

travel
itinerary

CALIFORNIA UNLEASHED: THE ULTIMATE COASTAL ADVENTURE

A deeper coastal journey between
Los Angeles and the Bay Area.

visit
California

Day 1–2: **Los Angeles to Ventura**
Day 3: **Channel Islands National Park**
Day 4–5: **Santa Barbara**
Day 6: **Santa Ynez Valley**
Day 7: **Central Coast to Big Sur**
Day 8: **Big Sur**
Day 9: **Carmel & Monterey**
Day 10: **Monterey to San Francisco**
Extensions: **San Francisco Bay Area**

THE TRIP

Itinerary overview

After cheering on your team in Los Angeles, escape the city for a coastal journey designed for travelers who value immersion in nature, wellness, and regional food culture. This itinerary prioritizes fewer destinations and longer stays, allowing time to experience California's legendary outdoor lifestyle at a meaningful pace.

From the pristine wilderness of Channel Islands National Park to the dramatic cliffs of Big Sur and the redwood forests of Northern California, this route balances iconic landscapes with authentic local experiences. Travelers will kayak through sea caves, hike among ancient trees, soak in mineral springs, and savor hyper-local cuisine shaped by the land and sea.



The Stats

Core Itinerary (Day 1–10): Approximately 520 miles / 837 km

With Bay Area Extension: Approximately 720 miles / 1,159 km

Best For: Active travelers, nature lovers, wellness seekers, photographers, couples and premium travelers seeking immersive outdoor experiences.

Day 1–2: Los Angeles to Ventura

Gateway to the Channel Islands

Driving: 70 miles / 112 km (approximately 1.5 hours via US-101 North)

Transition from the energy of Los Angeles to Ventura's relaxed coastal atmosphere, a natural launching point for Channel Islands National Park. A two-night stay allows travelers to unwind before their island adventure while exploring Ventura's historic downtown, beaches and harbor.

Highlights

- Explore historic downtown Ventura and Mission Basilica San Buenaventura
- Sunset at San Buenaventura State Beach
- Ventura Harbor Village dining and waterfront strolls

Overnight: Ventura (Two nights)



● Day 3: **Channel Islands National Park**

California's Galápagos

Driving: Round-trip ferry from Ventura Harbor

Spend a full day exploring Santa Cruz Island's untouched wilderness, where dramatic sea caves, endemic wildlife and panoramic coastal views reveal California as it once was. This immersive experience rewards travelers who dedicate time rather than rushing onward.

Highlights

- Ferry to Santa Cruz Island (advance reservations essential)
- Guided sea cave kayaking and snorkeling
- Hiking with sweeping coastal views

Overnight: Ventura

● Day 4–5: **Santa Barbara**

Coastal Elegance & Outdoor Living

Driving: 27 miles / 43 km (approximately 45 minutes via US-101 North)

Continue to Santa Barbara, where Mediterranean architecture meets outdoor lifestyle. Two nights allow time for cycling, sailing, hiking and exploring the region's food and wine scene without feeling rushed.

Highlights

- Bike the Cabrillo Waterfront Path to Montecito
- Explore State Street and the courthouse tower views
- Wine tasting in the Funk Zone
- Optional sunset sailing

Overnight: Santa Barbara (Two nights)



● Day 6: **Santa Ynez Valley**

Wine Country & Ranchland Adventure

Driving: 35 miles / 56 km (approximately 1 hour)

Head inland to the Santa Ynez Valley for a change of scenery. This relaxed wine region blends outdoor activities with culinary experiences and small-town charm.

Highlights

- Horseback riding or ziplining adventures
- Wine tasting in Los Olivos
- Farm-to-table dining

Overnight: Santa Ynez Valley

● Day 7: **Central Coast to Big Sur**

Transition to California's Most Dramatic Coast

Driving: 165 miles / 266 km (approximately 3.5 hours via US-101 North)

Travel north through the Central Coast with scenic stops before arriving in Big Sur. This day is intentionally paced to arrive early, allowing time to settle into the landscape rather than rushing through.

Highlights

- Breakfast stop in Los Alamos
- Scenic coastal viewpoints
- Arrival in Big Sur with time to explore

Overnight: Big Sur (Two nights)



● Day 8: **Big Sur**

Iconic Wilderness & Coastal Immersion

Driving: Local exploration

Dedicate a full day to Big Sur's extraordinary landscapes. This protected time ensures the destination becomes a highlight rather than a drive-by experience.

Highlights

- Hiking in Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park
- Scenic viewpoints along Highway 1
- Lunch at Nepenthe
- Redwood groves and hidden beaches

Overnight: Big Sur

● Day 9: **Carmel & Monterey**

Coastal Villages & Marine Life

Driving: 32 miles / 51 km (approximately 45 minutes)

Ease north to Carmel-by-the-Sea and Monterey, where art, marine conservation, and historic charm intersect.

Highlights

- Explore Carmel village and scenic drives
- Monterey Bay Aquarium
- Cannery Row waterfront

Overnight: Monterey



● Day 10: Monterey to San Francisco

Surf Culture & City Arrival

Driving: 118 miles / 190 km (approximately 2.5 hours via Highway 1 North)

Follow the coast through Santa Cruz and Half Moon Bay before arriving in San Francisco, where urban energy meets outdoor access.

Highlights

- Santa Cruz surfing heritage
- Half Moon Bay coastal views
- Arrival in San Francisco

Overnight: San Francisco

● Extensions: San Francisco Bay Area

Days 11–13 remain as optional extensions exploring San Francisco, West Marin and the Sonoma Coast.



Professional Tips for Travel Advisors

- Prioritize reservations for Channel Islands ferry, Big Sur lodging and popular parks
- Recommend premium vehicle rental for coastal driving comfort
- Package guided experiences to enhance value
- Consider private transfers for clients who prefer not to drive

Lodging

Focus on properties that immerse travelers in the natural setting:

- **Ventura** – Harborfront or boutique downtown hotels
- **Santa Barbara** – Beachfront resorts or luxury inns
- **Santa Ynez Valley** – Vineyard stays or ranch properties
- **Big Sur** – Luxury lodges or glamping resorts
- **Monterey** – Coastal resorts
- **San Francisco** – Waterfront or central neighborhoods

Essential Planning Notes

- Coastal weather can vary; layered clothing recommended
- Highway 1 conditions should always be checked in advance
- Reservations are required for many parks and attractions
- Allow flexibility for scenic stops



Agent Notes

This itinerary is best suited for travelers seeking:

- Outdoor adventure balanced with comfort
- Scenic coastal driving
- Culinary and wellness experiences
- Time to connect with landscapes

Extra Time Options

Extend the Experience

If additional time is available:

- Add Yosemite National Park
- Extend into Napa or Sonoma wine country
- Explore Lake Tahoe
- Include additional Bay Area outdoor experiences