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San Francisco / THE BAY AREA AND WINE COUNTRY



Opposite page: Bike riding on the coastline in Santa Cruz.

This page: The scenic drive from San Francisco to Carmel-by-the-Sea is dotted with small beaches you can visit.



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ADVENTURE AWAITS

Take the epic drive from San Francisco to Carmel

BY JESSIE FETTERLING



● The drive along Highway 1 is one that tops several bucket lists, and some of its best moments reside in the 120-mile stretch from San Francisco to Carmel-by-the-Sea, where stops in the oceanside communities of Half Moon Bay, Santa Cruz, and Monterey make the drive one you wish would never end.

HALF MOON BAY

First up? Half Moon Bay. This quaint town is nestled near the crescent-shaped coastline for which it gets its name. Locally owned shops and restaurants dot its charming Main Street made up of well-preserved buildings that date back to the 19th century. Art fans will especially enjoy

exploring the local art galleries, specifically Gallery M, where wood furniture and art crafted by 100 woodworkers are on display.

Of course, a trip here wouldn't be complete without a stop to the ever-popular Sam's Chowder House, where seafood is served with a view—so spectacular you can catch glimpses of whales or dolphins in the distance. Another food spot with a view is Half Moon Brewing Co., known for its selection of handcrafted year-round and seasonal brews. If you happen to visit in October—which you should for the annual pumpkin festival—the Pumpkin House Ale provides that quintessential taste of fall.

Whether you're looking to stay the night or to simply stop by for a glass of wine and a good s'mores roast on the hotel terrace, The Ritz-Carlton Half Moon Bay also packs in the charm. Five nights a week, a bagpiper plays a Scottish tune, walking the resort grounds from the front drive to the Ocean Lawn.

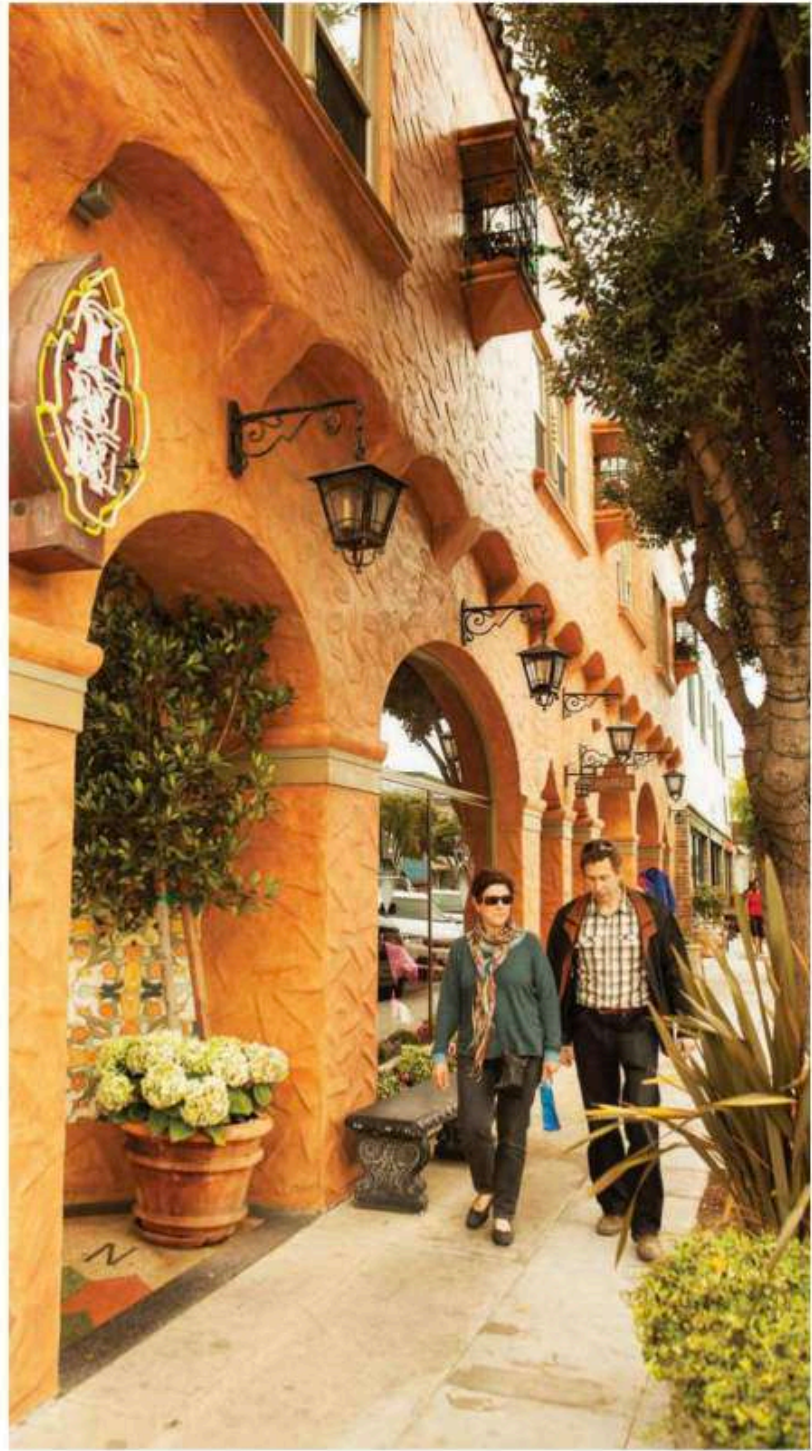
SANTA CRUZ

Venture further south to Santa Cruz, aka "Surf City." Yes, this is the very spot where three Hawaiian princes brought the sport of surfing to the U.S. mainland. So, if you're looking to bask in that history, take a surf lesson at Cowell Beach—the best spot for beginners to learn. Or you can visit the Santa Cruz Surfing Museum, housed insight the Mark Abbott Memorial Lighthouse, where you can peruse historic photographs, vintage redwood surfboards and early wetsuit designs from local Jack O'Neill.

Santa Cruz isn't all surfing though. The Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk has attracted visitors for more than 100 years with its Loeff Carousel and Giant Dipper wooden roller coaster. Kids will delight in the carnival foods—think funnel cake and the area's famous fried artichokes. However, just a few minutes from the boardwalk, The Picnic Basket serves up delicious sandwiches and salads made from locally sourced ingredients.

Opposite page: Mavericks Beach at Pillar Point near Half Moon Bay is the site of the annual big wave surfing competition called Maverick's.

This page: The quaint town of Half Moon Bay's Main Street.



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Opposite page: The Lone Cypress is a Monterey cypress tree in Pebble Beach, California. *This page:* Whale watching in Monterey Bay, California.

MONTEREY

If you're truly in search of local fare, though, make sure to stop at one of the fruit and vegetable stands on the drive from Santa Cruz to Monterey. After all, Monterey County is considered "the salad bowl capital of the world," with lettuce, artichokes, spinach and other produce grown here year-round.

Once known for its fishing and canning industry, Monterey keeps that history alive with its "Cannery Row," officially given that title in 1958 to honor local author John Steinbeck's nickname for the area. Restaurants, shops and even hotels reside in former cannery buildings along the water. Perhaps the best way to experience some of the city's hotspots—Fisherman's Wharf, Cannery Row and the Monterey Bay Aquarium—is a bike ride along the 18-mile Monterey Coastal Recreation Trail that connects Castroville (to the north) to Pacific Grove (to the south), all while providing some of the area's best views of the Pacific Ocean.

Monterey first-timers will want to check out the Monterey Bay Aquarium, where you can get up close to jellyfish and even pet a bat ray. But don't miss the opportunity to partake in a whale-watching tour, as this is one of the few places where you can see these giant mammals in their natural habitat year-round.

CARMEL-BY-THE-SEA

Last stop on the drive is none other than Carmel-by-the-Sea, a place that fosters artistic creativity so much that actors like Doris Day and Clint Eastwood have retreated here for decades. Authors and artists flocked here to start an artist colony in the early 1900s, and it still exists today in the form of the about 100 art galleries available for visitors to peruse.

Food and wine also abound. There are 18 wine tasting rooms within walking distance of one another in this 1-square-mile village as well as a weekly farmers' market that attracts locals and visitors alike. Experience a pairing of the two with Carmel Food Tours, which offers guests an in-depth exploration of the creations from some of the country's top chefs and winemakers.

Of course, golf lovers go gaga over the world-famous Pebble Beach Golf Links course that hosts several PGA Tour events each year, and has hosted five U.S. Opens (and a sixth in 2019) as well as a PGA Championship. Even if you're not a golf fan, scoring a ticket to one of these events is worth the view alone.

