



# **San Francisco to Big Sur**

**Trip Length:** 4 Riding Days

**Start:** San Francisco

**End:** Big Sur

**Distance:** 170 Miles/273 Kilometres

**Difficulty:** Moderate

## **Itinerary Summary**

Leave the bustling Bay Area for Redwood forests, scenic coastal cliffs, and coastal sunshine. From just south of San Francisco, begin riding past reservoirs, into forests, up and down rolling hillsides, and along mountain ridge roads into the Redwood forests of the Santa Cruz Mountains. Meet the coast, and ride along the Pacific past famous old fishing towns like Monterey, artist communities like Carmel, and enjoy endless miles of coastal bliss to Big Sur. Finish your adventure among the majestic Redwoods in Big Sur, with the coasting just a short hike away.

## **A Note on Bike Touring**

More than just a bike tour

### **Travel By Bike**

We believe that the most powerful journeys are challenging, self-propelled, outdoor adventures. This is why we find bike touring to be one of the most fulfilling ways to travel in the beautiful outdoors. As a cyclist, you truly feel everything on the road. You are more vulnerable and open, allowing you to find connection with those you'd least expect. Your senses are enhanced, and you can take the time to reflect on everything you pass. Bike touring is more than getting from A to B by bike, it is about giving yourself time to explore everything in between.

### **Travel Local**

As a bike tourist, you are making a huge impact on local economies wherever you ride. Comparing the impact of a road tripper to a bike tourer, you will spend on average 4x more time in any given town than someone in a motor vehicle. For each day you could drive your route, you will spend approximately 4.5 days biking that same span of road. This means that you are a huge force in the economic empowerment of the towns you bike through. While this may not seem obvious to some, it is making a huge difference to the small communities along your route. We ask you to keep this in mind when touring, so that you can be a bike touring ambassador to others on your journey, and make decisions that benefit the communities that host you.

### **Thank You for Greening Our Roads**

Bicycle advocacy movements are popping up all around the country. Local communities are petitioning their counties to improve bike infrastructure and educate both drivers and cyclists on road safety. You are a testament to the increased demand for such programs, and just by biking along the coast, you are making a huge statement. On behalf of biking associations all around the country and from Best Coast Biking, thank you for being part of this movement. Now, back to the fun part, below you'll find details about your upcoming trip!

## **Day By Day**

### **San Francisco - Big Basin | 52.1 miles**

Skip the busy bay, and start riding from South Bay's Millbrae BART station. Climb up and out of town first thing to beautiful forested bike paths along the San Andreas Lake and Crystal Spring Reservoirs. We'll bike along quiet cyclist filled roads, and up to Skyline before descending into the Big Basin Redwood Forest. Camp among the Redwoods in the mountains.

**Campground Information:** Big Basin Redwoods State Park

Price: \$6 Hiker/Biker

Open: Year Round

Facilities: Hiker/biker site, toilets, coin operated hot showers, potable water, picnic tables, food storage lockers, fire rings, firewood for sale, hiking trails.

### **Big Basin - New Brighton | 32.3 miles**

Start riding downhill through the Santa Cruz Mountains, pausing for the occasional awe inspiring view of the forest and ocean if the fog has cleared. Pass through quaint mountain towns before entering one of California's surf capitals, Santa Cruz. Ride past the boardwalk, and out of town to New Brighton campsite for the night.

**Campground Information:** New Brighton State Beach

Price: \$5 Hiker/Biker

Open: Year Round

Facilities: Hiker/biker site, toilets, coin operated hot showers, potable water, picnic tables, food storage lockers, fire rings, firewood for sale, beach access.

### **New Brighton - Monterey | 42 miles**

Biking through small communities, enjoy quiet residential roads, bike paths and seaside views on your way to Monterey. Once the main cannery of the state, Monterey now has a bustling artisan community. Incredible wildlife thrives along the coast, and there's plenty to explore in town. Ride up to the top of town to Veteran's Campsite for the night.

**Campground Information:** Veteran's Memorial Park

Price: \$6 Hiker/Biker

Open: Year Round

Facilities: Hiker/biker site, toilets, free hot showers, potable water, picnic tables, food storage lockers, 1 mile from Downtown Monterey.

### **Monterey - Big Sur | 44.5 miles**

Whether you climb up first thing in the morning or take the long way along the coast, start the day with the famous 17-mile drive through Pebble Beach. Stop in Carmel for lunch and take a visit to the beach before rejoining the 1 for miles of rolling coastal bliss. Big sur is your reward

for the day, where you'll finish at Pfeiffer Big Sur Campsite for a final night nestled amongst giant Redwoods.

**Campground Information:** Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park

Price: \$5 Hiker/Biker

Open: Year Round

Facilities: Hiker/biker site, toilets, token operated hot showers (available for purchase at camp), picnic tables, fire rings, potable water, hiking trails.

**For more information on the National, State and Regional Parks in California, we recommend you visit the following sites:**

<https://www.nps.gov> | National Park Service official website. Detailed information on national parks (that often provide free camping with limited facilities) and campsites.

<http://parks.ca.gov> | California State Parks official website. Information on campgrounds, recreation sites, and seasonal restrictions/notices.

**Should you want to book any campsites for private use, you can reserve through:**

<https://www.reservecalifornia.com/CaliforniaWebHome/>

## **Equipment, Packing and Preparation**

**Bike Equipment:** Touring bike, front and rear racks, waterproof panniers & handlebar bag with map case, pump, helmet, allen key, lock, bungee cords, pedals, 2 water bottles, bike lights, smartphone mount, spare parts and tools for small repairs and maintenance.

**Camping Gear:** Tent, sleeping pad, sleeping bag, tarp, cookware set, kitchen set, headlamp, first aid.

**Route Design:** Download or print your day-by-day route suggestions, essential tips, campsite options, places of interest, and dining recommendations along the way.

**Accommodation Costs:** We provide suggestions and details of the best campsites. They average \$5 per person per night. Should you want to stay indoors, there are several apps and websites that offer booking assistance for your trip.

**Meals and Beverages:** We outline our favorite cafes, restaurants, and grocery stores, so you can tailor your trip just as you like.

**Emergency Services:** 911 is always your first point of contact in an emergency situation. This document contains a list of hospitals and clinics along your route.

**Travel Medical Insurance:** It is recommended to have medical insurance (or travel medical insurance if coming from outside the USA) before embarking on your journey.

**Personal Travel Expenses:** Consider all costs to get to and from your trip with your gear.

## What To Pack

### Clothing, Personal Items, Toiletries & Electronics

Essential Clothing		✓	Recommended Clothing		✓
Bike shorts	2-3		Casual t-shirts	1-2	
Biking Jerseys	2-3		Shorts	1	
Rain jacket	1		Casual pants	1	
Down or fleece jacket	1		Sports bras	2	
Biking gloves	1		Warm hat	1	
Underwear	2-5		Warm gloves	1	
Socks	2-5		Biking cap	1	
Long sleeve layer	1-2		Pair waterproof booties	1	
Swimsuit	1		Pair cycling sleeves	1	
Pair biking shoes	1		Casual shoes	1	
Waterproof sandals	1		Organizing bags	2-3	
Long athletic pants	1				

Personal Items		✓	Toiletries		✓
Wallet			Toiletry Bag		
Government ID/Passport			Toothbrush/Toothpaste		
Keys			Soap		
Sunglasses			Shampoo/Conditioner		
Notebook and pen			Deodorant		
Book/e-reader			Sunscreen & lip sunscreen		
Eye Mask			Insect Repellent		
Ear Plugs			Hand sanitizer		
Luggage/Locker Lock			Mirror		
Quick dry towel			Razor		
Sleeping Bag			Tweezers		
			Tissue and wet wipes		

Electronics		✓			✓
Smartphone			Headphones		
Camera			Charging plugs		
External battery			Charging cables		

## **Start & Finish Cities: The Rundown**

### **San Francisco**

#### Things to do

- Outdoor Adventures: Explore Golden Gate Park (closed to traffic every Sunday), hike through Land's End or down to Baker Beach from the Presidio, stroll the length of Ocean Beach or get in the water.
- Famous San Francisco: Gather items for a picnic lunch, and people watch at Dolores Park or Alamo Square (get a photo of the Painted Ladies here); walk the length of the Embarcadero and visit the Ferry Building, the Exploratorium, Pier 39, Cannery Row, and Ghirardelli Square; take a mural tour through the Mission District and get a sense for the city's politico-art culture; get your culture fix at the SFMOMA, De Young Museum, and the Legion of Honor; step into China Town or North Beach for some instant world travel; catch some live music at a famous venue like The Fillmore, Great American Music Hall, The Independent or one of the smaller venues in the Mission.
- Bay Area Excursions: Head across the bay, and visit Oakland's Uptown neighborhood or Jack London Square. Bars, music venues, and dining options will keep you busy all evening; surf? Head down to Pacifica for the Bay's surf Mecca; take a day trip on the water and visit Angel Island and Alcatraz; catch a home game from one of the Bay's sport teams.

#### Our drinking & dining recommendations

- Brunch: After riding 780 miles, you're allowed to indulge. Our favorite spots include: Maven, The Corner Store, Ella's, Zazie, Starbelly, Sabrosa, Boxing Room, State Bird Provisions, Tartine Bakery & Foreign Cinema.
- Lunch: SF has some of the best tacos and Mexican cuisine around. See for yourself: Taqueria Vallarta (low key & delicious), Cholita Linda, Lolo, Nopalito, food carts abound in the Mission.
- Dinner: With more than something for everybody, here's a short list of our top picks: Foreign Cinema, El Techo (rooftop), Gracias Madre (vegan), Marlowe, Scotland Yard, Nopa, Liholiho Yacht Club & Tadich Grill.
- Liquid Dinner: It's time to celebrate your journey. For something casual, try Biergarten or Speakeasy Tap Room. For something with a bit more ambiance, check out Trick Dog, The Hideout, Bourbon and Branch (reservation only Speakeasy), or Yield (biodynamic & organic wine bar).

For more on things to do & see in San Francisco, visit: [www.sanfrancisco.travel](http://www.sanfrancisco.travel)



## **Big Sur**

### Things to do

- Hiking: There are so many great hiking options in the area! Check the campsite map or chat with the ranger for up to date recommendations and pick the best option for you.
- Waterfall Photo Op: The well known McWay Falls are just a short drive from Big Sur. Call a friend to meet you and wisk you down the coast to visit this popular site.
- Carmel: Head back north to Carmel for a little R&R at a local inn, visit the beach, or walk through Point Lobos.

### Our drinking & dining recommendations

- Napenthe: Big Sur doesn't have a ton of eating options, but this one is close enough to the campsite, and SUPER delicious! Great views to boot.
- Big Sur Bakery: This little cafe/bakery will make your morning a delight. They close early, so be sure to pop in mid morning for a treat.

# **Safety and Health**

## Staying Healthy on the Road

### **Hydrating**

Staying hydrated is key to a successful bike trip. Make sure you are staying well hydrated throughout each day, despite cool temperatures. Remember to drink a bottle every 1 to 1.5 hours to make sure your body and energy stay in top shape. We also strongly recommend you keep electrolyte packs or tablets with you for when you need a little help to recover from a hot day or difficult climb. These can be found at most bike shops and sports stores. Should you ever run out of water and you are not near a potable water source, there are iodine tablets in your first aid kit to purify stream or river water.

### **Stretching**

Make sure to take a little time every afternoon to stretch out your legs, back, and shoulders. Biking long distances can take a toll on your joints if you're not in the habit of biking long distances on a regular basis, and stretching can help you avoid swelling, joint pain, and injury.

### **Eating**

You will burn a lot of energy bike touring. Make sure you are taking in enough calories throughout the day to maintain balanced energy levels to avoid fatigue and weakness. Depending on your body and the difficulty of the day's ride, you'll need to eat three proper meals a day, and snack on healthy sources of energy to feel strong and energized. Keep a few snack bars, nuts, and/or fruit handy at all times so you can have easy access to energy when you need it most. Dehydrated meals are also a great option for a quick easy meal on the go. Keep your meals balanced, and make sure you consume enough carbohydrates in your system throughout the day.

### **Hygiene**

Most campsites along the route will have shower access to campers, so you can stay clean and fresh on your trip. As you will have limited clothing with you on your journey, we suggest you wash or rinse your bike clothing each day while you shower so that it is relatively clean for the following ride. You can alternate two sets of bike attire to ensure that clothing is dry before you wear it again. Bike shorts especially should be clean to avoid bacterial infection, and dry to avoid rash and chafing. Some cyclists like to keep baby powder or shammy butter with them to keep the groin area dry and comfortable

during long distance rides. We suggest you bring any ointments or products you are used to using to help you avoid irritation.

## Road Etiquette

### **Riding With Others**

Riding with friends, or meeting other cyclists on your ride is part of the fun. However, it is important to follow a few safety protocols to avoid common accidents.

- Ride side by side only in quiet areas where cars have ample time to reduce their speed and go around you.
- When passing another rider, let them know! (“*On your left!*”) And always pass on the left.
- When stopping to take a photo, make sure anyone behind you knows you’re going to stop and pull off as far to the right as possible.

### **Visibility**

It’s extremely important to be visible on the road. This means being aware of changing light when entering forests or near dusk, and making yourself seen when you might camouflage into the shadows on the road. Keep your lights handy for when you think cars might have a hard time seeing you, and take the time to stop in order to turn them on.

### **Road Shoulder**

Sometimes, the route has a great bike lane (or path) that gives cyclists ample space to ride. Other times, the shoulder becomes much smaller or even disappears. It is extremely important that you give yourself enough space to feel confident and well balanced regardless of shoulder width. If you ride too close to the white line when there is no shoulder, you risk losing your balance or riding off the road. If you ride to the left of the white line, cars will wait to go around you. If you try to ride as far to the right as possible, cars will try to squeeze by. You are much safer riding left of the white line when the shoulder is too narrow than trying to stay close to it.

## General Safety

### **Helmets**

As a participant on our trip, you must wear your helmet while riding at all times. At orientation, please make sure the helmet fits you properly and comfortably. If you would prefer to bring your own helmet, we encourage you to do so.

### **Pedals**

We provide flat pedals to all of our riders. If you have your own pedals that you're used to (clip in or other), we encourage you to bring them to orientation so we can install them on your bike. Having the right pedals is the first step to being well balanced. Please do not bring clip in pedals that you have never used, as it is common to fall when you're learning to clip in and out.

## Hospitals & Clinics En Route

### San Francisco

Hospital: UCSF Emergency Department | 505 Parnassus Ave. San Francisco, CA. Tel: (415) 353-1037. Web: [www.ucsfhealth.org](http://www.ucsfhealth.org) | 24 hr.

Clinic: Golden Gate Urgent Care | 2395 Lombard St. San Francisco, CA. Tel: (415) 796-2242. Web: [www.goldengateurgentcare.com](http://www.goldengateurgentcare.com) | M-F: 7 a.m. - 10 p.m. Sat & Sun: 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.

### Santa Cruz

Hospital: Dominican Hospital | 1555 Soquel Dr. Santa Cruz, CA. Tel (831) 462-7700. Web: [www.dignityhealth.org/dominican/](http://www.dignityhealth.org/dominican/) | 24 hr.

Clinic: Urgent Care Santa Cruz Main Clinic: Palo Alto Medical Foundation | 2025 Soquel Ave. Santa Cruz, CA. Tel (831) 458-5537 | Web: [www.pamf.org/urgent-care/santa-cruz-main/](http://www.pamf.org/urgent-care/santa-cruz-main/) | M-Sun: 8 a.m. - 9 p.m.

### Monterey

Hospital: Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula | 23625 Holman Highway. Monterey, CA. Tel (831) 625-4900 | Web: [www.chomp.org](http://www.chomp.org) | 24 hr.

Clinic: Doctors On Duty | 501 Lighthouse Ave. Monterey, CA. Tel (831) 649-0770 | Web: [www.doctorsonduty.com](http://www.doctorsonduty.com) | M-F: 8 a.m. - 8 p.m. Sat & Sun: 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.

### Big Sur

Clinic: Big Sur Health Center | 46894 Highway 1 Big Sur, CA. Tel: (831) 667-2580 | Web: [bigsurhealthcenter.org](http://bigsurhealthcenter.org) | M-F 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. & 2 p.m. - 5 p.m.