

The Original Road Trip: California's Central Coast Soft Adventure



7-DAY ITINERARY TRAVELING FROM LOS ANGELES TO SAN FRANCISCO

DAY 1

Arrive in Los Angeles, drive to Santa Barbara north on HWY 101 (100 Miles/160 Km; 1 hour 45 mins.)

Santa Barbara is one of the gateway destinations* to the Channel Islands, which are among the world's prime whale-watching grounds. The Santa Barbara Channel is home to close to 30 different species of marine life that visit throughout the year. May through November it is the prime northern feeding grounds for blue whales and humpback whales. The Santa Barbara Channel also plays host to the Pacific gray whale migration December—April, one of nature's greatest shows. More than 28,000 of these graceful mammals hug the coastline along their migration between Alaska and Baja. Spend a few hours with Condor Express Whale Watching as they put you in the right place to spot gray, humpback and minke whales, plus orcas (killer whales) and five types of dolphins along with sea lions, harbor and elephant seals, and sea otters. www.SantaBarbaraCA.com

Overnight in Santa Barbara.

****Ventura & Oxnard are also gateway destinations, with Island Packers in the Ventura Harbor docking year-round at the Channel Islands.***

DAY 2

Santa Barbara to San Luis Obispo via Santa Ynez Valley and Solvang – Total 104 Miles/168 Km

Santa Ynez Valley (31 Miles/50 Km; 45 mins.)

- **The Santa Ynez Valley** can fulfill your quest to see unique wildlife all in one day! Kids of all ages will enjoy these amazing animals. Start at OstrichLand, a 33-acre breeding farm to see/feed more than 100 ostriches and some emus. Just a few blocks to the east is Flag Is Up Farms, home of Monty Roberts, the “Man Who Listens to Horses.” Visitors are welcome to see the equine facilities and trainers in action. Proceed east on Highway 246 through Solvang and turn north on Alamo Pintado Road to discover Quicksilver Miniature Horse Ranch, a fascinating breeding facility for 34-inch and under horses that welcomes visitors daily for free viewing from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. www.SantaYnezValleyVisit.com
- Discover what pro cyclists know who train and ride here—the Danish village of Solvang is an ideal cycling area. Riders can leisurely tour the roads made famous by the film “Sideways” or push their limits on a 40-mile hilly workout on the same route used by the world’s top pro riders. Solvang was the proud host of the *Amgen Tour of California* pro cycling time trial for four years, as well as major amateur races throughout the year, attracting thousands of riders. The *Los Angeles Times* noted, “It is something of a cycling Mecca.” www.SolvangUSA.com

San Luis Obispo (65 Miles/104 Km; 1 hr 15 mins.)

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- **San Luis Obispo** is an undiscovered gem for outdoor recreation enthusiasts. The City's 'greenbelt' boasts 3500 acres of protected land featuring over 25 trails within minutes of the cultural downtown hub. San Luis Obispo is known for its scenic foothills, the most notable of which are the Seven Sisters—a chain of ancient volcanic plugs that lead from Downtown San Luis Obispo to Morro Rock in Morro Bay. Some of San Luis Obispo's most spectacular places can only be reached on foot, and locals regard hiking as the best way to see the county's secret treasures. The hikes inside the city grant you stunning views over San Luis Obispo, while other hikes explore the wilderness of inland canyons, ridges and mountains as well as the coastline. Along with near-perfect year-round weather, make SLO a great spot for hiking, biking, running, golf, horseback riding, and rock climbing, to name a few options. For more information: www.SanLuisObispoVacations.com/Things-To-Do/.

Overnight in San Luis Obispo.

DAY 3

San Luis Obispo to Pismo Beach (10 Miles/16 Km; 10 mins.)

- **Pismo Beach** has many trails, parks and beach access locations that offer everything from an easy walk to a challenging hike, beautiful ocean views and recreation opportunities. Our award-winning Parks, Trails & Beach Access Guide has valuable information for your convenience. www.ClassicCalifornia.com

Overnight in Pismo Beach.

DAY 4

Pismo Beach to Big Sur along HWY 1 (117 Miles/188 Km; 2.5 hours)

- Watch for migrating whales, sea lions, and sea birds galore. Big Sur is a good place to stop, eat lunch and check out some of California State Parks: San Simeon State Park, Limekiln Beach State Park, Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park, Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park, and Andrew Molera State Park (all parks info 831-667-2315). Just before Carmel-by-the-Sea is the Point Lobos State Park. All these parks are on Hwy 1.

Big Sur to Monterey (29 Miles/47 Km; 45 mins.)

- Kayak or bike from Adventures by the Sea and explore the marine mammals of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Take the Coastal Recreation Trail along 29 miles of gorgeous Monterey Bay shoreline, 95 percent of it is completely separated from vehicle roads. It goes from Pebble Beach all the way to Castroville. For service and accommodations, go to www.SeeMonterey.com. For the more adventurous, scuba divers can track the monsters of the deep—reportedly sighted just off the Big Sur Coast—or the giant squid spotted in the depths of Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary's underwater canyon, twice as deep as the Grand Canyon. Novices can sleuth the seas via Monterey Bay Dive Center with a full day Discover SCUBA program. Instruction and dives at the

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Sanctuary, Point Lobos State Park or San Carlos Beach offer insight into the region's rich diversity of sea life. For the younger set, Monterey Bay Aquarium's Underwater Explorers program treats kids 8 - 13 years to an aquatic adventure with a surface SCUBA dive in the Great Tide Pool on Monterey Bay. www.SeeMonterey.com

Overnight in Monterey.

DAY 5

Monterey to Gilroy (41 Miles/66 Km; 45 mins.)

- Outdoor enthusiasts will find the lushly wooded **Uvas Canyon Park**, with more than 1,200 acres, has much to offer. The park has seven miles of hiking trails, including a one-mile Waterfall Loop that travels along Swanson Creek past many of the park's waterfalls. Available at the Ranger Station, a self-guided interpretive pamphlet highlights the flora of Uvas Canyon. Nestled on the eastern side of the Santa Cruz Mountains, this park is open year-round from 8 a.m. to sunset. www.GilroyVisitor.org

Overnight in Gilroy.

DAY 6

Gilroy to Santa Cruz - Hwy 152 via Mt. Madonna County Park to HWY 1 N (35 Miles/56Km; 45 mins.)

- A visit to **Santa Cruz County** would not be complete without trying its signature sport: surfing! Year-round surf schools emphasize the basics of waves, how to safely navigate boards in the water, and how to stand on boards to catch a wave from a resting position. Cowell Beach, next to the Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf, and Capitola Beach are two of the best places to learn to surf. If you just want to capture the surfing spirit, stop by Lighthouse Point and watch surfers glide over the waves. The point overlooks Steamer Lane, Santa Cruz's legendary surfing spot. Another great surf spot is Pleasure Point, where experienced wave riders challenge themselves at "The Hook." Visit www.SantaCruz.org for more information. In the evening, visit the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk every day from Memorial Day to Labor Day, and on weekends the rest of the year. www.BeachBoardwalk.com.

Overnight in Santa Cruz.

DAY 7

Santa Cruz to San Francisco (75 Miles/80 Km; 1.5 hours)

Depart out of San Francisco