

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO WELLNESS AND EVENTS 58-69

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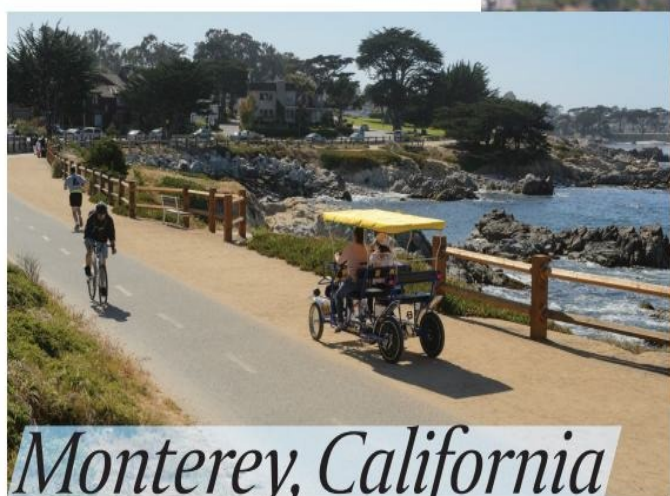
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**KELSEY RILEY DIXON,
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take it outside

Explore these destinations where the great outdoors awaits groups.

By Sam Boykin



Monterey, California

Situated about 100 miles south of San Francisco, Monterey is a historic and picturesque town along California's rugged central coast. With year-round temperatures averaging in the mid-60s and negligible rainfall, Monterey offers a host of great outdoor activities that take full advantage of the area's stunning landscape.

Activities

The scenic Monterey Bay Coastal Recreation Trail is ideal for biking or running, and it winds past top local attractions, including Monterey Bay Aquarium, with more than 200 exhibits that showcase some 35,000 creatures. The trail also runs through iconic Cannery Row, the one-time center of the sardine-packing industry that's now a popular strip of gift shops, seafood restaurants and bars in converted factories.

The 14,000-acre Fort Ord National Monument has more than 83 miles of hilly trails that traverse coastal oak tree forests. Protected by the Bureau of Land Management, the former military base has an array of endangered and rare plant and animal species, including black-tailed deer, turkeys, bobcats, coyotes, badgers and red-tailed hawks. About 13 miles from Monterey Peninsula, Toro Park in Salinas is another great option for biking or hiking.

The oceanfront Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary stretches along the central coast from San Francisco to Cambria and includes pristine beaches, tide pools and lush kelp forests. It's an ideal destination for kayakers, sailors, anglers and surfers.

Where to Stay

Monterey Plaza Hotel & Spa is a 290-room luxury waterfront hotel steps from epic hiking and biking trails, scenic parks and vibrant commercial corridors. It also includes more than 30,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor event space.



Los Angeles

While L.A. is perhaps best known for popular tourist attractions like the Hollywood Walk of Fame, Sunset Boulevard and Rodeo Drive, if you look a little deeper, you'll discover wonderful parks that enable you to escape the hustle and bustle and explore the area's rugged and natural beauty.

Activities

The 160-acre Runyon Canyon Park, situated at the eastern end of the Santa Monica Mountains, has fantastic views and an abundance of hiking trails. Start your adventure by trekking along Runyon Canyon Road. A notable stop along this roughly 45-minute loop includes the Star Trail, with its series of railroad-tie steps. A more challenging hike in the western section of the park is Hero Trail that winds up a steep slope on the spine of the ridge. Along the way, don't miss Indian Rock, the highest point in the park and a great vantage point to view the valley and the Hollywood Hills. The upper sections of the canyon are also home to hundreds of plant species and an abundance of wildlife such as owls, hawks, coyotes and deer.

For a more urban experience, check out the 4,500-acre Griffith Park, one of the largest municipal parks in North America. While the park's tree-studded canyons offer more than 70 miles of rustic hiking and equestrian trails, there are also activities like golf and tennis, with two 18-hole courses and three tennis complexes. You can also take advantage of numerous athletic fields and a swimming pool.

Where to Stay

The new 15-floor, 216-room Kimpton Everly Hotel has sweeping views of the Hollywood Hills, including the iconic Hollywood sign. In addition, the Everly has 4,900 square feet of flexible indoor pre-function and event space, including two meeting rooms, a boardroom and a ballroom with high ceilings. The hotel also has a gym and offers custom bike tours. And for a true L.A. experience, you can see and be seen at the fifth-floor rooftop pool and the expansive lobby bar, which hosts live music on the weekends.