is a drive out Hecker Pass Highway to enjoy the splendor of the "Field of Dreams" at Goldsmith Seeds. This internationally renowned horticultural attraction invites visitors to walk among six acres of thousands of experimental flowers (many of them one-of-a-kind). Another horticultural adventure is Gilroy Gardens Family Theme Park, which features more than 40 attractions including six majestic gardens, unique educational exhibits, rides designed to both educate and entertain, and the world-famous Circus Trees—one-of-a-kind sculptures made by grafting living trees (mainstays of "Ripley's Believe It or Not" in the 1940s and '50s, the trees do have to be seen to be believed). Also on (and just off) Hecker Pass are wineries offering tours, tastings, and more. Wine making is a time-honored tradition dating back to the Gold Rush era in the southern Santa Clara Valley. But it's also alive and well in Gilroy.

For something a little less agricultural, visitors head to the Gilroy Premium Outlets, the ultimate discount shopping opportunity on the Central Coast. Shoppers from around the world take advantage of the extraordinary values at 145 brand-name stores.

The revitalized downtown area of Gilroy combines historic buildings, quaint antique shops, and small family-run restaurants. Garlic-laced dishes can be enjoyed at Garlic City Café and the newest restaurant to open in downtown Gilroy, Lizarran Tapas Restaurant, located in historic Old City Hall.

Come and experience Gilroy—a community with a spice for life.

GILROY VISITORS BUREAU
408.842.6436 • GilroyVisitor.org

MORGAN HILL

Just minutes from the bustle of gigantic San Jose, the city of Morgan Hill is centrally located for an easy weekend getaway. The southern entrance to Silicon Valley, Morgan Hill is unique in its contrast of old and new, combining a comfortable sense of hometown America with the comfort of sophistication and top-quality visitor services. It is a place where agriculture and high tech coexist, hometown traditions mix with consumer comforts, and diverse exceptional dining experiences await fortunate visitors and locals alike.

Morgan Hill is a small welcoming town, whether you're looking for a weekend getaway or a base for a longer stay in the area. It makes a perfect central location for leisure or business travel to either the Silicon Valley or Central Coast. Outdoor enthusiasts will want to visit California's second largest state park, Henry Coe State Park, and Anderson Lake, a boating and fishing paradise. For hot summer days, the city's Aquatics Center has a way for everyone in the family to cool down and have fun. Morgan Hill boasts more than 600 hotel rooms, several day spas, four championship golf courses all within minutes of each other, shopping ranging from quaint boutiques and specialty shops to a selection of brand-name retail centers, and easy access to more than 23 wineries, including gold medal winners. Exceptional restaurants throughout the city offer great international dining options, and two wine bars spotlight local standouts with wine maker appearances and more (one also hosts a weekly live jazz night).

The city is also alive with special annual events! Morgan Hill hosts the largest Fourth of July Parade in Northern California. May's Mushroom Mardi Gras and September's Taste of Morgan Hill attract tens of thousands of both visitors and locals, and the Poppy Jasper Film Festival, in November, showcases juried short films from around the world. The Classic British Car Show fills the city with lovingly maintained two-seaters from the heyday of the British sports car in October, the Downtown Wine Stroll gives you an excuse (wonderful local wines) to wander through the city's commercial center, and the summertime Friday Night Music Series inspires picnicking, dancing, and listening to a variety of musical acts.

Morgan Hill—stay a while and enjoy.

MORGAN HILL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & VISITORS CENTER
408.779.9444 • MorganHill.org

PHOTO: GILROY VISITORS BUREAU

Santa Clara County Itineraries

GILROY

DAY ONE

Start your day with a self-guided tour of Goldsmith Seeds' breathtaking "Field of Dreams," (open dawn to dusk seven days a week) viewing the flowers and taking pictures (the viewing platform atop the public restrooms is a favorite vantage).

Then spend the afternoon enjoying the outdoor beauty of the Gilroy area with a drive down Hecker Pass. Known by the locals as "the jewel of Gilroy," this tree-lined scenic two-lane road invites visitors to stop and enjoy a variety of special sites along the way. One that's well worth a stop is beautiful and culturally significant Chitactac Adams Park, on Watsonville Road. A self-guided interpretive walk through the park takes you to eight stations describing Ohlone Indian Village life and the natural history of Uvas Creek. More than 2,000 years of indigenous history is visible in the numerous petroglyphs and hundreds of stone grinding bowls. A limited number of picnic tables are available. The park is open 8 a.m.–sunset year-round; admission is free.

DAY TWO

Breakfast at one of the local establishments such as OD's, Garlic City Café, or Black Bear Diner. Then venture out to the Gilroy Premium Outlets for a shopping experience extraordinaire.

Head back out to Hecker Pass to discover the bounty of Gilroy's vineyards with a tour of the lovely family-owned wineries that border the highway—Hecker Pass, Fortino, Sarah's, and Solis—and those just off the Pass on Watsonville Road—Sycamore Creek, Jason-Stephens, Kirigin, Clos LaChance, and Monte Verde. Taste the wines, chat with an actual winemaker, have an old-fashioned picnic on the romantic grounds.

Drive back into Gilroy for the evening, and enjoy fine dining at one of several restaurants including Mama Mia's Ristorante, Tasso's Old House Restaurant, or Westside Grill (all offer special garlic dishes).

MORGAN HILL

DAY ONE

For a day of exploring the recreation surprises in Morgan Hill's beautiful hills and open spaces, grab breakfast at any number of delicious locations, either downtown or en route to your first stop. After breakfast, pick up some snacks and picnic supplies, then head for Henry Coe State Park or Bear Ranch to enjoy the open spaces and the captivating sense of being away from it all. Now make your way to Anderson Lake, for a snack at a picnic area, to enjoy the beautiful tranquility of the surroundings, and maybe even a little boating or fishing. Head back into Morgan Hill and take time before dinner to enjoy a walk through downtown to drink in the friendliness of the people and the small-town environment as well as the art galleries and boutiques. End your first day with a play at the Morgan Hill Community Playhouse, and then settle in for a well-deserved rest at one of Morgan Hill's comfortable and hospitable lodgings.

DAY TWO

More recreation today. Uvas Park is home to waterfalls and a river (which winds its way through Svedahl, a Swedish community that is yet another of the area's hidden treasures). After breakfast, try some biking, along the winding trail that begins at the Lake Anderson Dam. For a change of pace, stop by the working citrus orchard nearby for a tour and some tasting of the extraordinary variety of locally grown fruits. Grab lunch at one of our great restaurants that you didn't get to try yesterday, and then take the family to the Morgan Hill Aquatics Center. Be sure to leave time for a tour of the wine country that is in and around Morgan Hill, comprising some 23 wineries, including 84-year-old family-owned Guglielmo. For the perfect ending to a perfect day, pick another of the restaurants you haven't yet tried (you can't go wrong).

Central Coast Tourism Council Members

Casa de Fruta
10021 Pacheco Pass Highway
Hollister, CA 95023
408.842.7282 • CasadeFruta.com

Gilroy Gardens Family Theme Park
3050 Hecker Pass Highway, Gilroy, CA 95020
408.840.7100 • GilroyGardens.org

Gilroy Visitors Bureau
7780 Monterey Street, Gilroy, CA 95020
408.842.6436 • GilroyVisitor.org

Morgan Hill Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Center
90 East 2nd Street, Morgan Hill, CA 95038
408.779.9444 • MorganHill.org

Ramada Inn Morgan Hill
16115 Condit Road, Morgan Hill, CA 95037
408.779.7666 • RamadaMorganHill.com

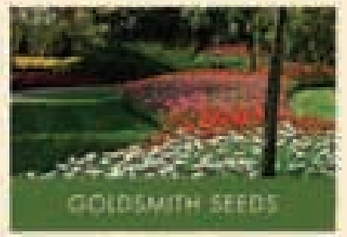
Wineries of Santa Clara Valley
SantaClaraWines.com

Gilroy & Morgan Hill
Gateway to the Central Coast

SHOPPING
RECREATION
ENTERTAINMENT
DINING
WINERIES

PREMIUM OUTLETS
premiumoutlets.com/gilroy

BEST WESTERN FOREST PARK INN
bestwesterngilroy.com


GOLDSMITH SEEDS
goldsmithseeds.com

GILROY GARLIC FESTIVAL
gilroygarlicfestival.com

CASA de FRUTA
casadefruta.com

BETABEL RV RESORT
betabel.com

MORGAN HILL AQUATIC CENTER
morgan-hill.ca.gov

gilroy Visitors Bureau
Gilroy Visitors Bureau
408.847.6436
gilroyvisitor.org

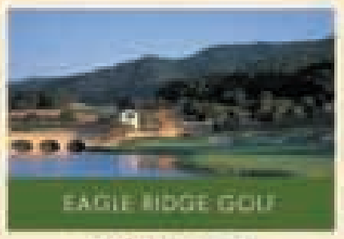
Morgan Hill Chamber & Visitors Center
408.779.9444
morganhill.org

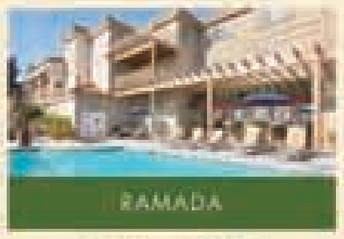
SOUTH SANTA CLARA VALLEY TOURISM PARTNERSHIP

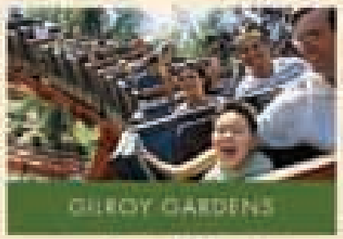
Just twenty minutes south of Silicon Valley, Morgan Hill and Gilroy boast some of the best recreation in the region. Visit the Gilroy Premium Outlets for the ultimate shopping experience. Tour twenty-three historic wineries, or have an old-fashioned picnic on the winery's romantic grounds. Treat the family to a fun day at Gilroy Gardens in the Morgan Hill Aquatic Center, or embark on a horticultural adventure at Goldsmith Seeds and Anaya's Orchard. Play golf at one of our seven world-class golf courses, enjoy gourmet dining featuring South County's famous garlic and mushrooms, or spend a rare outdoors dining down atomic Hacker Pass. Don't miss hiking the trails of Henry Coe Park, Mount Madonna Park, Uvas Trails, Harvey Bear Ranch, and Lake Anderson. Whether you come for the shopping or for business, you'll stay for the fun!

D'VINE JAZZ & WINE
dvinejazzandwine.com

WINERIES
santaclarawines.com


EAGLE RIDGE GOLF
eagleridgegc.com


RAMADA
ramadamorganhill.com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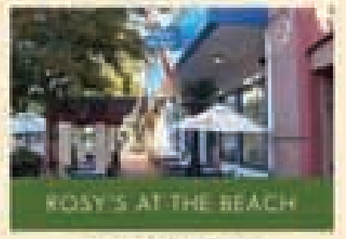
gilroygardens.org


ROSY'S AT THE BEACH
rosysatthebeach.com

Davenport Landing

Santa Cruz County

Roaring Camp Railroads

One of the most glorious settings in the world, Santa Cruz County is home to redwood forests and sunny beaches along 29 miles of coastline.

Beyond the beaches and forests lies the classic California lifestyle: organic farms, a sophisticated arts and culture scene, wineries, dazzling dining, a laid-back personality, and a diversity of landscapes. Santa Cruz County truly provides the quintessential California experience.

Sand dunes meet u-pick farms, berry fields, flower nurseries, and apple orchards in Watsonville and the Pajaro Valley, in southern Santa Cruz County.

The communities of Aptos, Capitola, and Soquel radiate charisma. The sun-kissed beaches of Capitola dissolve into the villages of Aptos and Soquel, rising to scenic towns and the forested summit of the Santa Cruz Mountains.

World famous as a surfing mecca, Santa Cruz is also known for its arts scene, world-renowned university community, culinary options, and energetic nightlife. North of Santa Cruz, legendary Highway 1 travels along rustic cliffs with sweeping vistas—one of the most spectacular drives in the United States.

- Pajaro Valley/ Watsonville
- Santa Cruz
- Aptos
- Capitola/Soquel
- Scotts Valley
- San Lorenzo Valley
- North Coast

PHOTOS OPPOSITE: MARK BARNES • THIS PAGE: DENIS LOCKMAN

Natural Bridges State Park

PAJARO VALLEY/ WATSONVILLE

In southern Santa Cruz County, agriculture has long been the principal industry for Watsonville and the Pajaro Valley. Celebrating this heritage is the Agricultural History Museum, at the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds. The museum houses a collection of restored farm equipment, antiques, and exhibits on the region's top crops. The historic Victorian home of John Steinbeck's sister sits adjacent to the museum.

Seasonal fruit is ample at local u-pick farms. Watsonville's cultural side includes 1880s storefronts, a classic plaza, and the Henry J. Mello Center for the Performing Arts, which regularly hosts the Santa Cruz Symphony, the Watsonville Taiko Drummers, and more.

The city is also home to the county's only airfield, Watsonville Airport, which hosts the Watsonville Fly-In & Air Show. The fly-in features vintage planes and restored warbirds every Labor Day weekend.

Also in the air, an amazing diversity of birds thrive in the rich habitats of Pajaro Valley's rivers and sloughs. Located on the Pacific Flyway, the Wetlands of Watsonville provide a resting stop for birds on their migratory journeys and serve as a year-round habitat for hundreds of species. Nearby, the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Reserve is one of California's last undisturbed coastal wetlands.

The Monterey Bay Birding Festival each September is another opportunity for birdwatching. This family-friendly festival features special presentations, expert-led day trips, and workshops.

Summertime brings the Monterey Bay Strawberry Festival, where visitors can savor an array of strawberry treats and enjoy a wide range of activities for kids and families.

Outside of town, miles of pristine beaches and sand dunes beckon where sandpipers and snowy plovers scurry along the water's edge. These contemplative stretches of sand are some of the best spots in the state for watching California's renowned sunsets.

SANTA CRUZ

With its spectacular beaches and varied seaside attractions, Santa Cruz is the spiritual heart of the county. A short walk from downtown, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary inspires a relaxed way of life. But Santa Cruz also offers virtually unlimited entertainment, recreational, cultural and dining opportunities.

Beautifully renovated since the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, Pacific Avenue downtown is a pedestrian-friendly district filled with local art galleries, outdoor cafés, spas, and nightclubs. Shops specialize in everything from vintage fashions, jewelry and books to surfing gear. Anchored by a landmark clock tower, this tree-lined street is the perfect mix of retail, entertainment, and dining.

Downtown is home to the Museum of Art & History, the Santa Cruz Symphony, Actors Theatre, the Santa Cruz Film Festival and much more. Public murals and sculptures accentuate the lively artistic flavor.

The music scene is rich here, too. Clubs offer a variety of live music any night of the week, and the Kuumbwa Jazz Center hosts major artists, dinner performances and ongoing educational programs.

Whether eating alfresco or in a cozy romantic bistro, eclectic fare is created with fresh seasonal offerings. Weekly farmers' markets highlight fresh local produce.

The authentic surf vibe is alive in Pleasure Point (home to wetsuit pioneer Jack O'Neill). Pleasure Point's flavor is expressed in its colorful stores and boutiques carrying unique selections of home décor, modern and vintage apparel, and garden art. For a laid-back dining experience, local cafés and quaint eateries satisfy cravings in plenty of ways.

For the perfect complement to the local cuisine, the celebrated wines of the Santa Cruz Mountains consistently rank among the best in the country. Many of the wineries are small and family-owned, and benefit from the region's varied microclimates, which are ideal for developing these award-winning wines.

PHOTO: MARK BARNES

Another element of the Santa Cruz experience is the century-old Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, a classic seaside amusement park. The Giant Dipper, a vintage wooden roller coaster, has been thrilling riders for more than 85 years. In addition, the boardwalk's Looff Carousel, built in 1911, features 70 hand-carved horses and music from the original 342-pipe Ruth band organ.

Other seasonal Boardwalk events include a free Friday night summertime concert series on the beach and the annual Clam Chowder Cookoff—one of Santa Cruz's most delicious events.

This vibrant destination sits on the edge of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Sailing tours offer a chance to spot sea life. Overlooking the bay, the Seymour Marine Discovery Center at Long Marine Lab is a noted research facility offering close-up views of marine life at seawater tables and aquariums, and exhibits illustrating the work of resident scientists.

Natural Bridges State Beach is perfect for tidepool exploration. Inland at the park in October, thousands of Monarch butterflies return to the area to spend their winters.

Between Natural Bridges and the Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf lies West Cliff Drive, a 2.5-mile-long path overlooking the bay. West Cliff Drive is a popular route for jogging, walking dogs, cycling, and romantic strolling. Santa Cruz Surfing Museum, housed inside the Mark Abbott Memorial Lighthouse, also sits on West Cliff Drive. Just off the point from the lighthouse, fearless surfers ride the waves at Steamer Lane, Santa Cruz's legendary surf spot.

To the south, stretching a half-mile out into the Monterey Bay, the wharf is lined with family-owned fish markets, restaurants, and gift shops. The wharf also hosts a number of events throughout the year, including the Surf City Classic: Woodies on the Wharf.

Overlooking the city is the University of California at Santa Cruz (UCSC). Its respected arts and sciences programs continue to make it one of the top-ranked schools in the country. Open to the public are the university's theaters and galleries, as well as the campus' many trails. UCSC also hosts acclaimed performances by Shakespeare Santa Cruz, presentations in the UCSC Arts and Lectures Series, and is home to the Arboretum.

APTOS

Straddling Highway 1, Aptos combines coastal elegance with majestic foothills and redwood covered mountains. Charming Aptos Village offers quaint boutiques, cafés, historic inns and resorts. At the Seascape Beach Resort's Sanderlings Restaurant, a state-of-the-art aquatic reef tank mirrors what is taking place in Monterey Bay. Nearby, the Forest of Nisene Marks State Park tempts outdoor enthusiasts with scenic hiking trails.

At the end of the fishing pier at Seacliff State Beach rests the *S.S. Palo Alto*, an experimental concrete ship. Each June, the vessel is honored at The Festival of the Cement Ship, with live music and a narrative of the ship's history. The park's visitor center tells the whole story.

CAPITOLA/SOQUEL

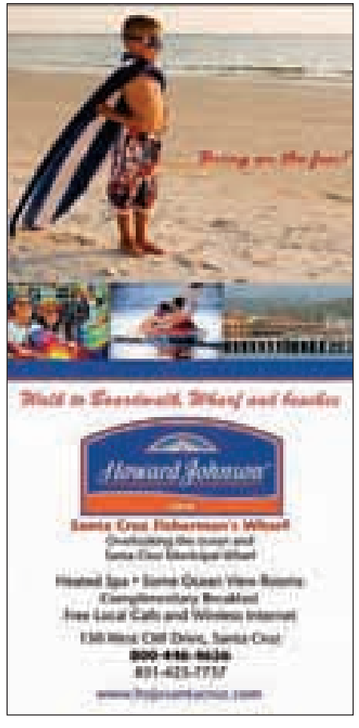
North of Aptos, Capitola radiates the charisma of a vintage beachside town, with sensational views of Monterey Bay. Capitola Village exudes a Mediterranean atmosphere, where a romantic esplanade opens to the beach.

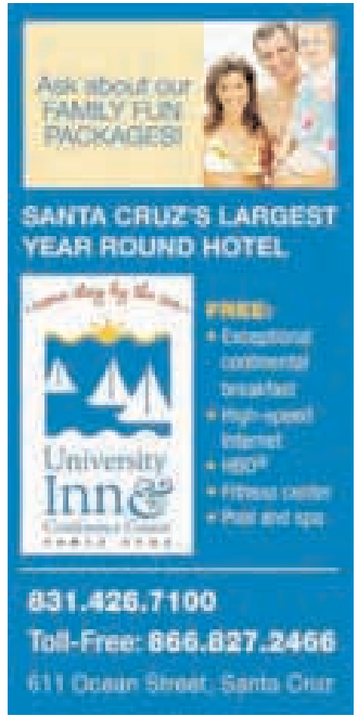
Just inland is Soquel Village, a quaint town where antique lovers and wine enthusiasts, flock to its numerous shops and sample excellent dining and wine tasting options.

SCOTTS VALLEY

Originally settled as a community of farms amidst the area's dramatic redwood forests, Scotts Valley is now home to technology businesses in a family-friendly setting.

Scotts Valley's small-town charm shines at year-round family-oriented events, a number of beautiful parks, fishing at Camp Evers, and other recreational options. Nearby wineries, scenic nine-hole Valley Gardens Golf Course, and the stylish Café Max at the Hilton Santa Cruz/Scotts Valley are other area features.





Just six miles from the beaches of Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley serves as the gateway to the redwood forests of the Santa Cruz Mountains. Whether as a destination or a stop along the way, Scotts Valley is the perfect retreat.

SAN LORENZO VALLEY

From Santa Cruz, Highway 9 winds into the mountains following the San Lorenzo River to thread together the valley's idyllic mountain towns.

Surrounded by lush redwood forests, the towns of Boulder Creek, Brookdale, Ben Lomond, and Felton emerged during the logging era. Nearby, Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park, Big Basin, Fall Creek, the Loch Lomond Recreation Area, and Castle Rock offer hiking, biking, fishing, camping, and equestrian trails. Popular with families, Roaring Camp Railroads takes visitors on a nostalgic ride aboard 110-year-old steam locomotives and hosts year-round events.

A variety of local wineries, antique stores, galleries, and golf—surrounded by majestic redwood trees—at Pasatiempo Golf Course or Boulder Creek Golf and Country Club, round out this picturesque region.

NORTH COAST

Established nearly 140 years ago as a whaling community, the coastal town of Davenport is now a thriving enclave of artists. In wintertime, the bluffs offer an unparalleled view of migrating whales passing offshore.

At Wilder Ranch State Park, 34 miles of trails provide challenging mountain biking routes and scenic coastal vistas. The park's historic Meder farmhouse has been restored to its early grandeur.

The 1914 Davenport Jail is now a museum, housing exhibits on North Coast history and environment.

Other activities on the North Coast include elephant seal viewing, extensive hiking and biking, and exploring beach coves.

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY CONFERENCE & VISITORS COUNCIL
800.833.3494 • 831.425.1234
SantaCruzCounty.Travel

Santa Cruz County Itinerary

DAY ONE

Start your day birdwatching at the Wetlands of Watsonville or at Elkhorn Slough. At midday, try seasonal fishing at Camp Evers Fishing Park in Scotts Valley. Or rent a kayak at the Santa Cruz Harbor and explore the coastline from the water, or hop on a mountain bike and check out the trails in Nisene Marks State Park. Head to Pleasure Point and watch as talented tube riders shoot the curl, then relax in an eclectic café.

DAY TWO

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast in Downtown Santa Cruz. Check out local art at the Museum of Art and History, or the Pajaro Valley Arts Council Gallery. In the afternoon, sample wines from the Santa Cruz Mountains at a local tasting room followed by a spa treatment. For dinner, ride the famous cable car at Capitola's Shadowbrook restaurant. End your day with live music at the Kuumbwa Jazz Center, or with a performance at the Henry Mello Center in Watsonville.

DAY THREE

The Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk is a must-see for any visitor. Stop for lunch on the Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf, adjacent to the boardwalk and pick up a memento at one of its many shops. Head inland to Roaring Camp Railroads and cruise through the redwoods aboard historic steam trains. Browse exhibits at the Agricultural History Museum in Watsonville, then dine on the outdoor patio at Severino's Grill at the Seacliff Inn in Aptos, surrounded by lush colorful gardens.

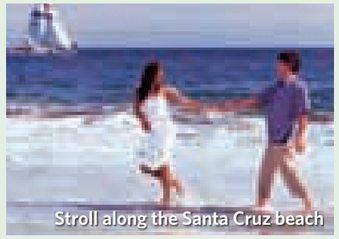

Stroll along the Santa Cruz beach

PHOTO: PAUL SCHRAUB

Central Coast Tourism Council Members

Best Western Seacliff Inn
7500 Old Dominion Court
Aptos, CA 95003
831.688.7300 • SeacliffInn.com

Casablanca Inn & Restaurant
101 Main Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
831.423.1570 • Casablanca-SantaCruz.com

Hilton Santa Cruz/Scotts Valley
6001 La Madrona Drive
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
831.440.1000
SantaCruzScottsValley.Hilton.com

Howard Johnson Inn
130 West Cliff Drive
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
831.423.7737
HoJoSantaCruz.com

Mission Inn Santa Cruz
2250 Mission Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
831.425.5455 • Mission-Inn.com

Roaring Camp Railroads
Graham Hill Road at Roaring Camp Road
Felton, CA 95018
831.335.4484 • RoaringCamp.com

Santa Cruz County Conference & Visitors Council
1211 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
831.425.1234 • SantaCruzCounty.Travel

Seascape Resort
1 Seascape Resort Drive
Aptos, CA 95003
831.688.6800 • SeascapeResort.com

University Inn & Conference Center
611 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
831.426.7100 • UCSCInn.com

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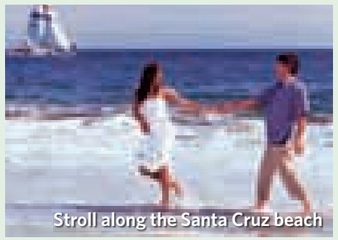
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PHOTO: PAUL SCHRAUB

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54 miles to San Francisco
CALIFORNIA 1 CENTRAL COAST
CENTRAL COAST
CALIFORNIA
TRAVEL TIME
All driving distances are approximate.
DRIVING DISTANCES
All driving times are approximate.
Santa Cruz
Morgan Hill
Gilroy
Hollister
Monterey
Carmel
Salinas
Soledad
King City
Greenfield
Lucia
San Simeon
Cambria
San Miguel
Paso Robles
Morro Bay
Templeton
Atascadero
Shandon
Santa Margaret
Avila Beach
San Luis Obispo
Pismo Beach
Grover Beach
Oceano
Arroyo Grande
Nipomo
Guadalupe
Santa Maria
Orcutt
Los Alamos
Lompoc
Buellton
Solvang
Gaviota
Isla Vista
Santa Barbara
Montecito
Carpinteria
Ojai
Oak View
Santa Paula
Fillmore
Ventura
Oxnard
Port Hueneme
Moorpark
Simi Valley
Thousand Oaks
Newbury Park
Point Mugu
New Cuyama
Cuyama
Ventucopa
Big Sur
Carmel Valley
Greenfield
Julian
Hearst Castle & San Simeon State Hist Mon
Los Padres NF
Carrizo Plain NM
Channel Islands NP
Pinnacles NM
Henry W Coe SP
Point Mugu SP
Santa Barbara Channel
Pacific Ocean
Coast Ranges
Salinas Valley
Santa Ynez Mountains
Ventura
Santa Barbara
San Luis Obispo
Los Padres
Monterey
Santa Cruz
Santa Clara
San Benito
Santa Barbara
Ventura
CALIFORNIA
SAN FRANCISCO
LOS ANGELES
The Counties of the Central Coast
LEGEND
County Seat
California Mission
Point of Interest
Rest Stop
Mountain Peak
Municipal Airport
Amtrak w/station
Large Park
National Forest
N
0 10 20 Miles
0 10 20 30 Kilometers

HOW WILL SAN LUIS OBISPO CHANGE YOU?

Rebecca spent a morning paddling out with the locals. Now household budgeting is a bit harder. Food, clothes, or surfboard?

After cruising the Farmer's Market, **Jessica** bags her parents for dairy fresh ice cream, insists on local honey, and has learned to love microgreens.

After a couple afternoons in San Luis Obispo's wine country, **Frank** might just try a Pinot Nuir with his next chili dog.

Jordan's career aspirations changed at the Summer Concert Series. He's trading Nascar gloves for the gloves of a massive.

Big Ben chased Firebees at the beach, fitted at the dog park and relaxed with his family in their dog-friendly hotel room.

Discover activities for all ages and luxuries for all tastes in San Luis Obispo, the ideal getaway halfway between Los Angeles and San Francisco on California's breathtaking Central Coast.

San Luis Obispo
Sincerely, California

Start your journey at **SanLuisObispoVacations.com**