

SANTA BARBARA

CALIFORNIA

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USA



Summer in Santa Barbara is a vibrant celebration of the coast, where golden sunshine, cool ocean breezes, and outdoor excitement define the day. Begin with a peaceful morning at Butterfly Beach, a favorite of locals for its tranquil setting and wide-open views of the Channel Islands. For those seeking energy, East Beach offers spirited volleyball matches against a backdrop of palm trees and ocean spray. Adventurers can paddleboard past the marina or hike into the nearby foothills for sweeping views of the sea and red-roofed cityscape. At Arroyo Burro Beach—affectionately known as Hendry’s—you’ll find surfers catching rolling waves, dog owners enjoying the sand, and a beachside café dishing up casual seafood with a front-row seat to the surf. In every direction, the coastline invites exploration, whether on a bike path hugging the shore or in the gentle rhythm of a kayak gliding across the bay.

As the day unfolds, Santa Barbara’s rich layers of history and culture come to life. The stately Old Mission, with its twin bell towers and centuries-old chapel, stands as a testament to the city’s Spanish heritage. Just across the lawn, a sprawling rose garden bursts with color—a favorite gathering spot for picnics and quiet moments. Downtown, the Santa Barbara County Courthouse dazzles with hand-painted ceilings, tiled staircases, and a clock tower that offers a postcard-worthy view of the city and coastline. Throughout the summer, the city hosts a variety of lively events, ranging from outdoor concerts and art walks to the vibrant Old Spanish Days Fiesta, where streets are filled with traditional music, dance, and food that celebrate local heritage. Between attractions, refuel with street tacos in the Funk Zone or enjoy ocean-to-table dining at a harborfront eatery, where each bite reflects the region’s fresh flavors and laid-back spirit.

As night falls, the city’s social pulse picks up with music and mingling in every corner. The Santa Barbara Bowl, an open-air amphitheater tucked into the hillside, hosts unforgettable summer concerts beneath the stars, with ocean breezes drifting through the crowd. Down by the waterfront, Chase Palm Park transforms into a casual concert venue on Thursday evenings, where locals sprawl out on blankets and sway to live bands with the sunset as their backdrop. After dark, the Funk Zone becomes the heart of Santa Barbara nightlife—an artistic district where tasting rooms, craft breweries, and colorful murals create a lively, creative atmosphere. Whether you’re sipping wine from nearby vineyards, enjoying cocktails on a rooftop terrace, or dancing the night away on State Street, Santa Barbara’s evening charm is as irresistible as its sun-soaked days—equal parts relaxation, rhythm, and coastal cool.

BEYOND THE CITY

OJAI, CALIFORNIA

Less than an hour inland from Santa Barbara, Ojai is a peaceful haven known for its artistic soul and natural beauty. The town exudes a relaxed, bohemian atmosphere, featuring charming boutiques, local art galleries, and an iconic open-air bookstore nestled beneath the trees. Hiking trails wind through citrus groves and oak-covered hills, while the golden hour glow on the surrounding mountains is a must-see. Ojai also boasts small-batch wineries and vibrant live music at rustic venues like Deer Lodge. For food and drink, enjoy wood-fired pizza under the stars at Boccali's or sip on house-brewed beers at the welcoming outdoor patio of Ojai Deer Lodge.

SANTA YNEZ VALLEY (SOLVANG & LOS OLIVOS), CALIFORNIA

An hour's drive into wine country leads you to the Santa Ynez Valley, where vineyard-dotted hills give way to the Danish-style village of Solvang. With its half-timbered buildings and windmills, Solvang offers European flair along with specialty bakeries and boutique shopping. Nearby Los Olivos is a hub for wine tasting, with dozens of inviting tasting rooms and scenic picnic spots. Summer here buzzes with events—wine garden concerts, outdoor theater, and cultural festivals. Start your day with buttery pastries in Solvang, tour historic missions and family-owned wineries, and finish with dinner at S.Y. Kitchen, known for its seasonal California cuisine.

PASO ROBLES, CALIFORNIA

About two hours north, Paso Robles is a spirited mix of frontier history and contemporary wine culture. This Central Coast gem boasts rolling vineyards and over 200 wineries, many of which offer outdoor tastings and summer concerts under the stars. The downtown square is lively, featuring tasting rooms, boutiques, and modern eateries, while nearby hot springs provide a relaxing end to the day. Music, festivals, and art exhibits bring local flavor to the warm evenings. Savor Italian-inspired fine dining at Il Cortile or dig into wood-fired rotisserie at The Hatch, followed by handcrafted cocktails in one of Paso's speakeasy-style bars.

PISMO BEACH, CALIFORNIA

A scenic 90-minute drive north takes you to Pismo Beach, a laid-back coastal town where vast sandy shores meet classic California charm. The long pier offers sweeping views of surfers and sunset skies, while the nearby Oceano Dunes invite off-road adventures across rolling sands: sea kayaking, beachcombing, and birdwatching round out the outdoor appeal. The relaxed downtown has a nostalgic vibe, with retro shops, surf cafés, and buzzing seafood joints. Savor beachside clam chowder at Splash Café or savor ocean views over dinner at Ventana Grill, both local staples renowned for their fresh flavors and unbeatable vistas.

HEARST CASTLE & CAMBRIA, CALIFORNIA

Travel about 2.5 hours up the coast to discover Hearst Castle, an opulent hilltop estate brimming with art, fountains, and unforgettable architecture. Once the private retreat of newspaper tycoon William Randolph Hearst, this mansion-turned-museum offers a glimpse into California's Gilded Age, with sweeping views of the Pacific. Nearby, Cambria welcomes visitors with a charming mix of galleries, antique shops, and hidden coastal trails. Elephant seals gather along the nearby shore, adding a wildlife twist to your visit. Grab a hearty burger and local wine at Sebastian's near the castle, or dine al fresco on global flavors at Robin's in Cambria.

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CALIFORNIA

Roughly 90 minutes north, San Luis Obispo blends college-town energy with small-town charm. The historic Spanish mission and lively public spaces anchor its vibrant downtown. Take in quirky local attractions like Bubblegum Alley or climb Bishop Peak for sweeping valley views. Summer nights come alive with street performers and live music at the popular Thursday night farmers' market. Art galleries, craft breweries, and independent bookstores line the walkable streets. Refuel with a famous tri-tip sandwich at Firestone Grill, or wind down with a pint and gourmet pub fare at The Black Sheep, a favorite local watering hole.

MALIBU, CALIFORNIA

Just over 90 minutes along the Pacific Coast Highway, Malibu dazzles with sun-soaked beaches, dramatic cliffs, and upscale coastal living. Bask on the sands of Zuma Beach or hike cliffside trails at Point Dume for postcard-perfect views. For a cultural break, wander the classical gardens and antiquities at the Getty Villa. Malibu's summer energy includes oceanfront brunches, live music patios, and chic shopping at outdoor plazas. Enjoy California-fresh fare at Malibu Farm, perched on the pier, or book a sunset dinner at Nobu, where sushi and ocean views create an unforgettable dining experience.

SEAL BEACH, CALIFORNIA

Located about two hours southeast, Seal Beach delivers a quiet coastal escape with vintage charm and a welcoming vibe. Its wide beach and wooden pier are perfect for strolls, sunbathing, or watching local surfers ride the waves. The quaint Main Street offers old-school ice cream, beachwear shops, and friendly bars where locals gather. Summer evenings bring mellow music performances and a warm neighborhood atmosphere. Grab tacos and a cocktail at The Hangout overlooking the sand, or head to Beachwood BBQ for award-winning smoked meats and an impressive selection of rotating craft beers.



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