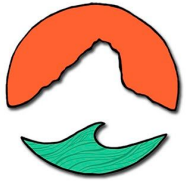


Moterra Campervans

California, The Golden State

Insiders Guide





Welcome | Take The Wheel

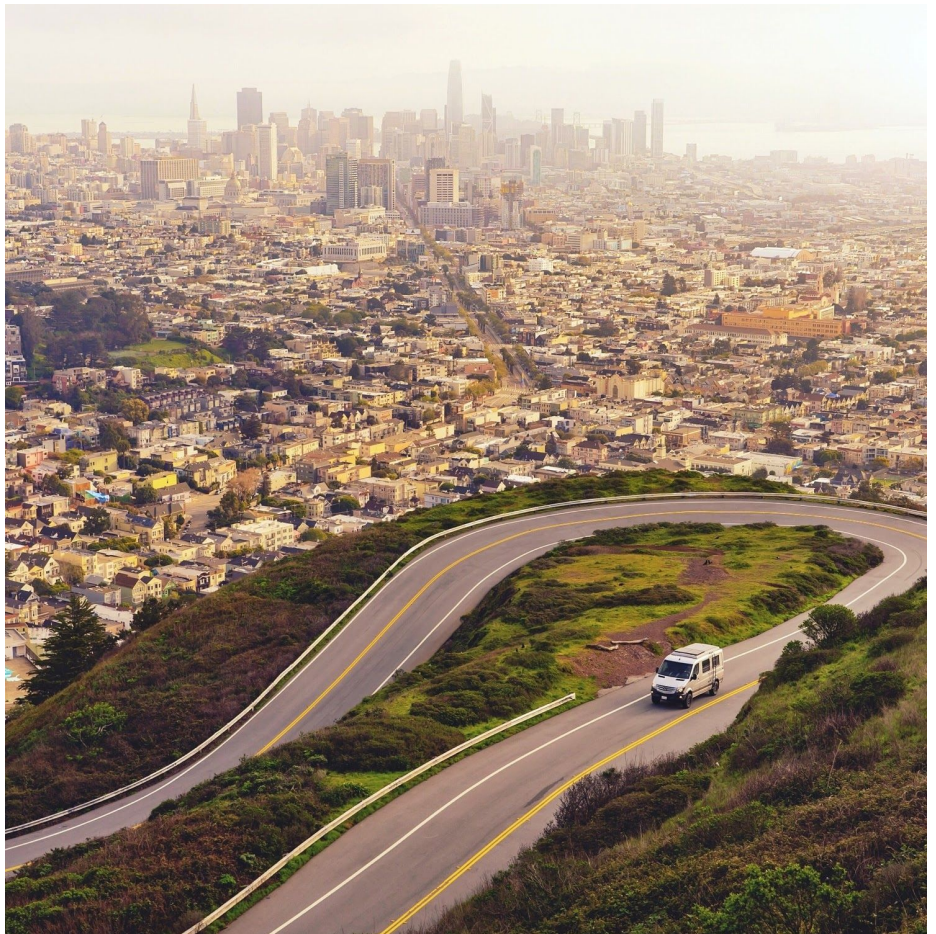
Welcome to your adventure through California!

Whether you have come for the sun-soaked coastline, the soaring granite walls of Yosemite, or the mossy redwoods and rolling wine country of Northern California, there is no doubt that the Golden State is best explored in a Moterra campervan. With the freedom that comes from driving your 19-foot home on wheels (about as long as a Ford F150), you are able to bypass the expensive hotels and tourist traps, spending more time in the wild landscapes you came to explore!

This free guide will give you the building blocks necessary to start planning your dream California campervan adventure, including insider recommendations for where to camp, places to eat, scenic drives and must-see hikes and activities.

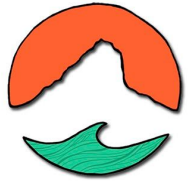
Even with all the free advice in this guide, we recognize that it can still be daunting to plan and book a trip that makes the most of your time within the Golden State. We therefore offer custom itineraries to our guests, which take the hassle and risk out of doing it all yourself. These are designed to give you the best taste of whatever area you are interested in seeing, while allowing you to explore at your own pace. **Click [here](#) for more information**

However you choose to travel with us, we sincerely hope you have an unforgettable experience in the sun-soaked state of California!



Happy Exploring,

The Moterra Team



San Francisco

Vibrant San Francisco is the perfect bookend to your campervan adventure. Known for its golden gates, steep hills and cable cars, San Francisco has something to offer every traveller, all located into an easy to navigate 49 square miles. Our Moterra hub is located at Pier 26, in the heart of downtown, so spend some time wandering the piers and famous Fisherman's Wharf either before you pick-up your campervan, or when you drop it off.

Things to do in San Francisco

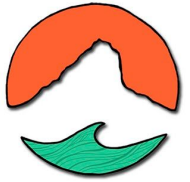
San Francisco is overflowing with activities, so we have picked out just some of our most favourite highlights. Particularly interested in one activity? Check out these links for more information on [hiking](#), biking, shopping and the arts in San Francisco.

RIDE THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE Few Bridges are more iconic than the Golden Gate bridge, and riding across it is an experience like no other. Starting at Fisherman's Wharf, it is an 8 mile ride across the bridge and over to the ferry port in Sausalito. Big cycling enthusiasts may consider turning left at the end of the bridge and adding in an extra loop around the Marin headland before descending into Sausalito. Make sure you dress appropriately- it can be cold and windy on the bridge in all four seasons. Before you jump on the ferry back to the city, we would definitely recommend enjoying sunny Sausalito and stopping at [Bar Bocce](#) for some outdoor pizza, beer and bocce on the water.

ALCATRAZ The tour to Alcatraz Island and its historic old prison is a must-see while in San-Francisco. Departures leave just a few piers down from Moterra HQ. Book early in peak months for ferry tickets.

WANDER San Francisco's historic vibrant old neighbourhoods. Highlights include Chinatown (the oldest Chinatown in North America), Haight-Ashbury and the Mission District- you may also want to head over to Hayes Valley for the outdoor movie theatre.





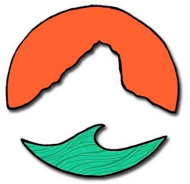
Big Sur State Park

Park Map: [HERE](#)



Distance from San Francisco | **2.5 hours** Time Needed | **3-5 days** Recommended Loop | **San Francisco - Big Sur- Yosemite- San Francisco**

The rugged and stunning wilderness of Big Sur State Park stretches for 85 miles down the California coastline between Carmel and San Simeon. The narrow State Route 2 carves between the Santa Lucia Mountains and the Pacific Ocean, famous for its winding turns through the mountains, seaside cliffs and spectacular views of the often-foggy coastline. The sparsely populated region has numerous state parks for hiking, camping, birdwatching and remote beach exploring, making it the obvious choice for a campervan adventure on the California central coast.



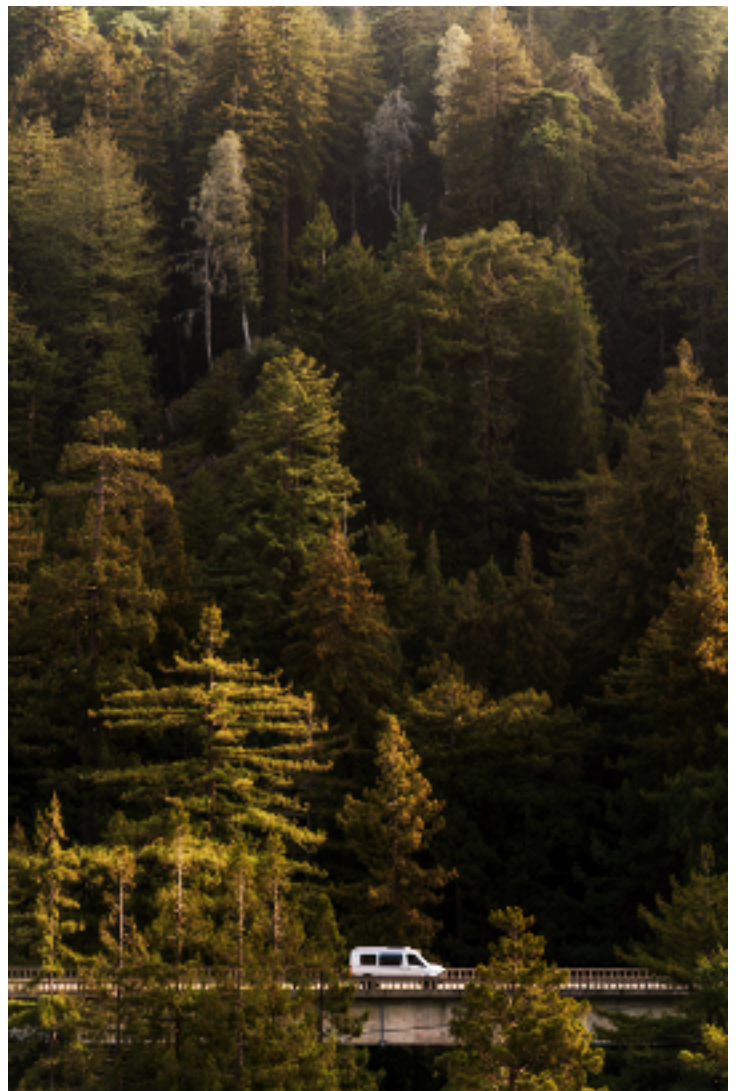
Camping in Big Sur

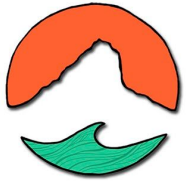
The camping options in Big Sur are as varied as they are plentiful, ranging from high-end glamping experiences to rustic State Parks. Big Sur is known for booking up early however, particularly in the summer months, so the earlier you can start planning, the better. Want to let us take care of the planning for you? Click [HERE](#) to inquire about our preset and custom itineraries.

VENTANA This is a higher-end camping facility that offers luxury campsites with an included pile of wood, smores kit and hot water bottles! Located in a beautiful redwood canyon on the coast, Ventana also provides optional activities like tai chi, meditation and flora and fauna hikes. Even better? Camping guests also get full access to the Ventana spa, which includes two outdoor heated swimming pools, japanese hot baths, gourmet restaurant The Big Sur and infinity edge hot tub. **Cost per night:** \$100 book through their [website](#).

PLASKETT CREEK CAMPGROUND is one of the best located state campgrounds in the park, just walking distance from Sand Dollar Beach. It is a popular campground, so if it is booked out, [Kirk Creek](#) is a great back up. Plaskett Creek is walking distance from Sand Dollar Beach, which is a fun place to spend the day and/or sunrise/sunset, but the tradeoff is that the actual campground is on the uphill side of the highway. Kirk Creek Campground is right on the coast but lacks the awesome beach access. Trust us, you can't go wrong either way. Both of these campsites are \$35 and can be booked at [recreation.gov](#).

DISPERSED OPTIONS If you're feeling adventurous and the weather is good, then you can head up [South Coast Ridge Road](#) to take advantage of the van by going the "dispersed camping" route. Prewitt Ridge is another popular dispersed campground, but its popularity has spurred overuse recently. Our recommendation would be head up South Ridge a few hours before sundown, to give you time to drive around and find the perfect secluded spot.





Hikes in Big Sur

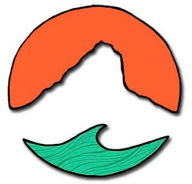
EWOLDSSEN TRAIL An all time favourite, Ewoldsen Trail is not for the faint of heart, but rewards hikers with an incredible variety of scenery. Starting in Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park, this 4.6 mile trail will get you up close with mossy redwoods, take you past weird moss formations in McWay canyon, before finishing off with sweeping ocean views. Allow at least 3 hours for this hike, and be sure to take a lot of water! Families with young kids are advised to turn around at the top, instead of doing the exposed second half of the loop.

VALLEY VIEW TRAIL Valley View Trail is one of the most popular hikes in Big Sur, and for good reason; the trail winds through giant redwood trees and ends with stunning views over the mountains and the Big Sur River gorge to the Pacific Ocean. A side trail leads to Pfeiffer Falls, an enormous, rocky waterfall with a perfectly positioned viewing platform. Both routes are wide and well-maintained, so they're accessible for kids; other than a single short, steep climb, most of the route consists of a gentle uphill. With the side trip to Pfeiffer Falls, expect to spend about one and a half hours to cover 2 miles. Find the trailhead in Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park, just across from the famous McWay Falls.



LIMEKILN FALLS TRAIL Half an hour south of the famous McWay falls is the stunning coastal [Limekiln State Park](#), filled with [hiking trails](#), redwoods and a beautiful beach. Choose between many short hiking options- our top pick is the





incredibly scenic 1.5 mile hike to Limekiln falls, a 100 ft cascading waterfall. Note there is a \$10 entrance fee to the park.

Things To Do in Big Sur

MONTEREY AQUARIUM While not in Big Sur itself, the Monterey Aquarium is on the way down from San Francisco and makes for a wonderful stop, especially if you have young ones on board! If you can make it to the Penguin feeding at 10:30am, or the Open Sea feeding at 11am, you will not be disappointed. With over 200 exhibitions and nearly 35,000 animals, the Monterey Aquarium is one of the largest public aquariums in North America.

PFEIFFER BEACH Big Sur is filled to the brim of beautiful beaches, but in our mind you can't go past spending a morning down to the beautiful [Pfeiffer beach](#) and its famous sun-portal.

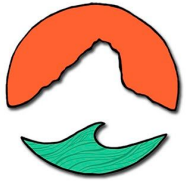
Between the coastal cliffs, offshore rocks and the stream running into the ocean, it is certain to be a favourite. Keep an eye out for big patches of purple sand if it has recently rained, caused by certain minerals in the sand that come to the surface.

17 MILE DRIVE Between Big Sur and San Francisco, you may consider taking the famous [17 Mile Drive](#), a scenic coastal road through Pebble Beach and Pacific Grove. Marvel at the snow-white beaches, dramatic coastal cliffs and giant trees,

including the 5,300-acre Del Monte Forest Cypress trees. This drive is also known for famous golf courses and stunning million-dollar homes, so keep your eyes peeled! FYI: There is a \$10.50 charge to drive this stretch, which is reimbursed if you spend \$35 at local restaurants.

NEPENTHE If at some point in your trip a fancy meal sounds appealing, you really can't go past [Nepenthe](#), known for its jaw-dropping cliff views and decadent dining options. They have fantastic lunch and dinner options- but we can't resist their chocolate cake!!





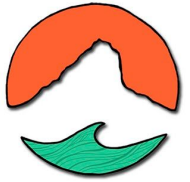
Yosemite National Park

Park Map: [HERE](#)



Distance from San Francisco | **3.5 hours** Time Needed | **3-6 days** Recommended Loop | **San Francisco - Big Sur- Yosemite- San Francisco**

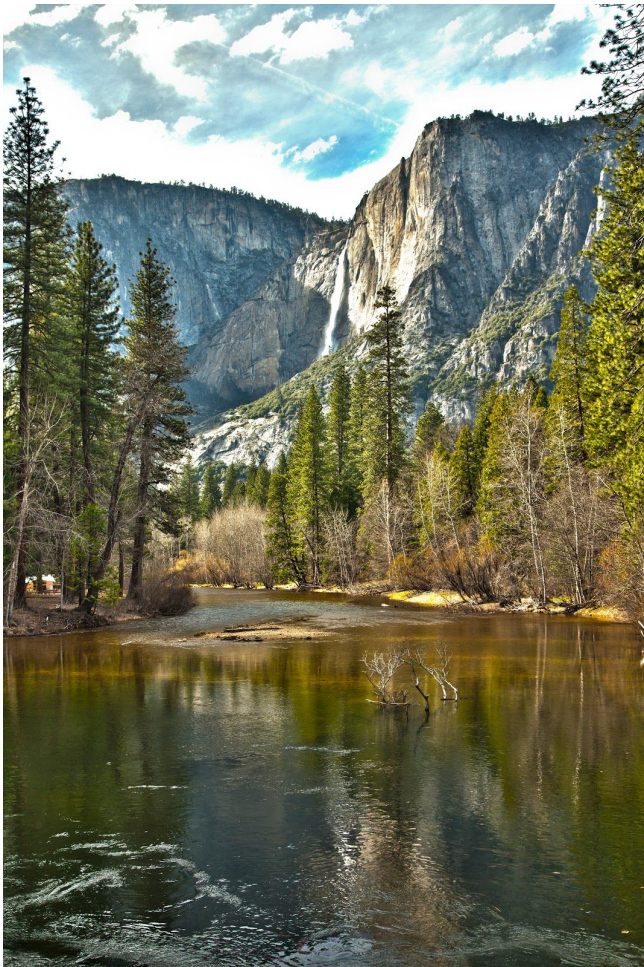
Yosemite needs no introduction. Internationally famous for its soaring granite cliffs, deep valleys, ancient redwoods and huge waterfalls, Yosemite National Park is one of the best places in the United States to visit in a campervan. With incredible hiking, climbing and exploring opportunities around every corner, you will be hard-pressed with how to spend your time. However with over 4 million visitors per year, Yosemite is definitely not off-the-beaten-track, and a bit of advanced planning is always advised. While it can be hard to leave the Yosemite valley once you have arrived, we would also recommend a day trip down to Sequoia National Park (1 hour south) for the perfect bookend experience.



Camping in Yosemite

If you have ever been camping in Yosemite, you will know that it either takes some serious advanced planning, or the willingness to wing it for same-day reservations. The Yosemite Valley has 10 sites that accommodate campervans, but the majority of them book out months in advance. Couldn't get the reservation you wanted for Yosemite? You may want to consider using [Campnab](#)- for a small fee, they will scan the calendar and alert you when reservations become available. Most campgrounds are open for the peak season. If you are travelling outside of that time, your campground options are limited to [Upper Pines](#), [Camp 4](#), [Wawona](#) and [Hodgdon Meadow](#).

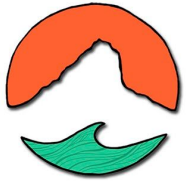
NORTH PINES CAMPGROUND This campground is a favourite, known for its towering granite walls, beautiful river and booking up super early in advance. Sites before available on [recreation.gov](#) five months before your reservation, on the 15th of the month. Seriously. If you are planning that early, you will be rewarded by beautiful wooded campsites and great hiking trails within walking distance.



CRANE FLATS The site is conveniently located 17 miles from Yosemite Valley, and is open from mid May to mid October. You can see a link to their website [here](#). Sites here can also be booked on recreation.gov five months before your reservation, on the 15th of the month, however they are usually the last to book as they are not actually in the valley. This is a good back up if you miss out on one of the valley campsites above. Open July till October.

FIRST-COME FIRST-SERVED

One common strategy if you are unable to get a reservation, is to show up early for one of the first-come, first-served sites. Get to the Campground Reservations building in the heart of Yosemite Valley early (and we mean *early*) to line up and put your name on the list. You can then enjoy your day in Yosemite, and come back in the afternoon to see if your name gets called for a campground. If you are travelling in the summer season, we recommend aiming to get to Yosemite mid-week to maximise your chances of getting a first-come first-served spot. Miss out when you arrive? Try [freecampsites.net](#)- the map is clunky, but there is some gold in there, and a lot of places around Yosemite to camp at in a pinch.



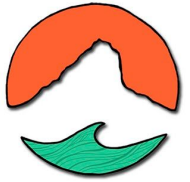
Hikes in Yosemite

CLOUDS REST Hiking Half-Dome is on many travellers lists when they come to Yosemite, however the difficult permit system and incredibly busy trail can make it unappealing. A little shorter and less intense than Half-Dome, this 14 mile return day-trip is rated as difficult and will see you complete 2,800ft in elevation gain. A beautiful winding trail with amazing views of Half-Dome and the Yosemite valley makes this one of our favourite day hikes in the park- a great option for those who have missed out on half-dome or don't want to wake up to wait in line for a permit. The top section of the Clouds Rest hike is over an exposed ridge, so if you have an aversion to heights, you may want to skip this one. We recommend getting on the Sunrise Lakes trailhead on Tioga Road, which makes it a 14 mile return- Make sure you bring plenty of water, as this hike is very exposed on a summer day. Trail Map [HERE](#)

UPPER YOSEMITE FALLS This 7.6mile up and back hike starts in the valley, so you will initially see large crowds, however they will disperse as you head further up and the trail gets more difficult. The earlier you can start this one the better! You will see 2,600 of elevation gain to the top of Yosemite Falls, and can continue on to Yosemite Point to make it a total of 3,000ft. This is a beautiful trail that will walk you through the spray of Yosemite Falls and allow you to take a photo of both the falls and half-dome in one shot. Your hike will start at the Lower Yosemite Falls Trailhead, so depending on where you are camping you can park at the day-use parking lot just south of Yosemite Village, or take the shuttle to the trailhead.

THE POHONO TRAIL If you are looking for a day hike that will touch on all of the best highlights of Yosemite, this is it. This 13 mile point to point trail along Yosemite Valleys south rim, will give you a birds-eye view of everything Yosemite is famous for, but not without pushing you through 3,700 feet of elevation gain if you include Sentinel Dome (3,400 without it). Glacier Point road is open from Mid- May to November, and while the waterfalls will be bigger the earlier you go, this trail is a must-do anytime it is open. The trail starts at Glacier Point and heads to Tunnel View- we would only recommend going this direction, as it is much more gruelling the other way. Transport is definitely the hardest part of this hike- our recommendation would be to book the [Glacier Point Tour Bus](#), which leaves from Yosemite Lodge at 8:30am or 10am, and goes to Glacier Point and Tunnel View. Drop your group at Yosemite Lodge to get on the bus for the tour, and then go and park at Tunnel View. Get your group to ask your tour driver to pick you up on the way to Glacier Point (sometimes they do it on the way back to Yosemite Lodge). Jump off at Glacier Point, and hike back to your car at Tunnel View.





Activities in Yosemite

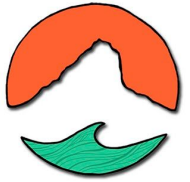
CLIMBING Yosemite is internationally renowned for its climbing, so if you have any interest in getting on the ropes, this is the place to do it! If you haven't seen the movie *Free Solo*, make sure you watch it before you arrive!! There are both guided climbing options (hire a guide for a half-day or a full-day), climbing lessons and equipment rental available in Yosemite, so you can pick your own adventure based on your skill and budget! You can read more about climbing in Yosemite including timing and prices for beginners/intermediates [here](#).

BIKING Families in particular will enjoy renting a bike from Half Dome Village, and cruising the 12 miles of paved, mostly flat, paths available to the public around the Yosemite valley. The 12 mile loop will take you around 2 hours to



complete if you ride without breaks, but we would recommend taking a day or an afternoon, and stopping to do some smaller walks at Mirror Lake and Merced River. Pack a picnic and enjoy a cruisy few hours exploring Yosemite. Note that the bikes do not have baskets, so a backpack is a must!

SEQUOIA/ KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARK The incredible Kings Canyon National Park and Sequoia National Park both lie just to the south of Yosemite (around 2 hours), and is a perfect book-end for any trip to Yosemite. Home to the largest tree in the world, Sequoia National Park offers beautiful hiking in massive redwoods, while Kings Canyon has the largest remaining grove of sequoia trees in the world, as well as spectacular soaring granite walls. These two parks boast incredible scenic drives (don't miss the [Kings Canyon Scenic Byway](#), and then take the flat walk into the Zumwalt Meadows), plus easy walks to points of interest such as the Grand General, General Sherman and Morro Rock. If you want to stay the night, consider staying at Lodgepole Campground, which can be booked on [Recreation.gov](#) and are available in mid-March for the rest of the summer season.



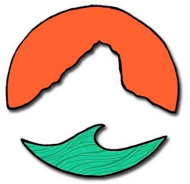
Northern California

Area Map: [HERE](#)



Distance from San Francisco | **2.5 hours** Time Needed | **4-6 days** Recommended Loop | **San Francisco - Napa- Sonoma Coast- San Francisco**

If crisp, foggy mornings, mossy trails under Redwood trees and exceptional wine sound like your version of a dream vacation, this stretch of the California Coast is for you. Napa and Sonoma offer amazingly different wine-tasting experiences, while the stunning coastline starting at Point Reyes National Seashore winds north towards the towering redwoods of Mendocino National Forest and into beautiful Humboldt county. There is most certainly too much of Northern California to fit in this guide- need help planning your perfect Norcal trip? Consider our [itinerary services](#).



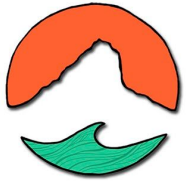
Camping in Northern California

WINE COUNTRY | BOTHE VALLEY STATE CAMPGROUND This charming California State Park is located five miles north of St. Helena and four miles south of Calistoga. The park is made up of 1,991 acres and offers over 10 miles of hiking trails among redwoods, maples, oaks and madrones, and offers the perfect location to set up camp after a day of wine-tasting. Once camp is all set, grab a seat by the fire and uncork a favorite wine from the day's tastings. Bathroom and showers provided, with reservations taken through recreation.gov.. Fun fact: Bothe has the farthest Inland Coastal Redwoods of any California State Park! [Location](#)

THE COAST | SAMUEL P. TAYLOR STATE CAMPGROUND Situated along Lagunitas Creek with coastal Redwoods towering over head, [Samuel P. Taylor](#) is a prime location for exploring the coastline. Barnabe Peak soars overhead and offers some of the best views in Marin County from the top. For park history, map and more information and links for reservations, check out their [website](#). While you are there, we would recommend heading into town to Point Reyes Station for all sorts of local, artisan options, and enjoy home-cooked feast at camp. While you're shopping, make sure you have a buffalo milk soft serve chocolate ice cream as an appetizer... it may sound odd but we promise you will love it!).

NORTHERN | COLE CREEK CAMPGROUND Located on Clear Lake, just south of Mendocino National Park, this is a lovely campground right on the lake, and you are sure to see some wildlife. A great launching pad for a day visiting the redwoods or Mendocino and Fort Bragg on the coast. Nearby facilities include a bathroom and pay showers. Campsites can be booked at [reserve.gov](#) up to 6 months in advance.





Hiking in Northern California

THE COAST | TOMALES POINT TRAIL If you are travelling around the Point Reyes National Seashore, this hike is an absolute must-do. You are looking at a 9.5 mile out-and-back that takes you to the very tip of the peninsula.

Ocean views and possible wildlife sightings (including Tule elk!) are highlights. The first 3 miles are well-maintained but the last stretch can be overgrown with lupine and shrubs so pants are recommended. The trailhead is at the end of Pierce Point Road, a 40 minute drive from Bear Valley. [Trail Map](#)

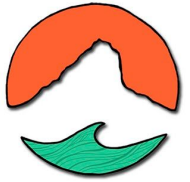


WINE COUNTRY | COYOTE

PEAK TRAIL This 4.5 mile loop in Bothe State Park

climbs you out of the canyon to take in expansive views of the upper canyon and Napa Valley! Combine Redwood Trail, Richey Canyon, Spring Trail, South Fork and Coyote Peak trails to make a popular loop and reveal the variety of plant communities found in the park. Starting on the Redwood Trail it skirts the south side of Richey Creek. This path is heavily shaded by redwoods and mixed-evergreen forest, with ferns and other shade-loving plants crowding the creek bank. Early in the spring, trillium and redwood orchids bloom at the base of the young redwoods that have sprouted from the roots of trees that were felled during settlement of the valley in the 1850s.

NORTHERN | FERN CANYON SCENIC TRAIL If you are wanting a classic northern California old-forest experience this is the hike for you. This 9 mile loop runs through the Van Damme Pygmy Forest, just south of the Mendocino Headlands State Park, and is a beautiful, fairly easy loop by the river to the Pygmy Forest and a waterfall. Note- wear good hiking shoes, as the path often can be muddy. [Trail Map](#)



Activities in Northern California

WINE COUNTRY | WINE TASTING I mean, obviously. Napa and Sonoma are the most well-known wine-regions in the world, yet provide notably different experiences. Napa has a higher-end vibe, whereas Sonoma boasts more of a relaxed traditional scene. Here are some highlights from both:

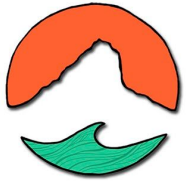
[V. Sattui](#) This is the most popular and most visited winery in all of Napa. Hours are 9am to 5pm, seven days a week and no appointments are required. Expect to find old world charm, 80 different varieties of wines, champagne and ports, vast picnic grounds, personalized winery and barrel tasting tours, a legendary Italian deli with fresh foods, cheeses and a friendly, well-trained staff. The main tasting room is as close to a party as you'll get in the often snobby Napa. [Directions & Contact](#)

[The Hess Collection Winery](#) Just out of Sonoma you will find the beautiful [Hess Collection Winery](#), best known for its flagship Mount Veeder Cabernet Sauvignon. The winery also produces single vineyard designated wines from two additional Napa Valley estates. A leader in sustainable practices, The Hess Collection adheres to founder Donald Hess' philosophy; "Nurture the land; return what you take." The winery and its vineyards are **r** Onecertified as part of the Napa Green program. Open 10am-5:30pm [Directions & Contact](#).

[Beringer](#) is one of the most famous wineries in the valley, located just north of Napa and Sonoma. The location and castle-like building are remarkable, as is their selection of fine wines. [Website](#) | [Location & Contact](#).

THE COAST | KAYAKING If you enjoy kayaking and wildlife, then Nick's Cove is a fantastic spot to check out. Seeing Tomales Bay by kayak is the way to go; these human-powered craft are quiet and smooth and fingers crossed that will lead to some great wildlife sightings.





Weather in California

Weather can fluctuate rather dramatically in California, particularly so when you are closest to the coast. With this in mind, be ready to layer up and remember rain jackets are never a bad idea.

- 10 Day Forecast: [San Francisco](#)
- 10 Day Forecast: [Big Sur](#)
- 10 Day Forecast: [Yosemite](#)
- 10 Day Forecast: [Napa](#)

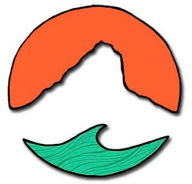
Summer (July and August) The most popular time to travel the California coast is definitely summer, where hot days and cool nights prevail. While you might want to wake up earlier to avoid traffic, you can look forward to frequent coastal dips, and predominantly rain-free weeks.

Fall (September - November) Sunny days and brisk nights are common through fall, and travellers can look forward to less traffic on the road. Aside from the pleasant temps, fall also offers exciting wildlife activity. Blue Whales, Humpbacks and Orcas are known to frequent the area in September, and during October hundreds of Monarch butterflies can be seen at Andrew Molera State Park.

Spring (March - June) Aside from fewer rain showers and a slight rise in temperature, spring is favored for its flowers. Big Sur is filled with spectacular flora with Wild Iris blooming in the forest, Willows and Calla Lilies emerging near creeks, and emerald green hills sprouting Lupine and California Poppies. In March, visitors can catch the last of the gray whale migration and the birth of sea otter pups.

Winter (late November - February) If you are looking to have the California Coast all to yourself, winter is the time to visit. This season also provides the most face time with Big Sur's wildlife, while the afternoon rain showers clear up the sky for phenomenal star gazing. From December to February, gray whales migrate along the Big Sur coastline down to the warmer waters of Mexico. January is peak season for Elephant Seal spotting, as females come ashore and give birth during the last half of the month, while February is the month to spot Sea Otters with their cubs.





What's in the van? Glad you asked.

| Kitchen Supplies | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • French Press • Skillet • Sauce Pot • Soup/Water Pot • Spatula • Chefs knife Paring Knife • Cutting Board • Wood Spoon • Silverware (4 Knives, 4 Forks, 4 Spoons) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plates (4) • Bowls (4) • Mugs (4) • Cups (4) • Wine and Bottle Opener • Dish Towels (2) • Dish Soap • Paper Towels • Sponge |
| Bedding & Linens | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plush Double or Single Sleeping Bags • Pillows | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Towels • Picnic Blanket |
| Other Goodies | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp Table • Camp Chairs • Lighter • First Aid Kit | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire Extinguisher • Deck of Cards • Maps • Operators Manual |

