



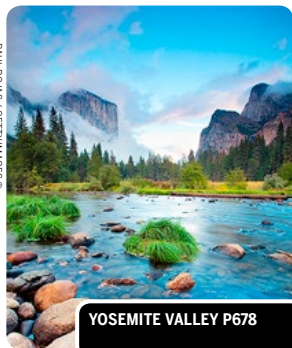
California



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YOSEMITE VALLEY P678



A CALIFORNIA BEACH

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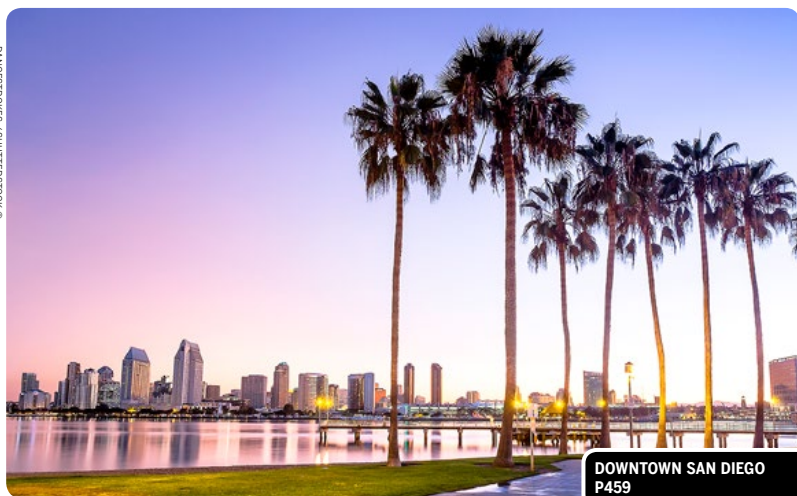
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Itineraries



1
WEEK

Los Angeles to San Francisco

You've got one week to settle California's longest-running debate: which is California's better half, North or South? Start in **Los Angeles** for Hollywood star-spotting, movie premieres and live music. Cruise north to the idyllic beaches of **Malibu**, and hop a boat from **Ventura** to explore island wildlife at **Channel Islands National Park**. Arrive just in time for happy hour at sophisticated **Santa Barbara**, conveniently bordering SoCal wine country.

Follow the monarch butterfly trail to retro-1950s **Pismo Beach**, and plan to arrive in **San Luis Obispo** good and hungry for legendary local BBQ. Take coastal Hwy 1 past offbeat beach towns like **Morro Bay**, **Cayucos** and **Cambria** before you stop and stare at the sprawling landmark to eccentricity known as **Hearst Castle**.

Wind north along dizzying cliff edges through soul-stirring **Big Sur**, where redwood forests rise and waterfalls crash onto the beach in a rainbow shimmer. Dive into California's best aquarium in maritime **Monterey**, and take a bone-rattling antique roller-coaster ride over the beach boardwalk in **Santa Cruz**.

Hwy 1 leads you past lighthouses and strawberry farms, staggering bluffs and fishing harbors to the countercultural capital of **San Francisco**. Now that you've arrived, you may not have settled the great North/South debate – but you can definitely see both sides.



California Classics

Cover the Golden State's greatest hits on this grand tour, starting in San Francisco and ending up over 1400 unforgettable miles later with your toes in the warm sands of San Diego.

Jump aboard a cable car in **San Francisco**, take a walk on the wild side in Golden Gate Park, and hop a ferry to infamous Alcatraz prison. Plan your jailbreak in time for dinner at the Ferry Building, San Francisco's local food landmark.

Cross the Golden Gate Bridge into the rolling hills of **Marin County**. California's most famous grapes grow just east in down-home **Sonoma Valley** and chichi **Napa Valley**. Detour west through more vineyards and apple orchards in rural **Anderson Valley**, and head through redwood forests to **Mendocino**, a postcard-perfect Victorian seaside town.

Swing onto Hwy 101 at **Leggett**, where your magical tour of the Redwood Empire really begins. In **Humboldt Redwoods State Park**, you'll stand in the shadows of the tallest trees on earth. Kick back in the candy-colored Victorian harbor town of **Eureka**, or head north to hang out with artists and environmentalists in the outlandish outpost of **Arcata**.

Turn east on Hwy 299 for a long, scenic trip to hidden **Weaverville**, skirting the lake-laced Trinity Alps. Keep trucking east, then south on I-5 to **Redding**, where families throng Turtle Bay Exploration Park. Climb east on Hwy 44 to the otherworldly moon-scapes of **Lassen Volcanic National Park**, at the southern tip of the Cascades Range.

Go southeast on Hwy 89 to **Lake Tahoe**, the Sierra Nevada's scenic outdoor playground. Roll down the Eastern Sierra's Hwy 395, taking the back-door route via Tioga Rd (open seasonally) into **Yosemite National Park**. Feel your jaw drop as you watch waterfalls tumble over granite cliffs, and enjoy moments of profound silence in groves of giant sequoias.

Zoom south to **Los Angeles** to find as-seen-on-TV beaches, fleets of food trucks and colorful neighborhood characters. Walk in stars' footsteps through Hollywood, then sprawl on the sand in hip Santa Monica or quirky Venice Beach. Cruise south past the beautiful beaches of swanky **Orange County** to hang-loose **San Diego** for epic surf and serious fish tacos. Dude, you've totally got the hang of California.



5 DAYS

LA & Orange County

All-star attractions, bodacious beaches and fresh seafood are yours to discover on this 100-mile Southern California sojourn.

Kick things off in Los Angeles. Skate north from oddball **Venice** to oceanfront **Santa Monica** for sunset carnival rides on the pier. Cram your social feeds with selfies on the star-studded sidewalks of **Hollywood**, then go highbrow with art museums in **Mid-City**, and the symphony hall and Grammy Museum in **downtown LA**.

Over in Anaheim, you've got a hot date with Mickey at Disneyland and wild rides at Disney California Adventure. If **Disneyland Resort** isn't enough adrenaline for you, hit the thrill rides over at **Knott's Berry Farm**, then recuperate in **Old Towne Orange**.

Cruise west to 'Surf City USA': **Huntington Beach**, where you can rent a board, join beach volleyball games and make s'mores over a beach bonfire. Swing by **Newport Beach** for sunset strolls and people-watching by the piers, then roll south to the upscale artists' colony of **Laguna Beach**. Slingshot back toward the I-5, and see what SoCal looked like before achieving international stardom at historic **Mission San Juan Capistrano**.

10 DAYS

SoCal Deserts

You might think you've arrived on another planet, with giant sand dunes, palm-tree oases, volcanic craters, and rainbow cinder cones – but you're just a few hours from LA. Go get lost – and find yourself – on this 800-mile desert drive.

Start in glam **Palm Springs**, where you can sip mojitos poolside, hike to palm-studded canyons and ride a tram into cool pine-scented mountains.

Drive past the Coachella Valley's date farms and along the shores of the mirage-like **Salton Sea**, turning west into wild **Anza-Borrego Desert State Park** to see bighorn sheep and wind-sculpted caves.

Boomerang north to **Joshua Tree National Park**, with its precariously balanced boulders and iconic namesake trees. Keep motoring north into the **Mojave National Preserve**, where you can hear sand dunes sing with the wind and wander the world's largest Joshua-tree forest.

Ready for a change of pace? **Las Vegas**, baby. Quit while you're ahead at the Strip's casinos and run to **Death Valley National Park**. These crackled salt flats and marbled canyons make Mars seem overrated – California is totally out of this world.



10 DAYS

Sierra Nevada Ramble

Nothing can prepare our tiny human minds for the monumental mountain scenery of the Sierra Nevada, with acres of wildflower meadows, gleaming alpine lakes and sun-catching peaks John Muir called the 'Range of Light.' Take this 850-mile trip in summer, when all roads are open to exploration.

To gaze up at the world's biggest trees and down at a gorge deeper than the Grand Canyon, start in **Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks**. Go west, then north to **Yosemite National Park**, where thunderous waterfalls and eroded granite monoliths overhang a verdant valley.

Soar over the Sierra Nevada's snowy rooftop on Yosemite's high-elevation **Tioga Rd** (open seasonally). It's a quick trip south on Hwy 395 to **Mammoth Lakes**, an all-seasons adventure base camp, and 100 more miles to **Lone Pine**, in the shadow of mighty **Mt Whitney**.

Backtracking north, gaze out over **Mono Lake** and its odd-looking tufa formations, which you can paddle past in a kayak. Head to **Lake Tahoe**, a deep-blue jewel framed by jutting peaks with hiking trails and ski-resort slopes. Roll across the Nevada state line for casino nightlife in **Reno**, and return to Tahoe for restorative hot springs.



2 WEEKS

North Coast & Mountains

Follow the ruggedly handsome coastline north of San Francisco past rocky shores, secluded coves and wind-sculpted beaches. Loop back via the majestic Northern Mountains for a memorable 800-mile journey.

Across the Golden Gate Bridge, hike over the **Marin Headlands** or around **Mt Tamalpais**. Locals keep hiding the road signs to **Bolinas**, but you'll find this eccentric cove north of Stinson Beach. Head up to blustery **Point Reyes National Seashore**, and, passing **Bodega Bay**, picnic at stunning **Sonoma Coast State Beach** or **Salt Point State Park**. Next, climb to the tip of **Point Arena Lighthouse**, step through pot-scented mists into enchanted **Mendocino** and ride the Skunk Train at **Fort Bragg**.

Hwy 1 curves inland to Hwy 101, running north into hippie Humboldt County. Hug ancient redwood trees on the **Avenue of the Giants** or head further north through misty **Redwood National and State Parks**.

Cutting east through Oregon to the I-5 southbound, arrive at majestic **Mt Shasta**. Treat yourself to a rest here before heading southeast to **Lassen Volcanic National Park**, a geological wonderland. Take a bracing dip in **Lake Almanor**, near the laid-back mountain town of **Quincy**, and emerge from your trip renewed, body and soul.

Off the Beaten Track



LOST COAST

Escape from it all: beachcomb in remote Shelter Cove, day-hike to Punta Gorda Lighthouse, or tackle an epic backpacking route. (p264)

LAVA BEDS NATIONAL MONUMENT

Explore a moonscape of lava flows, craters, spatter cones, shield volcanoes and lava tubes you can clamber inside. (p575)

AMADOR COUNTY WINE REGION

Discover the secret of Sierra Nevada: a mother lode of spicy old Zinfandel vines. (p630)

BODIE STATE HISTORIC PARK

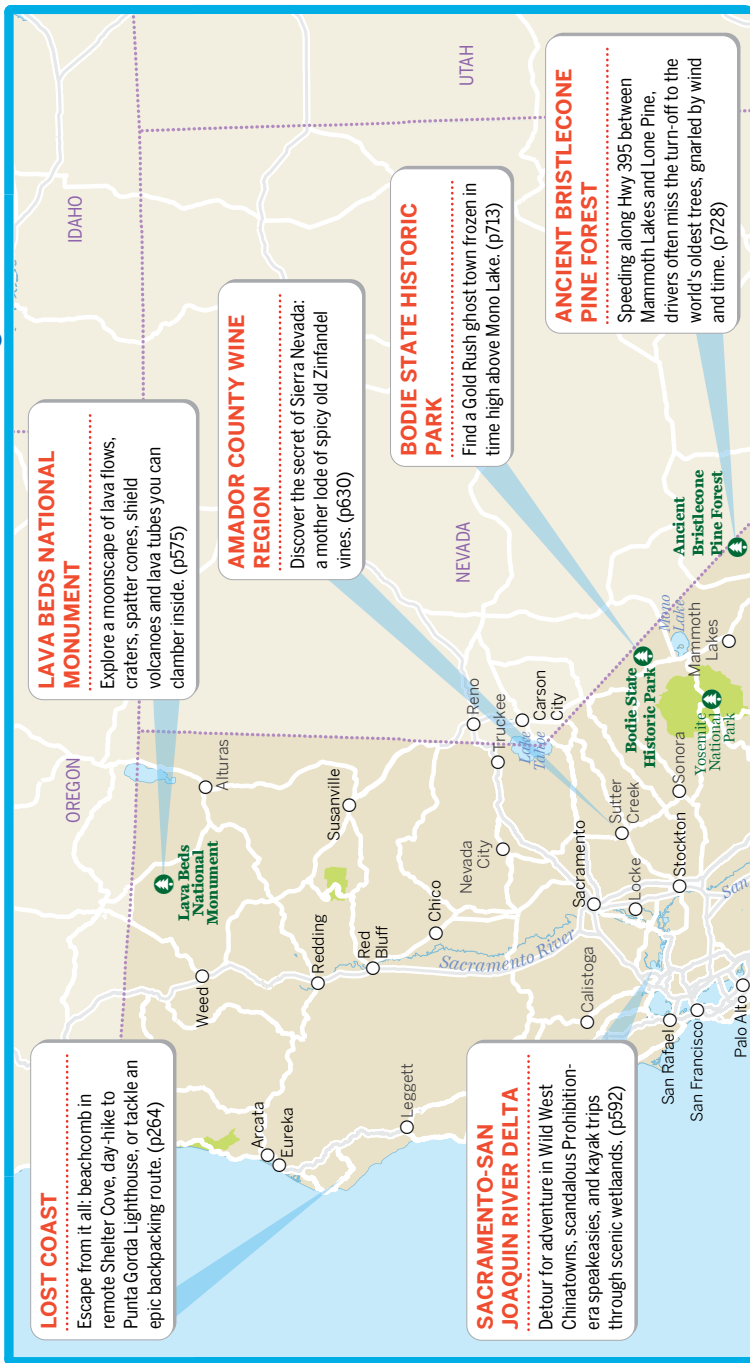
Find a Gold Rush ghost town frozen in time high above Mono Lake. (p713)

SACRAMENTO-SAN JOAQUIN RIVER DELTA

Detour for adventure in Wild West Chinatowns, scandalous Prohibition-era speakeasies, and kayak trips through scenic wetlands. (p592)

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, gnarled by wind and time. (p728)



PINNACLES NATIONAL PARK

Spot endangered condors circling high above rocky spires – a highlight for rock climbers. (p331)

MOJAVE NATIONAL PRESERVE

Restore inner peace in this serene, starkly beautiful stretch of desert, with Joshua trees for company and dunes that will sing you to sleep. (p526)

SEQUOIA NATIONAL PARK

Steer south of Yosemite to find another wonder carved by glaciers: Sequoia National Park, with pristine alpine lakes and a basin carpeted with wildflowers in spring. (p705)

ANZA-BORREGO DESERT STATE PARK

Spelunk into wind-carved caves and spot rare bighorn sheep in the painterly Sonoran Desert. (p517)



Map Legend

Sights

- Beach
- Bird Sanctuary
- Buddhist
- Castle/Palace
- Christian
- Confucian
- Hindu
- Islamic
- Jain
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery/Historic Building
- Ruin
- Shinto
- Sikh
- Taoist
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo/Wildlife Sanctuary
- Other Sight

Activities, Courses & Tours

- Body surfing
- Diving
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Course/Tour
- Sento Hot Baths/Onsen
- Skiing
- Snorkeling
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity

Sleeping

- Sleeping
- Camping

Eating

- Eating

Drinking & Nightlife

- Drinking & Nightlife
- Cafe

Entertainment

- Entertainment

Shopping

- Shopping

Information

- Bank
- Embassy/Consulate
- Hospital/Medical
- Internet
- Police
- Post Office
- Telephone
- Toilet
- Tourist Information
- Other Information

Geographic

- Beach
- Gate
- Hut/Shelter
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- Mountain/Volcano
- Oasis
- Park
- Pass
- Picnic Area
- Waterfall

Population

- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

Transport

- Airport
- BART station
- Border crossing
- Boston T station
- Bus
- Cable car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro/Muni station
- Monorail
- Parking
- Petrol station
- Subway/SkyTrain station
- Taxi
- Train station/Railway
- Tram
- Underground station
- Other Transport

Routes

- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed road
- Road under construction
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour detour
- Path/Walking Trail

Boundaries

- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

Hydrography

- River, Creek
- Intermittent River
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Reef

Areas

- Airport/Runway
- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Glacier
- Mudflat
- Park/Forest
- Sight (Building)
- Sportsground
- Swamp/Mangrove

Note: Not all symbols displayed above appear on the maps in this book



Celeste Brash

Northern Mountains Like many California natives, Celeste now lives in Portland, Oregon. She arrived, however, after 15 years in French Polynesia, a year and a half in Southeast Asia and a stint teaching English as a second language in Brighton, England – among other things. She's been writing guidebooks for Lonely Planet since 2005 and her travel articles have appeared in *BBC Travel* and *National Geographic*.



Jade Bremner

San Diego Jade has been a journalist for more than a decade. Wherever she goes she finds action sports to try – the weirder the better – and it's no coincidence many of her favorite places have some of the best waves in the world. Jade has edited travel magazines and sections for *Time Out* and *Radio Times* and has been a correspondent for the *Times*, CNN and the *Independent*.



Nate Cavalieri

Sacramento & the Central Valley Nate is a writer and musician based in Oakland, California, and has authored over a dozen titles for Lonely Planet including guides to California, the Caribbean and Latin America, and *Epic Bike Rides of the World*. He's cycled across China and Southern Africa as a guide with Tour d'Afrique, played third chair percussion in an Orlando theme park and accompanied modern dance classes.



Michael Grosberg

Yosemite & the Sierra Nevada Michael has worked on over 45 Lonely Planet guidebooks, from Myanmar to New Jersey. Other work has included development on the island of Rota in the western Pacific, writing about political violence in South Africa, and teaching in Ecuador. He has a Masters in Comparative Literature, and taught literature and writing as an adjunct professor at several New York colleges.



Ashley Harrell

Napa & Sonoma Wine Country After a brief stint selling day-spa coupons door-to-door in South Florida, Ashley decided she'd rather be a writer. She has traveled widely and moved often, from a tiny NYC apartment to a vast California ranch to a jungle cabin in Costa Rica, where she started writing for Lonely Planet. Her travels since became more exotic and farther-flung, and she still laughs when paychecks arrive.



Josephine Quintero

North Coast & Redwoods Josephine began her journalism career with a wine-and-lifestyle magazine in the Napa Valley. This was followed, ironically, with a move to 'dry' Kuwait, where she was editor of the *Kuwaiti Digest* for six years until August 1, 1990 – the day Iraq invaded. After six weeks as a hostage and escape to Turkey, Josephine moved to Andalucia, where she mainly earned a crust as a ghostwriter.



Helena Smith

Lake Tahoe; Gold Country Helena is an award-winning writer and photographer, and has written guidebooks on destinations from Fiji to Norway. Helena is from Scotland but was partly brought up in Malawi, so Africa always feels like home. She also enjoys her multicultural home area of Hackney and wrote, photographed and published *Inside Hackney*, the first guide to the borough (<https://insidehackney.com>).



John A Vlahides

San Francisco John has been a cook in a Parisian bordello, a luxury-hotel concierge, a television host, a safety monitor in a sex club and a French–English interpreter, and he is one of Lonely Planet's most experienced and prolific guidebook authors. A native New Yorker living in San Francisco, John has contributed to 18 Lonely Planet guidebooks since 2003.



Benedict Walker

The Deserts Berlin-based Ben grew up in the 'burbs of Australia, spending week-ends and long summers by the beach, and while he's magnetically drawn to big mountains, beach life is in his blood. Ben thinks that the best thing about travel isn't as much about where you go as who you meet: living vicariously through the stories of kind strangers really adds to one's own experience.



Clifton Wilkinson

Santa Barbara County Christmases spent near Sacramento, bike rides across the Golden Gate Bridge and hiking in Yosemite National Park have all reinforced Clifton's opinion that the Golden State is the best state in the whole US, and Santa Barbara is one of its most beautiful corners. Having worked for Lonely Planet for more than 11 years, he's now based in the London office.



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, Dublin, 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



Andrea Schulte-Peevers

Curator: The Deserts Born and raised in Germany and educated in London and at UCLA, Andrea has earned her living as a professional travel writer for over two decades and authored or contributed to nearly 100 Lonely Planet titles, as well as to newspapers, magazines and websites around the world. She also works as a travel consultant, translator and editor.



Brett Atkinson

Central Coast Brett is based in Auckland, New Zealand, but is frequently on the road for Lonely Planet. He's a full-time travel and food writer. Since becoming a Lonely Planet author in 2005, Brett has covered areas as diverse as Vietnam, Sri Lanka, the Czech Republic, New Zealand, Morocco, California and the South Pacific.



Andrew Bender

Los Angeles: Disneyland & Orange County An award-winning travel and food writer, Andrew Bender has written three dozen Lonely Planet guidebooks, plus numerous articles for lonelyplanet.com. Outside of Lonely Planet, he writes the Seat 1A travel site for Forbes.com and is a frequent contributor to the *Los Angeles Times*, in-flight magazines and more.



Sara Benson

Marin County & the Bay Area After graduating from college in Chicago, Sara jumped on a plane to California with one suitcase and just \$100 in her pocket. Today she makes her home in Oakland. The author of more than 70 travel and non-fiction books, she has written for Lonely Planet guides covering Peru, Japan, Malaysia, Las Vegas, California, Southwest USA, Canada, Australia and Hawaii.



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.



Cristian Bonetto

Los Angeles Cristian has contributed to over 30 Lonely Planet guides to date, covering New York City, Italy, Venice & the Veneto, Naples & the Amalfi Coast, Denmark, Copenhagen, Sweden and Singapore. His writing has appeared in numerous publications around the world, including the *Telegraph* (UK) and *Corriere del Mezzogiorno* (Italy). He lives in Melbourne, Australia.

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