

MOON

WANDERLUST

Road Trips

**40 BEAUTIFUL DRIVES
AROUND THE WORLD**

**Wanderlust Road Trips:
40 Beautiful Drives Around the World
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LOCATION



California's west coast

ROUTE



Santa Barbara – Monterey

LENTH



230 mi (380 km)

TIME



One day is enough to reach Monterey from Santa Barbara, but why rush? Take a few days to enjoy the many dreamy sights along this route.

YOU'LL LOVE



The sweetness of California and the superb panoramas from the jagged coasts.





PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY

THE CALIFORNIA DREAM ROAD FROM SANTA BARBARA TO MONTEREY

Stretching a total of 650 mi (1,000 km) between San Diego and San Francisco, California State Route 1 (or Highway 1) is part of a select club of the most beautiful roads in the world. Experience the California way of life as the state's beautiful coastline unrolls in front of you. The stretch between Santa Barbara and Monterey offers spectacular scenery between two charming towns. Depart from Santa Barbara, among the palm trees, to take El Camino Real, the route of the old Spanish missions. Farther on, Highway 1 continues in solitude. Sprayed by the waves of the Pacific, the road rises, twisting up the side of the coast, hugging cliffs, and winding past hidden coves with golden sand and forests of sequoias. A true ode to wild California.



SANTA BARBARA, THE AMERICAN RIVIERA

It all starts in **Santa Barbara (1)**. The journey begins on the promenade along East Cabrillo Boulevard, in the shade of palm trees as tall as skyscrapers. Joggers and rollerbladers slide past each other along the concrete ribbon that meets the wide sand carpet of East Beach. Beach volleyball players give it their all against the backdrop of the Pacific. At the end of the beach, Stearns Wharf, the oldest (1872) and longest pier in California, reaches into the sea with its 2,300 ft (700 m) of planks resting on a forest of 2,307 wooden pillars. On the other side of the pier, West Beach, wide as an airfield, welcomes the outrigger canoes of the local clubs.

Marching away from the ocean, State Street forms the backbone of downtown Santa Barbara. From the very first steps, Spanish colo-

nial-revival style buildings, built after the devastating earthquake of 1925, assert the city's Hispanic heritage. The old Arlington Theater, with art deco touches, echoes the nearby County Courthouse and its Spanish influences. Down the street you'll find the Presidio, one of the four strongholds of Spanish California, built in 1782, with its authentic adobe walls.

A stone's throw away, the Santa Barbara Museum of Art houses works by Chagall and Matisse. Captured by the 1980s soap opera *Santa Barbara*, the city, which saw the birth of American cinema before Hollywood, is home to one of the highest concentrations of high-income earners in the United States. . . Over the years, Kevin Costner, Tom Cruise, Leonardo DiCaprio, and Kirk Douglas have been among them.



CALIFORNIA, LAND OF MISSIONS

A stopover at Mission Santa Barbara (1820) opens a window to the past. Travel back in time as you take in the neoclassical facade decked out in pink columns, and the interior of heavy beams, colorful stuccoes, and depictions of crucifixions. Water gurgling in a mossy fountain almost sounds like prayer.

As early as the 16th century, the mythical California invented by the conquistadores proved to be a disappointment. A Franciscan priest, Junípero Serra, continued their conquest

through the forced conversion of the indigenous people who lived here. Between 1769 and the 1820s, 21 missions were built along the Camino Real, the “royal road,” each about a day's ride from each other. Today, many major cities bear their names: San Diego, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, San Francisco, and more.

Most of the missions have survived centuries and earthquakes. To the north of Santa Barbara, near the vast flower and strawberry fields of Lompoc Valley, **La Purísima Mission**

(1812) recreates the daily life of yesteryear, with its sheep and chickens.

The reddish tile roofs and light pink walls enclose the dormitories of the soldiers who watched over the monks, the apartments of their commander, and the craft workshops. The indigenous people, forcefully converted, worked there day after day for the “salvation” of their souls. . . Don't be surprised if this place feels haunted.

PISMO BEACH, KINGDOM OF BUTTERFLIES

Planted inland, at the foot of the wooded sierras of Santa Ynez, where roadsters roam, **Solvang (2)** stands out in the Californian scene. A windmill, half-timbered houses, bakeries, clog-makers, and a replica of Denmark's Little Mermaid statue. . . . Is this a movie set? Almost. This town, founded a century ago by Danes, has become a must-see. Stop by for some a pea soup, and continue your drive north.

Route 101 returns to the Pacific Ocean at **Pismo Beach (3)**. It's a typically Californian resort town, with wide, straight avenues, motels, fast food restaurants, and RV parks home to snowbirds (retirees fleeing cold winters of the northern states).

They're not the only ones who make the trip. At the **Monarch Butterfly Grove**, the eucalyptus trees, bathed in the smell of minty dry leaves, are home to hundreds of the orange-and-brown butterflies who return each November. The monarch is part of a special phenomenon: Each autumn, it travels between 600 and 3,000 mi (1,000 and 5,000 km) to reach the grounds where it will spend the winter. Traveling 20 mi (35 km) per day on average (with peaks of 80 mi/130 km!), the butterfly takes between one and four months to reach its final destination.

The population born east of the Rockies reaches as far as the Mexican Sierras. The ones born in the west fly down to the Californian coast. The butterflies stay there until February or March, before starting their long ascent back up north, which the next four or five generations will continue. Their genetic memory is astounding.



4

5

HEARST CASTLE, THE PALACE OF *CITIZEN KANE*

In **San Luis Obispo (4)**—also born around a Spanish mission—Highway 1 branches off to the north. Progressing between the ocean and grassy rolling hills, it reaches the pleasant village of **Cambria (5)**, another great place to stop. The town features brick buildings, antique shops dating back at least to the Nixon era, a saloon, and an art deco liquor store .

The next day, reservation in hand, knock on the door of Hearst Castle. On the itinerary: a visit to the incredible second home of William Randolph Hearst, newspaper magnate of the last century. Perched on a ridge at the end of a winding road accessible only by bus from the visitor center, this sprawling estate holds 115 rooms (including 38 bedrooms and 41 bathrooms). Construction began in 1922, and it had yet to be completed when Hearst died in 1951.

The castle overflows with masterpieces gleaned from all over Europe. It's eclectic, over-the-top, and bombastic, with its Roman swimming pool with blue mosaics and its personal zoo where antelopes, kangaroos, giraffes, and zebras frolicked. Hearst Castle was such a sight that playwright George Bernard Shaw described it as “what God would have built if he had had the money!”

Charlie Chaplin, Clark Gable, and Cary Grant all dragged their boots here . . . and of course, critics of the house still showed up, rain or shine. Hearst's life was also one of the main inspirations for Orson Welles's *Citizen Kane*.

PIEDRAS BLANCAS AND ITS ELEPHANT SEALS

It's 6am at **Piedras Blancas Beach (6)**. The sun has barely risen above the Santa Lucia Mountains, a refuge for the last condors in California. Down below, a few elephant seals are already basking. Females and pups, long and plump, huddle together at the foot of the slope.

One after the other, they come onto the sand. Glistening with cold water, they observe the scenery for a moment, then make their way across the sand, wiggling their bodies, to crowd together in the rays of the rising sun. Farther on, at the edge of the surf, two juvenile males mimic the fights they've seen adults perform: Face to face, they throw themselves on each other, tossing their heads and bodies in large, sudden movements.

In a few years, once the animals have reached their full-grown size, this fight won't be so playful. Elephant seal males can weigh up to 4.5 tons and grow up to 20 ft (6 m) long! For the time being, most of the large males are offshore, waiting to come back to shore to molt.

Elephant seals were hunted for their fat—almost to the point of extermination—in the 19th century. They took refuge on Mexican islets, and they have gradually reconquered the North Pacific. In 1990, about 20 elephant seals took possession of this isolated beach at the foot of the coastal road. Now 17,000 of them frequent the place at one time or another during the year, particularly in late January, late April, and late October.

BIG SUR, VERTIGO ON THE ROAD

After Piedras Blancas, the most adventurous stretch of Highway 1 begins. Completed in 1937, the road here winds along the side of a cliff, crossing a succession of steep valleys, capes, and peaks. The view is plunging, the Pacific omnipresent, the vertigo constant.

When winter storms kick in, it's not uncommon for landslides to get in the way. Sometimes, a few days of work are enough to restore the track. Sometimes months of hard work are needed. A few years ago, Route 1 was cut off in two places for four months, effectively turning Big Sur into a makeshift island.

Shortly before reaching this point, a stopover is essential. At **Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park**, the McWay Falls look like they're straight out of a movie scene. The falls, more plentiful in spring, flow from a wooded promontory onto a beige sand beach, lining the bottom of a peaceful cove. From the coastal path, perched high above under the leaves of eucalyptus trees, the view is breathtaking—and the smell intoxicating.

Finally, here is **Big Sur (7)**, an artists' haunt since Henry Miller fled civilization for solitude here. Fir trees and sequoias cover everything. Roofs protrude from between the peaks, overlooking the ocean.

A narrow road descends slowly toward Pfeiffer Beach, another paradise: a wild immensity of gray sand, punctuated by black rocks and an islet pierced by a keyhole. In the morning, the cliffs are enveloped in fog, formed when the temperatures from the cold ocean makes contact with the warmer land.

CARMEL AND 17-MILE DRIVE

Head to **Garrapata State Park** for a chance to see frolicking otters. Otters were once hunted for their fur, and though the population was decimated, they are gradually reclaiming their old domain here and in **Point Lobos**, where they share the waters and coves with seals and sea lions. The float on kelp beds—large clumps of algae that can reach 300 ft (100 m) in length—moor themselves to the seaweed, and break shells with their expert paws.

Carmel (8), between pines and cypresses, is home to a wealthy population. The town's cute mission, among the oldest (1770), is surrounded by an abundant, serene garden of tall trees, wisteria, and a gurgling fountain. This is where Junipero Serra, the infamous missionary, chose to rest for eternity.

Take in a view through tree branches of the rocky, brittle coast, hemmed by the white foam of a not-so-peaceful ocean, along the famous **17-Mile Drive**. In sight: **Monterey (9)**, the endpoint of this lovely drive.

Take your time to wander the beautiful Victorian homes of Pacific Grove and the old canneries of Cannery Row, passed down to posterity thanks to John Steinbeck. A can't-miss stop is the Monterey Bay Aquarium, a pioneer in the field of modern super-aquariums. And the mischievous sea lions of Fisherman's Wharf are endearing, too.

PLAYLIST

The Mamas
& The Papas

—
CALIFORNIA
DREAMIN'

Kavinsky

—
PACIFIC COAST
HIGHWAY

Supertramp

—
BREAKFAST
IN AMERICA

Red Hot
Chili
Peppers

—
CALIFORNICATION

PREPARE FOR YOUR TRIP

- visitcalifornia.com • Before your visit, go to the official tourism site of the state of California.
- dot.ca.gov • Check the California Department of Transportation website for state map and highway information before planning a coastal road trip.



HOW TO GET THERE

It's easy to get here: In addition to Los Angeles and San Francisco airports, you can also land in Santa Barbara or San Jose. You can easily reach Highway 1 from any of these airports.



RENT A CAR

You need a car to enjoy this drive. Alternatively, you can take the Green Tortoise minibuses, which offer 1-2 monthly 3-day trip (one-way) between San Francisco and LA along Highway 1 (May-Sept; approx. \$260).



WHEN TO GO

In Southern California (Santa Barbara through San Luis Obispo), the sun shines all year round, even if the thermometer drops in winter (46-64°F/8-18°C). Farther north, it's rainier in the off-season, and the temperatures drop a couple of degrees due to the cold currents that run along the coast. It is not uncommon for fog banks to cling to the coasts, even in summer.



ACCOMMODATIONS

While you can typically find a motel for \$60-80 in the off-season, prices go up on weekends and skyrocket on holidays and in the middle of summer. To lower the bill, you can bet on camping: Find campsites all along Highway 1, especially in state parks, which are often very pleasant. There are also B&Bs, which are often very beautiful and sometimes set up in historic homes—but, of course, prices are going up. If you do visit in high season, be sure to book in advance.



A BOOK FOR THE ROAD

Cannery Row,
John Steinbeck, Viking Press, 1945.



LOCATION



Western Canada, in the heart of the Rockies

ROUTE



Banff – Jasper

LENGTH



About 200 mi (300 km), including 140 mi (230 km) on the famous Icefields Parkway (Highway 93).

TIME



A day if you're in a hurry, but that would be a shame! One week will let you take advantage of the many stops for hiking, rafting, and more, in gorgeous nature.

YOU'LL LOVE



The grandiose landscapes, the flora and fauna, the great outdoors.



START-END OF ROAD TRIP



STOP



LANDMARK OR POINT OF INTEREST



ROAD



ROAD TRIP



DETOUR



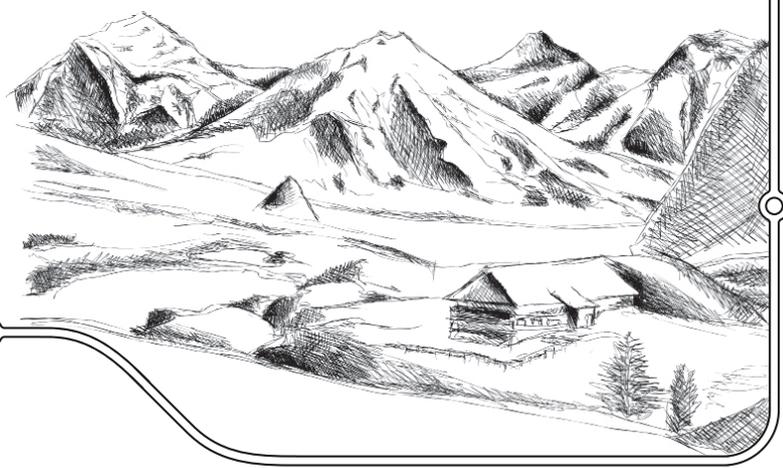
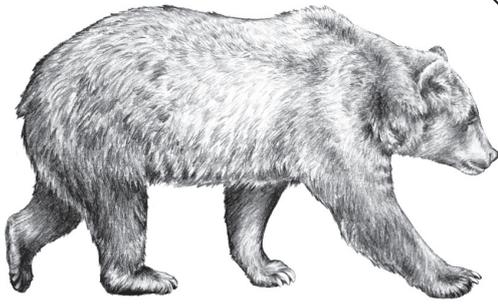
AT THE HEART OF THE CANADIAN ROCKIES

FROM BANFF TO JASPER



Banff to Jasper is a traveler's dream! The crossing of the Rockies follows one of the most beautiful roads in the world. Covering nearly 200 mi (300 km), unforgettable panoramas of chiseled and grandiose landscapes follow one another, looking perfectly plastic: sparkling blue lakes, rivers, forests as far as the eye can see, peaks with sharp ridges, waterfalls, and glaciers. The land is also home to varied and abundant wildlife—bears, caribou, elk, and more. The stage is set for an unforgettable road trip in a land of pioneers, where the magic of the great outdoors is still alive.





1

BANFF: GATEWAY TO THE ROCKIES

Gateway to the Rockies, 75 mi (120 km) from Calgary, Banff was born from an unexpected discovery: In 1883, workers on the transcontinental railway stumbled upon a cave with natural hot springs. To take advantage of the popularity of hot spring treatments, Canada decided to create the country's first national park. This was the beginning of a success story that continues today: With more than 3 million visitors a year, the charming mountain resort of **Banff (1)** is one of Canada's major tourist destinations, but not so much for hot springs anymore. The original thermal

baths have been transformed into a museum (**Cave and Basin National Historic Site**) and only one swimming pool remains open to the public: the **Banff Upper Hot Springs**, where you can splash around (water at 104°F/40°C) in the open air on the slopes of the aptly named **Sulfur Mountain**.

Today, people come to Banff for the exceptional natural setting of the UNESCO-listed national park, its relaxed village lifestyle, its summer festival, and the countless routes in the surrounding area, which you can cross on

foot, by bike, or by canoe. No less than 800 mi (1,300 km) of marked trails of all levels are available to hikers in **Banff National Park**—enough to recharge your batteries before embarking on this magnificent road trip.



*To take it all in, hop on the **Banff Gondola**, a cable car that rises 2,300 ft (700 m) in 8 minutes. From the top, you'll see a breathtaking 360-degree view of six mountain ranges, the **Vermilion Lakes**, and **Lake Minnewanka**, as well as the tumultuous **Bow River**, where you can go rafting once back on land.*



LAKE LOUISE: THE JEWEL OF THE ROCKIES

On the road 36 mi (58 km) north of Banff, **Lake Louise (2)** appears. It's a popular tourist destination, but above all, it's a Canadian icon. Instantly recognizable, this mountain lake perched at an altitude of 5,680 ft (1,731 m) looks like it was pulled directly out of a landscape painting, so harmonious are its shapes and its setting. Its turquoise waters, in tones that vary according to the seasons and the light, rest at the base of a circle of mountains covered with fir trees, against a backdrop of glaciers and eternal snow. This beautiful, almost unreal landscape has drawn crowds during summer since the construction of the imposing Fairmont Château Lake Louise in the early 20th century. It's advisable to arrive early in the morning—spend the night there if possible—and hike up to a viewpoint first thing: Take the path up to the **Big Beehive** (a superb panorama), or even hike to the spectacular Victoria Glacier, which overlooks the lake. Less famous than Lake Louise, **Moraine Lake (3)**, 7 mi (12 km) to the south, holds its own against its illustrious neighbor. More isolated—completely inaccessible in winter—it is bordered by severe rocky cliffs that plunge into bright blue waters, contrasting with the deep green of the surrounding conifers. An unforgettable, eminently romantic spectacle.



4

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6

ON THE ICEFIELDS PARKWAY

From Lake Louise, the famous **Icefields Parkway** heads north toward Jasper, a route through splendid scenery that lives up to its reputation for 144 mi (232 km). Every bend in the Icefields Parkway looks even more beautiful than the last: a feast of pristine lakes including the sublime **Peyto Lake (4)**, glaciers, and mighty mountains, all framed by wide valleys. Only a few rudimentary hostels, campsites, a handful of hotels, and a gas station dot the road. At times you'll drive without passing another car for miles, and you'll feel like you're completely alone in the world. At the end of 75 mi (120 km), the forests give way to lunar landscapes, which serve as a prelude to the spectacular **Columbia Icefield (5)**, an field of ice that extends over more than 100 square mi (300 square km) and is more than 984 ft (300 m) thick—the equivalent of the Eiffel Tower—in some places. It includes eight large glaciers, the most famous of which is the **Athabasca Glacier (6)**.



FOCUS

The Columbia Icefield's Spectacular Athabasca Glacier

Located on the watershed, this imposing glacier has the unique feature of feeding rivers whose waters flow into three oceans: the Pacific, Atlantic, and Arctic. The **Ice Explorer**, a bus with huge wheels, allows you to travel along the ice and reach to the glacier. It can be crowded with tourists, but it's still a special experience! If you don't want to ride the bus, you can admire the glacier on your own as you approach it (there's a parking lot across the road, opposite the Icefield Center). Warning: It is **forbidden and dangerous** to walk alone on the glacier!

PREPARE FOR YOUR TRIP

- icefieldsparkway.ca • Info on the road.
- banfflakelouise.com • Banff Lake Louise Tourism Board. Info and downloadable brochures.
- tourismealberta.ca • Alberta Tourism Board.



HOW TO GET THERE

Calgary International Airport is the closest large airport to Banff.



LOUER SA VOITURE

Rent your car in Calgary, and either do a loop or return it in Vancouver. Car rentals are also available in Banff and Jasper.



ACCOMMODATIONS

- **Banff Centre:** 107 Tunnel Mountain Drive, Banff.
- banffcentre.ca • An astonishing place that brings together a cultural center, a campus for resident artists, several performance venues, and also a hotel and three restaurants for all budgets (Three Ravens Dining Room is very good).
- **Hotel Athabasca:** 510 Patricia St., Jasper. • athabascahotel.com • A good hotel in the heart of Jasper, open since 1929. Vintage vibe.



WHERE TO EAT

- **The Maple Leaf Grill:** 137, Banff Ave., Banff. An elegant bistro with fine cuisine based on local products (Alberta beef, bison, salmon, etc.).
- **Bruno's Cafe & Grill:** 304, Caribou St., Banff. Burgers, pizza, wraps, sandwiches—a whole range of options at low prices.
- **Evil Dave's:** 622, Patricia St., Jasper. Generous and hearty options, good craft beers, modern decor, and great service.



7

8

9

IN JASPER NATIONAL PARK

Continue along the Icefields Parkway. The must-sees along the way include **Mount Edith Cavell (7)** (with many athletic hikes) and the impressive **Athabasca Falls (8)**, 100-ft-high (30-m-high) waterfalls that tumble down a narrow canyon. The road ends in **Jasper (9)**. Surrounded by impressive mountains, this small town is a paradise for hiking, cycling, mountain biking, kayaking, and rafting. At the gateway to the city, the **Jasper Skytram** cable car takes you up to nearly 8,000 ft (2,500 m) to The Whistlers and its superb panorama of the region. A little farther north, the open-air **Miette Hot Springs** are worth visiting. But above all, you will be able to explore the splendid national park itself. Heading

southeast about 30 mi (50 km) from Jasper is another must-see wonder of the Canadian Rockies: **Maligne Lake**, arguably the most intimate of the region's lakes, set against a backdrop of snow-capped peaks. It's a landscape with the serenity of Japanese prints, sure to inspire contemplation.

Along the way, you will pass **Medicine Lake**, which is oddly dry in winter. It is fed by the underground water network of Maligne Lake, which overflows in summer. When the water levels withdraw, the lake becomes a plain streaked with streams of water. It's like a gigantic natural bathtub that has been magically emptied.

