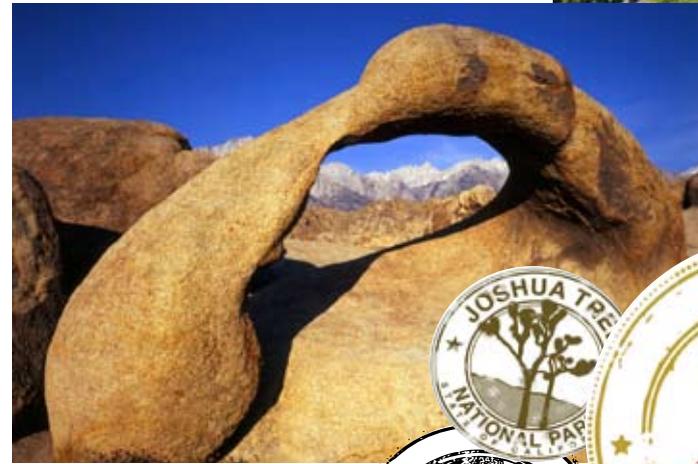




# Spirit of California

Kristin Luna



Rarely will you find a state so rife in diversity. From the sweeping coastal vistas of Big Sur to the snowy peaks of Tahoe to the wide expanses of sand in the Mojave Desert, California truly has it all. There's a reason 37 million residents call it home: They just can't get enough of the state's natural beauty.

In his book *The Yosemite*, naturalist John Muir, for whom many state parks and monuments are named, summed up California in a single statement: "Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul."

But with 800 miles of coastline lining the western border, the Sierra Nevada Mountains creating a boundary to the east—and a whole lot in between—how do you even decide how to divvy up your time? Keep reading to learn more about planning your visit to the Golden State.



## NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

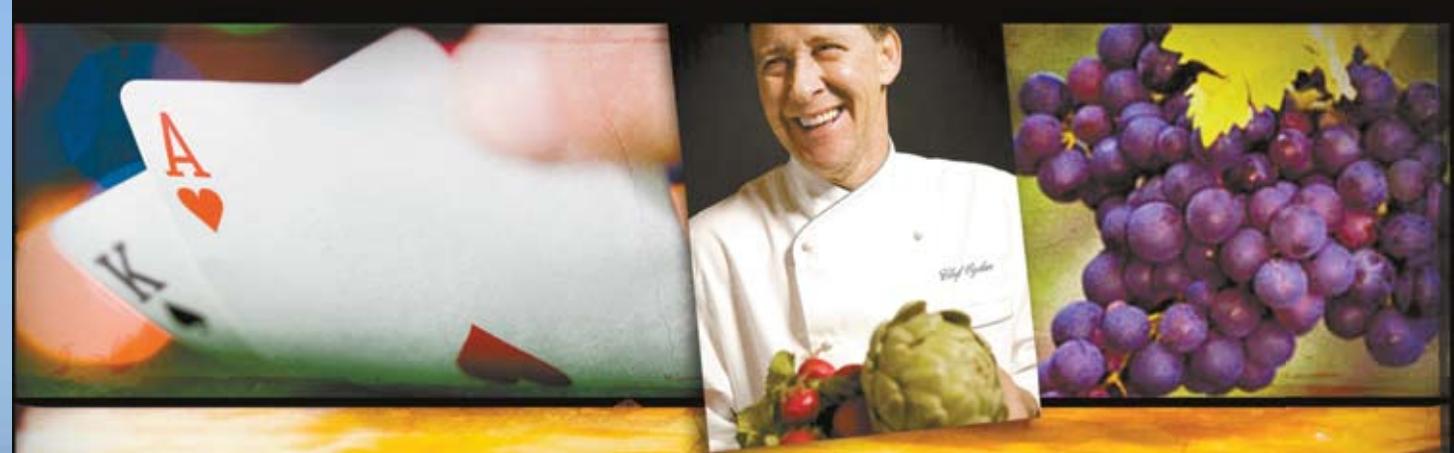
California is a road tripper's dream, and if you base yourself in the state's most eclectic city, San Francisco, you'll be able to see a good portion of the northern region via side trips. But first, the City by the Bay is deserving of a few days: Rich in culture, you could easily spend your entire time perusing its famous museums like the California Academy of Sciences, Palace of Fine Arts, Exploratorium, Museum of Modern Art or the Legion of Honor. Or if you prefer a more hands-on experience, meander down colorful and gritty Haight Street for a little people watching and thrift store shopping; from there, you can catch a flick at the iconic Castro Theatre if you need a bit of a breather. Nearby, the Mission District is famous for its vast, impressive murals—not to mention its burritos. Locals will warn you not to visit this city without sampling its authentic Mexican cuisine.

The famous saying, often attributed to Mark Twain, goes: "The coldest winter I ever spent was a summer in San

Francisco." Take heed and pack warmly: This is a city that is overcast and windy much of the year, only enhancing its ethereal, Emerald City-like charm. Throw on a fleece and some heavy pants and travel over the Golden Gate Bridge by foot; if it's a clear day, you'll be able to see beyond Alcatraz Island and all the way to Mount Diablo. If you're feeling like a long walk, venture down into the artsy seaside community of Sausalito for some fresh seafood and a gander at the local galleries.

Another option is to rent a car and take a drive down the famed windy way of Lombard Street, then continue out along Crissy Field, over the bridge and into the redwood forest of Muir Woods. Just an hour north of there, Wine Country is a sprawling mass of bright yellow mustard fields mixed with deep green vines. Delight in wine tasting at the various vineyards in Napa and Sonoma Counties. If wine isn't your thing, rent a bike and cycle through the wineries or book a hot air balloon and see the landscape from an alternate view.

Photos courtesy of iStockimages



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## CENTRAL VALLEY

East of the Bay Area sits Sacramento, home to Sacramento International Airport and the gateway to Northern California. Located conveniently to both Wine Country and Lake Tahoe, Sacramento International Airport is less congested than the Bay Area hubs, offering parking for as little as \$9 a day and boasting free wireless Internet throughout all terminals. While waiting for your flight, you can sip wine at Vino Volo, get pampered at the Massage Bar, or make the most of the more than 40 shops and restaurants on tap. And with a fancy new terminal in the works, the airport will offer even more perks to travelers when the terminal opens at the end of this year.

Sacramento is billed as the "City of Trees" and earned that nickname for a reason: As you drive through the shady downtown ways, awash in foliage, it will be easy to forget you're in the state capital. Take a stroll along the 23-mile American River Parkway for a taste of the area's flora and fauna. If you want even more of an adventure, book a rafting trip on the American River through one of the region's many outdoors tour operators.

*"California's biggest selling points is its diversity, visitors will find activities for every taste."*

Photos courtesy of iStockimages

# SAVE \$40 on ALL Disneyland® Resort Park Hopper® Tickets!



## Disneyland RESORT



The Little Mermaid-Ariel's Undersea Adventure  
Artist Rendering



Toy Story Mania!™  
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World of Color  
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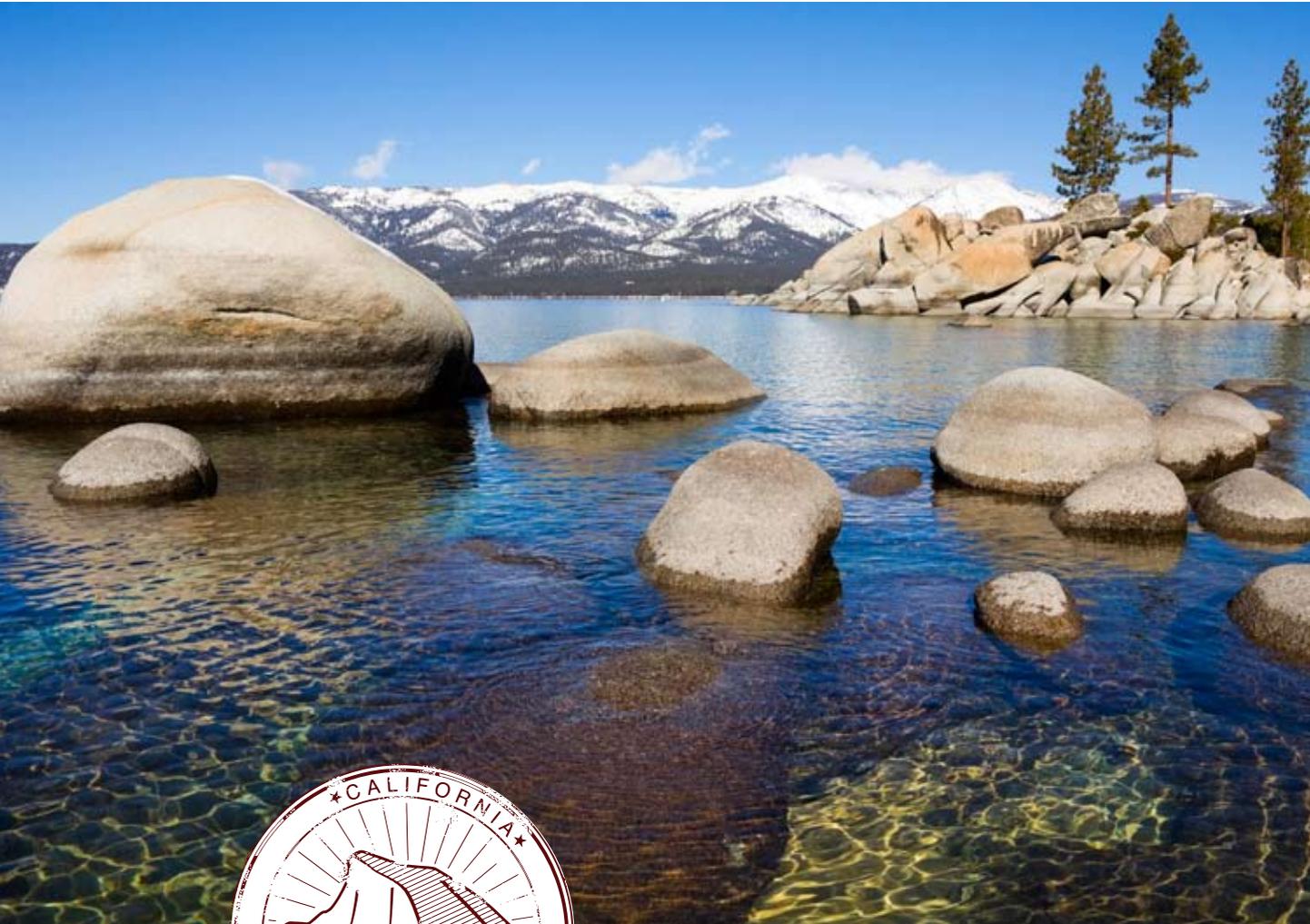
Big changes are transforming *Disney California Adventure™* Park! From *Toy Story Mania!™* and the new Silly Symphony Swings to the new nighttime water spectacular "World of Color," there's more magic than ever before. But that's not all. In 2011, you can take flight with "Goofy's Sky School" or go under the sea with "The Little Mermaid ~ Ariel's Undersea Adventure," all at *Disney California Adventure™* Park.

In celebration of all the new attractions taking place at *Disney California Adventure™* Park, Southwest Airlines Vacations is offering \$40 per person off all *Disneyland®* Resort *Park Hopper®* Tickets when you book a vacation package including flight + hotel for 3 or more nights to the *Disneyland®* Resort! Savings valid if booked 5/1/11 - 5/31/11 for travel 5/8/11 - 11/4/11. Seven-day advance purchase is required.

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## SIERRA NEVADAS

If you drive northeast from Sacramento on Interstate-80, you'll pass over the Sierra Nevada mountain range and find yourself in Reno-Tahoe, the sloping, natural, tree-lined area that straddles the California and Nevada state line. While skiing is what put Reno-Tahoe on the map, the region is just as bustling in summer months (and the casinos of South Lake Tahoe stay packed year round). If a view from the top is your desire, Heavenly Gondola is open year round; halfway up is the Deck, a 14,000-square-foot viewing platform, or you can continue all the way to Adventure Peak for hikes that begin at 9,136 feet. North Shore's biggest resorts, Northstar-at-Tahoe and Squaw Valley, are also ideal for warm weather family fun like al fresco dining, mountain biking, hiking and the like. One nearby summer event not to be missed is the monthlong Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival in Sand Harbor, running from July 15 to August 21. For more suggested activities, log onto [www.flyrenotahoe.com](http://www.flyrenotahoe.com).



Photos courtesy of iStockimages and The Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority



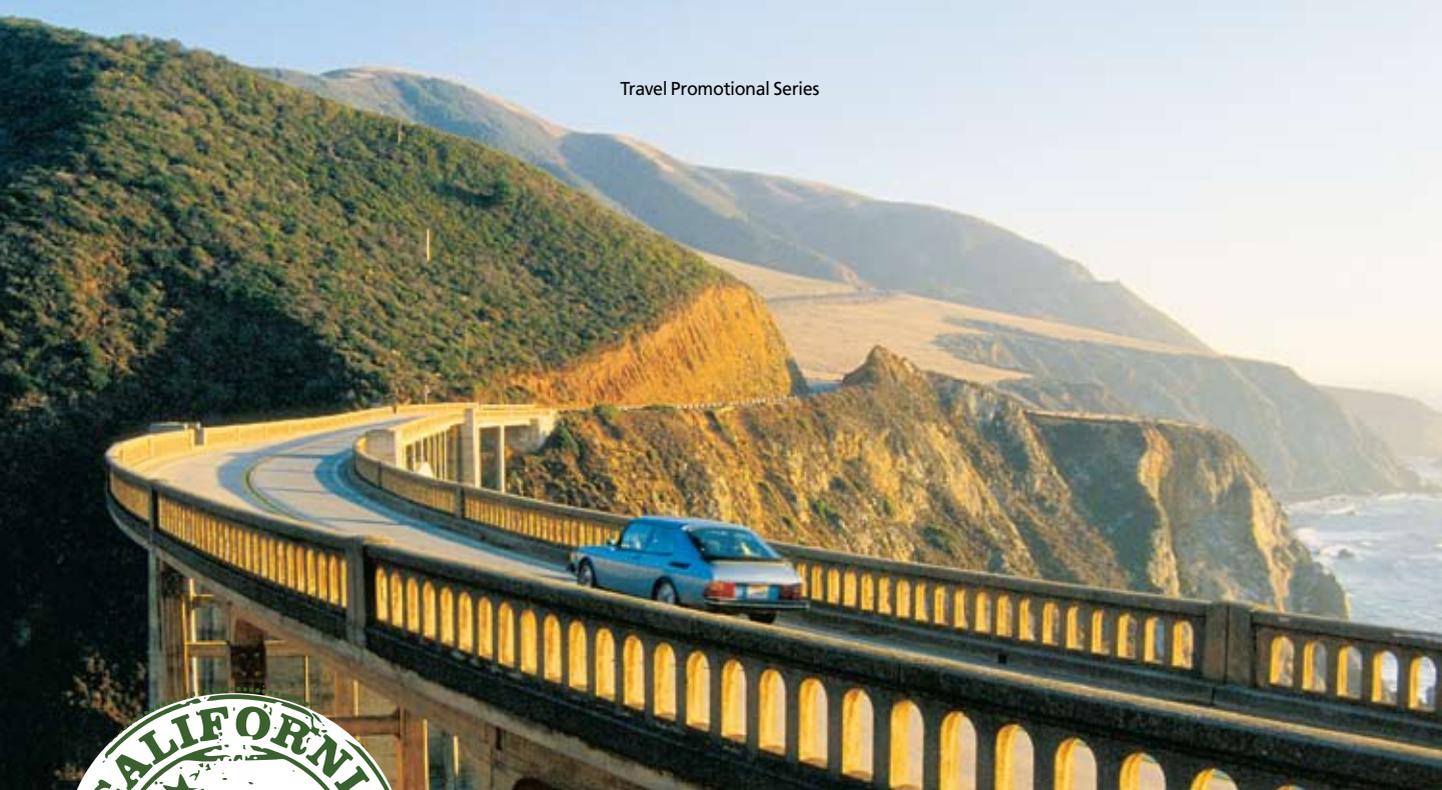
# Go ahead, dive in!

Hop on to one of several flights to Reno-Tahoe on Southwest Airlines and arrive at a destination that's a pleasant departure from the norm. In Reno-Tahoe, you'll find a mind-boggling menu of action, entertainment and culture. You'll find jaw-dropping ski in winter and a summer filled with plush green courses to golf, trails to hike or bike, lakes to sail, rivers to fish, towns thick with western lore, an arts and culture scene that's refreshingly rich, a world-class kayak course carving its way through a downtown – and all in an area legendary for its entertainment and gaming. Climb aboard your official escape pod to Reno-Tahoe with Southwest Airlines.

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## COASTAL CALIFORNIA

Driving south on Highway 1 from the San Francisco Bay Area toward Los Angeles offers some of the best ocean vistas in all of the country. Cut inland and you'll find yourself in Steinbeck country; pause to pay homage to one of literature's greats by stopping in at the National Steinbeck Center. John Steinbeck hailed from Salinas, and many of his great works were set in this rustic region.

Veering back toward the coast, you'll arrive in Monterey, home to the Monterey Bay Aquarium, famous for its cold water marine life inhabitants, and Cannery Row, a hodgepodge of shops, waterfront restaurants and hotels. Carmel is right next door and is the yin to Monterey's yang: Whereas Monterey caters toward tourists and is chock full of fun for the whole family, Carmel appeals to the high-end clientele with its upscale boutique and pricey, top-notch restaurants. Golfers with money to spend will want more than a day in the area to hit up Pebble Beach and play its five courses; those who prefer a more leisurely trip should check out the courses' neighboring houses of grandeur and rocky coastline by seeing the famed 17-Mile Drive by car.

But the best is yet to come—at least, in terms of views.

Stretching nearly 90 miles along the Pacific Ocean, Big Sur is one lush and mountainous sprawl, populated by splashes of colorful wildflowers and punctuated by its jagged cliffs that drop off directly into the sea. Hidden gems of beaches abound in these parts, as do wildlife. During winter months, whales travel this area of the sea by the dozens, making their presence known by breaching and blowing out their spouts. Monarch butterflies return to Andrew Molera State Park fresh off their 3,000-mile migration each October before they begin their northbound trip once more in January; year round, dolphins frolic off shore and lazy sea lions lounge out at Point Lobos.

While Big Sur is the name of both the region and the town, it's San Simeon that's perhaps most visited due to its regal resident, Hearst Castle. Former publishing head honcho William Randolph Hearst's 165-room estate is a splendid display of wealth. A blending of various European styles and architecture, the castle will take a full day to see. Two main focal points, however, are the 100-room Casa Grande, a museum of art Hearst collected from notable auction houses, and the mesmerizing Roman-style swimming pools (yes, multiple) that just beckon for a dip.

Photos courtesy of Monterey County Convention and Visitor's Bureau.



# Prepare for departure from the usual travel experience.

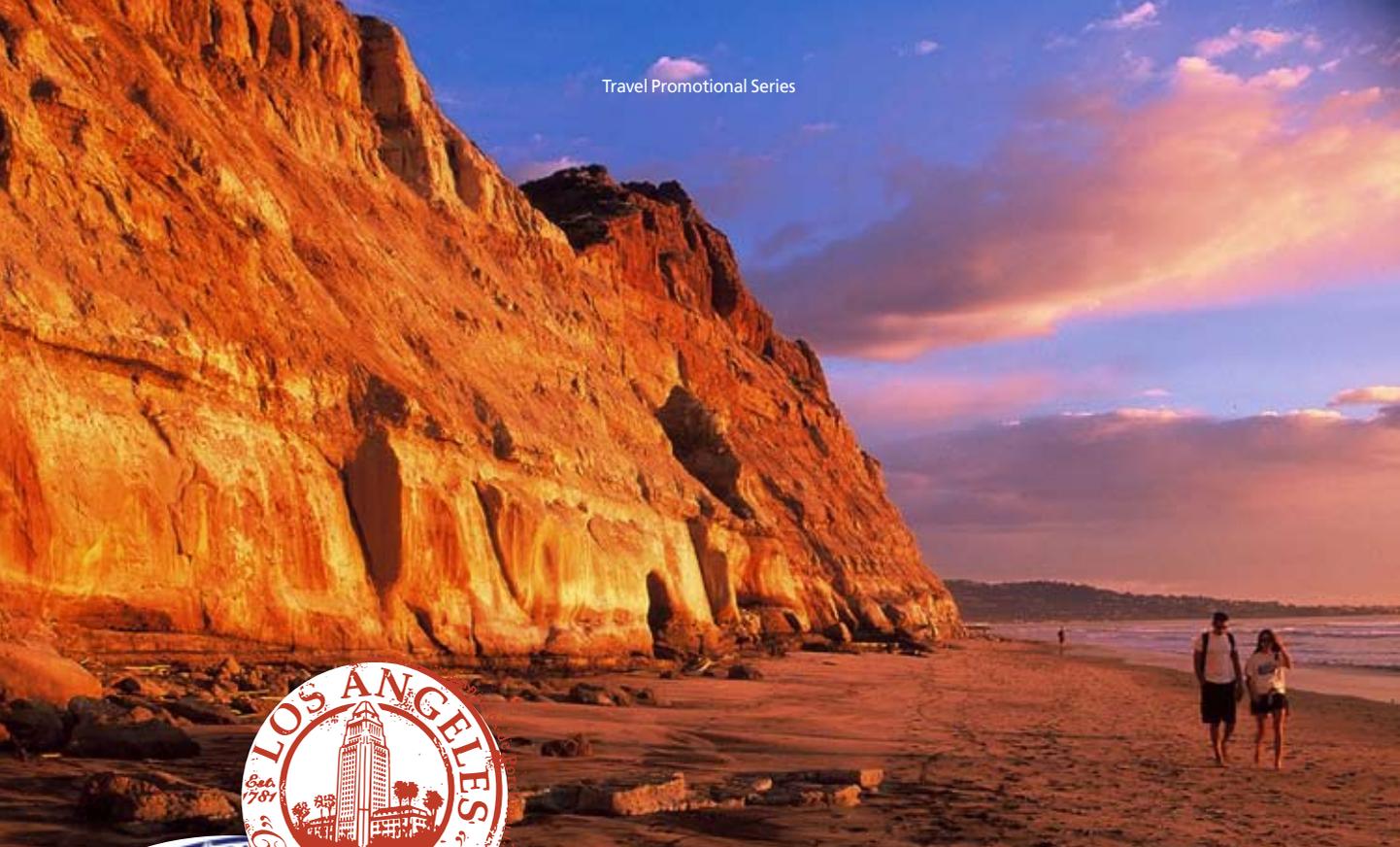


**This fall the ultimate Gateway to Northern California and the world will get even better.** The state-of-the-art new Central Terminal B at Sacramento International combines flyer-focused design, shopping and eating with a uniquely local flair and the most laid back experience possible. So the most convenient way to access spectacular destinations like the state capital, Lake Tahoe, The Wine Country and Yosemite, will become a destination all its own.



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## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Santa Barbara in its sun-soaked splendor is the gateway to Southern California. Flanked by the Santa Ynez Mountains to the north and the Pacific Ocean to the south, the quaint seaside community is a glorious blend of nature and beach life. It's also known for its opulence and red-roofed, Spanish-style buildings and lays claim to the "Queen of the Mission," the 10th—and grandest—mission of the 21 built in California. Set aside time to drive through Santa Barbara's neighboring community, Montecito; many celebrities like Oprah Winfrey, Michael Douglas and Carol Burnett keep homes there.

If gaming is your thing, consider heading to nearby Chumash Casino Resort. The gaming capital of Southern California, Chumash Casino features 2,000 of the hottest slot machines, dozens of table games, bingo, poker, and daily cash and prize giveaways. With 106 rooms, 17 luxury suites, a spa and three restaurants, you won't find any need to leave the resort throughout your stay. (Though nearby Santa Ynez Valley has some world-class wine tasting, should you want to get out for an afternoon.)

When the sun sets, many of the casino's visitors take a brief respite from the tables and relocate to the Samala Showroom, a 1,400-seat theater that hosts an array of well-known talent from Fleetwood Mac to Sheryl Crow to Brooks & Dunn.

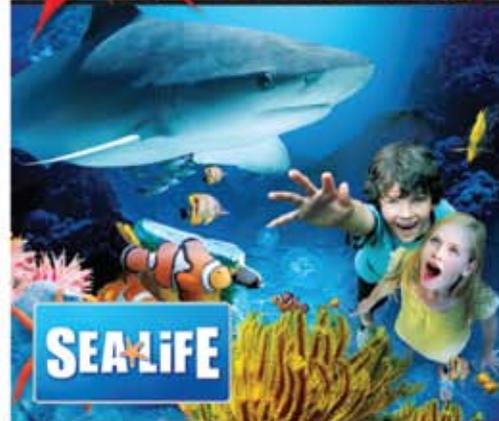
It's true that the stars shine brighter in L.A.—at least those who light up the big screen. From Venice Beach to Santa Monica, Brentwood to West Hollywood, you won't be hard-pressed to spot celebrities—if you know where to look, that is. With Rodeo Drive and a number of talent agencies located in the heart of Beverly Hills, the 90210 ZIP Code is often teeming with actors and their entourages. You'll often spot them on "working lunches" at Barney Greengrass or sitting stealthily in a well-hidden booth at The Grill on the Alley. Pool scenes are popular midday lolling points; you could easily see the likes of Lindsay Lohan or Paris Hilton and her posse sitting poolside at the Beverly Hilton or the Thompson Beverly Hills.

Don't discount West Hollywood either. Celebrities like to indulge their sweet side at Millions of Milkshakes or caffeinate

Photos by Brett Shoaf, Artistic Visuals and the San Diego CVB; iStockimages and Thinkstock images



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## California Attractions



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at The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf on Sunset and Holloway. Of course, the most obvious place to spy actors is on a studio lot. Warner Bros. VIP Studio Tour takes you through the sets of shows like *True Blood* and onto the soundstage of *The Mentalist*. Keep your binoculars handy, as you never know who might be filming nearby.

While visiting Warner Bros., try and get in on a weekday taping of *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*; you can request free tickets on the official website, [www.ellen.warnerbros.com](http://www.ellen.warnerbros.com). Other hit shows—from *American Idol* to *The Jimmy Kimmel Show*—need studio audiences and give away seats on sites like [www.tvtickets.com](http://www.tvtickets.com) or [www.on-camera-audiences.com](http://www.on-camera-audiences.com).

Inject a little culture into your visit by making a stop at the Getty Center, a museum with impressive art, lush gardens, stunning architecture and coastal vistas (and free admission). Check out exhibits like Flemish paintings, Egyptian artifacts and Renoir masterpieces at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, or more modern draws at the Broad Contemporary Art Museum. Those who prefer musical art to visual creations will delight in the Grammy Museum, an interactive experience that takes you through decades worth of melodic genius.

If shopping is your aim, there's no better place to do so than in L.A. A fashionista's haven, here you'll find global brands as well as the headquarters for independent

As if there wasn't already enough to do in Southern California to fill your days, the region also plays host to some of the country's biggest amusement parks. **Don't miss:**

**UNIVERSAL HOLLYWOOD**

If you truly want to be immersed in the world of cinema, look no further than Universal Hollywood. With special effects demonstrations, virtual roller coasters and 3-D productions like *King Kong*, you'll get the full movie experience. The backlot tram Studio Tour at Universal Studios Hollywood is also included in general admission to the park and takes you through many well-known scenes from the Bates Motel of *Psycho* to *Desperate Housewives'* Wisteria Lane. Keep your eyes peeled: You might even spot the stars from your favorite TV shows, as many of them shoot on one of the lot's many soundstages.



**KNOTT'S BERRY FARM**

One of California's most beloved attractions, Knott's Berry Farm in Buena Park is the perfect spot for kids, both young and old, as it has draws for all age groups. Recreating the amusement parks of old, Knott's Berry Farm has a number of roller coasters like Boomerang and Supreme Scream alongside funnel cake stands and ice cream vendors. There are stunt shows and other musical performances, such as Native Dance and Music. Snoopy has a home on the Farm in the park, and the *Peanuts* characters often roam the premises meeting and greeting their fans. Knott's also houses a water park, Soak City, for those steamy summer days when you need to cool off.



**LEGOLAND**

Every kid's dream (and some adults, too) will come true during a trip to this theme park that brings the famed plastic building blocks to life. Located in Carlsbad on the way to San Diego, LEGOLAND features more than 60 rides, attractions and shows. The park is divided into lands, such as Pirate Shores or Dino Island, each decorated accordingly with full-sized LEGO models. The target audience for this park is young children, who will "ooh" and "ahh" at a whole world created from LEGO characters. There's even a LEGOLAND Water Park next door, built around a 45-foot-tall tower made of—you guessed it—LEGOs.



Photos courtesy of Universal Hollywood, Knott's Berry Farm, and Legoland

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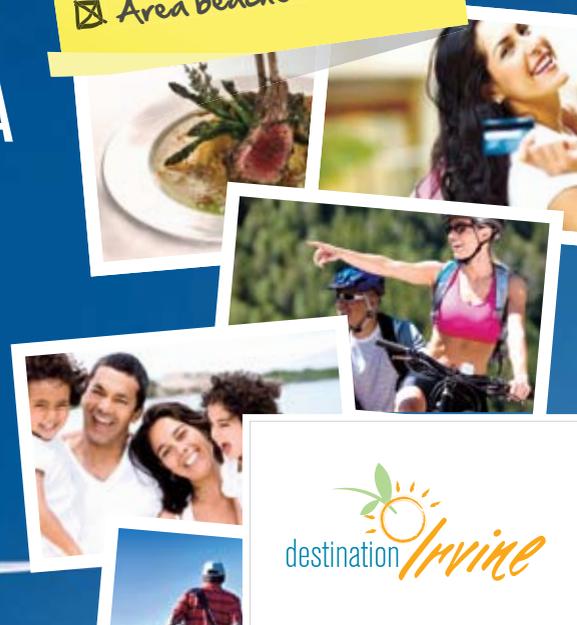
Package includes: two-round trip airline tickets on Southwest Airlines, a two-night stay at either the Hilton Irvine, Hyatt Regency Irvine or Irvine Marriott and a \$100 gift card to the Irvine Spectrum Center.

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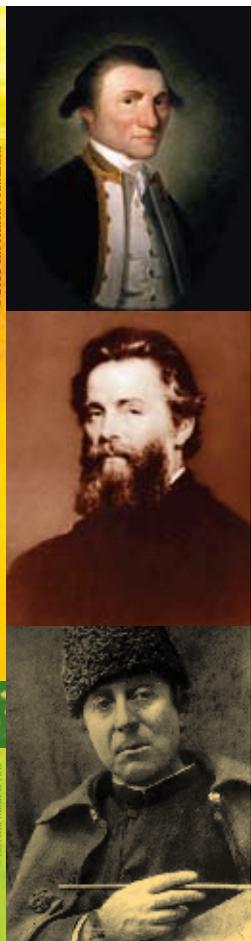
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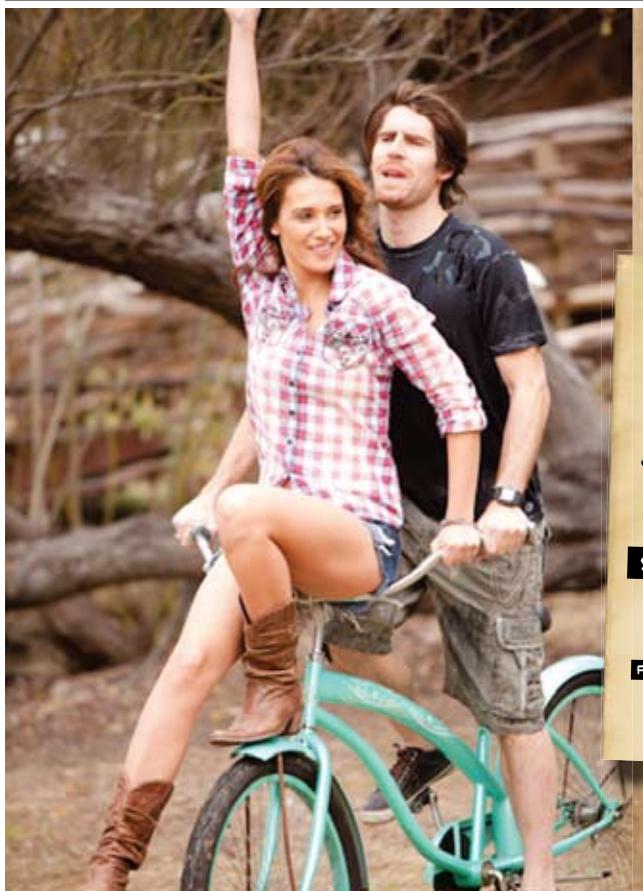


Travel Promotional Series

labels like Roar Clothing. Featuring elegantly woven apparel for both men and women, Roar is a relaxed line of casual clothing with a unique spin. Classic men's blazers, for example, are adorned with tribal patterns or made edgy by hoods. Women's clothing, heavy on the plaid and Western wear, is intricately embroidered or embellished by crystals. Visit [www.roarusa.com](http://www.roarusa.com) for retail locations in the Los Angeles area.

Once you've made off with a new wardrobe from Roar, you can mosey on out to Venice Beach for hipster duds or beachwear or meander down Third Street Promenade for a smattering of well-known U.S. fashion brands. If you want more kitschy souvenirs, take a jaunt down Olvera Street, a colorful village of pueblos and Mexican culture. You'll find a number of candy stores and shops selling Latin American trinkets of all kinds, as well as vendors whipping up nachos and churros (acceptable breakfast fare when that close to the border).

Due east of Los Angeles is Riverside, the largest and most prominent city in the area known as the Inland Empire. Back in the late 1800s, the city of Riverside was the birthplace of the state's citrus industry; you can witness this history first hand at the California Citrus State Historic Park, an open-air museum with an amphitheater, interpretative structure and demonstration grove. But fruit isn't the only thing the city of Riverside has going for it. It has recently emerged as a "City of Arts and Innovation." This movement can be observed by a trip to the Barbara and Art Culver Center of the Arts, Sweeney Art Gallery and California Museum of Photography—all located side by side along the UCR ARTSblock—or through the free Riverside Arts Walk on the first Thursday of each month. At 1,329 feet, Mount Rubidoux—a designated landmark (and actual hill, not mountain)—is the city's most



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Travel Promotional Series

well-known park and a great vantage point from which to glimpse a 360-degree panorama of Riverside. The city is also home to a handful of architectural marvels worth a visit, such as the newly revitalized historic Fox Performing Arts Center, which was the first theater to screen *Gone with the Wind*, and the Beaux Arts-style Riverside County Historic Courthouse.

"Wine Country" may be a term synonymous with Napa and Sonoma Counties, but Southern California has its own vines. Wine tasting in Riverside County's Temecula is a common day trip from Los Angeles and is more low-key and less touristy than some of the better known wine regions.

Orange County occupies a large portion of the real estate between Los Angeles and San Diego. While this waterfront region is widely known for its money and high number of celebrity inhabitants, it's also home to many smaller, lesser known gems such as the city of Irvine. A stone's throw from some of Southern California's best beaches, Irvine has far more to offer than just a day at the ocean. Make your first stop Orange County Great Park, where a massive, orange, tethered helium balloon standing 118 feet tall takes passengers to soaring heights (400 feet) for a panoramic view that can't be beat. The park also sports a two-mile-long canyon along a perennial stream and plush botanical garden, as well as a glimpse at the ecosystems of Crystal

Photos courtesy of iStockimages



Photographer captures St. Francis Assisi Chapel



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RIVERSIDE, CA

The St. Francis Assisi Chapel at The Mission Inn Hotel & Spa will dazzle you with history and drama. It's just one of the many riches of Riverside. Inspiration is right here. Visit [ExploreRiverside.com](http://ExploreRiverside.com)



City of Arts & Innovation



Diego Fair, which lasts from mid-June into early July, is the park's biggest annual attraction, it's not the only action-packed event the grounds host. There are horse shows, car races, monster truck rallies, Cirque du Soleil performances, rock concerts and even the occasional roller derby bouts. Permanent facilities include Del Mar Golf Center and its two

18-hole miniature golf courses, a massive short game area and 65 teeing stations, as well as the Hot Shotz Sports Center with batting cages, basketball and volleyball courts, trapeze instruction and more. Be sure to check out [www.delmarfairgrounds.com](http://www.delmarfairgrounds.com) before your trip to see what fun events are on tap during your time in the San Diego area.

## RACE TO THE FAIR

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On June 10, the San Diego County Fair—the largest annual event in San Diego—begins a 22-day salute to cars of all ages, vintage and size.

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### SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

on the **GRANDSTAND STAGE**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <br>MELISSA ETHERIDGE                       | <b>JUNE 10</b> Pat Benatar and Neil Giraldo                              |
| <br>THE DOOBIE BROTHERS                     | <b>JUNE 11</b> Bruno Mars & Janelle Monáe<br>Hooligans in Wondaland Tour |
| <br>WILLIE NELSON'S COUNTRY THROWDOWN       | <b>JUNE 16</b> An Evening with Randy Travis                              |
| <br>TRAVIS TRITT & THE CHARLIE DANIELS BAND | <b>JUNE 17</b> Switchfoot  |
| <br>THE BEACH BOYS                          | <b>JUNE 18</b> Melissa Etheridge   |
|   | <b>JUNE 19</b> Larry Hernandez   |
|   | <b>JUNE 21</b> The Doobie Brothers                                       |
|   | <b>JUNE 22</b> Neon Trees  |
|   | <b>JUNE 23</b> Willie Nelson's Country Throwdown                         |
|   | <b>JUNE 24</b> Come Together 2011<br>featuring Third Day & MercyMe       |
|   | <b>JUNE 25</b> 7th Annual Gospel Festival<br>featuring Kirk Franklin     |
|   | <b>JUNE 28</b> Travis Tritt & The Charlie Daniels Band                   |
|   | <b>JUNE 29</b> The Beach Boys  |
|   | <b>JULY 1</b> Big Time Rush  |
|   | <b>JULY 4</b> REO Speedwagon with the<br>Navy Band Southwest & fireworks |

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### PADDOCK CONCERT SERIES

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <br>THE BEACH BOYS | <b>JUNE 21</b> Young the Giant   |
|                    | <b>JUNE 25</b> Who's Bad: The Ultimate<br>Michael Jackson Tribute Band |
|                    | <b>JUNE 30</b> The Music of Abba (Arrival from Sweden)                 |

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### CHEVROLET ARENA EVENTS

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**DEL MAR FAIRGROUNDS • I-5 at Via de la Valle**

Cove State Park and the Cleveland National Forest. The weekly Sunday Farmer's Market features more than just produce; visitors can also walk away with homemade crafts or sample cuisine like crêpes or tapas from the local food trucks that are all the rage in California. For more information on the city, Destination Irvine has a website packed with tips and vacation ideas; log on to [www.destinationirvine.com](http://www.destinationirvine.com) to request a free Visitor's Guide.

Nearby Anaheim is a household name for one reason: It's home to Disneyland. From Pirates of the Caribbean in Adventureland to the water-soaked log ride in Critter Country, Disneyland will appeal to "kids" from all ages. For the best deals on your jaunt to the park, turn to Southwest Airlines Vacations. Providing packages that cover airfare, hotels, theme park tickets, dining, rental cars and more, Southwest Vacations ensures more bang for your buck by booking everything for your Disneyland needs all at once for one low price. Live out your greatest fantasies via a vacation at the Happiest Place on Earth.

South of Anaheim along the coast, San Diego is the last major California city you'll stumble upon before arriving at the Mexico border. Its positioning means it's a town with a heavy Latino flavor; take advantage of this influence and sample some of the best Mexican cuisine around.

San Diego's beaches are nothing to scoff at either. The suburb of La Jolla attracts surfers by the hundreds

due to the beautiful break, plethora of beaches and wide, open sandy spaces. Downtown is equally as buzzing with all the visitors taking to the Gaslamp Quarter for its bevy of trendy shops, hot eateries and rooftop hotel pools. The rich and famous—and those wanting to live like the rich and famous for a day—venture out to Coronado and the beaches surrounding its grand dame, Hotel del Coronado.

Bringing discovery and adventure to life, the San Diego Maritime Museum focuses on restoring, maintaining and operating historic ships. Located on the North Embarcadero, it houses an impressive display of classic vessels, such as the oldest active ship, the *Star of India*. From May 27 through early 2012, the museum is hosting a first-of-its-kind exhibit, Cook, Melville and Gauguin: Three Voyages to Paradise, which will showcase 110 pieces from the three voyages to the South Pacific. The collection includes oil and watercolor paintings, woodblock prints, engravings, carvings and sculptural works. Another exhibit opening this summer is the *San Salvador*, a full-sized replica of Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo's vessel from 1542 that was the founding ship of San Diego and California, which aims to create a link between the state's past and present. For tickets to the exhibits or for more information on the museum, visit [www.sdmartime.org](http://www.sdmartime.org).

For guaranteed fun in the San Diego area, head on down to Del Mar Fairgrounds. While the San

Photos by Joanne DiBona, courtesy of the San Diego CVB, and John Bahu, San Diego Scenics

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