Tackle an epic backpacking route, take a day hike to Punta Gorda Lighthouse, or beachcomb in utterly remote Shelter Cove, an overnight escape.

LOST COAST

One of NorCal’s most scenic drives winds off the Bohemian Highway near wacky Occidental, climbs through forestland and by lush meadows, and delivers you to the roaring blue Pacific.

COLEMAN VALLEY ROAD

Forget overcrowded Yosemite Valley. Head south to Sequoia National Park, where this wildflower-strewn basin shaped by glaciers beckons, with hiking trails to unspoiled alpine lakes.

SAN FRANCISCO PENINSULA

High above Mono Lake, this gold-rush-era mining camp has become a ghost town where 200 buildings stand eerily frozen in time.

BODIE STATE HISTORIC PARK

Dawdle lazily beside waterways and wildlife wetlands, taste farm bounty, and cruise one-stoplight towns with yesteryear saloons and colorful historical sites.

SACRAMENTO–SAN JOAQUIN RIVER DELTA

In a rush to reach Monterey, many drivers skip seeing the coast between San Francisco and Santa Cruz, despite the many state beaches, parks and family farms that line the route.

SAN FRANCISCO PENINSULA

AMADOR COUNTY WINE REGION

Explore one of California’s oldest but least-known wine countries up in the Sierra Nevada foothills, where old Zinfandel grapevines thrive in mineral-rich soil.

SMITH RIVER NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

A geological wonderland of lava flows, spatter cones, shield volcanoes and craters. Strap on a helmet and clamber inside two dozen lava tubes.

LAVA BEDS NATIONAL MONUMENT

One of the state’s last undammed river systems tumbles out of the Siskiyou Mountains, into Redwood National and State Parks. Plan to hike or raft.

SMITH RIVER NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

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ANCIENT BRISTLECONE PINE FOREST

Speeding along Hwy 395 between Mammoth Lakes and Lone Pine, drivers often miss the turn-off to the world’s oldest trees – don’t be one of them.

ANCIENT BRISTLECONE PINE FOREST

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Pinnacles National Park

On the way to nowhere, petite Pinnacles is worth a big detour for a chance to see endangered California condors soaring above spiring rock formations.

Pinnacles National Park

ON THE WAY TO NOWHERE, PETITE PINNACLES IS WORTH A BIG DETOUR FOR A CHANCE TO SEE ENDANGERED CALIFORNIA CONDORS SOARING ABOVE SPIRING ROCK FORMATIONS.