CA 101 Asset Toolkit

Program Summary:

California 101 is a data-driven, consumer-centric content series designed to support all experience pillars and drive partner handoffs. All topics and destinations were chosen based on in-depth SEO research to deliver the answers that consumers are seeking online. California 101 is the first strategic content program that provides inspirational content through the gorgeous scenery in the videos with practical how-to content through detailed information and partner links in the articles; and easy adaption for non-English markets.

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- Have Questions?
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Assets by California Region:

Click on the below regions to locate content relevant to you:

- North Coast
- Shasta Cascade
- San Francisco Bay Area
- Gold Country
- High Sierra
- Central Valley
- Central Coast
- Los Angeles County
- Orange County
- Inland Empire
- The Deserts
- San Diego County

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NORTH COAST

Crescent City
Video - Full
Video - 30sec Cut Down
Image
Editorial

5 AMAZING THINGS TO DO IN CRESCENT CITY

This North Coast town is home to awe-inspiring forests, river rapids, and good beer

Head to the tippy top of California's northern coastline to see this sea-faring city with two lighthouses, redwoods, and an ever-changing wildlife show of sea lions, harbor seals, pelicans, and even river otters at Crescent City Harbor. Don't miss these other cool experiences in this North Coast town.

Discover the Battery Point Lighthouse

In some ways, the 1856 Battery Point Lighthouse, in the town of Crescent City, is pretty impenetrable: It was built to withstand squalls, gale-force winds, and even the occasional tsunami. It's not easy to get to, either—California's northernmost lighthouse is perched on a tiny near-shore island that can be reached only at low tide and on foot. But it's totally worth the effort. When the ocean recedes, you can walk across a causeway, climb the narrow spiral staircase to the lamp room, then crawl up a ladder and through a trapdoor for a spectacular 360-degree view. The beach across from the lighthouse is perfect for little ones who enjoy beachcombing.

Ogle the old-growth trees
Pitch a tent in the shadows of towering redwoods at Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park, a few miles northeast of Crescent City. An 86-site, dog-friendly campground sits beside the emerald Smith River in a lush glade filled with ferns and old-growth trees. Walk from your tent to the 340-foot-tall Stout Tree and its ancient redwood brethren—an easy jaunt for kids, too—or go for a drive on spectacular Howland Hill Road, a 10-mile winding dirt road through stands of magnificent old-growth woodland.

Paddle the Smith River

The Smith is California's largest free-flowing river system as well as the fertile home of huge chinook salmon and steelhead. Hook up with an expert guide from Redwood Rides and you'll

learn about the unique geology of the Smith River watershed while you paddle through Class I and II whitewater and even a few small rapids. Want something tamer and more kid-friendly? Sign up for the company's Redwoods by River kayaking trip, and float your inflatable craft along the lazy river in Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park.

Taste cheese downtown

Wander the shops and restaurants in Crescent City's quaint downtown, and stop by Rumiano Cheese Store to sample the natural and organic products from California's oldest family-owned cheese company. Ask to learn more about Rumiano's hand-dug cellar, where they age wheels of dry Monterey Jack and Peppato cheese covered in a special blend of pepper and cocoa powder.

Sample local suds

You can't go wrong with brick-oven pizzas, cheese curds, and well-brewed craft beer. Dogs and kids are welcome at Seaquake Brewing's on-site brewery and tap room, where specialties include a complex blonde ale, a coastal pale ale, and an IPA. Nearby, the Port O' Pints Brewing Co. serves award-winning craft beers—as well as house-brewed sarsaparilla (root beer or birch beer) and casual bar food—in its coastal and Celtic-themed pub.

In partnership with Visit California

North Coast Beaches

Video - Full
Video - 30sec Cut Down
Image
Editorial

BEST BEACHES ON THE NORTH COAST

Explore the breathtaking scenery of the wild Sonoma and Mendocino coasts—from sandy shores to the top of a lighthouse

North of San Francisco, there's a whole other world of California, where rugged cliffs, towering redwood trees, and artsy towns dot an idyllic coastline. Here, you'll find scenic views around every corner and vast areas of unspoiled nature perfect for peaceful outdoor exploring.

Glass Beach

Marvel at the pastel glass covering Glass Beach, Fort Bragg's historic former trash dump that's now one of the largest sea glass repositories in the world. Discarded soda bottles and other items, tumbled and polished by the ocean waves, have been transformed into smooth, colorful jewels. A paved trail travels north from Glass Beach through MacKerricher State Park, offering wave-breaking views of Ten Mile Beach. Walk or bike its length, then cap off the day with a beer flight at North Coast Brewing Company in downtown Fort Bragg. The taproom hosts live jazz dinner concerts on weekend nights.

Point Arena Lighthouse

Reaching 115 feet into the sky, Point Arena Lighthouse stands sentinel on a rocky promontory, surrounded by water on three sides. Climb 145 steps to the top of this historic landmark, then soak in 360-degree views of sea stacks, rock arches, and crashing waves. Stop in at the visitor center to see a collection of maritime photos and exhibits. Can't bear to leave? Book a stay in the lighthouse keeper's quarters.

Stornetta Public Lands

Hike the paths off Lighthouse Road in Point Arena-Stornetta Public Lands to see sea lions, elephant seals, and harbor seals. You'll find everything a coast lover craves: blowholes, dunes, beaches, tide pools, and lingering sunsets. There's even a waterfall in the wet season, when Stornetta Falls cascades 40 feet over the coastal bluffs and into the Pacific.

Manchester Beach

The dunes at Manchester Beach back a driftwood-laden swath of sand, ideal for long walks spent searching for washed-in treasures. Plan to leave thousands of footprints on this five-mile-long beach. When night falls, pitch your tent at Manchester State Park's campground. While in Point Arena, be sure to check your tide table. During extremely low tides, walk from Schooner Gulch State Beach to Bowling Ball Beach to see its astounding assemblage of round rocks, formed by millions of years of weathering.

Sonoma Coast State Park

The picturesque town of Jenner is the gateway to dozens of beaches in Sonoma Coast State Park. Drive out to the headlands at Goat Rock Beach to watch the harbor seals' antics, then stroll along the tan sand. Take a longer walk on the Kortum Trail, tracing along the bluff tops from Blind Beach to Shell Beach. At the mouth of the Jenner River, follow steep paths downhill from Highway 1 to Jenner Beach. Scan the seas for gray whales or snap photos of postcard-perfect offshore sea stacks.

Where to stay

In Mendocino, the 19-room MacCallum House offers a cozy stay in a Victorian house built in 1882, with the option to book a luxury mansion overlooking the Pacific. Nearby, the

eco-friendly Stanford Inn by the Sea gives a family-farm vibe, with its organic gardens and elaborate wellness programs. Ten minutes south in Albion, you'll find romantic oceanfront cottages at the Albion River Inn that include private decks, large soaking tubs, and fireplaces. For a serene getaway overlooking the rugged Sonoma Coast, the Sea Ranch Lodge gives visitors a very secluded place to relax after a day of wandering nearby hiking trails.

In partnership with Visit California

Redwood National Park
Video - Full
Video - 30sec Cut Down
Image
Editorial

THINGS TO DO IN REDWOOD NATIONAL PARK

Behold massive sequoias, ancient forests, peaceful beaches, and tasty brews in this northern California wonderland

Experience awe with a trip to Redwood National Park. The expansive area—which is actually a clustered network of national and state sites—is home to stunning giants that grow over 350 feet tall. Go beyond the obligatory tree-hug photo with these bright ideas for exploring nature's majesty.

Drive the Newton B. Drury Scenic Parkway

This 10-mile road cuts through the heart of an old-growth forest in Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park. Herds of Roosevelt elk roam the woods and are easy to spot right from your car's windows. If you want a more immersive experience, hop out and go for a hike at one of the many trailheads, including Big Tree Wayside and Ah-Pah.

Hike to Fern Canyon on James Irvine Trail

Enter prehistoric wilderness on this 9-mile roundtrip hike. The densely verdant forest served as the backdrop for a number of scenes in Jurassic Park 2, including the untimely demise of dino-hunter Dieter Stark. Don't worry, you won't encounter any velociraptors as you make your way along redwood growths and through the 50-foot-deep canyon dripping with ferns.

Ride Trees of Mystery

"Hi there, friend! Welcome to the Trees of Mystery!" bellows a 50-foot-tall Paul Bunyan statue as you arrive at this unique attraction. The Trees of Mystery features a 0.8-mile interpretive trail, more than 50 wooden chainsaw-carved sculptures, and the main attraction, the SkyTrail

gondola ride, which provides a Bunyan-esque perspective of the forest from 130 feet above the ground.

Stay at Gold Bluffs Beach Campground

Where else can you spend all day in a lush, towering forest and turn in at night on a beach's soft sand? The Gold Bluffs Beach Campground is nestled among sand dunes and offers 25 campsites with fire pits and picnic tables. If you prefer a more luxe experience, book a room at Garberville's Benbow Historic Inn, or choose among seven Victorian properties that together make up Eureka's Carter House Inns.

Sip a flight of hoppy brews

Lost Coast Brewery has been Humboldt County's hops mecca since it opened its doors in 1990 pouring the malty Downtown Brown. The brewery now serves more than half a dozen styles, and it ships the good stuff all around the world. Stop in for a flight and stay for dinner at the adjoining restaurant.

In partnership with Visit California

Mendocino Road Trip
Video - Full
Video - 30sec Cut Down
Image
Editorial

MENDOCINO COUNTY ROAD TRIP

Explore the heart of the North Coast with a two-day trip through under-the-radar wine regions and dreamy seaside towns

Mendocino County, a winding two-hour drive north of San Francisco, is the ultimate escape. Despite the region's accessibility, its bucolic farmlands and untouched coast feel worlds away from city life. This two-day North Coast road trip hits all the high notes: artisan wines, baby goats, private sea coves, redwood forests, hidden beaches, and windswept bluffs. Starting just outside Cloverdale, the trip winds northwest through Anderson Valley and up to the seaside community of Mendocino, with plenty of unforgettable stops along the way.

Taste your way through Anderson Valley

Your adventure begins at the southernmost point of State Route 128, in Sonoma County. As you head north through Anderson Valley's wine country, you'll be greeted by grazing sheep and carefully planted grapevines. Once you reach the buzzy little town of Boonville, make a stop at

Pennyroyal Farm. Say hello to the dairy goats and their kids before enjoying a wine and cheese pairing on a patio overlooking the vineyard. Half a mile up the road, pop in at Farmhouse Mercantile. The curated home goods store sells all of the cow-shaped creamers and wooden platters you didn't know you needed. Baxter Winery, in next-door Philo, specializes in single-vineyard Pinot Noirs. The airy, minimalist tasting room complements the understated elegance of their wines.

Explore the North Coast's heartland

Before dinner, head to Hendy Woods State Park, home to two groves of 1,000-year-old redwoods and five miles of hike-able trails. After you've worked up an appetite, continue north to The Bewildered Pig. With an emphasis on hyper-local food and wine, the offerings change daily. Explore the delightful little patio decorated with creative fountains and a cozy firepit before heading into the rustic dining room for an unforgettable meal. Insider tip: The gluten-free popovers are a menu mainstay not to be missed.

Discover a secluded spot in Elk

You will trade green pastures for a rugged coastline as Route 128 turns into Highway 1, where the Navarro River meets the sea. Travel south past rocky shores to arrive at the Harbor House Inn, located in the picturesque town of Elk. The stunning Arts-&-Crafts-style lodge sits overlooking Casket Rock, perched above a private cove, only accessible to guests. Book an ocean-view room and you'll wake up to a breathtaking panorama of the white-capped sea.

Experience coastal wonder along Highway 1

The 17-mile drive north from Elk to Mendocino proper is an adventure in and of itself. Highway 1 hugs the Pacific the entire way, offering views of windswept cliffs, hidden beaches, and wildflower meadows. Stop in Little River to stretch your legs at Van Damme State Park, where a short hike takes you down to a driftwood-strewn beach or up through a fern-filled forest to a pygmy grove.

Explore Old Town Mendocino

Over the last 200 years, Mendocino has transformed from a logging region to a fishing village to an artists' colony. But thanks to its designation on the National Register of Historic Places, the architecture and landscape has remained impeccably preserved. Steep roofs and leaded windows appear plucked from a classic New England town. Meander along the streets and you'll find eclectic galleries and charming little shops. Browse the aisles at Gallery Bookshop & Bookwinkles, try a homemade truffle at Mendocino Chocolate Company, or enjoy lunch in the flower garden at Trillium Cafe.

Hike in Mendocino Headlands State Park

No trip to Mendocino is complete without a trek along the headlands. Stretching out from the mouth of the Big River, this state park comprises 347 acres of seaside bluffs and sandy beaches. Follow the four-mile single-track hiking trail for a picture-perfect perspective of the roaring

ocean, secluded offshore islands, and cliffs that seem to spring up directly from the sea. If the timing works, visit just as the sun is setting for a magical cap to a perfect weekend away.

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SHASTA CASCADE

Lassen Volcanic National Park
Video - Full
Video - 30sec Cut Down
Image
Editorial

THINGS TO DO IN LASSEN VOLCANIC NATIONAL PARK

Discover the Shasta Cascade region's hissing, boiling volcanic wonderland

The land is positively alive at Lassen Volcanic National Park. Home to all four types of volcanoes—shield, composite, cinder cone, and plug dome—this park in the northeast corner of California literally bubbles, steams, and roars. But for all of its hydrothermal activity, Lassen has a restive side too, with crystalline lakes and meadows filled with summer wildflowers. Here are seven ways to make the most of your visit.

Explore a Lake in the Heart of the Park

If this national park has a downtown, it's along Manzanita Lake, where you'll find an expansive campground, cabins, and a museum. Hike around the lake on an easy 1.5-mile loop trail; especially in the morning, you'll get the park's definitive view of the 10,457-foot Lassen Peak. Or cruise out on the lake with a stand-up paddleboard or kayak rental from the Manzanita Lake Camper Store.

Hike Through Lassen's Largest Hydrothermal Area

When you head out on something called the Bumpass Hell Trail, you know it won't be a routine walk in the woods. Named for the unfortunate Kendall Bumpass—who burned his leg when he broke through a thin layer of crust and fell into scalding water—this gentle 3-mile round-trip hike includes a stretch along a boardwalk with close-up views of boiling mud pots and vivid turquoise pools. Along the way, you'll also get terrific views of Lassen Peak and Brokeoff Volcano.

Stop at Lassen's Most Accessible Hydrothermal Area

Easily reached along the main park road, the parking area at Sulphur Works gives you a good glimpse of the roaring steam vents and volcanic-gas vents known as fumaroles. For a tough workout, the Ridge Lakes Trail climbs more than 1,000 feet in a mile to a pair of alpine lakes at a basin with an elevation of 8,000 feet.

Escape to Lassen's Historic Guest Ranch

Tucked into lush Warner Valley, Drakesbad Guest Ranch offers rustic lodge rooms and cabins during the summer season. Discover the valley's beauty as you saddle up for guided horseback rides or fly-fish for native rainbow trout. Lodging includes three meals a day in the ranch dining room; on Wednesdays, chefs cook up old-fashioned barbecue delights such as ribs, tri-tip, and burgers.

The Heat Is On at Devil's Kitchen

Starting from the Warner Valley Trailhead, the 4.2-mile round-trip Devil's Kitchen Trail crosses meadows and marshes before reaching its namesake hydrothermal area—the park's second largest. You'll see mud pots, fumaroles, and steaming streams, while side routes off the main trail lead to alpine lakes.

Lassen After Dark

When the sun goes down, Lassen gets dark. Very dark. This is one of the best places in California to truly see the night sky, and park rangers lead occasional astronomy programs during the summer. You can also come to the park for its annual Dark Sky Festival in August, which includes nightly constellation tours and presentations by professional astronomers.

Lassen in Winter

While parts of Lassen become inaccessible after heavy snows, you can still reach areas that are ideal for winter sports. Go sledding in the southwest section of the park or join ranger-led snowshoeing outings that begin from the Kohm Yah-mah-nee Visitor Center. For a gorgeous cross-country ski outing, try the marked trail around Manzanita Lake. Or follow the main park road—there's no traffic in winter.

In partnership with Visit California

Shasta Cascade Road Trip
Video - Full
Video - 30sec Cut Down
Image
Editorial

SHASTA CASCADE ROAD TRIP

Go off the grid in Northern California for an adventure through mountain towns and alpine lakes

Covering 50,000 square miles, the massive Shasta Cascade region is one of the most expansive and wildly beautiful areas in the Golden State. Natural wonders like glassy lakes, verdant

forests, and snow-capped peaks are only part of the fun. California's northeasterly corner is filled with unexpected hidden gems, from sustainable breweries to sock-hop-style diners imported from 2,600 miles away. Explore it all on this road trip from Tahoe City to Mount Shasta.

Kick off your trip at Lake Tahoe

Tahoe City, nestled between Lake Tahoe's north shore and the head of the Truckee River, is the perfect jumping off spot for your Shasta Cascade road trip. As the largest alpine lake in North America, Lake Tahoe will give you a taste of the natural grandeur to come. Before you leave town, make sure to dip your toes in at Commons Beach and take a short trek along the Tahoe Rim Trail, which extends an astonishing 170 miles point-to-point.

Time travel in Truckee

Trade crystal-clear waters for evergreen forests as you follow the Truckee River all the way to town. Truckee, a railroad community-turned-skiing hotspot, still retains its Old Western charm. Stop in the Old Jail Museum for a tour of the longest-continuously run jail in California which once held notorious troublemakers like Baby Face Nelson and Ma Spinelli. For lunch, hop a few decades forward at Jax at the Tracks. This authentic 1940s diner was shipped all the way from Philadelphia by an enterprising restaurateur. The Americana-meets-Cali fare includes chorizo breakfast burritos and southern-fried steak and eggs.

Beer o'clock

Say so long to Truckee and veer west on Interstate 80, stopping for a quick splash at Indian Springs, where the south fork of the Yuba River forms natural swimming holes. Towel off and continue west to Sierra Nevada Brewery in Chico. Long before craft beer was cool, Sierra Nevada was growing its own hops for pitch-perfect pale ale. After a tour of the estate, belly up for a tasting. Stay for dinner at the Taproom, where wood-fired pizza dough is made from fresh brewer's yeast, before tucking into your four-poster bed at Hotel James.

Paddle out at Lake Almanor

The next morning, enjoy two hours of wide-open mountain driving along State Route 32. You'll notice the Douglas firs grow increasingly taller as you make your way north to Lake Almanor. Along the lake's southern tip, you'll spot signs for Lake Almanor Kayak. Choose your vessel—standup paddle boards, as well as single and tandem kayaks are available for rent—before enjoying the pristine water and views of snow-capped Lassen Peak.

Explore hidden caverns

Continue toward your trip's North Star, the massive Mount Shasta, which looms like a beacon. On the way, don't miss Lake Shasta Caverns. This National Natural Landmark in Lakehead is a must-see. Getting there via catamaran, switchback bus ride, and vista-filled short hike is half the fun, but the caverns are the real showstopper. Explore the 250-million-year-old limestone

caves filled with stalagmites, flowstone, and soda straws as you wind your way through tight tunnels and well-lit rooms.

Hike around Mt. Shasta

Less than an hour later, you'll reach your final stop. From the crystal shops that line the city of Mt. Shasta's main drag to the beckoning trails, this town is all about the mystical draw of its 14,180-foot-tall mountain. Featuring an on-property spa, golf course, and restaurant, Mount Shasta Resort is the perfect spot to enjoy some pampering after a few days on the road. Check in before driving toward the mountain itself, which remains an active volcano to this day. In summer months, head to the Mt. Shasta Wilderness to hike along wildflower-dotted fields with mind-bending vistas. In winter, enjoy the 80 inches of annual snowfall, which makes for plenty of powder days.

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SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

San Jose
Video - Full
Video - 30sec Cut Down
Image
Editorial

5 AMAZING THINGS TO DO IN SAN JOSE

As the cultural center of Silicon Valley, San Jose is the land of innovation, startups, and technology history. Just a stone's throw from some of the most pioneering businesses ever founded, you can find intimate opera performances and three-star Michelin dining. Here's how to see a different side of San Jose.

Stay at the luxurious Hotel Valencia

Feel like an Andalusian aristocrat at Hotel Valencia, the only hotel on the city's Santana Row, home of some of the city's best shopping and dining. Architectural touches, inspired by Old World Spain, include a fountain-filled veranda, complete with fire pits when it's time to get cozy.

Explore Winchester Mystery House

The product of a fascinating architectural undertaking, the Winchester Mystery House is a must-see. In 1886, Sarah Winchester, the widow of a firearms magnate, began construction on her home—a project that continued for 36 years, ending only with her death. Learn more about the eccentric millionaire and explore her home's peculiar quirks—including 2,000 doors, staircases leading to nowhere, and a cabinet that opens to dozens of rooms.

Taste at the historic Testarossa Winery

Built in the 19th century by Jesuit Brothers, the Novitiate Winery in neighboring Los Gatos is one of the oldest in California. Its stunning cellars are now the home of Testarossa, where you can enjoy wine tastings, cheese pairings, and live music Thursday through Sunday.

Watch the Opera San José

Since Opera San José is the country's only year-round company of principal artists, you can delight in arias any time of year here. Enjoy classics like *Cosi Fan Tutte* or *The Flying Dutchman* with the beautiful California Theatre offering a baroque-inspired backdrop.

Eat at Manresa

Tucked away in neighboring Los Gatos, Manresa is a member of the hyper-exclusive Michelin-three-star club. Chef David Kinch expertly crafts the season's best products into a

first-class, prix fixe experience: Think Hokkaido uni, Riesling-poached pears, and slow-roasted squab. If you can't snag a reservation, sample his genius at Manresa Bread, which offers confections such as fluffy chocolate croissants and the perfect Pullman loaf.

Also, don't miss...

San Jose is home to more than a dozen museums, including downtown's lovely San Jose Museum of Art. Families will especially love the Tech Museum of Innovation, which features collaborative exhibits with Silicon Valley's biggest brands, and the Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose, with its full-size firetrucks and giant bubbles.

In partnership with Visit California

Palo Alto
Video - Full
Video - 30sec Cut Down
Image
Editorial

5 AMAZING THINGS TO DO IN PALO ALTO

Mingle with some of the world's sharpest minds while exploring unexpected delights in this sunny Silicon Valley city

Exclusivity is part of Palo Alto's allure. Stanford University accepts fewer than 5 percent of its applicants, and hiring rates for nearby tech giants Google and Facebook are estimated to be under 0.2 percent. But for visitors, the opposite is true. Anyone can visit Palo Alto—located conveniently close to both San Francisco and San Jose—and feel welcomed by the sunny climate, rich culture, and fascinating innovation—no application necessary.

Explore University Avenue and downtown

Stretching between the Stanford Campus and U.S. 101, University Avenue cuts right through downtown. Enjoy Palo Alto's nearly perfect climate with a stroll down the street, popping into shops like the historic Mills Florist or Books Inc. or stopping for a cone at Scoop Microcreamery. Every Saturday morning, local vendors flock here, selling everything from raw milk to freshly made pasta at the Palo Alto Farmers' Market.

Visit the Computer History Museum

Think of any powerful tech company, and chances are its offices are in the Palo Alto area. Google, Facebook, Skype, Hewlett-Packard—the list goes on. The Computer History Museum in nearby Mountain View celebrates the coding power of the present while taking a deep dive into the past. Curious adults and younger "engineers in training" will appreciate the signature

exhibit, “Revolution,” which takes visitors through the first 2,000 years of the evolution of computing.

Eat at Bird Dog

Thoughtful, creative, and playfully chic, Bird Dog is a star of the South Bay dining scene. Chef Robbie Wilson delivers a remix of East-West cuisine in a dining room featuring white concrete walls dotted with colorful ducks. Must-tries include the warm spiced roti (complimentary with every meal) and the wood-grilled avocado filled with homemade ponzu and fresh wasabi.

Hike Baylands Nature Preserve

Reset with a stroll around 1,940 acres of undisturbed salt marshes at Baylands Nature Preserve. Fifteen miles of pancake-flat trails mean the area works well for joggers and cyclists, while an incredible array of local winged wildlife—pheasants, pelicans, hummingbirds, and more—makes it a top choice for birdwatchers too.

Stay at Dinah’s Garden Hotel

Located on seven acres of verdant grounds, Dinah’s Garden Hotel offers a Silicon Valley sanctuary. Each of the guestrooms and suites has a unique design. Choose from favorites like the Lanai, with vaulted ceilings and lagoon views, or the Railroad Baron, complete with a four-poster bed and a model train that puffs around the room’s perimeter. The Tokyo-inspired Nobu Hotel Epiphany Palo Alto and the Sheraton Palo Alto, with its easy Stanford access, also make for excellent stays.

Also, don’t miss…

Built in 1965 by university scientists, "The Dish" is a 150-foot-wide radio telescope nested in Stanford’s foothills. A 3.5-mile hike leads you to the UFO-like structure, still in use today. For the “arts” part of “arts and sciences,” opt for a classic movie at the Stanford Theatre. The theater, founded in 1925, screens only film (no digital) and is home to the Mighty Wurlitzer Organ, played during intermission. For posh open-air shopping, head to Stanford Shopping Center for a mix of luxury designers (Burberry, Coach, Kate Spade) and well-known retailers, surrounded by gardens, fountains, and sculptures.

In partnership with Visit California

Golden Gate Bridge
Video - Full
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Image
Editorial

5 AMAZING THINGS TO DO AT THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE

See San Francisco's most iconic structure from every angle—by foot, bicycle, boat, and more

With its gently curved cables and deep orange hue, the Golden Gate Bridge is a total showstopper. Yes, it's beautiful to behold, but the bridge's charms are more than skin (steel?) deep. On your next trip to San Francisco, try these creative ways to enjoy the bridge and the surrounding area.

Stay at Cavallo Point

The story of Cavallo Point is even older than the Golden Gate. Before the bridge's construction, the army established Fort Baker as a military base in an effort to fortify the bay. Today, the lovely colonial revival buildings have been transformed into a resort replete with understated luxury. Guests can enjoy morning yoga, evening wine receptions, guided hikes, cooking classes—and, of course, the stunning views.

Cruise San Francisco Bay

The poet Dylan Thomas once wrote, "You wouldn't think such a place as San Francisco could exist. The wonderful sunlight...the great bridges, the Pacific at your shoes." Experience all three wonders at once with a boat tour around the bay. The Red and White Fleet is great for a simple voyage, while San Francisco Bay Boat Cruises host the area's only floating wine tasting. Hornblower Cruises, meanwhile, hosts a variety of seated dinners, brunch buffets, and glamorous parties. During spring and summer, take one of Hornblower's Alive After Five happy-hour cruises, which offer up cocktails and small plates as the ship glides past the bridge, Alcatraz, and other city sights

Explore the Golden Gate Recreational Area

Standing in bustling Union Square, it's hard to imagine that expansive, untouched public lands are a few short miles away. The Golden Gate Recreational Area protects an astonishing 82,027 acres of land stretching from Silicon Valley to Tomales Bay, and some of its most beautiful spots are right around the Golden Gate. Hike to a hidden beach by way of the 1.7-mile Tennessee Valley Trail, see ruins of the Sutro Baths at Lands End, or get your heart rate up with a hike through the hilly headlands.

Recharge at the Round House Café

The Round House Café makes good on the promise of its name with 360-degree views from the wheel-shaped restaurant's window walls. The Art Deco building, which opened in 1938, is your very last chance to grab a bite on the city side of the San Francisco Bay. Fill up on the massive hot dogs covered in slaw, California-style salads, or the ever-popular chowder in a bread bowl, which sells out nearly every afternoon.

Ride over the Golden Gate Bridge

Just shy of 2 miles long, the bridge makes for a thrilling but super-manageable bicycle ride. If you're coming from the city, Golden Gate Bridge Bike Rentals and Blazing Saddles both offer

rentals and tours for every size cyclist, while Sausalito Bike Rentals is your best bet if you're coming from Marin. Wheel Fun Rentals (which has two locations in Fisherman's Wharf) offers an audio-guided bike tour that uses GPS technology to give you info on your exact location. Whichever way you travel, make sure to stop at Fort Point for the ultimate bridge selfie.

In partnership with Visit California

San Francisco
Video - Full
Video - 30sec Cut Down
Image
Editorial

5 AMAZING THINGS TO DO IN SAN FRANCISCO

The City by the Bay packs an impressive amount of eclectic cultural charm into just 46 square miles

A lifetime in San Francisco wouldn't be enough to see the city's countless wonders. That's why we've selected experiences that everyone from the first-time traveler to the frequent visitor will love. Here's where to shop, eat, stay, and explore in the Golden City.

Stay at The Fairmont San Francisco

Named for the railroad barons ("Nobs") who built their mansions in the area, Nob Hill is one of the most high-end neighborhoods in San Francisco. At its pinnacle sits the historic Fairmont San Francisco, a stunning expression of early 20th-century opulence. Channel your inner blueblood and relax among marble columns, crystal chandeliers, and giant gilded mirrors. The penthouse suite, which takes up the entire eighth floor, boasts a two-story circular library, a vaulted billiards room, and even a secret staircase that once facilitated dalliances between President John F. Kennedy and Marilyn Monroe.

Explore SFMOMA

It's easy to get lost in the SFMOMA in a wonderful sort of way. The largest modern art museum in the world houses more than 33,000 pieces by the likes of Jackson Pollock, Paul Klee, and Andy Warhol. The space itself is impressive, and every inch of the structure is in a sense an exhibition. The rippling white fiberglass exterior invokes rolling fog while the innovative restaurant In Situ faithfully reproduces dishes from famous chefs around the world.

Shop in the Mission District

The Mission District is worth a visit if only to see this artsy neighborhood's vibrant outdoor murals. Once you're there, stop inside any of the dozens of independent boutiques and eateries. Fuel up with a banana cream cupcake from Wholesome Bakery before browsing for

urban camping supplies at Alite Outpost or creative gifts at the women-owned design collective Gravel & Gold.

Discover the Ferry Building

Beaux arts–inspired grandeur, locally sourced food, creative merchants, and killer views of San Francisco Bay—the Ferry Building is like a microcosm of the city itself. Stroll through the Great Nave to explore outposts of some of the Bay Area's most interesting vendors. Be sure to sample some Mt. Tam cheese from Cowgirl Creamery, try a few bluepoints on the half shell at San Francisco Fish Company, recharge with a siphon pour from Blue Bottle Coffee, and shop for handcrafted tableware at Heath Ceramics.

Eat at The Slanted Door

A meal at The Slanted Door is really all about the windows. Floor-to-ceiling walls of glass showcase sweeping views of the bay. Chef Charles Phan's take on contemporary Vietnamese cuisine has made this restaurant one of the city's most popular for more than two decades. Try favorites like shaking beef, cellophane noodles, and imperial rolls.

In partnership with Visit California

Wine Country Resorts
Video - Full
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Image
Editorial

4 AWESOME WINE COUNTRY RESORTS

Luxurious spas, farm-to-table dining, and easy access to dozens of wineries—these Napa and Sonoma resorts offer the indulgent getaway you need

Ready for some "me time" amid decadent surroundings? Reserve your spot at one of these spectacular Wine Country resorts.

Farmhouse Inn, Forestville

You might stumble on this Russian River Valley resort when you're making dinner reservations—its Michelin-starred restaurant, Farmhouse, has generated a huge following. The Farmhouse Inn has only 25 rooms, including eight cottages with dry saunas, all gussied up in woodsy-chic style. A full-service spa offers organic treatments using herbs, honey, and fruit harvested on the six-acre property. Swim in the heated pool, take a sommelier-led wine tour, roast late-night s'mores around the fire pit, or just luxuriate in your feather bed.

Auberge du Soleil, St. Helena, Napa

World-class Auberge du Soleil has reigned as the posh resort queen since its opening in 1982. Choose rooms (with French names like Saint-Tropez and Loire) in the main building or stay in one of the hillside cottages with terraces that capitalize on mesmerizing views. A tricked-out spa offers multiple ways to find your bliss—including a Cabernet grape body masque. There's also a sculpture garden, yoga pavilion, fitness classes, pool, and Michelin-starred restaurant. A stay at this sun-kissed spot high on Rutherford Hill is bound to take your breath away.

Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn and Spa, Sonoma

The Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn and Spa is the grande dame of Sonoma's resorts. Built in 1927, its distinctive pink walls, red tile roof, and courtyards dotted with fountains and gardens give it a storybook California mission look. The massive structure—more than 40,000 square feet—contains 226 rooms, wine lounge 38 North, and Santé Restaurant. But the biggest draw is the thermal mineral water bubbling up from the ground, which fills four geothermal swimming pools. Try a Watsu massage at the on-site spa, play 18 holes of golf, or simply soak away the world.

Carneros Resort and Spa, Napa

For a treat-yourself weekend that's an easy drive from San Francisco, head to Carneros Resort and Spa. Spread over 28 acres of orchards and vineyards, Carneros' farmhouse-style cottages make a perfect casual-chic setting for a Wine Country getaway. Most have patios or decks with lounge chairs, outdoor showers or soaking tubs, and picnic tables. Spend an afternoon at the adults-only infinity pool and make reservations for dinner at Farm. For casual dining, the Boon Fly Café serves cozy roadhouse food, including out-of-this-world doughnuts.

Learn more about luxury lodgings across the state on the California Now Podcast.

In partnership with Visit California

Berkeley & Oakland: 5 Amazing Things
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Editorial

5 AMAZING THINGS TO DO IN BERKELEY AND OAKLAND

San Francisco's *other* bridge—the Bay Bridge, not the Golden Gate—stretches about 4.5 miles between Oakland and Berkeley, cities that lay claim to a world-class university, lively music venues, legendary bookstores, groundbreaking restaurants like Alice Water's Chez Panisse, and major bragging rights. In 2019, *National Geographic Traveler* rated Oakland as one of 28 must-see destinations around the world. All that, plus the East Bay's weather is famously sunnier and warmer than San Francisco, so pack your shorts and T-shirts.

Jack London Square

Browse waterfront boutiques, graze on global cuisine, tour a historic ship, and fully immerse yourself in bayside splendor at Jack London Square, south of downtown Oakland. This nautical neighborhood, now a stylish bastion of condos, cocktail joints, and entertainment hot spots, was where adventurer and writer Jack London caroused in his younger days. Check out the replica of London's Yukon cabin and the next-door Heinold's First and Last Chance Saloon, an 1883 watering hole where London was a regular. (The 1906 earthquake torqued Heinold's into a permanent slant—the bar floor has a jaunty 20-degree grade.) Dine on modern Arabic food at Dyafa, bowl a few rounds at Plank or mingle in its sunny beer garden, and take a tour of the *USS Potomac*, Franklin D. Roosevelt's presidential yacht (the "floating White House"). Jack London Square is a lively spot any day or evening, but it's especially bustling during the weekly Sunday farmers market.

Tilden Park

The hills above Berkeley and Oakland are graced by a 20-mile string of East Bay Regional Parks, and their crown jewel is 2,000-acre Tilden. The park's huge array of activities caters to every kind of nature-loving urbanite: Families with young kids have fun feeding the pigs, chickens, and goats at the interactive Little Farm and riding Tilden's miniature steam train and hand-carved antique carousel. Plant lovers make a beeline for the beautifully landscaped botanic garden featuring 10 acres of California natives, including rare and endangered species. For swimmers and sun-worshippers, spring-fed Lake Anza has a sandy beach and warm water. For calorie-burners, the summit of Wildcat Peak is a solid workout. And for anyone who enjoys a lovely view, the paved Nimitz Way Trail travels to Inspiration Point. It's an easy walk to a spectacular ridgetop overlook—a fine spot to watch the sun set over San Francisco Bay.

Oakland Museum of CA

This fascinating museum provides a window into California's culture, its three floors documenting the state's art, history, and environment. In the Gallery of California Natural Sciences, wander through models of California's extraordinarily diverse ecosystems to learn about the Coachella Valley's palm trees, Yosemite's granite peaks and domes, and Point Reyes' nutrient-rich coastal waters. In the Gallery of California History, view exhibits dedicated to California's past, including Hollywood moviemaking, the Black Panthers, and the Gold Rush. In the Gallery of California Art, admire photographs by Dorothea Lange, Eadweard Muybridge, and Imogen Cunningham; sketches made by Gold Rush pioneers; and Barry McGee's vivid acrylic assemblages. Don't miss the rooftop sculpture garden with views of Oakland's Lake Merritt and the city beyond. On Friday nights, the museum buzzes with food trucks, dance performances, DJs, and late-night gallery hours (open 5 p.m. to 10 p.m.).

Claremont Club & Spa, a Fairmont Hotel

This posh 1915 hotel is the East Bay's gleaming white fairy-tale castle, a dreamy spot to hold your wedding or anniversary party, celebrate a romantic weekend, or savor luxurious spa treatments solo or with friends. Surrounded by the wooded Berkeley Hills, the Claremont is

perched high enough to enjoy lavish views of San Francisco Bay (for the best view, splurge on an upper-floor room). Three heated pools, 10 tennis courts, four on-site restaurants, a 20,000-square-foot fitness facility, and the luxurious Fairmont Spa at the Claremont are spread across 22 landscaped acres. Take a walk at Claremont Canyon Regional Preserve directly behind the hotel, then sit down to a house-crafted cocktail and regionally sourced cuisine on the bay-view patio at Limewood Bar & Restaurant.

Comal

Berkeley is considered the birthplace of ingredient-driven cuisine—thank you, Alice Waters—and that influence shows up at almost every eatery in town. Comal, an airy 170-seat restaurant in downtown, is a perfect example. Upscale south-of-the-border favorites—tamales, ceviche, fish tacos, and mezcal-drenched cocktails—are prepared with fresh, seasonal, local, sustainable ingredients. A lofty warehouse-style dining room with concrete walls and recycled-wood tables gives Comal's modern Mexican cuisine a chic, cosmopolitan accent, but the most popular seats are outdoors on the intimate back patio, where flames dance in the fire pits and servers push around margarita carts.

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Santa Cruz: 5 Amazing Things
Video - Full
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Image
Editorial

5 AMAZING THINGS TO DO IN SANTA CRUZ

With expansive beaches and some of the world's best off-shore breaks, Santa Cruz is famous for its high-stoke surf culture. But there's so much more to this laid-back strip of shoreline than wetsuits and short boards. A short drive from both San Jose and San Francisco, Santa Cruz makes for the perfect weekend getaway—although once you've had a taste of the area's eclectic charm and natural beauty, you may never want to leave.

Experience easygoing luxury at the Dream Inn

Staying near the beach is never a bad idea—and you can't get much closer than the Dream Inn. Built on the site of Jack O'Neill's first shop, this 1960s-era hotel sits just steps from Cowell Beach. The 165 rooms, all of which boast ocean views and private balconies or patios, are beachy-chic thanks to colorful, surf-inspired decor. Take a dip in the heated beachfront pool and listen to the crashing waves as you float in 85-degree water. Watch the sunset through picture windows at the on-site Jack O'Neill Restaurant, serving local seafood and farm-to-table fare.

Take an at-sea animal adventure

For a completely new perspective on Monterey Bay's marine life, rent a vessel from Venture Quest Kayaking and paddle out from shore. You'll float by sea lions sunning themselves on rocky outcroppings as pelicans swirl overhead. Watch for dolphin fins, frolicking otters, and seal heads bobbing up from the surf. Book a guided tour to explore the sea caves at Wilder Ranch State Park or get an up-close look at 50-foot-long gray whales during the migration season (March through May).

Get a sense of surfer history

Legend has it that surfing first arrived in the United States when a trio of traveling Hawaiian princes paddled out in Santa Cruz. The Santa Cruz Surfing Museum honors the city's cowabunga history with far-out artifacts, photographs, and plenty of old-school boards. After you've learned what Burt Landess first used for a board (hint: you can also iron on it), step outside to watch history come to life. Take a stroll around Lighthouse Point and you'll see dozens of daredevils shredding the break at Steamer Lane.

Get your kicks on a wooden roller coaster

Built in 1907 as the "Coney Island of the West," the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk is proof that a seaside amusement park never goes out of style. Feel the salty air whip through your hair on the stomach-flipping Double Shot or the Giant Dipper, a thundering wooden roller coaster with a 70-foot drop. Easy riders will love the Looff Carousel, which features real horse hair and a 342-pipe organ. Treat yourself to a classic carnival snack and try your luck at an arcade game before going for a stroll along the wharf.

Hike among the giants

Head north on California State Route 9 to explore a wildly different side of Santa Cruz County. A short 20-mile drive will take you from sandy beaches to shaded sequoia groves. Big Basin Redwoods State Park, located in Boulder Creek, offers easy access to these ancient giants. Take the 3.4-mile, out-and-back hike to Sempervirens Falls. Along the way, you'll see 300-foot-tall redwoods, Douglas fir, five-finger fern, and maybe even a banana slug or two, before reaching the straight-from-a-fairytale falls.

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GOLD COUNTRY

Gold Country Road Trip
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Image
Editorial

ROAD TRIP: CALIFORNIA'S HISTORIC HIGHWAY 49

Cruise along the Golden Chain Highway to discover gourmet eateries, classic inns, hilltop wineries, and all sorts of history

A road trip on historic Highway 49 doesn't simply take you from point A to point B—it also transports you to the past. Begin in Old Town Auburn with a stop at cozy Auburn Coffee Company for a chai latte or kombucha poured straight from the tap. If you're there on a Saturday, make sure to stop at the Foothill Farmers' Market, featuring local produce, flowers, and more. Then head to the Joss House Museum, a boardinghouse and school that served hardworking Chinese settlers during the Gold Rush.

Next, cruise south 18 miles to Coloma, where the South Fork of the American River runs through Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park. Here at Sutter's Mill in 1848, James Marshall spotted glittering flecks in the ground that changed the course of California's history. Try your hand at gold panning on the river's east bank, then stretch your legs with a hike up the monument trail past antique mining equipment.

Back on the road for 10 curving miles, you'll come to Placerville—affectionately called "Old Hangtown" for its Wild West–style of justice. Well-preserved Main Street boasts the town's oldest building, the rustic stone Fountain & Tallman Soda Works, built in 1852. Its two-foot-thick walls and underground rooms insulated the ice used for bottling soda water, which quenched the thirst of local miners. Now a museum run by the El Dorado County Historical Society, the building houses artifacts from Placerville's colorful past, including the original Soda Works carbonation machine.

Grab lunch under the stamped-tin ceiling at The Farm Table, a charcuterie and bistro serving artisanal house-cured meats and farm-fresh produce, then meander south on State Highway 49 to the heart of Amador Wine Country. Sip Rhone varietals in the barn-style tasting room at Plymouth's Helwig Winery, then take in the hilltop views, tour the wine caves, or attend a summer concert at the outdoor amphitheater.

Afterward, plan to arrive at Sutter Creek's elegant Hanford House Inn just in time for an evening glass of wine. Walk to downtown Sutter Creek for dinner, but keep it light—you'll want to conserve your appetite for breakfast at Element. Best bets? The Hanford House soppressata Benedict or challah French toast with a side of caramelized bacon.

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Calaveras Big Trees State Park
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Image
Editorial

5 AMAZING THINGS TO DO IN BIG SUR

The Gold Country area has rich prospecting history, cool outdoor adventures, and great wine

People travel from all over the world to marvel at the giant sequoia groves in Calaveras Big Trees State Park, where the tallest specimens top out at around 325 feet. While you're in the area, you'll want to experience all that Calaveras County offers, from gold mining history and wineries to caving adventures and whitewater rafting.

Stay the night at a Gold Rush-era hotel

Back in the day, the Murphys Historic Hotel & Lodge drew the likes of Mark Twain and Ulysses S. Grant when they visited the Gold Country. Now this 1856 hotel gives guests a taste of Mother Lode history in its vintage rooms and at a saloon where you can belly up to a bar that's more than 160 years old.

Get inside on a cave tour

How low can you go? On the Cave Walking Tour at Moaning Cavern Adventure Park, you'll descend 165 feet below the surface and into an underground world of delicate stalagmites and unique formations. For a different kind of adventure, race above the treetops for 1,500 feet along the park's twin ziplines.

Go rafting on a Sierra Nevada river

Paddle through granite gorges and eight rapids on a six-mile whitewater adventure with O.A.R.S.The unforgettable daylong trip along the North Fork of the Stanislaus River drops an

average of 70 feet per mile and is best for intermediate to advanced paddlers. After all that excitement, mellow out with walks through the giant sequoia groves in Calaveras Big Trees State Park.

Learn about the Gold Rush

Pan for gold and discover a mother lode of mining history at the Angels Camp Museum. The museum is famous for its impressive collection of beautifully restored carriages and wagons, as well as an exhibit on Mark Twain. The Angels Camp saloon reportedly inspired the literary icon to write the famous tale "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County."

Taste wines in the heart of Murphys

Thanks to Val du Vino Winery and Allégorie, you won't even have to leave Main Street in Murphysto find some of Calaveras County's finest wines. Stop by a restored 1920s barn to try Val Vino's varietals, such as its estate-grown Petite Sirah. At Allégorie, you'll find sparkling wines and small-batch Zinfandels and can browse through its gallery showcasing acclaimed artists.

Also, don't miss...

While you're in the area, catch a concert at a winery amphitheater—Ironstone Vineyards hosts a summer concert series that has featured artists such as Willie Nelson and Peter Frampton. Take a complimentary tour and taste wines before admiring the Gold Pocket, a remarkable 44-pound specimen of crystalline gold leaf in the winery's Heritage Museum.

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Sacramento: 5 Amazing Things
Video - Full
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Image
Editorial

5 AMAZING THINGS TO DO IN SACRAMENTO

California's vibrant capital city blends politics with high-minded eateries, innovative breweries, Gold Rush history, and ultra-modern hotels

Thanks to its proximity to the Sierra Nevada foothills' gold mines, the San Joaquin Valley's fertile soil, the American River, and San Francisco's bustling financial center, Sacramento was awarded the title of California state capital in 1854. The city has always been serious about government and agriculture, but in the past two decades, it's nurtured its cosmopolitan side. Artsy murals, third-wave coffee shops, hip music lounges, and ultramodern wine bars populate Sacramento's tree-shaded streets, and the city's cultural and culinary venues match those of California's bigger cities.

State Capitol

An elegant neoclassical structure with an imposing 128-foot dome, California's State Capitol building is an 1869 architectural stunner. On a free guided tour, visit the Senate Gallery and Assembly Room and glimpse how California's government works while you admire the details of this ornately crafted building, like the California poppy designs in the Italian mosaics on the second floor, and the cast-iron grizzly bears baring their teeth on the rotunda ceiling. There's a lot to see, but don't miss the portraits of California's governors, including Arnold Schwarzenegger and Ronald Reagan, and save time to tour the grounds. Surrounding the gleaming building is Capitol Park, a grassy expanse with historic rose gardens featuring more than 140 varieties, carefully tended camellia gardens (Sacramento calls itself "the camellia capital of the world"), bronze statues honoring California's veterans, and squirrels hoping your pockets are filled with peanuts.

Old Sacramento

Step back in time—about 170 years—with a stroll along Old Sacramento's wooden sidewalks. The cobblestone streets of the city's riverfront corridor look like a set from a Hollywood western, but these buildings are the real deal, many of them dating back to the 1849 Gold Rush. Located on Front Street between the I Street bridge and Tower Bridge over the Sacramento River, Old Sac's wooden Victorians house an eclectic collection of candy stores, souvenir shops, and museums. The Sacramento History Museum displays Gold Rush artifacts and offers underground tours and ghost tours of the historic district. Sacramento's legacy as the transcontinental railroad's western headquarters is documented at the California State Railroad Museum, home to 19 lavishly restored 1860s locomotives and dozens of railroad cars, from miniature-scale versions to full-size. At the Central Pacific Railroad passenger station, climb aboard a restored passenger train for a 45-minute ride along the river (April to September).

Canon

Get a taste of East Sacramento's foodie panache at Canon, an oasis of creative shared plates, craft cocktails, and bold global flavors. Everything is elevated here, from the dining room's soaring ceiling to the cutting-edge menu. Remember tater tots? Order them here, where chef Brad Cecchi employs 60-plus ingredients to create his mole-topped version. Many dishes are rooted in Mexican cuisine, but you'll also find Southeast Asian and North African influences. Locally grown vegetables—marinated sweet peppers, roasted baby carrots, blistered pole

beans—share the dinner limelight with king salmon and chicken drumsticks. The brunch menu delineates between sweet and salty dishes, with Bánh mi Crêpes, and Chicken & Potato Flautas starring on the salty side; Ricotta Pancakes on the sweet. Whatever you order, add on a sweet potato cinnamon roll (and remember, you're supposed to share).

Ruhstaller Tap Room

The Sacramento metropolitan area boasts more than 30 brew pubs, taprooms, and craft breweries, but in this beer-saturated city, Ruhstaller adds a sophisticated twist. To sample some of its 18 brews, you ring a doorbell and descend the stairs to a softly lit speakeasy, where a quirky-chic vibe is highlighted by recycled wood paneling, cozy couches, and brick walls lined with historic photos. Knock around the eight ball with your friends (the pool table is free), snack on peanuts, and sample Ruhstaller's 1881 red ale, made with hops grown only 15 miles away at the brewery's Dixon farm. The tap room bears the name of Gold Rush pioneer Captain Frank Ruhstaller, who helped to found the Sacramento-based Buffalo Brewery Co., a late 1800s brewery that was the largest west of the Mississippi.

The Sawyer by Kimpton

Swanky, modern, and lofty, The Sawyer is Sacramento's newest urban-elegant hotel, situated downtown next to the Golden1 Center and a few steps away from the Capitol Mall and K Street's Downtown Commons (DOCO). Check in here if you're headed to a Sacramento Kings game, but even if you're staying overnight on a business trip, take time to swim in the rooftop pool, savor a lamb burger or rib-eye steak at Echo & Rig Steakhouse, bowl a few lanes or throw some darts at Punch Bowl Social, or dance to the DJ's beats at Revival rooftop lounge. As with all Kimpton hotels, The Sawyer doles out a bounty of guest-centric amenities, like free loaner bikes, in-room spa services, pet-friendly rooms, and an evening wine hour in the lobby. For the best city view, book a room on an upper floor overlooking the Sacramento River and Old Sac's historic buildings.

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HIGH SIERRA

Lake Tahoe
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Image
Editorial

5 AMAZING THINGS TO DO IN LAKE TAHOE

Find year-round fun in Lake Tahoe, from summer waterskiing and kayaking to winter skiing and après nightlife

No matter the season, Lake Tahoe is a haven for outdoor adventure. The ski resorts are world-class, the water sports are epic, and the hiking and mountain-biking options are some of the best in the country. Discover the unique towns that surround the lake's crystal-blue water and explore as much as you can outside.

Get out on the water

Earn your water-sports diploma as you skim across Lake Tahoe's glassy surface on a kayak, a wakeboard, or water skis. For 30-plus years, the High Sierra Waterski School has been teaching people to safely drive powerboats and Jet Skis and navigate with human-powered kayaks, canoes, and paddleboards. Two locations, at Sunnyside and Homewood marinas, offer classes and rentals. Kayak rentals and tours are also available at Tahoe Adventure Company, Kayak Tahoe, and more.

Eat at Fifty Fifty Brewing Company

Fifty Fifty Brewing Company serves up inventive craft brews—pale ales, IPAs, porters, and an imperial stout aged in oak bourbon barrels—plus a hearty array of pub-style burgers, sandwiches, salads, and pizzas. Make your après-ski meet-up a progressive party by hitting a few more Truckee hot spots: Truckee Public House, Old Town Tap, and Moody's Bistro.

Stay at The Village at Squaw Valley

You can stay in the center of The Village at Squaw Valley's dining and shopping, in a comfy room with easy access to the slopes. Room sizes can accommodate big families and groups if needed, with suites and full kitchens available. In nearby Tahoe City, families love Granlibakken: It started as a sledding hill and ski jump in the 1920s, adding a lodge in the 1940s; today the 74-acre resort has a spa, a wide range of rooms and condo-style lodgings, and its historic warming hut.

A little farther north in Truckee, The Ritz-Carlton Lake Tahoe offers sweeping mountain views, ski-in/ski-out access to Northstar California's slopes, and a sumptuous 17,000-square-foot spa. Diners can watch the culinary magic happen in the open kitchen of Manzanita or sip a cocktail from the frozen ice rail in its earthy, dark-wood bar. In summer, take advantage of Northstar's mountain-bike park and nearby championship golf courses.

Bike the Truckee River Bike Trail

When the snow melts, Squaw Valley's to-do list heats up. An aerial tram soars 2,000 feet above the valley to an altitude of 8,200, where a lagoon-style pool lures swimmers and sunbathers with a summer-party atmosphere. Lace up roller skates and cruise around the outdoor rink, or hike on trails leading from the upper tram station to surrounding peaks. Down below in the valley, rent mountain bikes at Factory Bike and ride the Truckee River Bike Trail or miles of dirt trails in the surrounding forest.

Hike near Emerald Bay

From the drive-up overlook at Inspiration Point, it's easy to shoot dramatic photographs of Emerald Bay punctuated by rugged Fannette Island. But get a fresh perspective on this glorious stretch of blue by hiking the Rubicon Trail from Emerald Bay State Park, watching for bald eagles along the way. Or walk the wide Vikingsholm Trail downhill to the lakeshore and dip your toes into the cobalt water. At the bay's edge, tour Vikingsholm Castle, one of the finest examples of Scandinavian architecture in the United States; or rent a stand-up paddleboard and work your core as you explore the bay.

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Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks
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Image
Editorial

THINGS TO DO IN SEQUOIA & KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARKS

See the biggest tree in the world, climb to spectacular views, and go caving as you discover the best of Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks

Giant trees, deep canyons, and towering mountains: Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks encompass some of the most majestic sights not just in California, but anywhere in the world. Ranging a remarkable 13,100 feet in elevation, these adjoining parks are where you'll find the largest tree on the planet and 14,494-foot Mount Whitney—the highest peak in the Lower 48.

See the Sierra Nevada From a Lofty Overlook

In the park's northwest corner, drive along a narrow road from Grant Grove to a commanding perspective of the Sierra Nevada atop 7,520-foot Panoramic Point. A short, paved trail leads to this overlook, which lives up to its name with sweeping views of Kings Canyon and Hume Lake. For a longer trek, hike along a 2.5-mile trail from the point to the still-operational Park Ridge Fire Lookout.

Take a Drive Through a Fallen Giant

Back in the day, tunnels were cut into living giant sequoias and their cousins, coast redwoods, to create popular tourist attractions. These tunnels, however, weren't good for the trees, and the practice eventually fell out of favor. But in Sequoia National Park's Giant Forest, you can still drive through an opening in the Tunnel Log, the remains of a giant, 275-foot tree that tumbled down in 1937.

Sleep Under the Stars at the Lodgepole Campground

Nothing beats camping in a mountain forest, especially when you pitch your tent at Sequoia National Park's 214-site Lodgepole Campground. Not only is this campground at 6,700 feet beautiful, it's convenient too—just two miles from the Giant Forest. Keep it car-free by taking a free summer shuttle that stops in the campground. And learn more about the park during ranger programs at Lodgepole's amphitheater.

Behold the Largest Tree in the World

Yes, there are taller trees. But when measured by volume, the General Sherman Tree is the biggest on the planet: 275 feet tall and with a stout, 36-foot-diameter base. You truly have to see it to believe it, and the General Sherman is easily reached via a short paved trail in Giant Forest. To view more nearby giants, try the two-mile Congress Trail, which leads to the stately President Tree.

Go Deep Inside the Sierra Nevada at Crystal Cave

An amazing underworld awaits park visitors at Crystal Cave. You wouldn't think much could compare to the giant trees and spectacular mountain views. But on tours with the Sequoia Parks Conservancy, you'll enter subterranean chambers where delicate stalactites hang from the ceiling like stone icicles. For the ultimate adventure, crawl through narrow passages as you venture deep into the cavern on the Wild Cave Tour.

Climb to the Top of a Granite Dome

The majestic granite dome Moro Rock is Sequoia National Park's counterpart to Yosemite's iconic Half Dome. But while Half Dome demands a daunting 16-mile round trip, a more manageable 350-step stairway leads to Moro Rock's 6,725-foot apex. Once you've made it,

savor amazing views that stretch from the San Joaquin Valley to the snowcapped peaks of the Great Western Divide.
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Yosemite National Park
Video - Full
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Image
Editorial

THINGS TO DO IN YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Eight must-see sites at California's iconic park in the Sierra Nevada mountains

Known for its plunging waterfalls, giant sequoia trees, sheer granite cliffs, and more, you could easily spend weeks exploring Yosemite National Park. The park has a distinct appeal no matter what time of year—here, shoulder season simply means less people and a chance to see Yosemite's beauty from a different angle. Spring brings gushing waterfalls, summer allows for tackling all outdoor pursuits, fall boasts colorful trees and fewer crowds, and winter becomes a snowy wonderland for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

Getting around the park is made easier by the free Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System(YARTS), a public transit system that allows you to meander through the park car-free. Four routes connect to Yosemite from the gateway communities of Merced, Fresno, Mammoth Lakes, and Sonora (the latter three operate in summer only).
Plan ahead when you visit this storied destination to ensure the trip of a lifetime—here's a guide to get you started.

El Capitan

Towering 3,593 feet above the Yosemite Valley floor, El Capitan is the undisputed king of the granite monoliths and a mecca for daredevil rock climbers. Get a good look at the earth's largest single piece of granite from El Capitan Meadow. With a pair of binoculars, you can even watch the climbers inch their way up The Nose.

If you're new to granite crack climbing or traditional climbing, sign up for a class with Yosemite Mountaineering School and Guide Service in Half Dome Village. The beginners' "Welcome to the Rock" class will have you climbing and rappelling at heights of up to 60 feet on your first day. To learn more about Yosemite climbing, head over to the El Capitan Bridge and have a chat

with one of the Yosemite Climbing Rangers. The “Ask a Climber” program (11 a.m.–3 p.m. in summer) is a daily gathering of rangers, climbers, and curious onlookers.

Merced River Rafting

Give your adrenaline a day off as you float gently down the lazy Merced River. Lie on your back in an inflatable raft, trail your fingers in the water, and gaze up at Yosemite’s granite walls as you meander downstream. Rent equipment at Half Dome Village, drop your boat in the water, and wave hello to El Capitan as you pass. (A shuttle bus takes you back to the start so you can conserve your energy for other park activities.)

Tuolumne Meadows

Lace up your boots and wander easy trails along the Tuolumne River or more rugged paths to the summits of lofty domes and granite-backed alpine lakes. Sleep in a tent cabin, nosh on a burger from the Tuolumne Grill, or attend a poetry gathering at the log-walled Parsons Lodge. Time your trip to Tuolumne Meadows carefully—this 8,600-foot high country is accessible only from June to October.

Yosemite Falls

Upper, Lower, and Middle Yosemite Falls combined make up the highest waterfall in North America, topping out at a prodigious 2,425 feet. A challenging trail accesses the upper fall’s crest, but the base of the lower falls can be visited with an easy stroll. From April to June, wear rain gear—an icy spray drenches all who come near.

Half Dome

One of the West’s most photographed landmarks, Half Dome inspires awe from every angle. Hardcore hikers can trek to its summit (permits are required); everybody else can admire its sheared-off granite from afar. Check out the perspective from Mirror Lake at the base of the stone monolith or drive up to the Washburn Point overlook on Glacier Point Road.

Wawona Tunnel View

The vista from Tunnel View is one of Yosemite’s most iconic scenes, made famous by an Ansel Adams photograph. From the Wawona Tunnel’s eastern side, shoot your own postcard-panorama of Yosemite Valley, El Capitan, Half Dome, and Bridalveil Fall. Or hike the Pohono Trail uphill for an even bigger view where you can enjoy the scenery in relative solitude.

Majestic Yosemite Dining Hall

Grandeur rules at the Majestic Yosemite Hotel's dining room (formerly known as the Ahwahnee Hotel). Bounded by massive timbered walls, its 34-foot-high ceilings are dotted with dozens of wrought iron chandeliers. Enormous picture windows framed by heavy draperies let in views of Yosemite Valley. The dining room seats 400 people—and there's no bad seat in the house, especially at Sunday brunch.

Glacier Point

Glacier Point's 7,214-foot overlook provides an unforgettable vista of Yosemite Valley and the High Sierra crest. Stand at the stone walls and survey Vernal and Nevada Falls and the Merced River canyon, or walk inside the granite Geology Hut to peer out at Half Dome. Best time to visit? Sunrise or sunset, when Half Dome and its granite neighbors turn pink.

In partnership with Visit California

Yosemite Gateways: 5 Amazing Things

Video - Full

Video - 30sec Cut Down

Image

Editorial

5 AMAZING THINGS TO DO IN YOSEMITE'S GATEWAYS

Bookend your Yosemite trip with a stay in the park's gateway towns and discover elegant dining, adrenaline-fueled adventures, a vintage train excursion, and refreshing natural scenery

With its plunging waterfalls, alpine lakes, stark granite peaks, and verdant meadows, Yosemite National Park is a grand Sierra Nevada masterpiece. You might be in a hurry to get there, but don't miss these surprising, off-the-radar attractions in the gateway towns surrounding the park. On your next Yosemite trip, linger a while in Fish Camp, Mariposa, Oakhurst, or Groveland and discover these delightful gems.

Yosemite Mountain Sugar Pine Railroad

Yosemite visitors typically travel by car or by foot, but it's way cooler to ride in a vintage narrow-gauge steam train. The Yosemite Mountain Sugar Pine Railroad, just three miles beyond the park's southern entrance in Fish Camp, brings to life memories of long-gone logging camps with its narrow-gauge steam train "The Logger." Two beautifully restored steam

locomotives—one built in 1913 and the other in 1928—pull rail cars with tree-carved bench seats along four miles of track in Sierra National Forest's scenic woodlands. The narrated ride lasts about an hour and often includes a stop in the forest so riders can stroll and take photos. Keep on the lookout, though. On warm summer evenings, "masked bandits" on horseback stage mock train holdups, their six-shooters blazing.

Erna's Elderberry House

Try to look away from the elegant furniture and Old World paintings so you can peruse the 725-bottle wine list at Erna's Elderberry House, the in-house restaurant at Oakhurst's fabulous five-star hotel, Château du Sureau. Three lavishly furnished dining areas set the scene for a multi-course prix fixe dinner or decadent Sunday brunch, prepared with the freshest local, seasonal, and organic ingredients from nearby Central Valley farms. After one meal here, you'll be tempted to sign up for the chef's half-day or three-day cooking classes. Named for the elderberries growing on the estate's grounds, this haute-cuisine restaurant and adjoining inn were the vision of Austrian-born chef and interior designer Erna Kubin-Clanin. Since 2017, both are owned by hotelier Bernard Rosenson.

Yosemite Ziplines and Adventure Ranch

In Mariposa's pastoral, oak-covered hills, about 40 miles from Yosemite's Arch Rock/Highway 140 entrance, Yosemite Ziplines and Adventure Ranch serves up 30-mile-per-hour thrills. Book a spot on the two-hour tour, which includes a ride in a beefed-up Polaris Ranger to the top of the zipline course, followed by a soaring descent on six separate lines. First-timers have nothing to fear; you're provided with safety gear and taught how to zip by experienced guides. Anyone of any age can go zipping as long as they weigh between 60 and 250 pounds. If you're hankering for a triceps workout, spend an hour climbing around on the ropes course.

Rush Creek Lodge

Only a half-mile from Yosemite's Big Oak Flat entrance on Highway 120, Rush Creek Lodge's 143 woodsy-chic rooms offer a peaceful respite after a day of adventuring in the park. The lodge's restaurant and tavern serve mountain-style comfort food—burgers, steaks, and seafood—plus a wealth of vegetarian options. In summer, you can dine by the lodge's huge saltwater pool. There's plenty to do on the 20-acre property including table tennis, shuffleboard, board games, family movie nights, and fire pits for evening s'more roasting, but the lodge's biggest selling point is location—you can't get closer to the Big Oak Flat entrance without being inside the park. An easy, scenic drive leads to either Yosemite Valley or Tuolumne Meadows. If Rush Creek is booked during your travel dates, try its sister property, Evergreen Lodge, about 15 minutes farther north.

Rainbow Pool

Looking for the perfect spot to take your kids swimming in a crystal-clear stream? Head for Rainbow Pool, a 20-foot waterfall and swimming hole on the South Fork of the Tuolumne River, off Highway 120 between Groveland and Yosemite's Big Oak Flat entrance. In the days of

stagecoach travel, Rainbow Pool was the site of a toll bridge over the South Fork. The toll-keeper's cabin was perched on a rock promontory jutting out above the waterfall. Today, a paved path leads a few hundred feet down to the small beach edging Rainbow Pool. On every summer day, bold teenagers dive, jump, slide, and wade around the falls, while more cautious youngsters wade into the giant pool.

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Highway 395 Road Trip
Video - Full
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Image
Editorial

HIGHWAY 395 ROAD TRIP

Cruise through mind-boggling beauty on this desert-and-mountain drive

On the Sierra Nevada's eastern side, U.S. Highway 395 skirts the intersection of arid desert and alpine mountains, their chiseled summits soaring 10,000 feet above the sagebrush plains. Every turnoff shelters a wild wonder, so toss your head back and take it all in. This road trip visits some of the Sierra's most compelling sights—Mono Lake's tufa towers, Bodie's ghost town, Convict Lake's colorful lake basin, and the Alabama Hills' amazing arch—with some great food and drink stops along the way.

Explore Lone Pine

Start your trip in Lone Pine, where the Alabama Hills' whimsical maze of rounded boulders, golden-hued arches, and badland gullies frame a jaw-dropping view of the Sierra crest. This boldly contrasting landscape has been featured in hundreds of Hollywood westerns. Visit the Museum of Western Film History, then drive the Movie Road past famous film locations. Take a walk on the Arch Loop Trail to snap photos of 14,505-foot Mount Whitney, the highest peak in the contiguous United States, framed within the twisted span of Mobius Arch. Then hop back in the car and zoom up Lone Pine's Whitney Portal Road to the pavement's end. You don't need to summit Whitney to be wowed by the vista—there's plenty to see from your windshield. Stop in to the Whitney Portal Store and Hostel to pick up souvenirs, or hike a short stretch of the Whitney Portal National Recreation Trail.

Fuel up in Big Pine

You'll have worked up an appetite, so backtrack to US 395 and swoop in to the enclave of Big Pine. At Copper Top Barbecue, hungry diners share the outdoor seating area with a monster

grill and smoker. Order tri-tip, ribs, chicken, or pulled pork at the window, then stake your claim on a picnic bench and admire the turrets and towers of the Palisades crest.

Feel the awe at Convict Lake

Roll north through Bishop and pull in to Convict Lake. A sagebrush-covered shoreline and colorful sedimentary cliffs enclose the lake's deep, cobalt-blue waters, and 12,241-foot Mount Morrison towers above the scene. the trail circling the lake, fish for rainbow or brown trout, or rent a boat at the Convict Lake Resort marina.

Find your adventure in Mammoth Lakes

Push north to Mammoth Lakes, home to California's largest ski resort and a whole lot more. Drive the Lake Mary Road into the scenic Lakes Basin. Rent a bike and ride the paved Lakes Basin Bike Path, or go for a hike. From George Lake, a steep trail leads to Crystal Lake, which fills a granite bowl below 10,377-foot Crystal Crag. For dinner, hit up Mammoth Brewing Company, makers of award-winning craft beer since 1995. Since you're driving US 395, order the IPA 395, flavored with juniper and sage, and pair it with a burger or kale Caesar salad.

Recharge in June Lake

You've put on a lot of miles, so it's time for a little pampering—a cozy cabin with a king bed and whirlpool tub, a hot stone massage, and dinner at Eagle's Landing Restaurant overlooking Carson Peak. The Double Eagle Resort and Spa has all that, plus a 60-foot indoor pool, fitness classes, and a guest house that sleeps 12.

Wander Mono Lake's shoreline

Rise early the next morning for a half-hour drive to Lee Vining and iconic Mono Lake, an ancient inland sea that's more than twice as salty as the ocean. From a distance, its 65-square-mile size dazzles, but move in closer for a better view. At Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve, walk a path that skirts past the lakeshore's knobby clusters of tufa formations—off-white mineral formations created when calcium-laden springs mix with the lake's carbonates. To learn more about Mono Lake, drop in at the Mono Basin Scenic Area Visitor Center perched on a hill north of town.

Visit the ghost town of Bodie

For your trip's last stop, roam 20 miles north from Lee Vining to the Bodie turnoff, then wind through desert hills to the West's largest unrestored ghost town. Bodie State Historic Park's deserted buildings were constructed in the 1850s when gold fever gripped the Sierra. Peer in their windows to see tables, chairs, bed frames, and calendars that were abruptly abandoned when the mining boom went bust. Take a tour of the 116-year-old Standard Mill, which crushed ore into gold, and walk through the town's fascinating graveyard.

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CENTRAL VALLEY

Central Valley Road Trip
Video - Full
Video - 30sec Cut Down
Image
Editorial

ROAD TRIP: THE CENTRAL VALLEY'S HIGHWAY 99

Take a drive along Highway 99 to experience honky-tonk culture, culinary delights, urban adventures, and more

Famous for its bountiful produce, quality wine, and country music, the Central Valley is California's heartland. It's also a place of endless discoveries, so head out on a 250-mile road trip along California Highway 99 between Bakersfield and Lodi. You'll find plenty of surprises, including premium ice cream in Bakersfield, Fresno's vibrant urban scene, and wine country fun in Lodi.

A cool hotel and gourmet ice cream let you chill in Bakersfield

Bakersfield is home to country music legend Buck Owens' Crystal Palace, a shrine to the Bakersfield sound that the Buckaroo helped pioneer alongside Merle Haggard. Stay at downtown's Padre Hotel, a contemporary boutique inn that originally opened in 1928. Prospect, the hotel's speakeasy-style bar, mixes perfect craft cocktails, and you can dine at the hotel's Belvedere Room, a modern steakhouse infused with the spirit of California cuisine. For something sweet, drive over to Moo Creamery for homemade ice cream with such premium ingredients as Tahitian vanilla and Callebaut Belgian chocolate.

Taste Central Valley flavors at Bravo Farms

If you're looking for snacks or a meal along the route, Bravo Farms offers two locations right off Highway 99. Bravo Farms Tulare in the Tulare Outlets has a restaurant that lets you create delicious salads, sandwiches, and pizzas just the way you want them. Tiny Traver (population around 700) is home to the old-fashioned Bravo Farms Traver, where kids can frolic in a seven-story treehouse, play miniature golf, and see an assortment of animals, including llamas. Meanwhile, Bravo Farms Traver's Vintage Cheese Company is more about grown-up pleasures, thanks to tastings of handcrafted artisanal cheeses and California wines.

Discover Fresno from the ground up at Forestiere Underground Gardens

Baldassare Forestiere was certainly persistent. For 40 years, the Sicilian immigrant dug and picked his way through the hardpan of Fresno to create Forestiere Underground Gardens, 10 acres of tunnels, grottoes, and chambers. Take a guided tour and discover a remarkable (and

cool) subterranean world, where fruit trees and grapevines grow 20 feet below street level. There's even a fishing pond and chapel.

Experience Fresno after dark in the Tower District

Hip and historic, Fresno's happening Tower District gets its name from a 1939 Art Deco theater whose neon-lit tower commands the neighborhood skyline. Now operating as the Tower Theatre for the Performing Arts, this landmark showcases everything from mariachi to metal, as well as comedy performances and musicals. The theater anchors a lively district filled with restaurants and music clubs. Try the Italian specialties at Oggi Cossi Si Mangia (winner of a People's Choice Award from the Fresno Bee). If you love craft beers, the bicycle-themed Spokeasy Public House pours a great selection and lets you play vintage arcade games while you sip.

Explore the surprising Lodi Wine Country

Everyone knows about the premium wines of Napa and Sonoma, but many are surprised to discover the outstanding wines produced in the Lodi Wine Country. Named the 2015 Wine Region of the Year by Wine Enthusiast magazine, the area is most famous for its Zinfandel but also grows more than 100 grape varieties. Visit leading Lodi wineries while staying at Wine & Roses, a hotel featuring sleek contemporary rooms. Rejuvenate with a treatment in the spa, then pair any of 70 Lodi wines with the tantalizing, regionally sourced dishes at the hotel's relaxed-yet-elegant Towne House Restaurant.

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5 Amazing Things To Do In Fresno

Video - Full

Video - 30sec Cut Down

Image

Editorial

5 AMAZING THINGS TO DO IN FRESNO

Explore surprising Fresno, from a historic underground garden to miles of blooming orchards

The biggest city in California's Central Valley region, Fresno blends urban sophistication with enduring agricultural traditions. You'll find such attractions as an innovative zoo, fine restaurants that source ingredients locally, and nearby farms where you can shop for the freshest—and tastiest—of seasonal produce. Here are five unique ways to discover the different sides of Fresno.

Explore Fresno Chaffee Zoo

If you've ever wanted to pet a stingray or feed a giraffe, the Fresno Chaffee Zoo is the place to get up close and personal with remarkable creatures from around the world. In the city's Roeding Park, the zoo has a number of naturalistic enclosures, including the 13-acre African Adventure, a great place to watch lions frolic on boulders and elephants rumble across a savanna-like expanse. Special Behind-the-Scenes Encounters show how zookeepers work with such animals as rhinos, giraffes, and sloths, and you can even participate in training sessions with seals and sea lions.

Visit Forestiere Underground Gardens

Get a look at Fresno from the ground up at Forestiere Underground Gardens, 10 acres of subterranean tunnels, grottoes, and yes, gardens, all painstakingly dug out by Sicilian immigrant Baldassare Forestiere during a 40-year period starting in 1906. With its handcrafted stone walls and graceful arches, the gardens resemble some ancient archaeological wonder that has been unearthed and restored. But this designated California state landmark is very much a living place, complete with productive fruit trees and grapevines.

Experience Fresno County Blossom Trail

For a few weeks every year from mid-February and into March, the farmland outside Fresno brightens with color as thousands of apple, stone fruit, and nut trees burst into bloom along the Fresno County Blossom Trail. The route travels between local farm towns and passes through a landscape transformed by countless pink and white flowers. And the drive smells every bit as good as it looks, especially on a stretch that loops through orange groves.

Enjoy Simonian Farms

A fifth-generation agricultural operation, Simonian Farms dates to 1901 and is where you'll find a huge assortment of locally grown nuts and dried fruits. Walk the aisles of its big red barn and you may just be overwhelmed by this cornucopia of such seasonal produce as nectarines, pomegranates, boysenberries, and peaches, as well as gourmet goods like jams and honeys. And everywhere you look, there are antiques and historic artifacts, including a vintage model steam train that travels overhead along 200 feet of track and a 1946 caboose.

Dine at The Annex Kitchen

The Annex Kitchen keeps things local and takes full advantage of the rich array of ingredients cultivated and raised on Central Valley farms. The stylish, contemporary restaurant specializes in rustic, regional Italian dishes, including handcrafted pastas like sweet corn agnolotti. There are also (of course) pizzas served fresh out of a wood-fired oven, and don't miss such wood-burning hearth specialties as ribeye with a porcini rub. A little thirsty? Take your pick of modern or classic craft cocktails as you raise a toast during a night on the town in Fresno.

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CENTRAL COAST

Big Sur
Video - Full
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Image
Editorial

5 AMAZING THINGS TO DO IN BIG SUR

Discover the ocean vistas, luxury inns, and eclectic vibe of this special California destination on the Central Coast

With cliffs plunging hundreds of feet down to rocky coves churning with foamy surf, it's no wonder that many people consider Big Sur the most dramatic stretch of coastline anywhere in the world. But along with its rugged natural beauty, Big Sur is a region with a long artistic history, as well as creative restaurants and unique resorts that let you immerse yourself in this world of fogs, redwood forests, and incomparable coastal views.

Posh meets rustic at the Post Ranch Inn

Commanding the cliffs 1,200 feet above the Pacific, Post Ranch Inn lets you escape from the outside world. Seclude yourself within modern, yet soulful rooms set in architecturally distinctive buildings that blend seamlessly into the natural setting. Marvel at the views as you soak in a stainless steel tub on your balcony, then keep warm by the wood-burning fireplace.

Drive the world's most awesome coastal highway

Edging the cliffs and twisting through stands of towering redwoods, California Highway 1 is Big Sur's main drag. Take your time, both to drive safely and for stops at overlooks, where you can watch tendrils of fog drifting into the redwood canyons. There's also good eating along the way: Stop at the Big Sur River Inn for breakfast classics such as carrot cake French toast, or Big Sur Bakery, where the dinner selection includes gourmet wood-fired pizza.

Catch the good vibes at Nepenthe

For lovers of Big Sur, no visit here is complete without a stop for shopping, dining, and the gorgeous setting at Nepenthe. Nepenthe founders Lolly and Bill Fassett hired Rowen Maiden, who studied with Frank Lloyd Wright, to build the landmark redwood and adobe structure you see today. Settle into a seat along the counter on the deck and behold one of Big Sur's definitive views as you bite into Nepenthe's iconic ambrosia burger. Then shop at The Phoenix Shop, where you'll find distinctive clothing and gorgeous jewelry crafted by leading designers.

Hike down to a secluded cove

Bear in mind that what goes down, must come up as you set out on the trail to Partington Cove. At about two miles roundtrip, it's a short trail but there's a nearly 300-foot climb back to the trailhead off Highway 1. The route winds its way down slope before you enter a long tunnel carved by Big Sur pioneer John Partington. Go through it and you'll emerge at the rocky cove, which was once used for shipping logs (and later to smuggle moonshine).

Dine along the edge of the continent

Even if you don't stay at Post Ranch Inn, its restaurant Sierra Mar offers a taste of this amazing setting. Be sure to make reservations, then savor inventive prix fixe lunch and dinner selections (a favorite is the Wagyu short rib with stone-ground grits) while gazing out over the ocean through floor-to-ceiling windows. On some days, you'll literally be above the clouds when the fog rolls in.

Also, don't miss...

Big Sur's beauty and seclusion has long drawn a talented assortment of writers, artists, and musicians. Up and down Highway 1, you'll find galleries showcasing both leading regional and international painters and craftspeople. Honoring the legendary writer who settled in Big Sur, the Henry Miller Memorial Library hosts an eclectic concert series at its outdoor stage in a clearing surrounded by redwoods, while on Sunday afternoons, you can catch jazz, folk, and zydeco performances at the Big Sur River Inn.

High above the coast within a redwood forest, Ventana Big Sur connects you to the very best of this incomparable region. Soak in a Japanese-style bath and dine at The Sur House, which specializes in locally sourced coastal cuisine and boasts a thoughtfully curated selection of 10,000 Central Coast wines. For a full detox, head to the Esalen Institute, where you can soak in hot springs, relax with a massage, and take up to 600 courses—ranging from Brazilian dance to yoga to mindfulness—all with a backdrop of 27 acres of California coastline.

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Monterey
Video - Full
Video - 30sec Cut Down
Image
Editorial

5 AMAZING THINGS TO DO IN MONTEREY

You'll find plenty of adventure in this charming Central Coast town—including one epic aquarium

Set along the curving sweep of its namesake bay, Monterey is a community in touch with both the natural world and the tides of history. On Cannery Row, you'll find luxurious waterfront hotels and can spend the day at Monterey Bay Aquarium, which gives you close-up looks at the bay's remarkable marine life. And just a short distance from town, some of the world's finest golf courses await in Pebble Beach.

Stay along the bay at a posh Cannery Row hotel

Both contemporary and classic, the InterContinental The Clement Monterey hotel gives you a front-row seat to the beauty of Monterey Bay. Step out onto your balcony and scan the waters for harbor seals and sea otters, and even the occasional whale farther offshore. At night, nothing beats a drink by one of the fire pits in the hotel's Pacific Courtyard. Or enjoy bay views as you dine on such favorites as the day scallops at the hotel's acclaimed the C restaurant + bar.

Play a round in California's Kingdom of Golf

Considering this legendary course has hosted five U.S. Open championships (with a sixth forthcoming in 2019) and its Par 5 18th along Carmel Bay is frequently named the most dramatic finishing hole in golf, Pebble Beach Golf Links is hardly lacking for recognition. But when legend Jack Nicklaus declares, "If I only had one more round to play, I would choose to play it at Pebble Beach," then you know for sure that this Monterey Peninsula course is one for your bucket list.

Discover what's beneath the surface at the Monterey Bay Aquarium

Monterey Bay Aquarium takes you into the remarkable undersea world waiting just offshore Cannery Row—all without getting your feet wet. You'll see brilliantly colored jellyfish that resemble some kind of alien life form as they gracefully glide through the water. Go nose-to-nose with adorable sea otters, and catch glimpses of leopard sharks and schools of sardine swimming through the kelp forest exhibit. With 28-foot windows, it's one of the world's tallest aquariums.

Dine at a celebrated Monterey restaurant

For more than 20 years, Montrio Bistro has served up its seasonal and sustainable cuisine in an old firehouse building that dates back to 1910. The restaurant takes full advantage of Monterey County's bounty of locally sourced seafood and organic produce, while its art-filled, brick-walled interior makes it a perfect destination for a night out. Start with a craft cocktail, then work your way through a menu that includes such favorites as the Cabernet-braised boneless beef short rib and a king salmon with citrus risotto.

Explore the waterfront from Cannery Row to Old Fisherman's Wharf

Cannery Row has come a long way since the days when famed novelist John Steinbeck called it "a poem, a stink, a grating noise." Its sardine industry is long gone and now this tourist hub is filled with restaurants, boutiques, and tasting rooms pouring Monterey County wines. Take a

stroll down Cannery Row and you'll still see remnants of old cannery buildings as you walk toward Old Fisherman's Wharf, the historic pier that juts into Monterey Bay. Set out on a whale-watching or fishing trip, and don't miss the clam chowder at the wharf's many seafood restaurants.

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Santa Maria Valley
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Image
Editorial

5 AMAZING THINGS TO DO IN SANTA MARIA VALLEY

Head to northern Santa Barbara County to enjoy wine tasting, golf, and that famous barbecue

A perfect stop roughly midway between the Bay Area and Los Angeles, the Santa Maria Valley blends its historic ranching and farming traditions with an ever-growing reputation as one of California's top wine regions. Come to this northern Santa Barbara County region for succulent Santa Maria–style barbecue and tastings of premium wines along the Santa Maria Valley Wine Trail.

Step back into the past at La Purisima Mission

California history comes alive at La Purisima Mission State Historic Park outside of nearby Lompoc. The most fully restored of the state's missions, La Purisima takes you inside buildings with rustic beamed ceilings and sacred art that dates to the early 19th century. Hike trails that explore the park's nearly 2,000 acres, a landscape little changed over the centuries.

Tee off at a top golf course

Called "a total hidden gem" and honored as one of America's 50 Toughest Golf Courses by Golf Digest, La Purisima Golf Course near Lompoc is as challenging as it is beautiful. Play among the oaks on this hilly, wine country course as you test your game on the 18 holes designed by acclaimed golf course architect Robert Muir Graves.

Find that perfect something at a huge antiques mall

With more than 35 leading dealers, Deja Vu Antiques Mall in Old Orcutt lets you search for everything from traditional furniture to mid-century modern designs. Wander among the dealers displaying their wares in a cavernous loading-dock structure built in 1906. You never know what you'll find while browsing through collections that include vintage clothing, classic lunch boxes, and fine china.

Bite into a perfect steak at Far Western Tavern

Delicately seasoned and slow-grilled over red oak, there's nothing like a steak barbecued Santa Maria–style. For more than five decades, the Far Western Tavern has been the place to go for this Central Coast delicacy. Order up a rib eye or the tri-tip while enjoying western art, stained glass, and other decorative details brought over to the tavern's Old Orcutt location from the original restaurant in Guadalupe.

Visit a dramatic, contemporary winery

Strikingly modern with a V-shaped roofline, Presqu'ile Winery is as surprising as its distinctive name (pronounced press-KEEL, it's Creole for "almost an island"). Visit this breezy spot overlooking the Santa Maria Valley and you can sample the winery's celebrated Pinot Noirs and Chardonnays in a light-filled tasting room constructed of beautiful woods with walls of handlaid local stone. Check the winery's events calendar and sip a Syrah while watching a live outdoor concert.

Also, don't miss…

To experience the best of the local wine scene, follow the Santa Maria Valley Wine Trail, which leads to 15 area wineries. Take a ride on the Wine Trolley, which on Saturdays and Sundays makes a 75-minute circuit through the valley to reach both leading wineries and foodie destinations in the area. Speaking of food, you'll want to pair some of that great local wine with a big plate of Santa Maria–style barbecue at valley restaurants that specialize in this regional tradition.

In partnership with Visit California

Highway 1 Road Trip
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Image
Editorial

CALIFORNIA'S HIGHWAY ONE ROAD TRIP

Drive the Coast Highway to Ragged Point to discover artsy towns, unique lodgings, and California's iconic castle

In a mere 60 miles, this Highway 1 road trip delivers wonderful diversions and outrageous beauty along California's Central Coast, from an eclectic hotel to stunning views of a rugged coastline.

Marvel at the Madonna Inn

Start with an over-the-top overnight in one of 110 extravagant theme rooms at San Luis Obispo's Madonna Inn. Choose a décor to suit your inclinations—perhaps Daisy Mae, Antique Cars, Caveman, or Jungle Rock? In the morning, grab a red leather seat at the Copper Café and fuel up with eggs and coffee, then meander through downtown San Luis Obispo. Browse the red-tile-roofed courtyards of this laid-back college town and get a taste of the "SLO life" at the famous Thursday farmers' market.

Explore a sleepy beach town

Heading north, Morro Bay and its wildlife-rich estuary are part of a federally protected nature preserve. Get eye-to-eye with coastal birds, seals, sea lions, and even whales on a paddle trip with Kayak Horizons. Gaze at the marvel of Morro Rock, an extinct volcanic peak that rises 576 feet above the bay. Watch pelicans dive headfirst into the bay while you eat local oysters at Tognazzini's Dockside Restaurant.

Stroll around artsy Cambria en route to Hearst

Nearby Cambria offers dozens of galleries and come-hither shops tucked in among coastal pines. Stroll along Main Street and stop in at Linn's Restaurant for homemade olallieberry pie. Just north of Cambria lies Hearst Castle, where media magnate William Randolph Hearst built a castle and filled it to overflowing with treasures from around the globe, including fine European tapestries, Norman fireplaces, Spanish choir stalls, and ornately carved ceilings. Several different guided tours are offered. Start with the Grand Room Tour that visits the movie theater, billiards room, Neptune pool, and gardens of the 115-room main house.

Visit the gateway to Big Sur

North of Hearst Castle, the coastal terrain becomes steeper and more rugged. Unplug from the world in the tiny hamlet of Harmony, population 18. Sample the Chardonnay at Harmony Cellars and nearby wineries. Take a short hike to Salmon Creek Falls. Spend the night at the Ragged Point Inn, where rooms overlook the dramatic cliffs and rock outcrops of the southern Big Sur coast.

In partnership with Visit California

Channel Islands
Video - Full
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Image
Editorial

HOW TO EXPLORE THE CHANNEL ISLANDS

Spend a day—or a week—in this idyllic national park off the Central Coast

This chain of five islands—Santa Cruz, Anacapa, Santa Rosa, Santa Barbara, and San Miguel—is rich with untouched natural beauty and a California destination worthy of your consideration. Whether you have half a day or more than a week to experience Channel Islands National Park, here are some of the best ways to explore the islands—by kayak, yacht, or just by foot.

Embrace the Journey Itself

Just getting to the national park is a scenic experience—one to three hours by boat, or about half an hour by plane. Most boat trips depart from Ventura Harbor (home to the national park's visitors center) via operator Island Packers, and the majority go to the two closest islands, Santa Cruz and Anacapa. You can also reach the islands from Santa Barbara, by way of a Santa Barbara Sailing yacht, helmed by a U.S. Coast Guard captain. On the way from either city, you might spot frolicking whales, dolphins, or even flying fish.

Paddle a Kayak

Exploring the Channel Islands by kayak is the best way to see the islands' wealth of sea caves and kelp forests up close. Book a kayaking trip with Santa Barbara Adventure Company—the main outfitter for activities on the Channel Islands—which includes your ferry ride from Ventura, kayaking gear, and a guide. Paddling time lasts from 90 minutes to a full day, and tours focus on areas like the 100-foot-wide Painted Cave, one of the largest sea caves in the world.

Hike and Look for Wildlife

Each island offers its own scenic hikes, with pristine views and opportunities to see wildlife and birds. Santa Cruz Island has some 15 trails, Anacapa has a nice hike to a lighthouse (one of the few structures you'll see around here), and Santa Rosa Island has Lobo Canyon, with sandstone formations, pygmy mammoth fossils, and a good chance of seeing local island foxes.

Go Whale-Watching

Depending on the time of year, several species of whales can be spotted diving, breaching, and spouting around the islands. Take a whale-watching tour with Island Packers between

December and April to see gray whales on their annual migrations between the Bering Sea and Mexico, or come in summer to see humpbacks (and sometimes even giant blue whales) looking for a local buffet of krill. These tours don't land on the islands, so they're ideal if you only have part of a day.

Stay for Days

There's nary a hotel on the Channel Islands, but that doesn't mean you can't stay for a night or longer. Each island has a campground: the biggest are Scorpion Anchorage on Santa Cruz and Water Canyon Camp on Santa Rosa Island. For a full-service expedition, book a one- to 10-night trip with Santa Barbara Sailing, where you sleep on the boat and bring your own food (or let the crew cook for you) and spend your days stand-up paddleboarding, snorkeling, surfing, SCUBA diving, or just relaxing on a beach that you'll have to yourself.

Learn more about exploring the Channel Islands on the California Now Podcast.

In partnership with Visit California

Pinnacles National Park
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Image
Editorial

THINGS TO DO IN PINNACLES NATIONAL PARK

Mix a little adventure into your National Park experience with these five ideas

Pitch a tent at Pinnacles Campground

Peaceful, year-round camping can be found on the east side. (The park has east and west entrances that are not connected.) Reserve your spot and bring gear, or park your camper—RV sites are available. Each campsite has a picnic table and fire ring, and many are surrounded by oak trees, providing shade and privacy. Fall asleep under the stars and wake up to the sound of birds chirping and deer drinking from the waterway nearby.

Rock climb a towering spire on the west side
Chalk up, clip in, and climb on at one of the west side's many routes. At this end of the park, the rocks are higher, the routes are more challenging and the soft volcanic breccia is more flexible than typical granite—making it a better option for advanced climbers. Beginners can book a trip with a group like Adventure Out, which offers weekend adventures for all levels.

Bird-watch close to 200 different species

California condors are the park's signature bird. With a nine-foot wingspan and a completely bald head, the impressive creatures are difficult to miss. Bring your binoculars and stay on the lookout for these prehistoric-looking scavengers as well as nearly 200 other distinct species, including turkey vultures, hawks, golden eagles, and peregrine falcons.

Explore Bear Gulch Cave Trail

Get your Raiders of the Lost Ark on with this accessible-but-adventurous 1.5-mile hike. You'll feel like Indiana Jones as you walk through the trail's two separate caves. Insider tip: Take a flashlight to navigate the rocky, lightless paths.

Hike Moses Spring Trail

This mile-around, out-and-back hike takes visitors up 377 feet of elevation gain to Bear Gulch Reservoir. Sky-high volcanic structures line the trail, which includes some easy-to-navigate caves. The forgiving terrain and short distance make this a great choice for kids.

In partnership with Visit California

Santa Barbara: 5 Amazing Things
Video - Full
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Image
Editorial

5 AMAZING THINGS TO DO IN SANTA BARBARA

Blessed with grand architecture, near-perfect weather, and ocean-to-table eateries, this city earns its nickname as "the American Riviera"

Fronted by azure ocean waves and backed by the soaring Santa Ynez Mountains, Santa Barbara has been a favored getaway of Hollywood celebrities since the silent-movie era. In its cosmopolitan downtown, chic shops and edgy eateries are tucked between white stucco walls draped with bougainvillea that never seems to stop blooming. Planning a visit? A few days is never enough in this idyllic coastal paradise.

Visit Old Mission Santa Barbara

Santa Barbara's stately Spanish-Mediterranean architecture is adopted from the regal Santa Barbara Mission, one of 21 missions Spain built in the late 1700s to gain a foothold in what is now California. Santa Barbara's mission is one of the grandest, with a magnificent Moorish fountain, domed belfries, twin bell towers, heirloom rose gardens, and an abalone-encrusted

Chumash Indian altar. Since its founding in 1786, the altar light has never been extinguished. The mission is open daily; tour its whitewashed rooms and museum or attend Sunday mass.

Stay at the Four Seasons Resort The Biltmore

Echoing the mission's aesthetic is the Four Seasons Resort The Biltmore, a spectacular coastal property that wears the Spanish-Mediterranean style well. This vast-yet-intimate 1927 hotel shows off painstaking craftsmanship from adobe walls and wood-beamed ceilings to hand-made Mexican tiles and massive oak doors. Elegant archways, stairways, towers, fountains, and loggias are found throughout its tranquil 22 acres. Bougainvillea-draped paths thread through the grounds. As at all Four Seasons properties, guests have access to a long list of amenities—lighted tennis courts, a fitness center, a lavish spa, and full conference and business services—but you could easily just lounge poolside at the Coral Casino Beach and Cabana Club, or walk the brayed-tan sand at Butterfly Beach. Whatever you do, don't miss The Biltmore's lavish Sunday brunch.

Hike La Cumbre Peak

Santa Barbara's grandeur doesn't end with its architecture. There's wild natural beauty to be discovered in the Los Padres National Forest lands that hug the city. Dozens of hiking trails start on Santa Barbara's oak-lined northern edge, including the popular 10-mile round-trip to La Cumbre Peak. This challenging trail will test your cardiovascular fitness as you switchback uphill to Santa Barbara's highest summit (3,995 feet). You're well rewarded for your effort with sweeping views of the coastline and the Channel Islands.

Visit the Funk Zone

If climbing mountains sounds like too much of a workout, get in your 10,000 steps in Santa Barbara's Funk Zone. This once-neglected warehouse district by the Amtrak station contains a fun-and-funky collection of galleries, tasting rooms, breweries, boutiques, and sidewalk cafes. Try a handcrafted cocktail at Test Pilot tiki bar (ask for an umbrella in your drink), or a nitro milk stout at Topa Topa Brewing Company. Shop for vintage finds at The Blue Door, and check out the penny-covered wall and artisan pizzas at Lucky Penny. To see the city from on high, stop in at the Santa Barbara County Courthouse. El Mirador, the courthouse's 85-foot-tall clock tower, offers Instagram-worthy city views framed in its Spanish arches.

Enjoy Stearns Wharf & Santa Barbara Harbor

Kids and kids-at-heart will love strolling along Stearns Wharf, the West Coast's oldest continuously operating wharf (built in 1872). Walk its 2,300-foot-long wooden expanse and pop into stalls and shops selling seafood chowder and beachy souvenirs. The Santa Barbara Harbor is a 15-minute walk away (or get there faster on the water taxi). Visit the Maritime Museum Store to shop for nautical gifts, wander past tidy rows of yachts and sailboats, dine at one of a half-dozen seafood restaurants, or finish out a perfect Santa Barbara day with a sunset cruise on the Double Dolphin, Santa Barbara Sailing Center's colorful catamaran.

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LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Beverly Hills
Video - Full
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Image
Editorial

5 AMAZING THINGS TO DO IN BEVERLY HILLS

This iconic destination delivers on the promise of glamour, luxury, amazing shopping, and even celebrity spotting
Think of the lifestyles of the rich and famous and chances are that Beverly Hills will come to mind. But you don't need to be a movie star to live like one in this fabled celebrity haunt. Just splurge a little and try these five ways to experience Beverly Hills at its most fabulous.

Stay at the Four Seasons Los Angeles at Beverly Hills

A hub for awards season, the low-key and luxe Four Seasons Los Angeles at Beverly Hills is a favorite celeb retreat. Take in city views from the fourth-floor swimming pool, where you can also relax with a deep-tissue massage in a private cabana. In the evening, see-and-be-seen while sipping a handcrafted cocktail on the patio at the Windows Lounge.

Shop on Rodeo Drive

It doesn't get more glam than Rodeo Drive, Beverly Hills' world-famous shopping destination. Even if you don't plan on picking up that special little something at the flagship stores for such brands as Hermès, Cartier, and Louis Vuitton, a stroll along Rodeo Drive is an absolute must. Just off the drive, dine alfresco at 208 Rodeo overlooking the cobblestone streets of Two Rodeo, a European-style shopping lane.

Get pampered at the Tomoko Spa

Bliss out at the Japanese-style Tomoko Spa, a haven for A-listers looking to rejuvenate both mind and spirit. The soothing Zen interior and such treatments as the Iro Iro Massage, which combines Japanese, Thai, and Chinese traditions, led Forbes.com to conclude, "There are some spa experiences so unforgettable, it's hard to imagine having a better experience elsewhere."

Savor an unforgettable meal at Spago Beverly Hills

For the ultimate in upscale dining, make a reservation at Spago Beverly Hills, the flagship of celebrity chef Wolfgang Puck's restaurant empire. Indulge in the multicourse California Tasting Menu and let the sommelier guide you through a remarkable collection of top wines from around the state, as well as selections curated from the world's leading wine regions.

Catch a show at the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts
In an extraordinary contemporary facility that seamlessly combines the landmark 1933 Beverly Hills Post Office and state-of-the-art performance spaces, the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts hosts a diverse lineup of music, dance, and plays. Performers here have included the likes of Tony Award winners Audra McDonald and Patti LuPone. And on a beautiful Southern California night, nothing beats spending intermission outside in the Jamie Tisch Sculpture Garden.

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Hollywood
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Image
Editorial

5 AMAZING THINGS TO DO IN HOLLYWOOD

From the Walk of Fame to behind-the-scene tours, Hollywood is a true bucket-list destination

As the capital of the global entertainment industry, Hollywood is both a state of mind and a very real place. Spend some time here to see reminders of movie legends both past and present, while also discovering a vibrant, contemporary urban district that has undergone a dramatic revival in recent years.

Stay at the hotel that hosted the first Academy Awards ceremony

Back in 1929 at the Hollywood Roosevelt hotel, the silent film epic Wings was named Best Picture during the inaugural Academy Awards ceremonies. Stay the night at this beautifully restored boutique hotel, where such icons as Marilyn Monroe once slept. Let the masterful mixologists at The Spare Room (where you can channel your inner Lebowski on two bowling lanes) prepare the perfect craft cocktail.

Find your favorites on the Hollywood Walk of Fame

As you walk through Hollywood, you might just find yourself spending a surprising amount of time looking down. That's because the Hollywood Walk of Fame immortalizes the entertainment industry's biggest celebs with distinctive five-pointed terrazzo-and-brass stars embedded in the sidewalks of Hollywood Boulevard and Vine Street. Recent honorees include Jennifer Lawrence and Hamilton creator Lin-Manuel Miranda.

Go behind the scenes at Universal Studios Hollywood

Learn the secrets of moviemaking magic and look King Kong straight in the eye as you visit a working back lot during the world-famous studio tour at Universal Studios Hollywood. For an even closer look, the VIP Experience will take you inside soundstages and the prop room. Then grab your broom and take to the skies over Hogwarts on the thrilling Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey ride.

Stroll Hollywood Boulevard

In addition to the Hollywood Walk of Fame, the famous Hollywood Boulevard is also where you'll find iconic museums, theaters, and attractions. Visit Hollywood & Highland, home to the Dolby Theatre (where the Academy Awards ceremony is held) and the TCL Chinese Theatres as well as super-premium retailers like Louis Vuitton and the trendy OHM Nightclub.

Also, don't miss…

Whether you're into classical or rock or something in between, nothing beats a concert beneath the stars at the Hollywood Bowl. Everyone from the Beatles to Lady Gaga have performed here, and you can feel the history all around. Get out early for a picnic dinner, and look into the free museum, which celebrates the Hollywood Bowl's unique place in musical history.

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Griffith Park
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Image
Editorial

5 AMAZING THINGS TO DO IN GRIFFITH PARK

Discover astronomical wonders, the history of the American West, and an antique carousel at the largest municipal park in the country

Griffith Park spans more than 4,300 scenic acres, making it the largest municipal park in the country. The range of available activities is sizable too, including everything from ogling elephants at the Los Angeles Zoo to hearing top-flight musicians perform at the open-air Greek Theatre. Here are five compelling ways to spend a day in the park.

Hike along pristine, scenic trails

Escape the city on your own or with a knowledgeable guide on 53 miles of hiking trails that lace Griffith Park's remarkably unspoiled terrain. Follow well-marked paths through the lush, fern-filled glen at Fern Dell, amble through an urban wilderness to Bronson Caves (the Bat Cave

in the 1960s Batman TV series), or trek to the Griffith Observatory. Afterward, grab an avocado sandwich and Stumptown Coffee at the Trails Café.

Discover the wonders within the Griffith Observatory

A Los Angeles landmark since 1935, this formidable Art Deco–style building houses a triple-beam solar telescope and a twin refracting Zeiss telescope, both for public use. (Perhaps you remember the facility's star turn in the film La La Land.) Its outdoor deck provides an awesome view of the L.A. basin and its mountains-to-sea environs. Visit the astronomy exhibits in the Hall of Science or be awed by the stars at Samuel Oschin Planetarium, which boasts one of the largest planetarium domes in the world.

Transport yourself back to the Wild, Wild West

Learn the truth about the shootout at the OK Corral at The Autry Museum of the American West, a beloved museum Gene "The Singing Cowboy" Autry helped launch in 1988. Eight galleries explore the mythic history of the American West through collections of buckskin jackets, branding irons, saddle blankets, barbed wire, Native American baskets, and Frederic Remington sculptures. The museum store is a winner for gift-givers.

Hop on a horse and hit the trails

Let Trigger or Flicka do the walking for you at Sunset Ranch Hollywood. Daily horseback rides include a one-hour excursion that delivers a close-up look at the world-famous Hollywood Sign plus grand views of the chaparral-covered hillsides sloping down to the metropolis below. Longer rides include a trek to the top of Mount Hollywood for a 360-degree Los Angeles vista.

Take a spin on the Griffith Park merry-go-round

This carousel inspired Walt Disney, whose daughters loved to climb atop the gilded horses. While they galloped on this 1926 Spillman merry-go-round, Disney imagined a much grander amusement park, which later became… well, you know. The carousel's 68 prancing steeds are jumpers, and a custom-built organ plays more than 1,500 marches and waltzes.

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Santa Monica
Video - Full
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Image
Editorial

5 AMAZING THINGS TO DO IN SANTA MONICA

See what has made this Los Angeles beach community so beloved

Over the years, Santa Monica has never lost its beach town soul, even as it has become more glamorous with luxury beachfront hotels, fine dining, and high-end boutiques. Today you can experience the best of both worlds: broad California beaches with surfing and volleyball, plus a sophisticated, city-within-a-city scene. On your next visit, try some of Santa Monica's ultimate experiences.

Wake up by the beach in a stylish hotel

If you've ever dreamed of your own beach cottage, it probably felt a bit like Shutters on the Beach. Effortlessly chic, this gray-shingled hotel's bright and breezy rooms are both relaxed and elegant, with balconies overlooking the expansive sands of Santa Monica's beach. Hang by the pool or rent a beach cruiser at the hotel, then set out on the bike path that stretches for 22 miles along the shore. Shutters is just one of many high-end resorts to choose from in Santa Monica; other fantastic options include Casa Del Mar, Fairmont Miramar Hotel & Bungalows, and the Viceroy Santa Monica.

Take a stroll along a historic pier

A lot of fun begins where Route 66 ends, on the landmark Santa Monica Pier. Its neon gateway sign is one of Southern California's most recognizable icons, and the pier, which opened in 1909, puts you out over the surf, with spectacular views up and down the coast. Go for a spin on the beautifully preserved 1922 Looff Hippodrome carousel and catch a glimpse of the world beneath the waves at the Santa Monica Pier Aquarium.

Enjoy old-school fun at Pacific Park

With its updated roller coasters and bumper cars, Pacific Park, on the Santa Monica Pier, brings the classic amusement park experience into a new era. The West Coast's only amusement park on a pier, Pacific Park has an arcade where you can fine-tune your skills at Whac-A-Mole or the Balloon Bust. Then take a ride and enjoy incredible coastal panoramas on the Pacific Wheel, the world's only solar-powered Ferris wheel.

Escape to a bungalow on the bluffs

Inspired by both Santa Monica's chilled-out vibe and the romance of a Baja California-style casita, The Bungalow is the beach life incarnate. With its raftered ceilings, funky furnishings, and game room, this hideaway on the grounds of the Fairmont Miramar Hotel & Bungalows is like a private beach club—as conceived by surfers. Hang out on the patio with a craft cocktail as you take in one of Santa Monica's unforgettable sunsets.

Browse the Third Street Promenade

With an all-star retail lineup that includes the likes of Lululemon, Abercrombie & Fitch, and a spectacular Apple Store, the open-air Third Street Promenade is a shoppers' paradise. Browse the stores as you walk this vehicle-free street, where street musicians serenade passersby and the fantastical topiary dinosaurs add a whimsical touch.

Also, don't miss…

Art lovers will definitely want to stop at the 26th Street Art Center, a onetime water-heater factory and warehouse complex that's now home to one of Southern California's leading collection of galleries. And for high-end fashions in a low-key setting, go to Montana Avenue, where you'll find cool boutiques, restaurants, and a good chance of spotting a few A-list celebrities.

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Venice Beach
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Image
Editorial

5 AMAZING THINGS TO DO IN VENICE BEACH

Explore quirky Venice Beach, from Muscle Beach to Abbot Kinney shopping and Tito's Tacos

This unique Los Angeles County beach town has sand, surf, and a lot of local color. No doubt, many consider Venice Beach to be the nerve center for Los Angeles' quirky, out-there personality. Check out our tips below on how to explore Venice Beach in five unique ways.

Stay in the Heart of Venice

To stay at the center of Venice Beach culture, book a room at Hotel Erwin, a retro-meets-surf-style boutique hotel with plenty of ocean-view rooms, a rooftop lounge, and a lobby decorated with surfboards. Or stay at the historic Venice Beach Suites & Hotel, with its exposed-brick walls, a cool antique elevator named "Betsy," and a rooftop deck with 360-degree views.

People-Watch at Muscle Beach

Venice is most famous, perhaps, for Muscle Beach, a stretch of sand accented with an outdoor gym that's a magnet for serious body-builders, cheerful exhibitionists, and plenty of gawkers. The surrounding area of beach also has play areas for kids, a skate park, a boxing ring, and of course, a "regular" beach, where you can relax in the sand and watch everyone else work up a sweat.

Get a Scenic Workout

Get a day pass for the gym at Muscle Beach for just $10, or rent a bike and pedal along Venice's long, beachside bike path (Hotel Erwin guests can just borrow a bike).

Eat Like a Local

Venice has attracted plenty of top-shelf places to eat, drink, or just nosh. Grab a table at restaurant and bar James' Beach—located a mere half block from the sand—known for its Angus burgers, movie-star mahi-mahi tacos (they were featured in the 2009 film I Love You, Man), and colorful people-watching.

Gourmands also flock to two restaurants launched by chef Travis Lett, which both start with a silent G: Gjusta is an acclaimed bakery and deli known for its decadent sandwiches while Gjelina draws consistent crowds for its inventive vegetable dishes, pizzas, and surprises like rabbit stroganoff. Nearby Zinqué, meanwhile, takes its inspiration from the French for its charcuterie plates, quiches, and chocolate croissants.

Another bucket-list stop for foodies is Tito's Tacos, an old-school taqueria located at the eastern edge of Venice. Founded in 1959 and still sporting an old sign out front, Tito's regularly makes national best-of lists for its unapologetically traditional tacos and burritos. The tacos are topped with shredded iceberg and grated cheddar, and the beef burritos are filled with chili con carne and best served with a Mexico-bottled, cane-sugar-fueled Pepsi.

Shop for Quirky Treasures

Between meals and workouts, wander Abbot Kinney Boulevard, named for the eccentric real estate investor who built Venice in the early 20th century to reflect his favorite Italian city. Come on the first Friday of the month for food trucks and live music but any day offers a mix of art galleries, clothing boutiques, and intriguing gift shops, like the low-key elegance at Cuyana, the British-made activewear at Sweaty Betty, and the scents at Strange Invisible Perfumes. Abbot Kinney also features some transplants that make for excellent snacks, from Chicago's Intelligentsia Coffee to Portland's Salt & Straw Ice Cream and Blue Star Donuts.

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West Hollywood: 5 Amazing Things
Video - Full
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Image
Editorial

5 AMAZING THINGS TO DO IN WEST HOLLYWOOD

Spend stylish time in WeHo's haute hangouts shopping for cutting-edge art, chic furnishings, and trendy fashions

Famous as a destination for the latest style and design trends, West Hollywood (or WeHo, if you're in the know) is a haute hangout contained within the much larger boundaries of Los Angeles County. Art-and-culture devotees love its central location near the Miracle Mile museum district and Melrose Avenue's upmarket shopping nexus. It's also a highly walkable city with a great live music scene.

Explore the Design District

Design fans find their happy place in the West Hollywood Design District. Stroll along Melrose Avenue, Robertson Boulevard, and Beverly Boulevard to drop in on more than 200 fashion boutiques and galleries. For the hottest shoes, shop Christian Louboutin. For luxury consignment jewelry, browse The RealReal. For modernist furniture, head to Blu Dot. Melrose Avenue is anchored by the shiny blue-glass Pacific Design Center (nicknamed the "Blue Whale" for its immense size and vivid hue). The multi-level structure is crammed with more than 120 design showrooms and high-end home galleries. If you're in the market for furnishings, fabrics, floor coverings, architectural products, wall coverings, or lighting, you've found the holy grail. Some showrooms are open to designers and architects only, but if you're not in the business (or not traveling with someone who is), contact Pacific Design Services in advance to request admission. The center's architecture, indoor art, and outdoor courtyards are also worth a look.

Browse Hamilton Selway

Across Melrose and closer to North San Vicente Boulevard, Hamilton Selway Gallery is one of the West Coast's largest purveyors of pop and contemporary art. Collectors around the world shop here for works by Andy Warhol, Keith Haring, Roy Lichtenstein, and Robert Longo. Even if you're not a buyer, visiting this gallery is like a museum trip. Kiss the afternoon good-bye while you stare at all the gorgeous colors and shapes.

Eat at EP & LP

Melrose's galleries and shops are mixed in with buzzy dining hotspots like fun-and-flirty EP & LP, where Australian master chef Louis Tikaram cooks up Asian-Fijian-Vietnamese-Chinese fusion. Popular dishes include kung pao chicken, vegetable curry, and a delectable mango pudding. EP & LP's rooftop bar is a West Hollywood standout—and rooftop bars are a thing here—with 6,000 square feet of dazzling city views, luxe daybeds, and warm fire pits. Try the signature cocktail, a zingy bourbon concoction called Where Love Lives.

Stay at the Mondrian Los Angeles

With so much to see and do, you'll need to stay overnight. The sleek Mondrian Los Angeles is a sought-after spot, with a minimalist lobby that looks straight out of *Architectural Digest* (picture 30-foot-tall mahogany doors and a Lucite indoor swing). Spacious guest rooms have city-view

balconies, glittering chandeliers, and rain shower baths. Dine on Italian seafood with a 360-degree city view at Ivory on Sunset. Hang out in the chic Skybar lounge overlooking the Mondrian's spectacular pool. On weekends, listen to deep house and electronic music played by cutting-edge DJs.

Play at Whisky a Go Go

While at the Mondrian, you're within walking distance of rock-and-roll history. Founded in 1964 and inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2006, the Sunset Strip's famous Whisky a Go Go is where Alice Cooper, The Doors, Van Halen, and KISS got their start. That wild era is long over, but you can still enjoy live music almost any night of the week at this 500-seat nightclub.

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Los Angeles Country Resorts
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Image
Editorial

4 FABULOUS RESORTS IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Enjoy lavish spas, world-class golf, over-the-top dining, and unparalleled style at these high-end hideaways

Need an indulgent escape? Luxury resorts in Los Angeles County offer the high-end pampering you want in a Southern California vacation. Each of these destinations offers a different take on L.A. style and scenery, plus posh accommodations, attentive service, and grand views. For your next "I-deserve-this" vacation, try one of these over-the-top sanctuaries.

The Langham Huntington

Make a date with opulence at Pasadena's historic country-club-style hotel, where Spanish Revival bungalows and a glorious Italianate main building anchor a 23-acre property of manicured rose gardens and lush citrus trees. This is Southern California's version of old-world luxury, with public areas and grand ballrooms marked by glittering chandeliers and luster-polished marble floors. Tradition is honored at The Langham, but not in a stuffy way. Railroad magnate Henry Huntington opened the original hotel in 1914, and ever since a bell is rung every evening precisely at 7:05 pm to salute the dinner hour. But you can dine almost any time you like at The Terrace (California bistro cuisine and indoor-outdoor seating) or The Royce (chic wood-fired steakhouse serving wagyu and kobe beef).

This timeless resort has plenty of new-school mixed in with the old, include a thoroughly modern health club and live music at The Tap Room bar on weekends. Even The Langham's afternoon tea service (served on Wedgwood china, of course) leans more toward fun than prim-and-proper. There's plenty to do here: Wander the palm-tree-framed grounds, play a little croquet or badminton in the Horseshoe Garden, swim in the elongated pool, get a stone therapy massage at best-in-class Chuan Spa, or just stroll the zen-like Japanese garden and let the outside world disappear.

Terranea

Endless Pacific waves provide the backdrop for this sprawling 582-room hotel surrounded by a pristine nature preserve in Rancho Palos Verdes. Walk along clifftop paths for jaw-dropping vistas of the ocean and Catalina Island. Or just pick a seat at one of 200-plus outdoor fire pits and fireplaces dotted around the property and soak in the coastal scenery.

Terranea's lavishness doesn't end with its cinematic vistas. The resort has four pools, including an adults-only infinity pool and a splashy kids' pool with a 140-foot waterslide; tennis courts; a links-style oceanfront golf course; and the world-class Spa at Terranea, a 50,000-square-foot sanctuary offering every type of treatment you can dream up. Eight eateries range from upscale beachfront shack to artisan coffee shop, plus fine dining at Mar'Sel and contemporary Asian cuisine at Bashi. Guests are lodged in ocean-view rooms, two-bedroom villas, and spacious casitas. Choose from an array of workshops and programs from nature walks to photography classes to culinary programs led by the resort's chefs.

Mr. C Hotel

Cater to your inner jet-setter with a stay at this swanky high-rise straddling the border between Beverly Hills and West L.A. Combining modern L.A. style with Italian glamour, this 12-story hotel features 138 rooms with private balconies overlooking the hubbub of Los Angeles. The higher the floor, the more mind-boggling the view, but there's plenty to see even on the ground floor. Designer Michael Smith masterminded the hotel's chic lobby, furnishing it with custom-made Italian leather couches, lavish chandeliers, and a clear glass pool table. When you walk in, you don't see a check-in desk—it's discreetly hidden behind a sunken bar. A book-filled library and lush courtyard garden create nooks where guests can find private spaces. Sleek cabanas lend mystique to the buzzy outdoor pool scene. Even if you're not a celebrity, you'll feel like one as you lounge with a cocktail in hand.

The food alone is reason to visit. Owned by restaurant and hospitality entrepreneurs Ignazio and Maggio Cipriani, Mr. C hosts the world-class Italian eatery Cipriani, which consistently garners rave reviews. This location is one of a dozen worldwide that serves Cipriani's signature grilled meats, innovative artisan pizzas, and perfectly poured Bellini cocktails.

Hotel Casa del Mar

Located right on the beach in Santa Monica, this elegant A-list retreat can't be topped for blue-water ocean views and the Santa Monica Pier's colorful Ferris wheel twirling in the

distance. Constructed in 1926 as an exclusive beach club, Casa del Mar retains its Jazz Age sophistication with a vibrant Spanish-Moorish lobby and impeccable décor. Seventeen suites cater to guests seeking the posh life, but all 140 rooms are gussied up in luxurious Mediterranean style. Guests sprawl in chaise lounges and gaze at the Pacific Ocean from the expansive deck that surrounds the Palm Terrace Pool, or immerse themselves in pampering treatments at the eco-minded Sea Wellness Spa. The resort somehow manages to separate itself from the buzzy throng of Santa Monica, and yet the boardwalk, the Strand walking path, and Third Street Promenade are close by. The Catch seafood restaurant offers ocean-view dining, a sushi bar, and cabana-style seating in the adjacent Terrazza Lounge.

In partnership with Visit California

Universal Studios Hollywood: 5 Amazing Things
Video
Video - 30sec Cut Down
Image
Editorial

5 AMAZING THINGS TO DO AT UNIVERSAL STUDIOS HOLLYWOOD

Get swept up in cinematic magic at the world's largest working film and television studio and theme park

Covering more than 400 acres in the middle of Los Angeles, Universal Studios Hollywood gives you a behind-the-scenes peek into Hollywood's inner workings. You'll learn what makes the movies so thrilling—and so enchanting—as you immerse yourself in real-life and virtual film sets and take a seat for world-class action rides amped up with dizzying special effects.

Ride the Studio Tour

Start by taking the one-hour World Famous Studio Tour, constructed with creative advice from Stephen Spielberg. The tram tour gives you a peek at 13 blocks of back-lot movie and television show sets, plus some simulated thrills. Inside your tram car, your tour is video-hosted by comedian Jimmy Fallon. Cinema buffs will love seeing actual props and film characters like King Kong, Jaws, and dozens of dinosaurs. You'll cruise by the Bates Motel from the film *Psycho* and the set from the TV series *Desperate Housewives* (remember Wisteria Lane?). You'll experience movie-making virtual reality as you "survive" an earthquake, flash flood, and avalanche.

Explore the Wizarding World of Harry Potter

Next, step into The Wizarding World of Harry Potter, with a towering Hogwarts castle and all the classrooms, corridors, and passageways you know from the films. Watch a wand choose its owner at Ollivanders, and sample food fit for wizards in Hogsmeade Village. Buy chocolate frogs and peppermint toads at Honeydukes, or sip a mug of butterbeer or pumpkin juice at Three

Broomsticks, a fairy-tale tavern serving traditional British fare (bangers and mash and shepherd's pie). You might need a reality check after "flying" over Hogwarts on the Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey ride. (Ask your companions: "Did that just happen?"). Young kids will enjoy the not-too-scary Flight of the Hippogriff rollercoaster, which zooms around Hagrid's pumpkin patch.

Enjoy Jurassic World–The Ride

Watch a showdown between dinosaurs at Jurassic World–The Ride. This "sequel" to the park's Jurassic Park ride was created by some of the same folks behind the blockbuster movie series, including Steven Spielberg and *Jurassic World* director Colin Trevorrow. Board a 25-person boat and glide through various lands of dinosaurs, check out the video "warnings" from *Jurassic World* stars Chris Pratt and BD Wong, then watch an Indominus rex and T. rex battle it out—all before your raft takes an 84-foot water plunge. On your way out, let the kids dig for fossils in the play area or relax with some refreshments at the area's Isla Nu-Bar and Jurassic Café.

Survive AMC's Walking Dead Attraction

Revenge of the Mummy is touted as California's fastest indoor roller coaster, and thanks to high-tech robotics and advanced animatronics, it's undeniably scary. But even scarier is AMC's Walking Dead attraction. Imagine the most frightening haunted house you've ever visited, then multiply that by 100. Just try not to get infected by the undead as you navigate your way through the creepy hospital maze. (Warning: Expect to see a lot of simulated blood and gore. This is a zombie apocalypse, after all.)

Watch Waterworld Live Show

The 1995 Kevin Costner film *WaterWorld* may not have been a big box-office hit, but it makes a thrilling live outdoor show. You'll cheer on steampunk-garbed stuntmen and stuntwomen as they perform daredevil feats—diving into the water from impossibly high towers and racing around on jet skis. The stunning pyrotechnic effects in Waterworld will blow your mind. Even though anything is possible in Hollywood, it's still hard to believe your eyes when a flaming seaplane flies over the set and crashes with a big splash.

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ORANGE COUNTY

Orange County Beaches
Video - Full
Video - 30sec Cut Down
Image
Editorial

ORANGE COUNTY'S BEST BEACHES

Visit these four idyllic, sun-drenched stretches of sand in Southern California

With 42 miles of sandy coastline and a string of small, eclectic beach towns, Orange County delivers the quintessential Southern California experience. Sandwiched between San Diego to the south and Los Angeles to the north, "The OC" blends a casual, active lifestyle with laid-back sophistication. Catch a famous surf break, sunbathe, visit nearby family attractions, or shop near these top Orange County beaches, listed north to south.

Huntington City Beach, Huntington Beach

The flat, wide beaches and desirable breaks along Huntington Beach gave this town its "Surf City, USA" nickname in the 1950s when the Vans U.S. Open of Surfing first took place. Today, Huntington remains a wave-riding mecca and the most popular of the well-known beaches in the country—but surfing is not the only game in town.

Near the famous 1,850-foot Huntington Beach Pier, you'll see volleyball players spiking on the sand (the AVP Huntington Beach Open is held here), and runners, cyclists, and skateboarders taking advantage of the flat, paved 10-mile Ocean Strand. Wander to Main Street to find the latest in beach apparel or if hipster-chic boutiques and a gourmet food court are more your style, head to oceanfront shopping hub Pacific City, which opened in 2016.

The area offers a variety of ocean-view rooms, from classic resorts like the Hilton Waterfront Beach Resort and Hyatt Regency Huntington Beach Resort and Spa to the colorful and modern Kimpton Shorebreak Hotel and Paséa Hotel & Spa.

Corona Del Mar State Beach, Newport Beach

In addition to Newport Beach's pristine sandy beaches, the Orange County gem is known for its restaurants, nightlife, and waterfront shopping, including recently opened luxury destination Lido Marina Village. Newport also offers multiple off-shore activities like Hornblower's whale-watching and cocktail tours, as well as trips to the island town of Avalon via the Catalina Flyer.

One of the many appeals of Newport's beaches is that you can wind down next to a bonfire right on the sand. Fire rings are available on a first-come, first-served basis at Corona Del Mar State Beachand Balboa Pier during the beach hours of 6 a.m.–10 p.m.

For a convenient home base—with views of yachts outside your window—stay at the elegant Balboa Bay Resort off Pacific Coast Highway.

Victoria Beach, Laguna Beach

The allure of Victoria Beach lies in its natural beauty and isolated location. The Instagram-popularspot takes effort to find, but the payoff is significant: a nestled cove with a front-row seat to waves crashing against beautiful rock formations, a salt water pool, and a castle-like tower called "La Tour."

Victoria Beach is not easily accessible due to the lack of parking near the entrance on Victoria Street. (Note: Street parking on Pacific Coast Highway and nearby side streets is available, but very limited.) Get to the beach by descending a long stairway off Victoria Street, or you can walk down the emergency vehicle access ramp off Dumond Drive. Once you reach the shore, walk a bit north to find the concrete pool and tower. Time your visit to be there near high tide when the pools are most likely to fill up. And be careful as you make your way there—you may have to navigate over slippery rocks depending on conditions.

Enjoy a peaceful overnight stay at The Ranch at Laguna Beach, a secluded, sustainable-minded property that made it on National Geographic's exclusive list of Unique Lodges of the World.

Salt Creek Beach, Dana Point

If you're traveling with kids, Salt Creek Beach makes beach-going simple. There's plenty of available (paid) parking, lifeguards on site, a concessions stand, and a grassy area with picnic tables and a basketball court. Salt Creek is a popular boogie boarding and surfing spot, with a variety of breaks for every level (rent a surfboard or standup paddleboard from nearby Infinity Surfboards).

Want the best view of the beach below? Head to the bluff-top Ritz-Carlton Laguna Niguel, set 150 feet above the water. Watch the sunset from the balcony of 180BLU, the hotel's cocktail bar, with a specialty drink—like the Tequila Sangria—in hand.

For a unique vantage point of Dana Point's entire coastline, hop aboard the Spirit of Dana Point, a 118-foot replica of a 1770s private schooner that sails from the Ocean Institute, a marine science and maritime history center.

In addition to the Ritz-Carlton, you have your pick of gorgeous coastal properties throughout Dana Point. Monarch Beach Resort boasts a championship golf course and luxury spa, Laguna Cliffs Marriot Resort & Spa provides contemporary comforts and a family-friendly pool area,

and the DoubleTree Suites by Hilton Doheny Beach offers separate living spaces in their modern-meets-beachy suites.

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Orange County Resorts
Video - Full
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Image
Editorial

4 INCREDIBLE RESORTS IN ORANGE COUNTY

Enjoy unparalleled views, world-class golf, fine dining, and much more at these high-end destinations

With long stretches of golden sand, prime surfing spots, excellent dining, and top golf courses, the good life doesn't get much better than along the Orange County coast. That's especially true at its luxury resorts, where you can get pampered at lavish spas and marvel at colorful sunsets over the ocean.

Montage Laguna Beach

If you've ever dreamed of having your own beach house, it might look something like the art-filled, Craftsman-style Montage Laguna Beach. Elegant yet relaxed, the oceanfront resort is home to the Spa Montage Laguna Beach, where locally inspired treatments include the California Wildflower Massage and the Seaside Renewal body treatment. Afterward, indulge in a dry redwood sauna or soak in the spa's waterfall whirlpool.

The Resort at Pelican Hill

Newport Beach's Resort at Pelican Hill blends the romance of a Mediterranean villa with the best of the California coast. This is heaven on earth for golfers, with two courses created by master designer Tom Fazio, including the Ocean North Course, where all 18 holes have ocean views. Let the experts at the resort's Golf Academy help you work the kinks out of your game. But leave time to relax along the resort's Coliseum Pool, which is spectacularly decorated with more than a million hand-laid glass mosaic tiles.

Monarch Beach Resort

Live life in the moment at the Monarch Beach Resort in Dana Point, where you can rejuvenate at the California branch of the world-famous Miraval Life in Balance Spa. Meditation sessions help promote increased mindfulness, while fitness classes, including aerial yoga, will challenge

both body and mind. Hike along the ocean cliffs, and to find a different kind of balance, take a surfing class or stand-up paddleboard lesson.

The Ritz-Carlton Laguna Niguel

Commanding an oceanfront bluff overlooking a graceful stretch of coastline, The Ritz-Carlton Laguna Niguel lets you immerse yourself in California's beach lifestyle. Take in sweeping Pacific views as you work out in the fitness center. Spend the day surfing, or stretch out with a Pilates class in the shade of an oceanfront gazebo. And be sure to catch spectacular sunsets that light up the waves while you savor cocktails and small plates alongside a firepit on the balcony at 180blũ, a beach-casual restaurant.

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Anaheim: 5 Amazing Things
Video - Full
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Image
Editorial

5 AMAZING THINGS TO DO IN ANAHEIM

Find year-round fun in a city saturated with craft breweries, hip hangouts, a fabulous food hall, and much more

This dynamic Orange County hub is home to Disneyland Resort, the Los Angeles Angels baseball team, and the Anaheim Ducks hockey team—plus a whole lot more that may surprise you. If you haven't taken the time to explore Anaheim, you have multiple fun discoveries ahead.

Eat at the Packing District

Eating doesn't get much cooler than this. Just a few miles from Disneyland, three historic landmarks—a 1919 Sunkist orange packing house, a 1925 Packard car dealership, and a 1917 orange marmalade factory—got new leases on life in 2013 as the Anaheim Packing District. The airy renovated warehouse spaces now house Anaheim Brewery, Umami Burger, Unsung Brewing Company, Pali Wine Company, plus the Packing House Food Hall—more than 30 food stalls and restaurants selling everything you could ever want to eat. There's grilled cheese, ramen, Cajun seafood, soul food, organic curry, dim sum, Japanese crepes, gelato on a stick, and plenty more. The warehouse décor is as hip as the food. Air plants suspended on dangling ropes drape from the open-beamed ceiling, and BXCR Wine Bar is built into a converted 1920s railroad boxcar.

Explore Little Saigon

Hundreds of bustling Vietnamese-owned businesses and restaurants pack a three-square-mile area of Westminster and Garden Grove, home to almost 200,000 Vietnamese Americans and one of the largest Vietnamese communities outside of Vietnam. Get a taste of this fascinating area by browsing the Asian Garden Mall (a.k.a. Phuoc Loc Tho), a colorful two-story indoor shopping center filled with baked goods, jewelry, clothes, cosmetics, home goods, and ephemera. Be sure to eat at Little Saigon's tantalizing restaurants: Sip perfect pho at Pho 79 or Pho Nguyen Hue, or tuck into *banh beo* (steamed rice cakes with shrimp) or *bun bo hue* (beef soup) at zen-like Quán Hy.

Simulate Soaring in the Sky

Tired of ho-hum get-togethers? This Friday night, take your friends to the Flightdeck Flight Simulation Center to experience the thrill of competing in air-to-air combat while flying at 600 knots. The action happens in simulators, not actual airplanes, but the sensation is astoundingly real. You'll dress up in a genuine military-issue flight suit, attend ground school, then hop into one of Flightdeck's eight F-16 fighter jet simulators and show off your best *Top Gun* maneuvers. Your goal is to blow the other jets out of the sky—and not get hit. If you're more of a cruiser than a speed demon, try your hand at the commercial airline simulator instead. You'll take the controls of a commercial plane and "fly" it through the friendly skies.

Taste at Noble Ale Works

Close to Angel Stadium and the Honda Center, Noble Ale Works is a fun-loving hub for beer connoisseurs. Find your bliss with Nobility—a national-award-winning IPA—or an array of light pilsners, or maybe a Naughty Sauce coffee stout. An industrial warehouse setting and sleek stool-and-barrel seating speak to Noble's beer-centric focus. For food, hit up the food trucks parked outside. Anaheim's beer scene is hopping—other noteworthy stops include Backstreet Brewery, Karl Strauss, and Golden Road near Angel Stadium; Legends Brewery near Disneyland; Bottle Logic on La Palma; and the Packing District's Anaheim Brewery and Unsung Brewing.

Play at The Ranch

Get out your shiniest silver belt buckle and pointy-toed boots and make an evening of it. Start with dinner at The Ranch, where grand cedar beams and flagstone floors set the stage for upscale cowboy cuisine: Kobe beef carpaccio, bone-in rib-eye, Castroville artichokes, and a wine cellar stocked with more than 10,000 bottles. Then sidle over to The Ranch Saloon to work off your dinner by two-stepping and line dancing. Don't know how to do the quick-quick-slow? Free dance lessons are offered Wednesday to Sunday evenings, or you can watch from the sidelines at the 47-foot-long Longhorn Bar.

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5 Amazing Things To Do At Disneyland Resort

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Image
Editorial

5 AMAZING THINGS TO DO AT DISNEYLAND RESORT

Find your version of the Happiest Place on Earth by way of movie magic, fine dining, and more

When entertainment mogul Walt Disney opened his Anaheim amusement park in 1955, the whimsical rides and attractions were meant to re-create fairy-tale magic. Since then, Disneyland Resort has grown to two theme parks, three hotels, and the Downtown Disney District. But it also offers countless forms of entertainment, thrills, and great dining. Here are five ways to experience it—appealing to all ages and different definitions of magic.

Stay at Disney's Grand Californian

Booking a stay at Disney's Grand Californian Hotel offers two kinds of treats: First, the woodsy, Arts and Crafts-style interior is incredibly soothing after a fun-filled theme park day. The hotel also offers easy access to both parks and Downtown Disney, and even has its own entrance gate to Disney California Adventure Park. Stay here and you can also take advantage of Extra Magic Hours, which grants hotel guests early entrance to the parks. Whether you stay overnight or not, take some time to relax in the lobby, or have dinner at the Napa Rose restaurant, which artfully channels California wine country cuisine.

Explore Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge

Disneyland Park's Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge transports you to an alternate universe—namely, Black Spire Outpost, on the Outer Rim planet of Batuu. You'll see strolling cast members, who belong to either the Resistance or the First Order, but you may be most drawn to the otherworldly porgs and tauntauns available in The Creature Stall, or the robotic buddies you can create at the Droid Depot (to be a true Jedi, get your own lightsaber at Savi's Workshop). Make your way to the area's debut ride, Millennium Falcon: Smugglers Run, which lets you take on the duties of a pilot, gunner, or flight engineer aboard Han Solo's famous ship.

Enjoy the time machine of classic rides

Most Disney fans would agree that Fantasyland, tucked behind Sleeping Beauty's Castle, is the original heart of Disneyland Park, with its 1950s-era rides such as Dumbo the Flying Elephant or the spinning cups of the Mad Tea Party. Don't miss the relatively newer classics in other parts of the park, too, such as Pirates of the Caribbean, which opened in 1967 (the last ride that Walt Disney himself oversaw) and Splash Mountain, which debuted in 1989. Fun fact: In the course of a full day, the song "It's a Small World" plays about 1,200 times.

Let it go at *Frozen: Live at the Hyperion*

See a classic Disney story in a whole new way at California Adventure's Hyperion Theater. This Broadway-level production of *Frozen* has become a hit for its rotating sets, ice-shooting special effects, and serious song-belting by Elsa and her supporting cast. While you can line up to see one of the daily performances, you can also lock in your seat using the Disneyland Mobile App, or booking the Frozen dining package which includes both a reserved seat and a three-course meal at Carthay Circle Restaurant, the fine-dining spot modeled after the movie theater that debuted *Snow White*.

Play at Pixar Pier

Fans of Pixar films—such as the *Toy Story* series, *The Incredibles*, and *Inside Out*—will love the Pixar Pier section of Disney California Adventure Park. The boardwalk-style area (formerly known as Paradise Pier) blends movie magic into rides and attractions such as Incredicoaster, the Inside Out Emotional Whirlwind, and the Pixar Pal-A-Round Ferris wheel. The Pixar theme extends to food, too, from the Señor Buzz Churros and Jack-Jack Cookie Num Nums to the sit-down Lamplight Lounge, filled with Pixar sketches and memorabilia. Stop in at Knick's Knacks for movie themed T-shirts and toys, copies of Pixar concept art, or custom portraits made by the on-site character sketch artist.

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INLAND EMPIRE

Inland Empire Road Trip
Video - Full
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Image
Editorial

ROAD TRIP: INLAND EMPIRE'S RIM OF THE WORLD

Drive this picturesque route through the Inland Empire

A short drive from the surf and sand of Southern California, an entirely different landscape emerges: the mountains, lakes, and scenery of the Inland Empire. Head east from San Diego, Orange County, or Los Angeles, and take a California road trip along the 110-mile-long Rim of the World Scenic Byway, nicknamed for its stunning views along the cliffs of the San Bernardino Mountains. Here are five great stops to make along the way, culminating at Big Bear Lake.

Embark on the Rim of the World

The Inland Empire byway begins at Cajon Pass, on State Highway 138 between the San Bernardino and San Gabriel Mountains. You can take this California road trip year-round: You'll want tire chains during the snowy winter, but that's also when you can make snow angels in the Snow Play Area. Make the most of photo-op-ready turnouts, like Silverwood Lake Overlook off State Highway 138, which offers a view of the sparkling lake.

Recharge at Lake Arrowhead

Take a detour on State Route 173 to relax at this deep-blue mountain lake and the quaint town that neighbors it. Stay the night at Lake Arrowhead Resort & Spa, just outside the village, where you can kayak across the lake, roast s'mores on the shore, or get a massage. While you're here, hike a stretch of the Pacific Crest Trail—about seven miles from the lake—or take a steamboat ride on the Arrowhead Queen to ogle lakefront homes and learn about the movies filmed here over the years. Stop at Shop Road Trip and pick up some hand-crafted pottery, sun-catchers, vintage rugs, and native-tribe-made sweaters.

Play at Big Bear Lake

Get on State Route 18 and head toward Big Bear Lake Village. Embrace the Alpine scenery on the western side of the Rim by staying in a modern version of a mountain cabin. The cottages of

Noon Lodge, which first opened in the 1950s, have been renovated with cedar detailing, kitchens, fireplaces, and cheeky-cabin decor (as well as TVs and WiFi). For a great breakfast or lunch, stop at Big Bear Local, owned by pro surfer Sanoe Lake Eaton and her husband, where they serve California-meets-Hawaii cuisine like teriyaki, poke, and açai bowls, along with marshmallow-laced lattes.

Zipline Between the Trees

Skis, snowboards, and hiking boots may be the classic ways to enjoy Big Bear, but they're not the only way to get a head rush around here. Action Tours offers outings with snow shoes, Segways, and even tree-rope-climbing gear. Or, take one of their zipline tours, a three-hour adventure with nine runs amid the trees and mountain scenery.

Hike Castle Rock Trail

Get one more awesome view in the Big Bear area on the popular Castle Rock Trail, a sometimes-steep three-mile hike. The forest-lined walk takes you past huge granite boulders as you ascend through Ponderosa pines, white firs, and incense cedars to get a panoramic view of Big Bear Lake. Come in spring or summer to see a waterfall, and keep an eye out for herons, hawks, and even bald eagles.

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Temecula: 5 Amazing Things
Video - Full
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Image
Editorial

5 AMAZING THINGS TO DO IN TEMECULA

Relax in laidback Temecula, where the slow life is celebrated in its historic downtown, culinary scene, and rolling hills lined with vineyards

North of San Diego County lies the grape-rich region of Temecula, a fertile valley boasting 40-plus vineyards, dozens of tasting rooms, and an easy-living vibe. Plan to stay for at least a weekend—you'll want to take your time and fully experience wine-tasting, golfing, balloon rides, and more.

Visit Old Town

Start by exploring Old Town Temecula's 12 blocks of antique shops, galleries, brewpubs, and restaurants. Water towers, wooden sidewalks, and frontier-style storefronts create a charming 1860s Western façade—an homage to the town's cattle ranching and railroading past. Learn about Temecula's history at the two-story Temecula Valley Museum. Head over to Temecula Olive Oil Company to taste artisan olive oils in bold flavor profiles like roasted garlic or citrusy blood orange, and shop for lavender lotions and bath soaps at Temecula Lavender Company.

Check out who's playing at the Temecula Stampede, the West Coast's largest country and western music venue, offering free dance lessons on weekends.

Enjoy E.A.T Marketplace

Lunch on farm-fresh sandwiches and homemade coconut milk at E.A.T Marketplace (EAT stands for "Extraordinary Artisan Table"), and be sure to save room for turtle cheesecake. Chef Leah Delyte makes inventive dishes with grass-fed beef and local Temecula edibles, plus plenty of gluten-free, vegan, vegetarian, and paleo choices.

Stay at Temecula Creek Inn

Spend the night at the Temecula Creek Inn, where you'll sleep soundly on a plush bed overlooking the Santa Ana Mountains and Temecula Creek's 27-hole championship course. Plan to tackle those greens tomorrow, but for tonight, enjoy a glass of wine by the outdoor fire pits and farm-fresh flavors at Cork Fire Kitchen.

Explore in a Hot Air Balloon

At dawn, head out for a fabulous airborne escapade as you join the party of hot-air balloons rising 1,500 feet above Temecula's vineyards. Book a spot with California Dreamin' Balloon Adventures, Magical Adventure Balloon Rides, or A Grape Escape, then go up, up, and away. Your balloon is propelled by blasts of hot air and the whim of the wind (and your experienced pilot's skill). Enjoy amazing views of citrus groves, vineyards, and the distant mountains. After touching back down to earth, celebrate with a sparkling-wine toast.

Taste at Wilson Creek Winery

Spend your weekend's second day wine-tasting. The Temecula Valley was once known for Chardonnay grapes, but today's winemakers have branched out into Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Cabernet Franc, and dessert wines. (Check out the Temecula Valley Winegrowers Association website for tasting coupons and discounts.) For a fun-loving tasting experience, head straight to Wilson Creek Winery. Even if your palate leans toward Cabernet, expand your horizons with a sip of Wilson Creek's signature almond sparkling wine. Live bands play on the lawn most summer weekends, and an outdoor bar serves wine slushies—a guaranteed crowd-pleaser.

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THE DESERTS

Death Valley National Park
Video - Full
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Image
Editorial

THINGS TO DO IN DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

Experience the famous extremes of Death Valley National Park, home to the lowest point in North America

Death Valley National Park is all about extremes. Famous for the highest temperature ever recorded anywhere in the world (a sizzling 134 degrees in July 1936) and as the driest spot in North America, from autumn into spring Death Valley is an inviting to explore. Come here to hike through colorful canyons and to see such landmarks as Badwater Basin—at 282 feet below sea level, it's the lowest point in North America.

Catch Sunrise at Zabriskie Point

Wake up early and watch the badlands glow gold as the first light of day reaches Zabriskie Point. The morning sun also paints the Panamint Range across the valley with gorgeous pinks and purples.

Learn About the Park at Furnace Creek Visitor Center

Get some expert advice from rangers on how to explore this vast desert park—the largest national park in the Lower 48—at Furnace Creek Visitor Center. Check out exhibits on geology and Native American life in the area, and for a great introduction to Death Valley, catch the 20-minute orientation film.

Take a Drive Down Badwater Road

While everyone wants to see the salt flats and pools at Badwater, North America's lowest elevation, take some detours as you drive south from Furnace Creek. A three-mile round-trip hike leads through serpentine, flood-carved Golden Canyon and to dramatic Red Cathedral. Or take a one-mile round-trip hike to Natural Bridge, a dramatic rock formation that spans a wash. And an unpaved road leads to Devil's Golf Course, a jagged expanse of eroded rock salt. (Note that hiking is not advised during summer months.)

Discover a Rainbow of Rocks on Artist's Drive

Late afternoon is the time to experience Artist's Drive, a nine-mile, one-way road that leads through some of Death Valley's most vibrantly hued sedimentary and volcanic formations. The highlight is Artist's Palette, where the rock is improbably colored with gorgeous yellows, pinks, and greens.

See a Spring Bloom of Wildflowers

In recent years, the rare phenomenon of a "super bloom" has swept across California's deserts, and Death Valley was home to some of the most spectacular displays. Super bloom or not, the spring season is still the perfect time to spot rare wildflowers in the park. Read our guide on the best way to see Death Valley's colorful plants.

Head Into the High Country at Dante's View

Despite its hellish name, the panorama from this overlook at 5,475 feet in the Black Mountains is positively heavenly. Hike along the trails for different perspectives on Death Valley more than a mile below you.

Look for Wildlife in the Mesquite Flat Dunes

Dawn is the time to explore this sea of shifting sands off State Highway 190. Accenting the contours and ripples in the dunes, the early morning light is especially beautiful. You also might spot such creatures as coyotes, desert kit foxes, and kangaroo rats. And keep your eyes open for tracks across the dunes—the soft sands provide a record of animal activity during the night.

Walk Along the Rim of a Volcano

Gaze down into the gaping, 600-foot-deep abyss of Ubehebe Crater as you hike along a 1.5-mile trail that follows the rim. As you trek along the edge, you'll get spectacular views over a remote section of the park, including smaller craters.

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Joshua Tree National Park
Video - Full
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Image
Editorial

THINGS TO DO IN JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK

A haven for artists, hipster transplants, and the ascent-obsessed, this national park has an allure all its own

With a stunningly stark, almost witchy beauty, it's easy to fall under Joshua Tree's spell. Whether you're looking for a sense of peace, a strenuous adventure, an Old West–inspired getaway, or the best music this side of the Sonoran, Joshua Tree National Park and its surrounding area deliver plenty of delights.

Explore Indian Cove Nature Trail

The walking trail at Indian Cove is one of the best places to enjoy the park's namesake flora. Its official name is Yucca brevifolia, but it's better known as the Joshua tree. Accessible from the east end, this 0.6.-mile path is surrounded by boulder formations. Keep an eye out for wildlife, including bighorn sheep and desert tortoises.

Rock climb at Echo Cove

With more than 8,000 known climbs and 400 unique formations, it's little wonder Joshua Tree is a dirtbag's paradise. Echo Cove has plenty of routes great for first-timers and advanced climbers alike. BYO gear or rent everything from shoes to chalk at Nomad Ventures. The friendly local shop has been in business since 1980.

Hike among giant boulders on Arch Rock Trail

Millenia of whipping winds and rushing water have served to sculpt some incredible designs throughout these deserts. One of the most miraculous, the 30-foot-tall Arch Rock, is easily accessible thanks to a 0.5-mile out-and-back trail starting from White Tank Campground.

Walk among cacti in Cholla Cactus Garden

Mother Nature's majesty and her mischief are both on full display in this organically occuring cacti grove. Stay the course on this 0.25-mile loop and you'll be treated to one of the world's densest concentrations of the lovely-but-dangerous cholla cactus.

Relax and rewind at the Pioneertown Motel

Utilitarian chic meets Southwestern Americana at the Pioneertown Motel. A former live-in motion-picture set founded in part by Roy Rogers and Gene Autry, Pioneertown still looks like it's straight out of an old Hollywood Western. The motel allows visitors to sense the area's history in a modern context: The rooms are decorated with cowhide rugs, Aztec blankets, and exposed bulbs.

Kick back to live music at Pappy & Harriet's

Just down the street from the Pioneertown Motel, Pappy & Harriet's Pioneertown Palace is a musical oasis in the middle of the desert. Part honky-tonk, part roadhouse, part premier venue, the always-packed Palace is a truly unique experience. Fill up on the bison burger or the

18-ounce ribeye as you listen to live jams. Pappy's has hosted everyone from Paul McCartney to Vampire Weekend on its intimate stage.

Experience sunset at Keys View

The highest point in Joshua Tree, Keys View offers round-the-clock breathtaking vistas. Nighttime serves up sparkling splendor; and during clear days, visitors are treated to sweeping views of the Coachella Valley, Palm Springs, and the surrounding peaks that stretch all the way to Mexico. But Keys View is at its very best at sunset, when bright oranges and blistering reds saturate the desert sky.

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Palm Springs Resorts
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Image
Editorial

4 FANTASTIC RESORTS IN GREATER PALM SPRINGS

Find the perfect place to stay in Greater Palm Springs, from boutique mid-century inns to lavish golf resorts

From the hip and modern to the traditional and classic, resorts in and around Greater Palm Springs let you escape to the desert any way you like. You'll find just the right place, whether you're planning to play a few rounds on one of the Coachella Valley's world-famous golf courses, lounge by the pool, or experience the desert's incomparable mid-century architecture.

Parker Palm Springs

Design buffs love the Parker Palm Springs for its Jonathan Adler décor, while celebs also adore this intimate inn's seclusion—especially the one-bedroom villa suites with enclosed patios. After a private yoga session and a seaweed wrap at the spa—playfully named the Palm Springs Yacht Club—hole up in a cabana alongside one of the inn's two saline pools. For dinner, settle into a corner banquette and indulge in the braised Wagyu beef short ribs at the seductive bistro, Mister Parker's. Pro tip: Don't miss the hotel's Counter Reformation, a cozy wine bar that features a wooden confessional flown in from Italy.

Ace Hotel Palm Springs

The Ace Hotel Palm Springs brought a mid-century hotel back from the dead and infused it with an artsy spirit that combines the best of Palm Springs cool, both old school and new. Groove to DJs in the lobby and poolside, or create your own soundtrack in a room with a record player

and a selection of classic vinyl. Dine on the refined roadhouse fare at the hotel's King's Highway restaurant (once a Denny's) and take your pick of 21 craft beers on tap in The Amigo Room.

L'Horizon Resort and Spa

Blending the style of iconic architect William F. Cody and the vision of renowned designer Steve Hermann, L'Horizon Resort and Spa is Palm Springs incarnate. With post-and-beam bungalows, some featuring outdoor showers, the low-slung, three-acre resort earned raves from Architectural Digest as "the most jaw-dropping of the pack" of Palm Springs' mid-century hotels. Take in dramatic mountain views through your bungalow's floor-to-ceiling windows and dine al fresco on executive chef Jason Niederkorn's inventive cuisine at the hotel's So.Pa restaurant.

La Quinta Resort & Spa

Long before this region became synonymous with a 1950s aesthetic, the Spanish-inspired La Quinta Resort & Spa defined California desert style. Come to this lavish oasis, with its 41 swimming pools and seven restaurants, to golf on five leading courses, including the Stadium Course at PGA West (named one of the country's top 50 by Golf Digest). Afterward, rejuvenate your spirit with one of the 14 different yoga classes or with one of the immersive, personalized yoga retreats inspired by Indian spiritual centers.

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SAN DIEGO COUNTY

San Diego
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Image
Editorial

5 AMAZING THINGS TO DO IN SAN DIEGO

From parks to nightlife, discover this Southern California city beyond the beach

With lively neighborhoods, an internationally renowned craft beer scene, and one of the world's most beautiful urban parks, there's a whole lot of San Diego to explore beyond its famous beaches. Experience this dynamic city as you prowl the vibrant Gaslamp Quarter and see the exotic animals at the San Diego Zoo in Balboa Park.

Stay in a stylish Gaslamp Quarter hotel

To find the most happening spots in San Diego, sometimes you have to look up. That's certainly true at the Pendry San Diego, where the rooftop Pool House lets you bask in the city's perfect weather by day and a cool lounge scene after dark. Stop into Provisional, the hotel's combination restaurant and marketplace, for all-day dining and to shop for housewares.

Explore San Diego's hottest entertainment district

Proving that the hip and historic are hardly incompatible, the Gaslamp Quarter combines beautifully restored 19th-century buildings and 21st-century nightlife. Dine on chef Leyla Javadov's innovative (and healthy!) cuisine at Café 21, which features live music every day. Or check out the action on all three levels at The Tipsy Crow, a sports bar, pub, and club all in one.

Stroll El Prado in Balboa Park

Lined with museums housed in elaborate Spanish Colonial Revival buildings inspired by landmarks in Spain and Mexico, El Prado is the romantic heart of Balboa Park. The dazzling films at the San Diego Natural History Museum's The Subaru 3D Experience will transport you into the planet's most spectacular natural settings. Or lose yourself in an exotic world of cycads, orchids, and ferns at the historic Botanical Building. (And don't forget to take a selfie along its lily pond.)

See the menagerie at the San Diego Zoo

Sure, you'll find lions and tigers and bears, but the San Diego Zoo is most famous for its beloved koalas and pandas, animals that are only found at a few select zoos worldwide. Catch glimpses

of African penguins, baboons, crocodiles, and leopards at the newest exhibit, Africa Rocks, and for one of San Diego's best views, ride high on the Skyfari Aerial Tram—also a great way to get across the zoo's lush and verdant 100 acres.

Eat chicken fried by a celebrity chef

Proving that there's more to the Little Italy district than pasta, former Top Chef winner Richard Blais takes fried chicken and eggs to a whole new level at The Crack Shack. Hang out on the patio at this rustic chic spot and play some bocce, then bite into such irresistible sandwiches as the Coop Deville (fried chicken, pickled chilies, lime mayo on brioche) or The Royale (chicken sausage, egg, and smoked Cheddar on an English muffin). And don't forget the deviled eggs.

Raise a glass at Ballast Point

Celebrated for its West Coast–style Double IPAs, San Diego is consistently ranked as one of America's top craft beer cities. Order up a flight and taste your way through some of the city's best brews at Ballast Point's Little Italy brewery, tasting room, and restaurant. Make a reservation in The Kettle Room, where the prix fixe menu features dishes perfectly paired with Ballast Point beers.

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San Diego Beaches
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Editorial

SAN DIEGO COUNTY'S BEST BEACHES

Surf, swim, and sunbathe at one of these five postcard-worthy beaches

Seventy miles of coastline makes San Diego County a shining destination for lovers of sand and surf. And with all that shore, there's something for every sort of beach goer. From budding marine biologists to experienced shredders, here are five of the best beaches to please them all. Insider tip: Always stay for sunset to see if you can catch a glimpse of the ephemeral green flash.

Swami's Beach

The surf culture is strong in Encinitas, a beach community in San Diego's North County. The city offers plenty of breaks for the catching—Seaside, Pipes, D Street to name a few. But with big swells and high performance waves, Swami's is a local favorite. Try this recipe for a truly rad morning: surf a dawn patrol session followed by a massive breakfast burrito at Pipes Cafe,

coffee from local roaster Zumbar, and a peaceful walk through the Self Realization Fellowship Gardens from which Swami's Beach gets its name.

Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve

This reserve, which protects 1,500 acres of land along La Jolla's coast, is one of the only places where you can see the country's rarest conifer, the torrey pine. Explore groves of jutting pines as you hike from the top of sea cliffs all the way down to the shore on the aptly named Beach Trail. Celebrate your efforts with a root- or ginger-beer float. There are six to choose from on the menu at the Lodge at Torrey Pines. Or better yet, spend the night at this five-star resort.

Belmont Park at Mission Beach

Click, click, click, click, weeee! The Giant Dipper at Mission Beach's Belmont Park delivers buzzing anticipating and stomach flips drops for $6 a pop. Built in 1925, it's one of the last two wooden roller coasters still in operation on the west coast. The oceanfront amusement park brings nostalgia-inducing staples—including mini golf, carousel rides, and arcade games—to the sands of Mission Beach for a day of boardwalk fun.

Coronado Beach

Often voted one of the top beaches in America, Coronado Beach's wide span, calm waters, and soft golden sand is a favorite of couples and families. Hotel del Coronado, the massive Victorian confection overlooking the beach, has been impressing guests since 1888. Sixteen presidents and hundreds of celebrities have enjoyed the hotel's beautiful beach views, which were featured prominently in the classic film Some Like It Hot. An impressive dedication to modernization has allowed the hotel to stay completely current. The resort now offers yoga on the sand as well as mermaid fitness classes, tail rental included.

La Jolla Cove

San Diego is known for its award-winning zoo, but some of the very best animal watching is right along the shore. La Jolla Cove is home to sea lions (large, dark brown, big flippers) as well as seals (smaller and more mottled), and it's easy to spend hours watching them swim, play, and sunbathe along the rocky coast. Admire the creatures from land at Shell Beach, Children's Pool, or after a journey down the stairs into Sunny Jim's Sea Cave. You can also choose to swim or kayak with your newfound friends by renting gear from outfitters including La Jolla Kayak and Everyday California.

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San Diego Resorts

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Image

Editorial

4 FANTASTIC RESORTS IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY

Find luxury living with a touch of Southern California cool at these exclusive hotels

With a temperate climate and beautiful Pacific beaches, it's no wonder San Diego is one of the nation's top vacation destinations. Whether you want to hit legendary links, practice yoga al fresco, or indulge in a decadent French dinner, these four resorts will make your visit something special.

Rancho Valencia

Mornings at Rancho Valencia start with fresh-squeezed orange juice delivered to your door, and that pretty much sets the tone for this five-star resort near Del Mar. Here, your room is a casita complete with fireplace and garden patio, the 18-court tennis center is one of the best in the state, and a fleet of Porsches is available to borrow (and ultimately buy, if you so choose). Spend your days playing golf, practicing tree pose in the stunning outdoor yoga pavilion, or learning to saber Champagne, then dine at one of two on-site eateries, including The Pony Room, where the tequila list boasts more than 100 bottles.

L'Auberge Del Mar

Built on the site of the historic Hotel Del Mar, L'Auberge Del Mar once drew stars like Jimmy Durante and Desi Arnaz. The Pacific crashes just beyond the pool, visible from your balcony and accessible via private path. The ponies sprint at the famed Del Mar Thoroughbread Club just a mile away, and Del Mar Village's shops and restaurants are right outside the front door. Catch sunset by the fire pit at Bleu Bar, then head to Kitchen 1540, where chef Nathan Lingle crafts award-winning menus using the bounty and herbs from a local farmers' market truck.

Fairmont Grand Del Mar

Inspired by revered architect Addison Mizner, Fairmont Grand Del Mar's sprawling estate feels plucked from the Mediterranean, thanks to its ornate fountains, formal landscaping, and sculpted stone arches and columns created in Italy by a family of master craftsmen. The design alone is worth a visit (and an Instagram post), but that attention to detail carries over to other elements of the resort, like the spa's wine-infused facials, the pool's underwater speakers, and restaurant Addison, where chef William Bradley offers seasonal tastings of contemporary French cuisine that aim for the "haute couture of food."

The Lodge at Torrey Pines

Golf courses hardly come more scenic than the pair at Torrey Pines, set atop bluffs overlooking the ocean in La Jolla. Guests at the AAA five-diamond Lodge at Torrey Pines get priority tee times, as well as guided hikes inside the adjacent Torrey Pines State Preserve, where trails climb

coastal cliffs and descend to golden beaches and tide pools swarming with life. When you're ready for a break, return to the craftsman-style hotel and lounge by the pool, play croquet on the lawn, or just enjoy a good book by the lobby's grand, tiled fireplace.
Learn more about luxury lodgings across the state on the California Now Podcast.

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SeaWorld San Diego: 5 Amazing Things
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Image
Editorial

5 AMAZING THINGS TO DO AT SEAWORLD SAN DIEGO

Sun-drenched SeaWorld San Diego is the sum of its parts and so much more. It's a zoo, an aquarium, a thrill-ride theme park, and a vital animal research facility. Sprawling across nearly 200 acres on San Diego's Mission Bay, this park will educate you, entertain you, and amp up your adrenaline on exciting rides.

Start your visit with a five-minute ride up the Skytower, a 320-foot column that overlooks the park. Then think of your favorite sea animal and go find it—thousands of creatures are on exhibit, from sea horses to sea lions. At Turtle Reef, view loggerhead, hawksbill, and green sea turtles, plus thousands of tropical fish. In the Shark Encounter, walk through a 57-foot acrylic underwater tunnel. You'll be surrounded by several species of sharks swimming in a 300,000-gallon lagoon.

Ride the Electric Eel

For a different kind of excitement, SeaWorld has plenty of thrill rides. Take a lap on San Diego's tallest, fastest rollercoaster, the Electric Eel, which soars to 150 feet with multiple loops, twists, and inversions. The slightly tamer Manta rollercoaster roars across the park at 45 miles per hour. Then splash your way downriver on Shipwreck Rapids' wheel-shaped rafts or plunge 60 heart-stopping feet on the Journey to Atlantis flume ride. You'll suddenly understand the significance of negative G-forces, and you'll get soaked to the skin.

Learn at the Penguin Encounter

Roll along the moving sidewalk in the Penguin Encounter past a colony of 300 penguins, including tall Emperor penguins and smaller Adélie, Gentoo, and Macaroni penguins. These adorable tuxedo-wearing birds hang out, swim, waddle, and slide on their bellies in a simulated Antarctic. Sign up for the Penguins Up-Close Tour and you can meet a penguin face-to-face and learn more about these extraordinary birds.

Play at the Dolphin Encounter

In the Dolphin Encounter, you'll stand poolside with a dolphin trainer and get up close and personal with utterly charming bottlenose dolphins. You'll learn a few hand signals to communicate with these super-smart creatures, who seem as eager to please as golden retrievers. For an even bigger once-in-a-lifetime thrill, the Dolphin Interaction Program lets you don a wetsuit and get in the water to touch, feed, and play with the animals.

Watch Sea Lions Live

SeaWorld's famous arena-style trained animal shows are guaranteed to wow. Two of the most popular performers are Clyde and Seamore, an acrobatic comedy duo of hilarious sea lions, who seem to get a genuine kick out of performing for—and splashing—the audience. They don't mind posing for photos, either. Other popular shows star dancing dolphins who do an Esther-Williams-style synchronized swimming routine with wide grins on their faces.

Interact at the Beluga Encounter

SeaWorld's newest interaction program lets you enjoy a one-on-one experience with enchanting beluga whales. These snow-white denizens of frigid Arctic waters are known for their curious temperaments and cheerful-sounding calls. You'll go behind-the-scenes at the Wild Arctic habitat and meet the gentle belugas and whiskered, long-tusked walruses at poolside.

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LEGOLAND California: 5 Amazing Things
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Editorial

Let your kids' sense of wonder unfold at this imaginative theme park inspired by LEGO bricks

You have to see it to believe it: an entire theme park built out of brightly colored LEGO bricks, with 60 interactive rides, shows, and attractions. LEGOLAND California is an elaborate fantasyland that's focused on kid-oriented fun, but even adults will be amazed at the incredible creativity and craftsmanship on display. Located north of San Diego near Carlsbad's spectacular beaches, LEGOLAND is a must-visit for families. As the LEGO song goes, "Everything is awesome," so pack up your mini master builders and go.

Explore Miniland USA

No one walks away unimpressed by Miniland USA—a diorama of cities built from 34 million multi-colored LEGO bricks. You can't help but stare at the mini Las Vegas strip, pint-size

Washington D.C., teeny-tiny New Orleans, and wee-sized Golden Gate Bridge, all built with painstaking accuracy. (You may find yourself mesmerized by the LEGO characters practicing Tai-Chi in New York's Central Park.)

Stay at LEGOLAND Castle Hotel

To maximize your park time, stay at the 250-room LEGOLAND Castle Hotel, which opened in 2018, or the LEGOLAND Resort Hotel, both near the park's main entrance. Rooms are decorated in lavish detail according to theme, so your kids can stay as princesses, knights, adventure heroes, or magic wizards. Kids love seeing the brick-tastic LEGO statues that crop up everywhere, and even the LEGOLAND Resort Hotel elevators are designed for fun: As soon as the doors close, the disco music starts.

Ride the Deep Sea Adventure

LEGOLAND California sets itself apart from other theme parks in that guests aren't just spectators. Most rides and attractions are highly interactive, so your kids will be highly engaged. On the Deep Sea Adventure submarine ride, passengers look through the sub's portholes to find LEGO models and search for gold coins, pearls, and other sunken treasures. In the Fun Town driving school, they pilot electric LEGO cars on a pint-sized road. (Driver's licenses are awarded to kids who stop at red lights.) In Ninjago The Ride, kids put their Ninja warrior skills to the test by controlling animated fireballs, lightning, shockwaves, and ice.

Learn at Sea Life Aquarium

At Sea Life Aquarium, guests visit with more than 5,000 sea creatures—from sharks to seahorses to jellyfish (and these are 100 percent real, not made of LEGOs). Your kids can feel the "skin" of sea stars and spiny sea urchins in touch pools, and walk through a virtual bioluminescent tide under a sky full of stars, even if it's the middle of the day.

Ride the Dragon Rollercoaster

LEGOLAND has its share of fun rides, too. The thrills are on the milder side to accommodate young riders, but even so, your too-cool-for-school teenagers will let out a few screams on The Dragon rollercoaster. Dragon-shaped cars twist, turn, climb, and descend inside and out of a massive LEGO castle, home to knights, princesses, and one giant LEGO-constructed dragon.

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