

Monterey. So Much to Discover.



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Natural beauty is at the heart of Monterey County's enormous appeal—you sense it everywhere, whether you're exploring one of the area's attractive coast-side towns, relaxing at a luxurious resort, or weaving your way through Big Sur along Highway 1, making what may well be America's most spectacular drive.

The ancient forests and rugged shoreline of Big Sur, to the south in Monterey County, have traditionally been a retreat for artists and writers. As you head north the coastline softens into lower bluffs, windswept dunes, pristine estuaries, and long sandy beaches. Exclusive Carmel-by-the-Sea and Carmel Valley Village burst with historic charm, fine dining, and unusual boutiques that cater to celebrity residents and well-heeled visitors.

Nearby 17-Mile Drive—one of the prettiest stretches of road you'll ever travel—runs from Carmel-by-the-Sea through Pebble Beach to Victorian-studded Pacific Grove, on the southern end of one of the world's most amazing marine environments, the Monterey Bay. The bay is protected by the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, the nation's largest undersea canyon, bigger and deeper than the Grand Canyon.

The town of Monterey, a former Spanish military outpost, has a well-preserved historic district. Cannery Row, the former center of Monterey's once-thriving sardine industry, has been reborn as a major attraction, with shops, restaurants, hotels, and the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

FAMILY FUN

For traveling families, Monterey County offers fresh air and fun. There are dozens of state parks, reserves, and beaches, with trails suitable for all ages, plus great picnic spots and shoreline to explore. **Point Lobos State Reserve** (☒ Hwy. 1 ☎ 831/624-4909 🌐 www.pointlobos.org 📄 \$10 per vehicle ☺ Daily 8 am–½ hr after sunset), a few miles south of Carmel,

is especially noteworthy for its wealth of marine life—along its trails you can spot sea lions, otters, harbor seals, and (in winter and spring) migrating whales. Arrive early (or in late afternoon) to avoid crowds; the parking lots fill up.

The city of Monterey has a number of kid-friendly attractions. At the extraordinary **Monterey Bay Aquarium** (☒ 886 Cannery Row ☎ 831/648-4888 🌐 www.montereybayaquarium.org 📄 \$30 ☺ Late May–June and early Sept., daily 9:30–6; July and Aug., weekdays 9:30–6, weekends 9:30–8; early Sept.–late May, daily 10–5), the exhibits are designed to give a sense of what it's like to be in the water with the animals—sardines swim around your head in a circular tank, and jellyfish drift in and out of view in dramatically lighted spaces that suggest the ocean depths. The **Monterey County Youth Museum** (☒ 425 Washington St. ☎ 831/649-6444 🌐 www.mymuseum.org 📄 \$7 ☺ Mon., Tues, and Thurs.–Sat. 10–5; Sun. noon–5) has seven galleries showcasing the science and nature of the Big Sur coast, theater arts, Pebble Beach golf, and beaches. **Fisherman's Wharf** (☒ At end of Calle Principal ☎ 831/649-6544 🌐 www.montereywharf.com) is lined with souvenir shops, seafood restaurants, and whale-watching tour boats; it's a lively and entertaining place and the best spot along the waterfront for viewing sea lions.

In Carmel Valley, **Earthbound Farm** (☒ 7250 Carmel Valley Rd. ☎ 831/625-6219 🌐 www.ebfarm.com 📄 Free ☺ Mon.–Sat. 8–6:30, Sun. 9–6), the world's largest grower of organic produce, has a kid's garden and events on Saturday, from bug walks to garlic-braiding workshops.

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BUTTERFLY SPOTTING

Pacific Grove is known as Butterfly Town USA. Monarch butterflies migrate south from Canada and the Pacific Northwest to take up residence in pine and eucalyptus groves from October through March—the sight of them hanging from the branches like a long, fluttering veil is unforgettable. The **Monarch Grove Sanctuary** (✉ Ridge Rd., between Lighthouse Ave. and Short St., 🌐 www.pgmuseum.org) is a fairly reliable spot for viewing.

Contact the **Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History** (✉ 165 Forest Ave. ☎ 831/648-5716 🌐 www.pgmuseum.org 📄 \$3 suggested donation 🕒 Tues.–Sun. 10–5) for the latest migration information. If you're in Pacific Grove when the monarch butterflies aren't, you can view the well-crafted butterfly tree exhibit at the museum.



OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

The natural beauty of the Monterey area is reason number one for visiting, whether you're taking it in from the seat of your car, along a hiking trail, or on the water. In Big Sur, driving **Highway 1** is an adventure sport, combining awesome views and hair-raising curves. Stop along the way at **Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park** for fine hiking, marvelous coastal vistas, and an astounding 80-foot waterfall that drops into the ocean.

Between Carmel and Pacific Grove, in Pebble Beach, primordial nature resides in quiet harmony with palatial late-20th-century estates along **17-Mile Drive**, which winds through an 8,400-acre microcosm of the Monterey coastal landscape. Dotting the drive are rare Monterey cypress, trees so gnarled and twisted that Robert Louis Stevenson described them as “ghosts fleeing before the wind.”

The city of Monterey is the best launching point for exploring the coastal waters. Monterey Bay never warms to the temperatures of its Southern California counterparts, but that's one reason why the marine life here is among the world's most diverse; **Aquarius Dive Shop** (✉ 2040 Del Monte Ave. ☎ 831/375-

1933) is a good choice for diving lessons and tours and equipment rental.

Thousands of gray whales pass close by the Monterey Coast on their annual migration between the Bering Sea and Baja California; a whale-watching cruise is the best way to get a close look at them.

The migration south takes place from December through March; January is prime viewing time. The migration north occurs from March through June. In addition, some 2,000 blue whales and 600 humpbacks pass the coast and are easily spotted in late summer and early fall. Even if no whales surface, bay cruises from Monterey and Moss Landing almost always encounter other enchanting sea creatures, such as sea otters, sea lions, and porpoises. **Monterey Bay Whale Watch** (✉ 84 Fisherman's Wharf ☎ 831/375-4658 🌐 www.montereybaywhalewatch.com), which operates out of the Monterey Bay Whale Watch Center at Fisherman's Wharf, gives three- to five-hour tours led by marine biologists.

Farther north near Moss Landing, the **Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve** (✉ 1700 Elkhorn Rd., Watsonville ☎ 831/728-2822 🌐 www.elkhornslough.org 📄 \$2.50 🕒 Wed.–Sun. 9–5) is made up of 1,400 acres of tidal flats and salt marshes, forming a complex environment that supports some

THE FIRST ARTICHOKE QUEEN

Castroville, a tiny town off Highway 1 between Monterey and Watsonville, produces about 95% of the artichokes grown in the U.S. Back in 1948, the town chose the first queen to preside over its Artichoke Festival—a beautiful young woman named Norma Jean Mortenson, who later changed her name to Marilyn Monroe.

300 species of birds. A walk or kayak trip along the meandering waterways and wetlands can reveal hawks, white-tailed kites, owls, herons, and egrets. Sea otters, sharks, rays, and many other animals also live or visit here.

GREAT GOLF

Since the opening of the Del Monte Golf Course in 1897, golf has been an integral part of Monterey County's social and recreational scene. Famed **Pebble Beach Golf Links** (☎ 17-Mile Dr., near Lodge at Pebble Beach ☎ 800/654-9300 🌐 www.pebblebeach.com) attracts golfers from around the world willing to pony up the greens fees. Even nongolfers enjoy the views of the impeccable greens over a drink or lunch at the Lodge at Pebble Beach. Each February the course is the main site of the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am, where show-business celebrities and golf pros team up for one of the nation's most glamorous tournaments.

Elsewhere in Monterey County you'll find less expensive—but still challenging and scenic—golfing options. Many hotels have golf packages or will help with reservations; inquire when you book your room.

FOOD AND DRINK

In California you can eat well, and around Monterey Bay you can eat very, very well. Thanks to the abundance of local produce, meats, seafood, and wine, the best cuisine here is that which doesn't stray too far from home.

Monterey and Carmel are filled with restaurants, with Monterey's **Montrio Bistro** (☎ 414 Calle Principal ☎ 831/648-8880 🌐 www.montrio.com)—a temple of California cuisine—leading the pack. In Carmel, highlights are the innovative bistro fare at **André's Bouchée** (☎ Mission St. ☎ 831/626-7880 🌐 www.andresbouchee.com) and the Italian- and French-influenced cuisine of **Casanova** (☎ 5th Ave. ☎ 831/625-0501 🌐 www.casanovarestaurant.com).

Pacific Grove has its share of reliable, reasonably priced dining options (look for **Fandango**, **Fishwife**, and **Red House Café**), along with the standout **Passionfish** (☎ 701 Lighthouse Ave. ☎ 831/655-3311 🌐 www.passionfish.net), where Latin and Asian flavors infuse the finest produce, fish, and meat available. Inland in Carmel Valley, **Marinus** (☎ 415 Carmel Valley Rd. ☎ 888/648-9463 🌐 www.bernardus.com), the restaurant of Bernardus Lodge, is one of the top upscale dining experiences in the Monterey area.

Once thick with dairy farms, Carmel Valley has recently proved itself as a noteworthy wine appellation. At **Bernardus Tasting Room** (☎ 5 W. Carmel Valley Rd. ☎ 831/659-1900 🌐 www.bernardus.com) ☺ Daily 11–5) you can sample wines from



Dan Smith, fodor.com member

the nearby Bernardus Vineyard, and you can tour and taste at **Château Julien** (☎ 8940 Carmel Valley Rd. ☎ 831/624-2600 🌐 www.chateaujulien.com), recognized internationally for its chardonnays and merlots.

LODGING OPTIONS

Monterey-area accommodations range from no-frills motels to luxurious hotels. Pacific Grove, amply endowed with ornate Victorian houses, has quietly turned itself into the region's B&B capital; Carmel also has charming inns in residential areas. Truly lavish resorts, with everything from featherbeds to heated floors, cluster in exclusive Pebble Beach and pastoral Carmel Valley.

For Romance

Monterey County is filled with get-away-from-it-all locations where you can escape the daily grind and rekindle romance. For first-class extravagance, check out Carmel Valley's **Bernardus Lodge** (☎ 415 Carmel Valley Rd. ☎ 888/648-9463 🌐 www.bernardus.com), where the valet hands you a glass of chardonnay as you check in, and guest rooms have featherbeds, fireplaces, patios, and bathtubs for two. At **L'Auberge Carmel** (☎ Monte Verde, at 7th Ave. ☎ 831/624-8578 🌐 www.laubergecarmel.com), in Carmel-by-the-Sea, you'll feel like you've been transported to a European village. Gorgeous ocean views ramp up the romance at Carmel's **Highlands Inn** (☎ 120 Highlands Dr. ☎ 800/682-4811 🌐 highlandsinn.hyatt.com) and the **Martine Inn** (☎ 255 Ocean View Blvd. ☎ 800/852-5588 🌐 www.martineinn.com), a Mediterranean-style villa in Pacific Grove.



For Families

The **InterContinental The Clement Monterey** (☎ 750 Cannery Row ☎ 831/375-4500 🌐 www.intercontinental.com/montereyic) has a superb waterfront location neighboring the Monterey Bay Aquarium, with buildings on both sides of Cannery Row; the VIP Kids Club provides programs in a well-supervised play space. The **Best Western Beach Resort Monterey** (☎ 2600 Sand Dunes Dr. ☎ 800/242-8627 🌐 www.montereybeachresort.com), on the waterfront 2 miles north of town, is a great value, with views of the bay and the city skyline, a surprising array of amenities, and a large pool.

For Spa Treatments

You'll experience all-out indulgence at Monterey County's world-class resort spas. At Big Sur's chic **Post Ranch Inn** (☎ Hwy. 1, 1½ mi south of Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park ☎ 800/527-2200 🌐 www.postranchinn.com) redwood guesthouses blend almost invisibly into a wooded cliff 1,200 feet

above the ocean; along with extensive spa services, activities include everything from yoga to stargazing. Another Big Sur luxe destination, the **Ventana Inn & Spa** (☎ Hwy. 1, almost 1 mi south of Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park ☎ 800/628-6500 🌐 www.ventanainn.com) has been an escape for hundreds of celebrities, who pamper themselves with mind-and-body treatments between hikes and horse rides in the nearby hills. **Casa Palmero** (☎ 1518 Cypress Dr., Pebble Beach ☎ 800/654-9300 🌐 www.pebblebeach.com), an exclusive resort in the style of a stately Mediterranean villa, gives you access to the state-of-the-art services at the adjacent Spa at Pebble Beach.

SHOPPING

The chief allure of downtown Carmel-by-the-Sea is shopping, especially along its main street, **Ocean Avenue**, between Junipero Avenue and Camino Real. There you'll find the greatest concentration of boutiques and art galleries anywhere in Monterey County, along with a clutch of appealing restaurants and cafés. Of special note is the **Weston Gallery** (☎ 6th Ave., between Dolores and Lincoln Sts. ☎ 831/624-4453 🌐 www.westongallery.com), run by the family of the late Edward Weston, which sells contemporary color photography complemented by classic black-and-whites. If you tire of the commerce, you can take a short stroll down Ocean Avenue to Carmel's pretty beach.

In the town of Monterey, **Cannery Row** and **Fisherman's Wharf** are filled primarily with souvenir shops, but they make an interesting setting for picking up a knickknack. Farther up Highway 1, **Moss Landing** is not much more than a couple blocks of cafés and antiques shops plus a busy fishing port, but therein lies its charm. It's a fine place to stop for lunch, browse, and get a dose of nature.

EVENTS IN MONTEREY COUNTY

FESTIVALS AND FAIRS

Apr. 9-10: Pacific Grove Good Old Days Festival
 May 7-8: Marina Festival of the Winds
 May 12-15: Salinas Valley Fair
 May 12-15: Carmel Art Festival
 June 5: Cannery Row Block Party
 July 31: Moss Landing Antique Street Fair
 Aug. 31-Sept. 5: Monterey County Fair

SPORTS AND THE OUTDOORS

Apr. 29-May 1: Avia Wildflower Triathlon
 May 1: Big Sur International Marathon
 July 21-24: California Rodeo, Salinas
 Sept. 9-11: Pacific Grove Triathlon
 Sept. 22-26: Monterey Bay Birding Festival
GOLF
 July 4-10: First Tee Open at Pebble Beach
 Nov. 15-20: Callaway Golf Pebble Beach Invitational
 Feb. 6-12, 2012: AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am

FOOD AND WINE

Apr. 28-May 1: Pebble Beach Food and Wine Festival
 May 20-22: Cooking for Solutions Food Festival, Monterey
 May 21-22: Castroville Artichoke Festival
 June 2: Carmel Valley Art & Wine Celebration
 June 10-11: Monterey Wine Festival
 June 11: Monterey Beer Festival
 Aug. 13: Monterey Winemakers' Celebration