



Sacramento & Central Valley

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Best Places to Eat

- Empress Tavern (p591)
- Noriega's (p611)
- Towne House Restaurant (p602)
- Shubert's Ice Cream & Candy (p598)

Best Places to Sleep

- Padre Hotel (p610)
- Citizen Hotel (p589)
- Greens Hotel (p589)

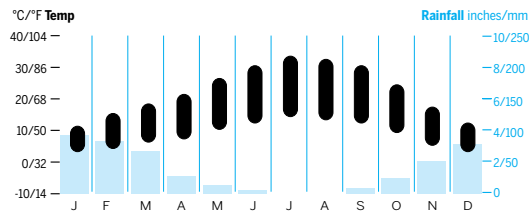
Why Go?

The Central Valley is visible from space – a vast expanse of green between the Sierra Nevada and Pacific Ocean. The area is divided in two parts: the Sacramento Valley in the north and the San Joaquin Valley in the south. For millennia, the rivers cutting through these valleys flooded seasonally, creating extremely fertile soil. Today, those waterways are tamed by mighty public works projects that support massive agricultural endeavors. Half the produce in the US is grown in these valleys – including almost every almond, olive and bulb of garlic.

Like the birds that commute overhead, most travelers are just passing through – zipping along the highway to more popular parts of the state. But those who linger are rewarded with stately Victorian-era mansions, uniquely scenic byways and quirky small towns.

When to Go

Sacramento



Feb–Mar Stop for pie and hot cider in the valley's technicolor Blossom Trail orchards.

Nov–Feb Catch the spectacular return of millions of migratory waterfowl in Sacramento.

May–Sep The peak of harvest time brings farmers markets and food festivals aplenty.

Sacramento & Central Valley Highlights

- 1 Strolling between **breweries in Sacramento** (p591), the self-proclaimed mecca of beer.
- 2 Driving bumper cars, eating fried Twinkies and checking out blue-ribbon livestock at the **California State Fair** (p588).
- 3 Uncorking the region's emerging fine-wine scene in **Lodi** (p603).
- 4 Tasting the valley's bounty in Sacramento's abundant **farmers markets** (p589).
- 5 Sipping cold beer and listening to country music in **Buck Owens' Crystal Palace** (p611), Bakersfield.
- 6 Rushing down world-class rapids on the mighty **Kern River** (p612).

