

One Day to Tour Monterey

With so much to see and do, guests may need to choose whether to go out to sea or drive inland to the hills. Either way, a sensible place to start is at the rocky shoreline between Fisherman's Wharf and Cannery Row in Monterey.

After breakfast, begin with Cannery Row, immortalized by John Steinbeck in his well-loved novels, *Cannery Row* and *Sweet Thursday*. Anchoring one end of the famous street where the sardine was once king is the Monterey Bay Aquarium, one of the world's finest. Exploring its fascinating galleries will absorb most of the morning.



Guests can then walk (or bike, or rollerskate, or surrey) towards Fisherman's Wharf, departure point for a veritable fleet of whalewatching boats. Cruises run between two and four hours, depending on which whales the group will be watching: different species visit Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary almost year-round.

Upon returning to shore, guests can explore the Path of History in Old Monterey, viewing Colton Hall, where California's state constitution was drafted in 1846, Pacific House, Custom House, and the Monterey Maritime Museum.

Weather not great for boating? Walk the Path of History now, then drive inland to Salinas, the county seat, to visit the National Steinbeck Center. It covers the works — novels, movies, essays and more — by the Nobel Prize-winning author, and introduces visitors to the many-faceted world of farming in the new Rabobank Agriculture Wing.

Conclude the afternoon with a wine-tasting session at A Taste of Monterey: their wine-tasting rooms bring together wines from all across the county. (There's one opposite the Steinbeck Center and one on Cannery Row.)



Two Days to Tour Monterey

With just a little more time to spend, the sightseeing opportunities open to short-stay visitors widen dramatically.

Spend the first morning on Cannery Row, visiting the Monterey Bay Aquarium and learning about the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary at our doorstep. Ramble the Recreation Trail over to Monterey, and spend the afternoon out whalewatching or, if the weather discourages voyaging, suggest guests walk the Path of History through Old Monterey. Start at Custom House and Pacific House Museum, both near Fisherman's Wharf, then go on to visit Cooper-Molera Adobe, Casa Serrano and Casa Soberanes.



On Day Two, drive the beautiful coast road connecting Monterey to Carmel, passing through into Pebble Beach, renowned for its superb golf courses and the picturesque 17-Mile Drive. Carmel's leafy streets beckon guests to stroll at their leisure, to investigate innumerable art galleries, antique shops and quality boutiques, or play on its silvery, dog-friendly beach before lunch.

In the afternoon, head up Carmel Valley. This is the sunniest part of the coast, equally highly regarded for its sunsoaked golf courses, horseback riding and hiking trails, and wineries. Chateau Julien, mid-way up the valley, offers winery and vineyard tours in addition to tastings in its French-style chateau.

At Laureles Grade, choose to go straight on to Carmel Valley Village for more wine-tasting and antiques, or return to the main highway and wend through oak-dappled hills to Salinas and the National Steinbeck Center.



Three Days to Tour Monterey

With a slightly extended stay, guests are really ready to combine sightseeing with relaxation and recreation. (Remind them that there's so much more, they'll still have to make some hard decisions — or just come back another time!)

Again, start the tour by learning more about our wonderful bay at the Monterey Bay Aquarium on Cannery Row, then follow it up with an afternoon in Old Monterey (the Maritime Museum is a fascinating place to start), or out whalewatching.

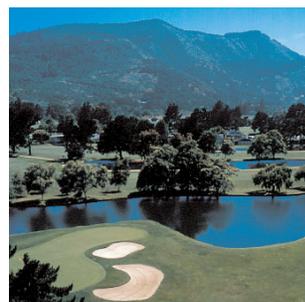


The second morning, take the coast road past the Monterey Bay Aquarium to tour Pebble Beach, passing Seal Rock, Pebble Beach Lodge and immaculately kept golf courses on 17-Mile Drive. Explore Carmel, taking time before lunch for its art galleries, antique shops and boutiques.

Leave Carmel by way of Mission San Carlos Borromeo; third of the chain of missions founded in the 1770s, it houses a magnificent bronze sarcophagus honoring Father Junipero Serra, sculpted by artist Jo Mora.

Spend the afternoon getting a taste of Big Sur. While large coaches are restricted from venturing down Highway One to Hearst Castle, the beautiful coastline of Point Lobos State Reserve, just past Carmel River State Beach, is a striking sampler of what lies further south. Nature walks, with or without guide, refresh the spirit and senses.

Day Three is prime-time for relaxation and refreshment. With pre-arranged tee times, guests might start the day with a round of golf: some of the best — and sunniest are located in Carmel Valley. Not all golfers? Suggest an alternative morning of pampering: how about a body-wrap or massage at one of the many elegant spas in the area? Spend the afternoon in Carmel Valley Village doing some wine-tasting (there are half-a-dozen wineries to visit) and antiquing.



An excellent alternative to sports or spas is a day in the Salinas Valley instead. Guests can begin with the National Steinbeck Center's educational (but so much fun!) galleries, including its new Rabobank Agriculture Wing, and a stroll Salinas Oldtown's mellow Main Street. Then head for The Farm to learn about organic veggies and strawberries or Wild Things animal training center, to meet Josef, the model for The Lion King. Bring a picnic along, and everyone can enjoy a visit to one of the many wineries lining the Salinas Valley, a great way to toast to a splendid Monterey County vacation.

Carmel-by-the-Sea & South Itinerary Ideas

Starting from Monterey Peninsula Airport, take Highway 68 to Highway One south. To make Carmel-by-the-Sea your first stop, turn right onto Ocean Avenue. Coaches have assigned parking areas at the top of Ocean Avenue near Carmel Plaza. Smaller vehicles can park in the public lot at Carmel Plaza (Mission off Ocean) or Sunset Center (Mission and 8th Street).

* Carmel is known for its almost innumerable art galleries and the picture-postcard architecture sometimes called “Fairytale Tudor.” There are dozens of restaurants and cafes for refreshment, and shops to pick up a warm sweatshirt for protection against occasional coastal fog.

If guests just want to enjoy the beach and bay, suggest they walk down Ocean Avenue; smaller vehicles can take advantage of the parking lot right at the sands.

Leave Carmel village, but linger at one of Carmel’s most famous sights. Return to Highway One and turn right on Rio Road. On the left is San Carlos Borroméo de Carmelo Mission, known as Carmel Mission.

* The handsomely reconstructed church is a ‘must-see’ sight. Founded by Father Junipero Serra in 1775, it contains a magnificent bronze sarcophagus dedicated to his memory, sculpted by Jo Mora. The museum contains dozens of rare Spanish-era artifacts.

Leave the Mission and continue back down Rio Road to Highway One. Here, you can cross Highway One for a quick shopping stop in either The Barnyard or The Crossroads shopping villages. There are shops offering every sort of merchandise — including picnic supplies. Otherwise, turn right (signposted Big Sur), onto Highway One.

* At 2 miles, on right, is Point Lobos State Nature Reserve. It ranks as one of the jewels of the California State Parks system, “the most beautiful meeting of land and sea” in the world, according to artist Francis Macomas. Hike any of several trails to reach meadows of wildflowers, vistas of Pacific Ocean, or stands of Monterey pine and fragrant cypress.

* At 3.5 miles, on the left, is Sculpture House and Gardens, a fine art gallery — look for the piled stone sculptures nearby. Large coaches should not venture further south: due to the sharp and blind turns, the California Highway Patrol prohibits coaches more than 45’ long from driving through Big Sur to Hearst Castle.



Carmel Valley Itinerary Ideas

Starting from Monterey Peninsula Airport, take Highway 68 to Highway One south. Turn left onto Carmel Valley Road.

Several shopping opportunities await at the Mouth of Carmel Valley: simply turn right at the first light, Carmel Rancho Road.

* On the right, past an Albertson’s supermarket, is The Barnyard Shopping Village, an imaginative compound of restaurants and shops surrounding the Thunderbird Bookstore. On the left is Carmel Rancho Center, with a handy delicatessen. Further along, around the corner, is The Crossroads Shopping Center, which includes a Safeway supermarket in addition to many restaurants, food shops, boutiques and specialty stores.

Carmel Valley is famous for its many fine golf courses. First up, about a mile from Highway One on Carmel Valley Road, is Rancho Cañada Golf Club. It has two courses open to the public, East and West.

The Valley’s mild, sunny climate, so perfect for golfers, is also great for growing vegetables and herbs. Stop in at Earthbound Farm (at the 3.5 mile mark) to learn about organic farming; in addition to regular tours, there’s a farm stand and all-organic café.



Carmel Valley Itinerary continued



Another excellent golf course, just past the farm at 8000 Valley Greens Drive, is part of Quail Lodge Resort and Golf Club. Its spa and health center offers luxurious treatments, too.

Wine grapes also flourish in Carmel Valley, and many wineries grow and produce fine vintages in the area. First along the way (about five miles from Highway One) is Chateau Julien. Look for the traditionally styled French chateau building, tucked behind roses, on the right.

Continue straight past Route G20, Laureles Grade, and the highly regarded Bernardus Lodge, both on the left. Carmel Valley Village is several miles further up

Carmel Valley Road.

* The Village itself features more than a half-dozen winery tasting rooms: Georis, Talbott, Heller Estates/Durney Winery, Bernardus and the left; Joullian, Chateau Sinnet and San Saba further along on the right. (To learn more about Carmel Valley wines and individual wineries, visit our Wine Tasting page.

At this point, you can choose between short and long (allow at least two hours) routes back towards Monterey, or onwards to other destinations.

* Smaller vehicles can take the longer route. To do so, continue straight on Carmel Valley Road. As it twists along the Carmel River, it passes the turn-off for Tassajara Hot Springs. Located 14 miles off the main road (by very rough lane), the springs are open to day visitors May-Sept; they are part of the Zen Mountain Center. (Call 415-865-1899 for essential day-use reservations. Note: the road is unsuitable for coaches.)

Carmel Valley Road eventually connects with Arroyo Seco Road; take it eastbound to connect with Highway 101 in the Salinas Valley, at which point you may turn north to Salinas or San Francisco or south to Los Angeles.

* The shorter tour returns down Carmel Valley Road to Laureles Grade. Turn right, and continue over hills with fine views to the ocean and Salinas Valley. At Highway 68, turn left to return to Monterey or turn right for Salinas and Highway 101.



North County Itinerary Ideas

Starting from Monterey Peninsula Airport, take Highway 68 to Highway One north. The highway initially runs between high sand dunes and the communities of Seaside and Sand City. These neighboring towns are a good place to stock up on snacks, sunscreen or maps, as they possess dozens of shops of all sizes. A Class A, paved, recreation trail for biking and jogging crests dunes and parallels the road — it runs another 15 miles north to Castroville. Look for kite-fliers and hang gliders all along this stretch; if you join them, be aware of signs noting the restoration of fragile plants to this windblown habitat.

* For an opportunity to walk out into the dunes safely, exit Highway One at Reservation Road; turn left under the highway and go straight to the Marina State Beach. A wheelchair accessible boardwalk winds through Marina Dunes Natural Preserve.

Return to Reservation Road and follow it under Highway One to the bustling, practical little town of Marina; a good selection of restaurants, accommodations and shopping. Locke-Paddon Park (831-384-4636 for information) is one of the few original wetland wildlife preserves in North America, open to hikers and naturalists looking for several endangered species.

Return to Highway One northbound. In a few miles, take the easterly fork on Highway 156 to Castroville.

* 90% of America's artichokes are grown within a few miles of the town that calls itself The Artichoke Capital of the World; Marilyn Monroe was crowned the first Artichoke Queen here in 1948, before she shot to stardom.



North County Itinerary continued



Explore its main street, Cabrillo Road (Highway 183), which then connects back to Highway One northbound.

A sharp left turn at Potrero Road leads to Salinas River State Beach, a three-mile stretch of sand perfect for wildlife spotting, kite-flying and picnicking (though it is too rough for watersports or swimming). A gradual left turn at this intersection leads to Moss Landing Road and the hamlet of Moss Landing.

* Founded by Charlie Moss as a shipping point for locally produced salt, the sheltered harbor has grown into a nexus for fishing, boating, marine sightseeing tours (both whalewatching and exploring neighboring Elkhorn Slough), and, surprisingly, antiques. Several good restaurants, a b&b and RV campground. (831-633-4501 for information)

Return to Highway One northbound, and make an immediate right onto Dolan Road, next to the huge PG&E power station. At Elkhorn Road, turn left and continue several miles to the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve.

* The Visitor Center (831-728-2822 for information) is located in the heart of the Slough, which is one of the nation's rare estuary wildlife preserves. The Center offers guided tours on the weekends in addition to interpretive information and fascinating displays (including a vastly enlarged slice of mud, complete with worms!).

Continue on Elkhorn Road past Kirby Park. More water than land, Kirby Park is primarily a jumping off point for boating and fishing, but visitors with binoculars can spot many estuary birds and wildlife. After winding through low hills, Elkhorn Road joins County Road G12; continue straight towards Watsonville.

* Another important hub of produce distribution, particularly by rail, Watsonville is noted for strawberries and its Latino-accented home-town atmosphere, acquired in recent years thanks to the many Mexican-born farm-workers who live and work nearby.

Just after the railroad tracks, turn right on Aromas Road (County Road G11), and follow it into Aromas. One of the smallest towns in Monterey County, Aromas retains its village atmosphere despite the recent arrival of Silicon Valley refugees.



Leave town on Carpenteria Road, continuing on it to a T-junction with San Juan Road (County Road G11) where you turn left. Continue on San Juan Road to Highway 101.

* For a visit to San Juan Bautista and its famous mission, go north on 101 to the exit for Highway 156. The town of San Juan Bautista retains a pleasing compound of historic building, centered on the handsome adobe church (open to the public daily) founded by Father Junipero Serra. Its quaint main street has many cafés and antique shops.

Return to Highway 101. Here you can go north to San Jose and San Francisco, or turn south to Salinas.

* The county seat of Monterey, Salinas was incorporated in 1874. The city is a hub for the processing and shipping of hundreds of thousands of tons of vegetables every year, and now famous as the birthplace of John Steinbeck.

Highway 101 southbound runs directly through Salinas. Leave Highway 101 at Boronda Road; turn left across the highway, then right on North Main Street (County Road 183), a busy road lined here with large shopping malls, restaurants and cinemas. After a mile, on the left, is Sherwood Park, setting for the California Rodeo Grounds and Sherwood Hall.

Remain on North Main Street when it crosses Highway 101; it crosses under a railroad bridge and crosses Market Street. (Amtrak station on West Market Street.) Park in the lot on the left of the next corner, opposite Salinas Transit Center.

* Salinas's most famous son, John Steinbeck (1902-1968), is celebrated in the modern National Steinbeck

North County Itinerary continued



Center at the top of Main Street; the NSC has just opened a brand-new wing dedicated to agriculture of the "Valley of the World," as Steinbeck called the Salinas Valley while writing *East of Eden*.

* The Steinbeck Birthplace, two blocks away on Central Avenue, is open to the public as a lunchtime café and bookshop. The town has many eateries, interesting shops, and a charming old-town style to its Main Street.

At this point, you can return to Monterey by continuing on Salinas Street to rejoin Main Street (follow signs — Main is one way at the end nearest the Steinbeck Center). Main becomes Highway 68/Monterey-Salinas Highway; Monterey is about 19 miles away.

You can also rejoin Highway 101 southbound for San Luis Obispo and Los Angeles.

Salinas Valley Itinerary Ideas

The last convenient stop for fuel (gas or snacks) is just past the airport at Canyon del Rey Blvd; neighboring Tarpy's Roadhouse restaurant is a stone-built complex that includes the Ventana Vineyards tasting room.

* Barely a mile further, on the left, is York Road, which leads to Laguna Seca Golf Club, one of the best values for golfers in the area.

Continuing on Highway 68, look on the left for the entrance to the Laguna Seca Recreational Area. In addition to extensive campgrounds (RV and tenting), it features miles of mountain bike, horseback, and hiking trails. It's also the home of Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca, a world-famous 2.3 mile track for sportscar, motorcycle, and Formula racing, and the 24 Hours of Adrenalin and Sea Otter Classic bike races.

Less than a quarter mile past the Laguna Seca gates, on the right, is Laureles Grade — a scenic road that connects Highway 68 to Carmel Valley, reaching an elevation of 1284 feet for views of both the Salinas Valley and the ocean.

A few miles further, on the right, is Corral de Tierra (small group of shops). This road leads into a mix of agricultural, viticultural and residential lands that was made famous by John Steinbeck. He recalled the Spanish explorers' name for the gentle valleys in his 1932 collection of stories, *The Pastures of Heaven*.

* Between Corral de Tierra and River Road, the highway passes between the Laguna Seca recreation area (off street parking, on the left) and Toro Park, a county park (entrance on the right). Both offer picnic opportunities plus hiking and mountain biking trails.

Pass the exit for River Road and continue a few miles further to Spreckels Road; exit here, and make an immediate left under the road, to visit The Farm.

* Noted for its giant farmers sculptures by local artist John Cerney, The Farm offers guided tours for school groups and families, and a farm stand stocking fresh local and regional produce. Small paddock of barnyard critters, too.

After visiting The Farm, backtrack on Highway 68 a mile to River Road. Exit and make an immediate left under the road on to River Road (County Road G17). This road forms part of the signposted Salinas Valley Wine Country route: look for white painted finger posts directing drivers to eight or ten wineries from here to Greenfield, 30 miles to the south.

* If the thought of meeting the Dreyfus Fund lion, the Exxon tiger, and Brandy, the cinnamon brown bear who has starred in countless Disney movies, intrigues you, look for the unobtrusive sign for Wild Things/Vision Quest Ranch (400 River Road). Guided tours of this wild animal training facility daily at 1pm; special tours and events.

After about 20 miles, River Road forks. Take the left-hand bend, which becomes Fort Romie Road. A little further along on the right is Mission Nuestra Señora de la Soledad, 13th of the 21 missions founded by Father Junipero Serra in 1791.



Salinas Valley Itinerary continued



Backtrack slightly to the fork, and take Foothill Road south to sample Monterey County wines at some local wineries.

* Among the nearest to Mission Soledad are Hahn/Smith & Hook Winery (at 37700 Foothill Road) and Paraiso Vineyards/Cobblestone (at 38060 Paraiso Springs Road). Both these hillside wineries have tasting rooms and picnic areas with expansive views over the Salinas Valley.

Continue south on Paraiso Springs Road, turning left at Clark Road to rejoin County Road G17, now called Arroyo Seco Road, winding south through vineyards. Turn left on County Road G16 towards Greenfield.

In Greenfield itself, turn right on Central Avenue, continuing through this sleepy farming community to Hobson Avenue. Turn left (towards Highway 101) to stop at Scheid Vineyards' tasting room (at 1972 Hobson Avenue).

Turn right (south) onto Highway 101 to King City.

* One of the largest valley towns, it has several restaurants and cafes, a few motels, and a large campground for RVs and tents in San Lorenzo Park (1160 Broadway). Take time for the Monterey County Agricultural and Rural Life Museum: it tells the story of valley agriculture through historic buildings and exhibits.

Here you can return to Highway 101 north back to Salinas, or south onwards to Los Angeles.



Alternative Route South

To visit Mission San Antonio, leave King City by crossing Highway 101 towards Jolon on County Road G14. The mission, about 10 miles west (inside Fort Hunter Liggett Army base), is the third founded by Father Serra in 1771. It seems virtually untouched by time, and both church and the museum in the cloisters are worth the detour. Nearby Lake San Antonio County Park offers camping, hiking, watersports, and other activities.

Alternative Route North

To visit Pinnacles National Monument, continue east out of King City on Broadway to Metz Road (County Road G15). Make a left onto Metz and drive north along the eastern edge of the valley, then turn right on Stonewall Canyon Road. The park is about ten miles due east.

* The steeply eroded rock formations of The Pinnacles are the remnants of an ancient volcano, the remainder of which is 200 miles south outside of Los Angeles — a massive example of how the San Andreas Fault can move mountains!

* For a final wine-tasting stop, try Chalone Winery (open weekends), one of the oldest vineyards in the Salinas Valley, is just off Stonewall Canyon Road outside the National Monument's gates.

