

The Original RoadTrip: California's Central Coast Winter Holiday Celebration Tour



7 Day Itinerary traveling from San Francisco to Los Angeles for
Winter Holiday Events

DAY 1

Arrive at San Francisco International Airport (SFO) and drive approximately 60 miles / 96 km, 1 hour 10 minutes, to Santa Cruz County down HWY 101 South to HWY 17 West

For a nostalgic look at Christmas, the Santa Cruz Holiday Lights Train, hosted by Roaring Camp Railroads, features beautifully lit Pullman and open-air excursion cars that travel through Santa Cruz as carolers sing, and the sweet scent of hot spiced cider fills the air. For a new spin on California Cool, Santa Cruz County is where visitors can catch the holiday spirit and local vibe. California's oldest seaside resort town hosts Surfing Santa each year, as jolly Saint Nick and his reindeer ride the waves to shore at Capitola Beach. Hang loose the Saturday after Thanksgiving at noon, as Santa settles into a lawn chair on the beach and takes wish-list requests from the kids while Donner, Blitzen and the others break out the candy and the holiday cheer. www.santacruzevents.com

Take HWY 1 South to HWY 152/Hwy 101 East to Gilroy, 36 miles, 45 minutes

Gilroy Gardens Holiday Lights presents "Nights of Fire" Laser Light & Fireworks Spectacular beginning December 4th on selected dates through December 30th at 8:30 p.m. Coyote Lake comes alive as the Laser Light and Fireworks pulse and dance to the beat of a majestic holiday soundtrack. And just for the little ones it's "A Charlie Brown Christmas" from Knott's Merry Farm at the Lakeside Amphitheater, featuring millions of twinkling lights, Santa's workshop, ice skating under the stars and themed rides --- a Gilroy tradition since 2004! Gilroy Gardens Holiday Lights is open 4 – 9 p.m. on selected dates throughout the month of December. www.gilroyvisitor.org

Spend the Night

DAY 2

Monterey next morning down Hwy 101 to 156 West to HWY 1, 45 miles, 45 minutes

Step back into Monterey's past during Christmas in the Adobes. See the adobes by candlelight as volunteers in period attire welcome you into historic homes decorated in historical style. The twenty 19th-century adobes, lit by luminaries and enhanced with period decorations, are within an easy walk of each other, so you can enjoy the wide array of tasty refreshments and celebratory music that each has to offer. Learn while you celebrate. Docents and volunteers will be on hand to tell the story of each of these charming buildings, many of which are only open to the public during this celebration. Special activities are also planned at the state parks. Activities vary each year but can include tree lights, historic reenactments, light parades, and the fishing fleet dressing up in lights. More information: www.seemonterey.com

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Spend the night

DAY 3

South on HWY 1 to Hearst Castle, 98 miles, 2.5 Hours

Driving down the No. 1 Scenic Highway in the USA” to San Luis Obispo County, you will view the spouts of migrating whales in pods along with the spectacular coastline, the quaint village of Big Sur and numerous State Parks. When you arrive at Hearst Castle during the holiday season, you will experience the castle as it might have been on Christmas in the 1920s or 1930s. The Experience Tour is an excellent tour to see many of the decorated rooms. The staff at Hearst Castle decorates the estate for the Holidays, creating a special atmosphere that is sure to get you in the Holiday spirit. Christmas at the Castle is an event that is not to be missed! The Evening Tour program includes Living History Docents dressed in 1930s period clothing, along with holiday decorations in many of the rooms plus two 18-foot Christmas trees filling the Assembly Room. www.SanLuisObispoCounty.com

Continue South on HWY 1, to San Luis Obispo 46 miles, 1.25 hours

Spend the Night

DAY 4

Drive South on HWY 1 to HWY 101 to Solvang, 46 miles, 1.25 hr

“Little Denmark’s” streets are decked with thousands of twinkling lights, and more than 150 boutiques and specialty shops beckon. Enjoy carolers, choirs and free concerts throughout the village. Annual Julefest highlights a Tree-lighting Ceremony with live music and dance; Julefest Parade with Grand Marshals Santa and Mrs. Claus. A choir, actors and live animals bring the “Christmas Story” to life in the Nativity Pageant along with Community Caroling Party. All events are free. For a complete schedule, visit www.SolvangUSA.com.

Spend the Night

DAY 5

Take 246 West then Drive South Hwy 101/Hwy 1 along the Ocean to Santa Barbara, 45 miles, 1 hour

Visit Santa Barbara to soak up holiday cheer, enjoy festive local traditions and take advantage of stellar shopping without big city crowds. Get a head start on your shopping at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History's Annual Folk & Tribal Arts Marketplace, which occurs during the first weekend in December (Friday-Sunday). Attendees can find unique and wonderful gifts from over 50 countries while watching international dance and musical performances. The Annual Downtown Holiday Parade lights up State Street on the first Friday of the month. More than 50,000 spectators will be treated to a

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colossal contingent of high-stepping marching bands, giant helium balloons, fabulous holiday floats, spectacular performance groups, local personalities, the annual arrival of Santa Claus, and the lighting of the large Christmas tree. The holiday spirit takes to the sea the second Sunday in December for the Annual Harbor Parade of Lights, which includes Santa's Village, a Boat Parade and fireworks.

www.SantaBarbaraCA.com

Spend the Night

DAY 6

Drive South on HWY 1 along the Ocean to Ventura, 27 miles, 30 minutes

Ventura County is home to a wide variety of Annual Winter Events that warm the heart, ignite the imagination and capture the call of the wild. The holidays offer a vast array of ways to capture the spirit of the season in style. Ventura Harbor hosts the popular boat Parade of Lights & Fireworks each third weekend in December for two nights. This festive event features carnival rides, faux snowfall and visits with Santa. On Saturday evenings, Santa and his sleigh fly over the Ventura Harbor for all the guests to see. December is also the time for Ventura Harbor's Winter Wonderland. On the third Sunday of December, you can visit with holiday characters and enjoy carolers, live reindeer, ice carving, faux snowfall, a carnival and much more. Historical landmarks, such as the Pierpont Inn, Camarillo Ranch House, as well as Oxnard's Heritage Square and Christmas Tree Lane in the Henry T. Oxnard Historical District, each deck the halls in rich tradition. www.ventura-usa.com

Spend the Night

DAY 7

***Continue South to LAX on HWY 101 for 72 miles, 1 hour and 10 minutes depending on traffic
Depart out of Los Angeles***