

The Original RoadTrip: California's Central Coast Young Families Fun



7 Day Itinerary traveling from Los Angeles to San Francisco

DAY 1

Arrive at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) and drive approximately 62 miles / 100km, 1 hour 12 minutes, to Ventura County (recommended drive: 405 North & 101 North)

DAY 2

Spend the day in Ventura County

Ventura County is a perfect playground for young families and the young-at-heart. Experience fun on the farm at Underwood Family Farms and McGrath Farms, both providing back-to-basics learning activities, tours and more. At Underwood Family Farms, you can pick your own produce, visit the petting zoo, and sample fresh produce at the Farm Market. McGrath Family Farms is a sustainable farm that grows organic produce and also has a Farmer's Market conveniently open seven days a week. Ride the rails through the fragrant citrus groves of Heritage Valley in vintage style aboard the historic Fillmore & Western Railway with seasonally themed trains and family fun throughout the year! Hands-on educational opportunities thrive at both the Museum of Ventura County (every third Sunday of the month) and Oxnard's Gull Wings Children's Museum (Tuesdays – Saturdays). Both Channel Islands Harbor and Ventura Harbor offer great opportunities, including day trips to Channel Islands National Park. www.visitoxnard.com or www.ventura-usa.com

Overnight in Ventura County

DAY 3

Drive 61 miles / 98.2 km, 1 hour and 24 minutes, to Solvang and Santa Ynez Valley in Santa Barbara County (recommended drive: 101 North to Highway 246)

Checking out fascinating fauna is fun for kids of all ages! All places are open to the public (some fees may apply). Please call ahead for hours of operation. Start at **Ostrich Land**, a 33-acre breeding farm, to see and feed more than 100 ostriches, and to get an up-close view of some emus (610 E. Highway 246, Buellton, 805-686-9696). Just a few blocks to the east is **Flag Is Up Farms**, home of Monty Roberts, the "Man Who Listens to Horses," where visitors are welcome to see the equine facilities and trainers in action (901 E. Highway 246, Solvang, 805-688-9709). 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. Visitors are welcome daily for FREE viewing from 10 a.m.- 3 p.m. (1555 Alamo Pintado Road, Solvang, 805-686-4002). www.SantaYnezValleyVisit.com

Overnight in Santa Barbara County

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DAY 4

***Drive 79 miles / 127.14 km, 1 hour and 28 minutes, to Morro Bay in San Luis Obispo County
(recommended drive: 101 North to Highway 1 North)***

The Morro Bay State Park Museum of Natural History and nearby Elfin Forrest are perfect San Luis Obispo County destinations to explore with young families. The Natural History Museum sits on a hill overlooking the world-famous Morro Rock and Morro Bay Estuary, a unique habitat where fresh water meets ocean water. There are over 26 interactive exhibits designed to delight and educate. Docents are available for guided walks. And while you are visiting the area, take time for a walk through the Elfin Forest Natural Area, and you will believe in the magic of elves. This unique small wilderness at the edge of the bay is a diverse and complex assemblage of natural plant communities and home to many threatened and endangered species. Its name is derived from the stunted live oaks (Pygmy Oaks) growing on sand dunes with limited water and nutrients. For more information visit www.sanluisobispo.com

DAY 5

***Drive 210 miles / 337.96 km, 4 hours and 52 minutes, to Monterey in San Luis Obispo County
(recommended drive: Highway 1 North, to Highway 46 East, to Highway 101 North, to Highway 68 West, to Highway 1 South)***

Kids love animals and nature, and Monterey County is home to many of the finest. Start at the Monterey Bay Aquarium on historic Cannery Row to learn all about life below the surface of Monterey Bay. There are special programs for children of various ages, including behind-the-scenes tours, touch ponds, and even a beginning scuba diving program. Just next door is Pacific Grove, which isn't called "Butterfly Town, USA" for nothing! From October to February, thousands of butterflies make the Monarch Grove Butterfly Sanctuary in Pacific Grove their home. Saunter down to Old Fisherman's Wharf in Monterey and listen for the sound of barking from the sea lions sunning on the rocks, as well as pelicans, terns and gulls circling above. While at the wharf, book one of the day trips out onto Monterey Bay to get up close and personal with the gentle giants of the sea – whales. Finish up with dinner at one of many seafood restaurants with special kids menus. www.seemonterey.com

Additional reasons for pit-stops along Hwy 101 North as you make your way to Monterey:

- Atascadero: Charles Paddock Zoo
- Paso Robles: Paso Children's Museum
- Paso Robles: The WineYard at Steinbeck Vineyards
- Paso Robles: The Ravine water park
- San Miguel: Old Mission San Miguel

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- Fort Hunter Liggett/Camp Roberts: military bases that you can see from the highway. You cannot tour them; however, you will be able to see the barracks and other buildings as you drive past.

Overnight in Monterey County

DAY 6

Drive 43 miles / 69.2 km, 50 minutes, to Santa Cruz in Santa Cruz County (recommended drive: Highway 1)

Santa Cruz is undoubtedly the quintessential California beach town. Surfers tote their boards through local neighborhoods on their way to the beach while families relax on the sand. Set along Santa Cruz's Main Beach, adjacent to the wharf, the **Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk** is alive with year-round excitement. Already Northern California's favorite amusement park, the century-old Boardwalk was named "Best Seaside Amusement Park," in the world by amusement industry experts. The Giant Dipper, the park's centerpiece, is a vintage wooden roller coaster that has thrilled visitors for over 85 years. Seventy-three hand-carved horses prance proudly to the music from two beautiful antiques, the park's original 342-pipe Ruth band organ and a showy Wurlitzer 165 band organ, at the famous Loeff Carousell, built in 1911. A free summertime concert series at the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk on Friday nights also draws crowds ready to hear the hits of the '60s, '70s and '80s. www.santacruzcounty.travel

Overnight in Santa Cruz County

DAY 7

To depart out of San Francisco International Airport (SFO) drive approximately 60 miles / 96 km, 1 hour 10 minutes, from Santa Cruz County