



# Coastal California



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## PLAN YOUR TRIP

Welcome to Coastal California.....	4
Coastal California Map ...	6
Coastal California's Top 25.....	8
Need to Know .....	20
If You Like.....	22
Month by Month.....	26
Itineraries .....	28
Beaches, Swimming & Surfing.....	32
Outdoor Activities .....	35
Travel with Children....	42
Regions at a Glance....	45



BIG SUR P275



SANTA BARBARA WINE COUNTRY P326

## ON THE ROAD

### SAN FRANCISCO ... 48

### MARIN COUNTY & THE BAY AREA .... 88

<b>Marin County .....</b>	<b>90</b>
Marin Headlands .....	90
Sausalito .....	95
Tiburon.....	97
San Rafael.....	100
Mill Valley.....	101
Mt Tamalpais State Park...102	
Muir Woods National Monument.....	103
Bolinas.....	105
Olema & Nicasio.....	106
Point Reyes Station.....	106
Inverness .....	107
Point Reyes National Seashore .....	107
<b>East Bay.....</b>	<b>109</b>
Oakland .....	109
Berkeley.....	118
Mt Diablo State Park....	127
John Muir National Historic Site .....	128
Vallejo.....	128
<b>The Peninsula .....</b>	<b>128</b>
San Jose .....	130
Half Moon Bay to Santa Cruz.....	136

### NAPA & SONOMA WINE COUNTRY ... 139

<b>Napa Valley .....</b>	<b>142</b>
Napa.....	146
Yountville.....	151
Oakville & Rutherford ...	154
St Helena.....	155
Calistoga & Around .....	159
<b>Sonoma Valley .....</b>	<b>164</b>
Sonoma & Around .....	168
Glen Ellen & Kenwood...	173

### Russian River Area .... 175

Sebastopol .....	179
Occidental & Around ....	182
Guerneville & Around ...	183
Santa Rosa .....	188
Healdsburg & Around ...	190

### NORTH COAST & REDWOODS..... 195

#### Coastal Highway 1 .... 197

Bodega Bay.....	197
Jenner .....	200
Salt Point State Park....	202
Sea Ranch .....	202
Gualala & Anchor Bay ...	203
Point Arena .....	204
Manchester .....	205
Elk.....	206
Van Damme State Park...206	
Mendocino.....	206
Jug Handle State Reserve .....	211
Fort Bragg .....	212
MacKerricher State Park...215	
Westport .....	215
<b>Along Highway 101....</b>	<b>215</b>
Hopland .....	216
Clear Lake .....	217
Anderson Valley .....	219
Ukiah .....	221
Willits .....	223

#### Southern Redwood Coast..... 225

Leggett.....	225
Richardson Grove State Park.....	226
Benbow Lake.....	226
Garberville.....	227
Lost Coast.....	228
Humboldt Redwoods State Park & Avenue of the Giants .....	230

# Contents

## UNDERSTAND

Scotia.....	232
Ferndale.....	232
Eureka.....	234
Samoa Peninsula.....	237
Arcata.....	237
<b>Northern Redwood Coast.....</b>	<b>241</b>
Trinidad.....	241
Patrick's Point State Park.....	243
Humboldt Lagoons State Park.....	243
Redwood National & State Parks.....	243
Klamath.....	246
Crescent City.....	247

## CENTRAL COAST .. 250

<b>Along Highway 1.....</b>	<b>252</b>
Santa Cruz.....	252
Around Santa Cruz.....	260
Monterey.....	262
Pacific Grove.....	271
Carmel-by-the-Sea.....	273
Big Sur.....	275
Point Piedras Blancas.....	284
Hearst Castle.....	284
San Simeon.....	285
Cambria.....	286
Morro Bay.....	288
Montaña de Oro State Park.....	290
<b>Along Highway 101.....</b>	<b>291</b>
San Juan Bautista.....	291
Salinas.....	292
Pinnacles National Park.....	294
Mission San Antonio De Padua.....	294
Paso Robles.....	295
San Luis Obispo.....	297
Avila Beach.....	302
Pismo Beach.....	305

## SANTA BARBARA COUNTY..... 308

<b>Santa Barbara.....</b>	<b>310</b>
<b>Santa Barbara Wine Country.....</b>	<b>326</b>
Los Olivos.....	332
Solvang.....	333
Buellton.....	336
<b>Around Santa Barbara ..</b>	<b>337</b>
Montecito.....	337
Summerland.....	338
Carpinteria.....	338
Ojai.....	339
Ventura.....	341
Channel Islands National Park.....	343

## LOS ANGELES..... 347

## DISNEYLAND & ORANGE COUNTY .. 383

<b>Disneyland &amp; Anaheim</b>	<b>386</b>
Old Towne Orange . . . . .	396
Seal Beach. . . . .	400
Huntington Beach . . . . .	401
Newport Beach. . . . .	403
Around Newport Beach. .	408
Laguna Beach. . . . .	418
Dana Point. . . . .	423

## SAN DIEGO & AROUND ..... 425

<b>Central &amp; Coastal San Diego ....</b>	<b>427</b>
La Jolla.....	450
Del Mar.....	453
Cardiff-by-the-Sea.....	456
Encinitas.....	456
Carlsbad.....	457
Oceanside.....	459

<b>Coastal California Today .....</b>	<b>462</b>
<b>History.....</b>	<b>464</b>
<b>California Flavor.....</b>	<b>472</b>
<b>The People &amp; Way of Life.....</b>	<b>479</b>
<b>Music &amp; the Arts .....</b>	<b>484</b>
<b>Redwoods &amp; Wild Things .....</b>	<b>489</b>
<b>Earthquakes &amp; the Land .....</b>	<b>492</b>

## SURVIVAL GUIDE

<b>Directory A–Z .....</b>	<b>498</b>
<b>Transportation .....</b>	<b>506</b>
<b>Index.....</b>	<b>515</b>
<b>Map Legend.....</b>	<b>526</b>

## SPECIAL FEATURES

<b>Alcatraz 3D Illustration .....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>San Francisco by Cable Car.....</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Southern California's Best Beaches .....</b>	<b>398</b>
<b>Pacific Coast Highways.....</b>	<b>409</b>

# Itineraries



**3**  
DAYS

## San Diego & North County

The best part about San Diego? It's almost always around 68°F (20°C) and sunny. Add insanely good Mexican food, beaches of all stripes, historic sites and one of the best zoos in the world (plus an open-range safari park). Are you sold yet?

Spend a couple of days at San Diego's Pearl-like beaches, stretching all the way up the North County Coast. But before you head northward, drive out to **Point Loma** for sweeping views, or take a ferry over to old-fashioned **Coronado**, with its famous 'Hotel Del.' Ride the Giant Dipper roller coaster at family-friendly **Mission Beach**, join the funky surfers at **Pacific Beach**, dive or snorkel in gorgeous **La Jolla**, bet on horse races or soar in a hot-air balloon at **Del Mar**, and get new-agey in **Encinitas**.

On day three, if you have kids, make a beeline to the suburban **San Diego Zoo Safari Park**, where giraffes, lions and zebras roam. Otherwise, head back to **San Diego** to explore the zoo at museum-loaded Balboa Park and the atmospheric Spanish-Mexican Old Town. End your trip with a wild night out in the city's Gaslamp Quarter downtown.

5  
DAYS

## San Francisco, Marin County & Wine Country

Clamber around the hilly 7-sq-mile peninsula that is dashing, innovative and ever-evolving San Francisco. Then soak up the natural beauty of Marin County before indulging in a wine-splashed weekend in Napa and Sonoma.

Start with a day in **San Francisco** uncovering the alleyways of Chinatown, wandering the Mission District and climbing Coit Tower. Brave the fog on a cruise to Alcatraz from Fisherman's Wharf, or lose yourself on a sunny day in Golden Gate Park, stopping to smell the flowers where hippies danced during 1967's 'Summer of Love.' Wherever you roam, eat everything in sight – especially at the waterfront Ferry Building Marketplace.

Escape the city on day two via the landmark Golden Gate Bridge, which you can trek, cycle or drive across. On the far side of the bay, photograph the floating houseboats of picturesque **Sausalito**, or go hiking and mountain-biking across the **Marin Headlands**, where a swinging footbridge leads to historic Point Bonita Lighthouse. To really get away from it all, hop aboard the ferry from Tiburon over to **Angel Island**, within view of San Francisco's skyscrapers.

Meander north along the Marin County coast on day three, passing the tall redwood trees of **Muir Woods National Monument**, crescent-shaped **Stinson Beach** and the turnoff to quirky small-town **Bolinas**. Veer inland to conquer **Mt Tamalpais** or make your way to wildly beautiful **Point Reyes National Seashore**, where end-of-the-world beaches lead to long rambles, and you can spy whales in winter from the historic lighthouse. Save time for sea kayaking at nearby **Tamales Bay**.

Finish with two days in wine country. From Bodega Bay, country roads wind inland to charming **Occidental** and the vineyards of the **Russian River Valley**. Paddle a canoe downriver to **Guerneville**, with its redwood cottages and swimming by the beach in summer. Truck east across Hwy 101, then head south into Northern California's wine country, orbiting stylish **Napa** and its countrified but still-chic cousin **Sonoma**. Soak your road-weary bones in a volcanic mud bath at a hot-springs spa in **Calistoga** before winding down in posh **Healdsburg**.



## Los Angeles & Orange County

Kick things off in Los Angeles, where top-notch attractions, miles of beaches and tasty food form an irresistible trifecta, before tripping through OC's theme parks and beaches.

On your first two days in **Los Angeles**, traipse along the star-studded sidewalks of clubby Hollywood, dive into the arts and cultural scenes Downtown, and browse the Mid-City's many museums and West LA's hilltop Getty Center. Out at the Pacific's edge, sophisticated Santa Monica beckons with a carnival seaside pier and creative restaurants, while alternative Venice lives and breathes beachy boho-chic style.

Heading inland on day three, make a date with Mickey at perfectly 'imagineered' **Disneyland** and next-door **Disney California Adventure**, celebrating the Golden State. Both parks are in Anaheim, not far from **Knott's Berry Farm**, America's oldest theme park, which pairs Old Western cowboy themes with high-tech roller coasters. If it's too darn hot, cool off at Knott's Soak City Orange County water park.

Drop by the family-friendly, interactive Discovery Science Center or peruse the art galleries of the Bowers Museum in **Santa Ana**. Catch your breath in time-warped **Old Town Orange**, clustered with antiques stores, or **Little Saigon**, where you can trade theme-park hot dogs for a steaming bowl of pho.

On day four, motor west toward the ocean. In **Huntington Beach**, aka 'Surf City, USA,' rent a board, play beach volleyball, build a bonfire after sunset. Hit **Newport Beach** for soap opera-worthy people-watching by the piers. Make a quick stop for power shopping in **Costa Mesa**, then roll south to **Laguna Beach**, a former artists' colony with more than two dozen public beaches to spoil you, plus fashionable downtown boutiques.

Slingshot back toward the I-5 on your last day, stopping off at **Mission San Juan Capistrano** for a glimpse of Spanish colonial and Mexican history. Or keep up the beach-bum attitude by slacking south to **Dana Point**, with its yacht-filled harbor and beach, and retro **San Clemente**, near Trestles, a year-round surf break.



Top: Hollywood Walk of Fame (p349), Los Angeles. Hollywood Walk of Fame™ & Design © 2014 HCC. All Rights Reserved  
Bottom: Dana Point harbor (p423)



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**Beth Kohn**

**Marin County & the Bay Area** A lucky long-time resident of San Francisco, Beth lives to be playing outside or splashing in big puddles of water. For this and the *California* guide, she hiked and biked Bay Area byways, backpacked Yosemite and Lake Tahoe in winter and soaked in myriad mountain view hot springs. An author of Lonely Planet's *Yosemite, Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks* and *Mexico* guides, you can see more of her work at [www.bethkohn.com](http://www.bethkohn.com).



**Adam Skolnick**

**Los Angeles** Adam Skolnick has written about travel, culture, health, sports, human rights and the environment for Lonely Planet, *New York Times*, *Outside*, *Men's Health*, *Travel & Leisure*, *Salon.com*, *BBC.com* and *ESPN.com*. He has authored or co-authored 25 Lonely Planet guidebooks. Find him on Twitter and Instagram (@adamskolnick).



**John A Vlahides**

**Napa & Sonoma Wine Country** John A Vlahides co-hosts the TV series *Lonely Planet: Roads Less Travelled*, screening on National Geographic Channels International. John studied cooking in Paris, with the same chefs who trained Julia Child, and is also a former luxury-hotel concierge and member of Les Clefs d'Or, the international union of the world's elite concierges. He lives in San Francisco, sings tenor with the Grammy-winning San Francisco Symphony, and spends free time biking SF and skiing the Sierra. For more, see [JohnVlahides.com](http://JohnVlahides.com), [twitter.com/JohnVlahides](https://twitter.com/JohnVlahides).

Read more about John at:  
[lonelyplanet.com/members/johnvlahides](http://lonelyplanet.com/members/johnvlahides)



## OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Beijing and Delhi, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

## OUR WRITERS



### Sara Benson

**Coordinating Author, Santa Barbara County, Central Coast, Southern California's Best Beaches** After graduating from college, Sara jumped on a plane to California with just one suitcase and \$100 in her pocket. After driving tens of thousands of miles to every corner of this state, she settled in a little beach town halfway between San Francisco and LA. She's an avid hiker, backpacker, cyclist and all-seasons outdoor enthusiast who has worked for the National Park Service in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The author of more than 65 travel and nonfiction books, Sara is the lead writer for Lonely Planet's *California*, *California's Best Trips*, *Coastal California* and *Los Angeles, San Diego & Southern California* guides. Follow her latest adventures online at [www.indietraveler.blogspot.com](http://www.indietraveler.blogspot.com), [www.indietraveler.net](http://www.indietraveler.net), @indie\_traveler on Twitter and indietraveler on Instagram.

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### Andrew Bender

**Disneyland & Orange County, San Diego & Around** Andy is a true Angeleno, not because he was born in Los Angeles but because he's made it his own. This native New Englander drove cross-country to work in film production, and eventually realized that the joy was in the journey (and writing about it). He writes the Seat 1A travel site for Forbes, and his writing has also appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*, in-flight magazines and over three dozen LP titles. Current obsessions: discovering SoCal's next great ethnic enclave, and photographing winter sunsets over the Pacific.



### Alison Bing

**San Francisco** Over 10 guidebooks and 20 years in San Francisco, author Alison Bing has spent more time on Alcatraz than some inmates, become an aficionado of drag and burritos, and willfully ignored Muni signs warning that "safety requires avoiding unnecessary conversation."



### Celeste Brash

**North Coast & Redwoods** Celeste's ancestors moved to Northern California in 1906 and this is the region she will always consider home. After 15 years in French Polynesia she now lives in the Pacific Northwest and was thrilled to head south to explore and imbibe the treasures of her old stomping grounds, hike snowy peaks, find petroglyphs in caves, be awed by redwoods and seduced by the wild coast. Find out more about Celeste at [www.celestebrash.com](http://www.celestebrash.com).

OVER MORE  
PAGE WRITERS

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