

California

Includes →

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Best Places to Eat

- Benu (p982)
- Chez Panisse (p993)
- French Laundry (p996)
- George's at the Cove (p942)
- Bazaar (p924)

Best Places to Hike

- Yosemite National Park (p1009)
- Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks (p1013)
- Marin County (p991)
- Redwood National & State Parks (p1001)

Why Go?

With bohemian spirit and high-tech savvy, not to mention a die-hard passion for the good life – whether that means cracking open a bottle of old-vine Zinfandel, climbing a 14,000ft peak or surfing the Pacific – California soars beyond any expectations sold on Hollywood's silver screens.

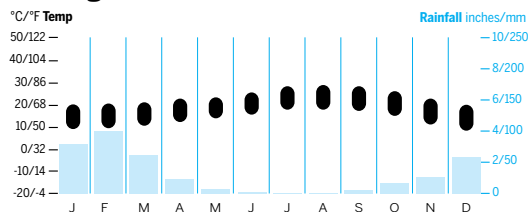
More than anything, California is iconic. It was here that the hurly-burly gold rush kicked off in the mid-19th century, poet-naturalist John Muir rhapsodized about the Sierra Nevada's 'range of light,' and Jack Kerouac and the Beat Generation defined what it really means to hit the road.

California's multicultural melting pot has been cookin' since this bountiful promised land was first staked out by Spain and Mexico. Today, waves of immigrants from around the world still look to find their own American dream on these palm-tree-studded Pacific shores.

Come see the future in the making in California. Then stay for the beaches.

When to Go

Los Angeles



Jun-Aug Mostly sunny weather, some coastal fog; summer vacation crowds.

Apr-May & Sep-Oct Cooler nights, mostly cloudless days; travel bargains.

Nov-Mar Peak tourism at mountain ski resorts and in SoCal's warm deserts.

DON'T MISS

You can't leave California without hugging a tree! We suggest a coast redwood, which can live for 2000 years and grow to 379ft tall.

Fast Facts

- ➔ **Hub cities** Los Angeles (population 3,819,702), San Francisco (population 812,826)
- ➔ **Driving time** LA to San Francisco (5½ hours via inland I-5 & I-580 Fwys, 8½ hours via coastal Hwys 101 & 1)
- ➔ **Time zone** Pacific Standard

Did You Know?

Just a few of California's inventions: the internet and the iPad, power yoga and reality TV, the space shuttle and Mickey Mouse, the Cobb salad and the fortune cookie.

Resources

- ➔ **California Travel & Tourism Commission** (www.visitcalifornia.com) Official state tourism info.
- ➔ **California Department of Transportation** (www.dot.ca.gov/cgi-bin/roads.cgi) Road conditions and highway closures.
- ➔ **USGS Earthquake Hazards** (<http://quake.usgs.gov/recenteqs/latest.htm>) Real-time earthquake maps.

Getting There & Around

Los Angeles (LAX) and San Francisco (SFO) are major international airports. Small airports in San Diego, Orange County, Oakland, San Jose, Sacramento, Burbank, Long Beach and Santa Barbara handle primarily domestic flights.

Four long-distance Amtrak routes connect California with the rest of the USA: *California Zephyr* (Chicago–San Francisco Bay Area), *Coast Starlight* (Seattle–Los Angeles), *Southwest Chief* (Chicago–LA) and *Sunset Limited* (New Orleans–LA). Amtrak's intrastate routes include the *Pacific Surfliner* (San Diego–LA–Santa Barbara–San Luis Obispo), the *Capitol Corridor* (San Jose–Oakland–Berkeley–Sacramento) and the *San Joaquin* (Bakersfield to Oakland or Sacramento, with Yosemite Valley buses from Merced).

Greyhound buses travel to many corners of the state. But to really get out and explore, especially away from the coast, you'll need a car.

CALIFORNIA'S NATIONAL & STATE PARKS

Yosemite and Sequoia became California's first national parks in 1890, and today there are seven more: Kings Canyon, Death Valley, Joshua Tree, Channel Islands, Redwood, Lassen Volcanic and Pinnacles. The **National Park Service** (www.nps.gov) manages two dozen other historic sites, monuments, nature preserves and recreational areas statewide. Entry fees vary from nothing up to \$25 per vehicle for a seven-day pass; campsites cost up to \$20 nightly. **Recreation.gov** ([☎ 877-444-6777](tel:877-444-6777), 518-885-3639; www.recreation.gov) handles camping reservations for all federal lands.

California's 280 **state parks** ([☎ 800-777-0369](tel:800-777-0369), 916-653-6995; www.parks.ca.gov) are a diverse bunch – everything from marine preserves to redwood forests – protecting a third of the coastline and offering 3000 miles of hiking, biking and equestrian trails. Some state parks may be closed or have reduced opening hours due to budget cutbacks (call ahead or check the website). Day-use parking fees are \$4 to \$15, campsites \$5 to \$75 nightly. **ReserveAmerica** ([☎ 800-444-7275](tel:800-444-7275); www.reserveamerica.com) handles state-park camping reservations.

Top Five California Beaches

- ➔ **Huntington Beach** (p932) Bonfires, beach volleyball and rolling waves in 'Surf City USA.'
- ➔ **Coronado** (p935) Sun yourself along San Diego's boundless Silver Strand.
- ➔ **Zuma** (p917) Aquamarine waters, frothy surf and tawny sand near Malibu.
- ➔ **Santa Cruz** (p961) Surf's up! And the beach boardwalk's carnival fun never stops.
- ➔ **Point Reyes** (p992) Wild, windy, walkable beaches for sunsets and wildlife watching.