

The Original Road Trip: Experience Breweries on California's Central Coast



7 Day Itinerary traveling from Los Angeles to San Francisco

DAY 1

Arrive at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) and drive approximately 60 miles / 96 km, 1 hour 17 minutes, to Ventura County (recommended drive: scenic Highway 1 along the Pacific Coast Highway)

DAY 2

Spend the day in Ventura County

Raise your pint glass to toast the breweries and beer festivals in Ventura County. In historic downtown Ventura you will find Anacapa Brewing Company with over 20 specialty brews made onsite and flowing on tap, depending on the season. This microbrewery also serves delicious local cuisine that pairs beautifully with its custom libations. Ventura also hosts two annual summer beer festivals: the Salute Beer Festival held at San Buenaventura State Beach and the California Beer Festival held at Mission Park. Microbreweries come together at the annual Southern California Homebrewers Festival held at Lake Casitas in late spring. BJ's Restaurant and Brewhouse at the Esplanade in Oxnard offers seven regular beers on tap, plus several seasonal and specialty beers. This family-friendly establishment also features innovative spins on favorite foods, including deep dish pizzas, salads, sandwiches, pastas, steaks, baby back ribs and so much more. Tours are available upon request and in advance at both Anacapa Brewing Company and BJ's Restaurant and Brewhouse. www.visitoxnard.com

Overnight in Ventura County

DAY 3

Spend the day in Santa Barbara County

Drive 27 miles / 43 km, 31 minutes, to Santa Barbara in Santa Barbara County (recommended drive: 101 North)

Here's good news for lager-loving locavores who prefer beer that hasn't spent days on a truck. Microbreweries are expanding around the country like the head on a well-poured pilsner, and Santa Barbara is no exception, with more than a six-pack of local breweries going strong, from downtown Santa Barbara to the Santa Ynez Valley. Some, such as Hollister Brewing Company, double as restaurants that are just as popular for their beer-friendly gourmet fare as they are for their handcrafted ales brewed onsite. Another standout, Telegraph Brewing Company, serves up lively tastings and supplies its award-winning suds to many local restaurants and bars. All of our microbreweries are helmed by creative brewmasters who approach their craft like talented chefs - even using local ingredients like lemons, oranges and chamomile. So whether you crave a crisp ale or a rich, smooth stout, head to one of the area's microbreweries and tap into this tasty trend, Cheers! www.SantaBarbaraCA.com

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Drive 44 miles / 71 km, 43 minutes, to Buellton in Santa Barbara County (recommended drive: 101 North)

As you travel along Hwy 101 throughout the Central Coast, be sure to stop off in Buellton for a nice cold beer. Firestone Walker Brewing Company, the locals' favorite, uses an oak barrel brewing system to enhance the flavors of its beer. Located on McMurray Road in Buellton, this is one of two Firestone Walker Breweries in California. This brewery is one of the "Top 50" largest craft breweries in the U.S and offers a full-service restaurant. The Figueroa Mountain Brewing Co. due to open in late summer 2010, will capture the essence and taste buds of the region. Head Brewmaster and "Great American Beer Festival's Brewer of the Year" Jason Courtney will produce rustic American lagers and ales that reflect the Valley's unique flavor and history. Jason and crew can be found on Industrial Way in Buellton. www.visitbuellton.com

Overnight in Santa Barbara County

DAY 4

Spend the day in San Luis Obispo County

Drive 96 miles / 155 km, 1 hour and 44 minutes, to San Luis Obispo in San Luis Obispo County (recommended drive: 101 North)

San Luis Obispo County has become a hotspot for breweries and microbreweries. With several breweries scattered throughout the Central Coast, the area has developed a wide range of unique and award-winning brews. And some of the breweries have gained recognition for being among some of the greatest in the world, such as Firestone Brewery. Stop in at Central Coast Brewery in San Luis Obispo and taste a flight of locally brewed beers or grab a beer and a bite to eat at Creekside Brewery.

Drive 25 miles / 40 km, 28 minutes, to Paso Robles in San Luis Obispo County (recommended drive: 101 North)

If you're on your way up Highway 101, take a side trip to another Firestone Brewery, but this time for a tour as well as a tasting. Located in Paso Robles, CA, it originally featured seven 200-barrel JV Northwest unitanks and a 200 barrel JV Northwest bright beer tank. Additions have since been added to the original brewery, now featuring 17 interior fermenters, four 500bbl exterior fermenters, a KHS keg line, and Kronen bottling line, among other improvements. For more information visit www.SanLuisObispoCounty.com

Overnight in San Luis Obispo County

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DAY 5

Spend the day in Monterey County

Drive 120 miles / 193 km, 1 hour and 59 minutes, to Monterey in Monterey County (recommended drive: Highway 101 North to Highway 68 West)

Embark upon your exploration of Monterey's classic breweries at English Ales Brewery, a production brewery and pub just a short jaunt off Highway 1 in Marina. British beers brewed on-site, include the Monterey Bay Wheat, Big Sur Golden and Brew 66, to name a few. Additionally you will find delightful private brews at the Portola Plaza Hotel in downtown Monterey. Peter B's Brew Pub, Monterey's only on-premises micro-brewery, offers 10 hand-crafted microbrews as well as a variety of single malt scotches and specialty martinis. It's the perfect place to catch a game (on one of 11 flat-panel TV's) or just catch up with friends. Try the new Cannery Row Brewing Company, with 74 beers on tap and a lengthy bar menu of local treats. It is just half a block above John Steinbeck Plaza on historic Cannery Row. Next, take the Reservation Road route along the lush fields of the Salinas Valley to Monterey Coast Brewing Company on Main Street in Old Town Salinas. The best way to explore the brewery's homemade suds is to order a sampler tray of 4-oz. tasting glasses accompanied by a handy identification card that helps you keep them all straight. www.seeMonterey.com

Overnight in Monterey County

DAY 6

Spend the day in Santa Cruz and Santa Clara Counties

Drive 46 miles / 74 km, 57 minutes, to Santa Cruz in Santa Cruz County (recommended drive: Highway 1 North)

Tucked away on Santa Cruz's westside, Santa Cruz Mountain Brewing's tasting room offers samples or flights of handcrafted, organic selections ranging from pale, amber, wheat, and even coffee-infused microbrews. Its newest creation, Organic Olallieberry Cream Ale, conjures up notions of pie and jam and all things berry. The creaminess of the ale is achieved through a mixture of rice, barley and wheat; complimenting the tartness of the berry and finishing dry. The new tasting bar's nine taps offer samples of the brewery's six flagship ales as well as three other specialty ales, including the new Olallieberry Cream Ale. Santa Cruz Mountain Brewing is located in a spirited courtyard along with shops and restaurants. Always brimming with something new to see or taste, Santa Cruz is a lively spot, home to Bonny Doon Vineyards and a number of tasting rooms that make up Surf City Vintners.

www.santacruzcounty.travel

Drive 46 miles / 74 km, 1 hour, to Morgan Hill in Santa Clara County (recommended drive: Highway 1 South to Highway 17 North to Highway 101 South)

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Featuring over 45 feet of gorgeously polished Poppy Jasper rock inlaid into the bar surface, El Toro Brewing Co., located in downtown Morgan Hill, is the perfect brewpub stop for the beer connoisseur. The two-floored building with a patio is the ideal setting to enjoy numerous gold and silver medaled beer festival winners, such as Poppy Jasper Amber Ale, Extra Hoppy Poppy Jasper, El Toro Oro Golden Ale & William Jones Wheat Beer. Add live music and dancing to your brewpub experience to make this a truly memorable visit. www.gilroyvisitor.org

Overnight in Santa Clara County

DAY 7

To depart out of San Francisco International Airport (SFO) drive approximately 57 miles / 92 km, 1 hour 4 minutes, from Santa Clara County