



California

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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 vintage bottle of Zinfandel, summiting 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. 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 staked out by Spain and Mexico. Today waves of immigrants still look to find their own American dream on these palm-tree-studded Pacific shores. It’s time for you to join them.

Best Places to Eat

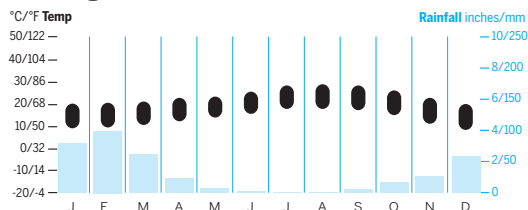
- » Benu (p138)
- » Chez Panisse (p148)
- » Zazu (p153)
- » Bazaar (p79)
- » Passionfish (p118)

Best Places to Stay

- » Beverly Hills Hotel (p76)
- » Hotel Del Coronado (p97)
- » Ahwahnee Hotel (p167)
- » Beltane Ranch (p152)
- » Mar Vista Cottages (p155)

When to Go

Los Angeles



Jun-Aug Mostly sunny weather and crowded with families taking summer vacations.

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

Nov-Mar Peak tourism at mountain ski resorts and in SoCal's dry, warm desert regions.

Transportation

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

Four main 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), *Capitol Corridor* (San Jose–Oakland–Berkeley–Sacramento) and *San Joaquin* (Bakersfield to Oakland or Sacramento, with Yosemite Valley buses from Merced).

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

NATIONAL & STATE PARKS

Yosemite and Sequoia became California's first national parks in 1890, and today there are six more: Kings Canyon, Death Valley, Joshua Tree, Channel Islands, Redwood and Lassen Volcanic. The **National Park Service** (NPS; www.nps.gov) also manages almost 20 other historic sites, monuments, nature preserves and recreational areas statewide.

California's 278 **state parks** (☎916-653-6995; www.parks.ca.gov) are a diverse bunch: expect everything from marine preserves to redwood forests, protecting nearly a third of the coastline and offering 3000 miles of hiking, biking and equestrian trails.

For camping on federal lands, see p440. Day-use parking fees are \$4 to \$15; campsites cost \$10 to \$65 nightly. **ReserveAmerica** (☎800-444-7275; www.reserveamerica.com) handles state-park camping reservations.

Warning! Check current park closures and reduced opening hours due to state-budget cutbacks – call ahead or check the park website.

Top Five California Beaches

- » Coronado (p92) Sun yourself along San Diego's boundless Silver Strand.
- » Huntington Beach (p89) Bonfires, beach volleyball and rolling waves in 'Surf City USA.'
- » Zuma (p73) Crystal aquamarine waters, frothy surf and tawny sand, just north of Malibu.
- » Santa Cruz (p118) Surf's up! And the beach boardwalk's carnival fun never stops.
- » Point Reyes (p147) Wild, windy, end-of-the-world beaches, perfect for wildlife watching.

DON'T MISS

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

Fast Facts

- » Population: Los Angeles (3,792,620), San Francisco (805,235)
- » Driving distance: Los Angeles to San Francisco (380 miles)
- » 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)
- » California Highway Information (www.dot.ca.gov/hq/roadinfo)
- » Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (www.fire.ca.gov)
- » USGS Earthquake Hazards (<http://quake.usgs.gov/recenteqs/latest.htm>)