

# THE MAGNIFICENT PULL OF CALIFORNIA

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*One attraction might draw you in, but once you set your sights on the Golden State it's impossible to look away.*



Golden Gate Bridge, San Francisco



Choosing to travel to California doesn't narrow down your vacation style options. Beach break? Huntington Beach. Ski vacation? Lake Tahoe. Camping? Yosemite National Park. Winery tours? Napa Valley. Gourmet dining? San Francisco. Theme park hopping? Anaheim.

The sheer number of incredible experiences you can have in this vast state is the best and most challenging part of planning a California vacation.

How exactly do you narrow down where to go and how long to stay?

Allow as much time as you can, then follow your passions to reveal your ideal California style.

## SHIMMERING SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

The Pacific coastline with its sun-drenched beaches and laid-back vibe draws countless visitors to Southern California. When the sun goes down, though, the lights and glamour of Tinseltown take over.

**Hollywood** is just about as iconic as a place can get, and your stay should make you feel like a star.



# CALIFORNIA



W Hollywood WET Deck

The *W Hollywood* is a luxurious retreat in the heart of the action at the intersection of Hollywood Boulevard and Vine Street—just steps away from the Hollywood Walk of Fame, the storied Capitol Records Building and Sunset Boulevard.

Match your meals with the elevated ambience of your surroundings at the hotel's Delphine Eatery & Bar offers. It boasts unforgettable entrees, including bone-in filets and seared Maine scallops, as well as signature cocktails to help you unwind after a day of exploring.

A little more than an hour south, the famed beaches of

Orange County feel a world away from stylish Los Angeles. Chill and beautiful, [Huntington Beach](#) and [Newport Beach](#) embody the easy Southern California feeling that defines Surf City U.S.A.

The proximity to Disneyland and built-in kid friendly activities—surfing, fishing, kiting and biking—make this an ideal family vacation destination.

While the area is laid back, your stay can still be sophisticated at [The Waterfront Beach Resort](#). This AAA Four Diamond resort and spa sits on prime oceanfront property. It takes your beach vacation to the next level with waterslides, two lagoon-style pools, cabana rentals and private beach bonfire packages.

Farther south along the coast, [San Diego](#) is another perfect family destination. Make your home base The Westin San Diego Gaslamp Quarter for easy access to the best attractions around. This urban oasis is consistently ranked among the city's top hotels. Its Bronze Bird bar serves local draft beers plus specialty cocktails inspired by the diverse San Diego neighborhoods.

The hotel is in the heart of one of those distinct neighborhoods. The Gaslamp District is a bustling historic area full of live music,

shopping and delectable restaurants including Cafe Sevilla where authentic Spanish tapas awaits. The nearby world-renowned San Diego Zoo exceeds its reputation with sprawling exhibits like the Tiger Trail and Africa Rocks. The zoo houses some of the world's rarest animals, including the elusive snow leopard, Madagascar's threatened and unique fossa, plus the largest koala colony outside of Australia.



San Diego Zoo Entrance

## INSPIRING NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Northern California is a chic treat full of gorgeous cityscapes, seaside cliffs, majestic valleys and breathtaking lakes, all enhanced by fresh cuisine.

The [San Francisco Bay Area](#) is a mix of urban culture, refined cuisine, rich history and striking views. Popular attractions include lively Fisherman's Wharf, Union Square, Lombard

W HOTELS: SAN DIEGO ZOO



San Francisco Cable Cars

Street and, of course, the Golden Gate Bridge. For a unique perspective, walk or rent a bike to cross the bridge then return via ferry past historic Alcatraz Island.

WalletHub ranked San Francisco as the country's fourth best food city, and this is not the place to hold back on restaurant selection. Local chefs focus on organic, local and sustainable food sources and the city is home to six Michelin-starred restaurants. Three-star Atelier Crenn offers multi-course pescatarian experiences known for their artistry. The restaurant's curated wine list enhances the experience with regional character.

Just north of San Francisco is [Napa Valley](#), home to some of the world's best wineries. A wine tour is the best way to explore the area's many vineyards and savor tastings of different varietals.

Traveling through the fertile Sacramento Valley brings you to the splendor of [Lake Tahoe](#). This alpine scenery of rocky



Nappa Valley Grapes

outcrops, evergreen pines and shockingly blue waters is truly a unique sight. A cruise on the lake's pristine waters is an ideal way to appreciate this dynamic landscape.

## NATURAL WONDERS ABOUND

When there are so many famous man-made attractions to see, it's easy to forget just how incredible the landscape itself is. California is the third largest state in the U.S.—only Alaska and Texas are larger—and the geographical diversity is simply astounding. It's a state of beautiful dichotomy: barren deserts and breezy beaches, massive rocky mountains and picturesque wine-growing valleys, dense forests and waving palm trees.

There are 28 national parks in California, which preserve dramatically different features. In fact, California national parks are home to both the lowest and highest places in the continental U.S.



Death Valley National Park

[Death Valley National Park](#) (one of three UNESCO World Heritage sites in California) is a desolate desert, but it's a shockingly scenic one. The iconic undulating vistas of Zabriskie Point were shaped by the powerful forces of water and are now a lingering testament to its absence.

While it's stunning, it's also just downright hot, so lunchtime at the nearby (and aptly named) Oasis at Death Valley is key. The 1849 Restaurant is on theme with its dark leather, Wild West-style furnishings.

After you've hydrated and refueled, head about 20

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minutes south to get to the lowest place in the U.S. At 282 feet below sea level, the park’s Badwater Basin is an expansive salt flat that was once an inland lake.

A little more than 100 miles away, Mount Whitney stands 14,494 feet above sea level as the towering Eastern border of [Sequoia National Park](#). Southern California may be home to many famous stars, but this popular park—which welcomes more than a million visitors each year—is home to some famous trees. The park’s giant sequoia trees are among the oldest living things on the planet; one is 3,000 years old.



Sequoia National Park

The General Sherman Tree is the largest tree in the world with a 36-foot diameter at its base and height of 275 feet—that’s nearly an entire football field tall! Here you will also find the Tunnel Log, a unique drive-through tree.



Yosemite Valley, Yosemite National Park

[Yosemite National Park](#) is one of the country’s most famed and popular national parks. Visitors come from around the world to see Yosemite’s waterfalls, granite cliffs and diverse wildlife. Hiking, cycling and horseback riding trails take visitors along rivers, through meadows and on mountains. Photographs can’t do justice to the beauty and splendor of the park’s popular landmarks, including Half Dome, Mirror Lake, Glacier Point and Yosemite Falls.

REFUSE TO CHOOSE?

**CATCH A RIDE**

If you want the full California experience, don’t waste precious vacation time stuck on clogged highways trying to travel between each region.

Choosing to make the transportation part of the vacation is the perfect solution.

Ocean-lovers can board [Celebrity Cruises® Pacific Coastal cruise](#) from Los Angeles that includes idyllic Catalina Island, an overnight in San Francisco, and a stop in Monterey, home of the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

Rail travel enthusiasts will love the **8-day California Coastal Classic** from Vacations by Rail. The rail journey showcases the state’s changing landscapes as you travel from San Francisco all the way to San Diego, with stops in between at landmarks including Monterey’s Cannery Row and Old Mission Santa Barbara.

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➔ **California offers incredible experiences!** Take time to enjoy yourself and see as many sites as possible. Visit [AAA.com/TravelAdvisor](#) for reservations.