

welcome to Coastal California



Beaches & Outdoors

In all of your California daydreaming, palm trees, golden sands and Pacific sunsets beckon, right? Here's the good news: in coastal California, those cinematic fantasies really can come true. You can learn to surf, drink a cocktail with your feet in the sand, play a game of pickup volleyball or join a drum circle. Beach towns from Santa Cruz south to San Diego, each with its own idiosyncratic personality, give you perfect excuses to hit the road. Heading north of San Francisco, dramatically windswept beaches have inspired generations of poets and painters, offering miles of oceanfront for beachcombing and tramping in solitude. If you can tear yourself

away from the ocean, myriad adventures await on land. When that infamous San Andreas Fault shakes, rattles and rolls, think of it as a reminder of just how wild the coastal California experience can be.

Big Cities, Small Towns

No less astoundingly diverse than the landscape are all of the people who have staked their fortunes on coastal California. Start out exploring San Francisco's eclectic neighborhoods, from beatnik North Beach and historic Chinatown to arty SoMa and the hipsterville Mission. Then join the star-crossed paparazzi as they chase TV and silver-screen celebrities with their glam entourages in LA. Hang with radical



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From towering coast redwoods in foggy Northern California to the perfectly sun-kissed surf beaches of Southern California, these 1100 miles of Pacific Coast are a knockout beauty.

(left) Crescent Bay (p417), Orange County
(below) Outdoor dining, San Francisco (p48)



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tree-sitting lefties in the Humboldt Nation, live the very good life in California's wine country towns, get groovy with modern-day hippies in Santa Cruz and new-age gurus in San Diego's North County, or talk fishing with salty dogs in old port towns like Eureka, Bodega Bay and Monterey.

Food & Drink

Maybe your coastal sojourn will be an epicurean quest. Finding the most-killer fish tacos in San Diego alone could take days or even weeks. San Francisco and Los Angeles are all-around global foodie capitals, where citizens passionately argue about the best sushi bar, gourmet food truck or pop-up kitchen. LA is also a melting pot

of multicultural cooking, from Little Tokyo and Thai Town to the tamale shops of East LA. Follow your nose and let it lead you serendipitously up and down California's coastal highways, stopping at rollicking seafood shacks, brewpubs and farmers markets, or follow two-lane back roads that wind past pastoral vineyards. You'll never be able to eat or drink your fill here, but that just gives you an irresistible excuse to come back and do it all over again.

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