

Tips On Trips

Wish You Were Here—Summer Getaways In California



(NAPSA)—With plenty of summer destinations to choose from, many travelers are heading to California for fun, relaxation and a bit of adventure.

Hit The Beach

U.S. households make 54 million trips to the beach annually (according to the Travel Industry Association of America). What differentiates California from competing destinations is its 1,264 miles of diverse coastline.

In Northern California, travelers don light sweaters and enjoy the region's moderate temperatures and inspiring views. Beach communities such as Shelter Cove, Fort Bragg, Dillon Beach and Baker Beach are perfect for discovering seashells. Beachgoers can also take a ride on the Giant Dipper rollercoaster at the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk during the park's centennial celebration this summer.

Along the Central Coast, beachcombers heading to Pismo Beach, Morro Bay and San Simeon State Beach will find plenty of recreation options, including ATV riding in the Oceano Sand Dunes and tours of historic Hearst Castle. In Southern California, visitors choose from more than 100 pristine beaches, including Hermosa and Huntington Beaches, for picnics, surfing or just relaxing in the sun. In San Diego, travelers can enjoy a night on the town in the city's Gaslamp Quarter.

Raise A Glass

With connoisseur travel on the rise, many travelers look to incorporate their passions, such as food and wine, into their getaways.

Epicurean travelers can treat their palates at more than 3,000 wineries and 80,000 eating and drinking establishments state-wide. Foodies and wine connoisseurs won't want to miss a trip through the Sonoma and Napa Valley wine country to sample gourmet meals, enjoy renowned

wine tasting and indulge in spa treatments at the regions' luxurious resorts.

For a hands-on experience, cooking skills are put to the test at Napa Valley's Culinary Institute of America, while Copia offers classes such as introduction to wine and food pairing workshops. In Southern California, Temecula boasts a burgeoning wine region where a day of tasting can begin with a hot air balloon ride.

Hug A Tree

Many visitors forego the gym while visiting California and choose to burn calories outdoors. The Golden State offers more than 278 state parks to explore and activities ranging from hang gliding to whitewater rafting. In Northern California, visitors can cruise Lake Shasta aboard a luxury houseboat complete with waterslides, while anglers can cast a line beneath Redding's magnificent Sundial Bridge. In Lake Tahoe, visitors can kayak on North America's largest alpine lake. Soaring glaciers and sequoias abound in Yosemite, where visitors can hike, rock-climb and mountain bike through the National Park.

Take A Bite

Nothing beats the state's abundant agriculture, and a visit to the Central Valley reveals some of the country's most delicious fruits, vegetables, wine and dairy products. In fact, nine out of 10 of the country's top agriculture-producing counties can be found in California.

Hungry visitors can tour the Squaw Valley Herb Gardens, Fagundes Old World Cheese or one of the region's other working farms and gardens. The Fresno County Fruit Trail is a popular, self-guided tour through the state's heartland. Along the way, visitors can take part in hometown events, including the Selma Raisin Festival and Clovis Peach Party.

Paint The Town

The state's thriving cities provide endless urban vacation opportunities.

Visitors to San Francisco can indulge in retail therapy at Union Square, experience the architecture of the Ferry Building or the new San Francisco Centre, or feast on a culinary walking tour.

In Southern California, stargazers should begin their adventure in Los Angeles to find their favorite celebrity's star on the Walk of Fame or pose for a photo outside of Grauman's Chinese Theatre. In addition to fine dining at celebrity-owned restaurants, such as J.Lo's Madre's and Ashton Kutcher's Dolce Enoteca e Ristorante, and endless shopping, visitors can take in a performance at the Walt Disney Concert Hall or visit the Getty Villa.

California's theme parks are a must for thrill seekers. From Legoland in Carlsbad to Knott's Berry Farms in Buena Vista and the Disneyland Resort in Anaheim, both kids and kids at heart will enjoy the ride.

Soak Up The Sun

Vacationers looking for peace and serenity should pack their bags for California's desert region.

At Joshua Tree National Park, sightseers can experience the expansive terrain through a guided hike or mountain bike trail. Explorers hoping to leave dry land can head to Big Bear Lake for activities such as wakeboarding or jet skiing, or jump aboard the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, which rises 8,500 feet above the desert floor. For travelers hoping to improve their swing, the desert region offers more than 80 public and private golf courses.

According to the Travel Industry Association of America (TIA), Americans will take nearly 330 million "person-trips" this summer, a record high. For more information about planning your California vacation, check out visitcalifornia.com.