

# Santa Barbara County



Santa Barbara's gotten a bit frisky in the new millennium. Tucked between the majestic Santa Ynez Mountains and the shimmering Pacific, the city's red-tile roofs, white stucco buildings, Spanish mission and sleepy Mediterranean vibe have long given credence to Santa Barbara's claim to the title of the 'American Riviera.' It's a gorgeous place to loll on the beach, eat well, shop a bit and push your cares off to another day. But the city's waking up, jump-starting the nation's nascent 'green movement' in an outside-the-box, upbeat style highlighting electric shuttles, accessible urban bike trails, ecofocused attractions and earth-friendly wine tours.

This energy has trickled into the agricultural heart of Santa Barbara County. With the success of Oscar-winning movie *Sideways* (2004), winemaking is booming in the bucolic Santa Ynez Valley, where a hundred or so wineries now vie for your attention. Many of the newest winemakers are implementing their passion for the vine in earth-conscious ways, using organic practices and biodynamic farming techniques while enthusiastically sharing their knowledge in the tasting room. And they're producing top-notch pinots, Syrahs and Chardonnays in the meantime.

Mother Nature returns the love with hiking, biking, surfing, kayaking, scuba diving and camping opportunities galore. There's even an Outdoor Visitor Center to help you plan your adventure. But if all you want to do is relax, sunny beaches still await your arrival.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Enjoying panoramic views of the city from the 85ft tower of the **Santa Barbara County Courthouse** (p378) in downtown Santa Barbara
- Pedaling past vineyards, farms and rolling countryside in the scenic **Santa Rita Hills** (p395)
- Window shopping, wine tasting and patio dining in **Los Olivos** (p399)
- Hiking Rattlesnake Canyon Trail in the southern foothills of the **Santa Ynez Mountains** (p384)
- Pretending to understand Einstein's written description of the theory of relativity at the **Karpeles Museum** (p382) in Santa Barbara
- Exploring the **Foxen Canyon Wine Trail** (p396) and tasting California's best pinot noirs and Syrahs
- Watching for migrating whales from Cavern Point on Santa Cruz Island in **Channel Islands National Park** (p405)



**FAST FACTS**

- **Population Santa Barbara County** 399,347
- **Average temps** Jan 45/64°F, Jul 59/75°F
- **Santa Barbara to LA** 95 miles
- **Santa Barbara to Solvang** 35 miles (via Hwy 154)
- **Santa Barbara to Ojai** 30 miles
- **Santa Barbara to Ventura** 27 miles

**HISTORY**

The Chumash people thrived in the Santa Barbara area for thousands of years before the arrival of the Spanish, setting up elaborate trade routes between the mainland and the Channel Islands, which they reached via sturdily constructed canoes known as *tomols*. In 1542 explorer Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo sailed into the channel, claimed the area for Spain then sailed off to winter – and eventually die – on one of the nearby islands.

The Chumash had little reason for concern until the permanent return of the Spanish in the mid-1700s, when missionaries and padres arrived to establish missions and to convert the Chumash to Christianity – a systematic process that was occurring up and down the coast. The Spaniards used the converted Chumash to construct the missions and presidios and provide subsequent labor. Conversion saw these Native Americans change their diet and their clothing; many of them contracted fatal European diseases.

The Spanish weren't the last of the settlers. Easterners began arriving en masse with the 1849 gold rush, and by the late 1890s the city was an established vacation spot for the wealthy. After a massive earthquake in 1925, tough laws were passed requiring the town to be rebuilt in the now-familiar faux-Mediterranean style of white stuccos and red tile.

**SANTA BARBARA****ORIENTATION**

Santa Barbara's coast faces south, not west, an important fact to remember when navigating town. Downtown Santa Barbara is laid out in a square grid – its main artery is State St,

which runs north–south. State St divides the east side from the west side. Lower State St (south of Ortega St) has a large concentration of bars, while Upper State St (north of Ortega St) has most of the pretty shops and museums. Cabrillo Blvd hugs the coastline and turns into Coast Village Rd as it enters the eastern suburb of Montecito. Just south of Hwy 101, east of State St, the burgeoning Funk Zone lures the curious with its eclectic mix of rough-and-tumble indie shops – a refreshing poke in the eye to the conformist Spanish Mission–style designs prominent downtown. The southern foothills of the Santa Ynez mountains, just north of the city, are known locally as the Front Country.

Santa Barbara is surrounded by small affluent communities: Hope Ranch to the west, and Montecito and Summerland to the east. UCSB is just west of Hope Ranch in Isla Vista.

Interstate 101 and the railroad tracks – which run parallel – cut east to west across State St, just north of the coast. Be prepared to wait for the train about once every hour or so if you're traveling on State St. Access to and from Interstate 101 can be found at Garden St.

The Santa Barbara Visitor Center (p378) has free maps.

**INFORMATION****Bookstores**

**Book Den** (Map p380; ☎ 805-962-3321; 15 E Anapamu St) The oldest used bookstore in California specializes in history, art, architecture and academic-press titles. It has an excellent tracking system for locating used books. Bibliophiles and perpetual students, beware: you may never get out of here.

**Chaucer's Books** (Map pp378-9; ☎ 805-682-6787; 3321 State St, Loreto Plaza) Best selection in town – 150,000 plus – for any new book you could ever want.

**Pacific Travelers Supply** (Map p380; ☎ 805-963-4438, 800-546-8060; 12 W Anapamu St) The best spot in town to buy guidebooks and maps, as well as miscellaneous travelers' accessories including hats, Crocs, tents, GPS systems and surfing guides.

**Internet Access**

**FedEx Kinko's** (Map p380; ☎ 805-966-1114; 1030 State St; per min 25¢; ☎ 7am-10pm Mon-Thu, 7am-9pm Fri, 9am-7pm Sat, 10am-8pm Sun)

**Graphicphics** (Map p380; ☎ 805-899-2387; 1114 State St, #7 La Arcada, La Arcada; per 15min/hr \$2/8; ☎ 8:30am-5pm Mon-Fri) Five stations available.