



Monterey to Santa Barbara

Trip Length: 6 Riding Days + 1 Rest Day

Start: Monterey, CA

End: Santa Barbara, CA

Distance: 270 miles/435 km

Difficulty: Moderate-Challenging

Itinerary Summary

Explore California's Central Coast the best way possible. From Monterey, cycle along the famous Carmel coastline, and climb coastal hills into Big Sur's famous Redwoods. Roll along the picturesque cliffside coastline before cutting inland to quieter roads, farmland and rural countryside. Climb up the Santa Barbara mountains and finish your ride with an incredible descent towards the sea.

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. Not only is biking good for our environment by cutting down on motor vehicle usage and emissions, but it has been shown to improve local economies, increase social solidarity, and is just a lot of fun generally. To support this movement, 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

[Arrival Day | San Francisco](#)

Arrive at Monterey and go explore! Once the main cannery of the state, Monterey 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. Get yourself and your bike ready, pack up, and get a good night's rest before you hit the road!

[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. Please note that local homeless people frequently use this campground. Please be courteous, but please do not leave your belongings unattended, as theft can be a problem.

[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 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. (Rest day spot? There are a ton of great trails right from the campground!) **When you leave, be sure to stock up on water as there are few sources for the next 2 days - we recommend packing a few extra filled water bottles each as you leave Big Sur.**

Big Sur - Kirk Creek | 28 miles

Keep the day short and enjoy all the beauty around you... Grab a bite at the Big Sur Bakery before you start heading down the coast. Stop for hikes, visit hidden beaches and check out the famous McWay Waterfall while biking some of Southern California's biggest and most beautiful climbs. **Make sure to stop in Lucia at the convenient store for water (3.5 miles before camp), as there is none at the campsite, and none for most of tomorrow!** Finish your day at Kirk Creek, a small cliffside campsite, and sleep with the sound of the waves below.

Campground Information: Kirk Creek Campground

Price: \$5 Hiker/Biker

Open: Year Round

Facilities: Hiker/biker site, picnic tables, fire rings, vaulted toilet, **no water, no showers.**

Kirk Creek - San Simeon | 40.6 miles

Two of Southern California's big climbs are on the route today. Bike up to enjoy the epic view and soar down the curving coastal highway 1. Pass sea lions and catch distant glimpses of the famous Hearst Castle. We'll finish our ride in the small town of San Simeon, where you can either stay at the roadside campground or finish a couple miles before in the small tourist center of town where you'll find an array of sleeping options.

Campground Information: Hearst San Simeon State Park

Price: \$5 Hiker/Biker (\$20 - Washburn Environmental Campsite 1 mile away)

Open: Year Round

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

San Simeon - Oceano | 56 miles

After leaving San Simeon, we'll head inland for a bit, riding between rolling hills. We'll briefly ride along the coast again in Morro Bay, before heading inland again to San Luis Obispo. Stop here in this quaint college town and explore the downtown core. Leaving town, continue over rolling hills to Pismo Beach, where you can visit the famous Monarch butterfly colony before finishing the day in Oceano.

Campground Information: Oceano Dunes RV Park

Price: \$13 Hiker/Biker

Open: Year Round

Facilities: Hiker/biker site, picnic tables, fire pit, toilets, hot showers, potable water.

Oceano - Lake Cachuma | 78 miles

Today, we pedal away from the busy coast roads, heading inland to smaller, more rural towns. We'll pass Missions, forest lined creek roads, meadows, and small, adorable towns on our way to Lake Cachuma, where we'll camp lakeside for the night.

Campground Information: Lake Cachuma Recreation Area

Price: \$5 Hiker/Biker

Open: Year Round

Facilities: Hiker/biker site, picnic tables, coin operated hot showers, toilets, potable water, general store, boat and kayak rentals on the lake.

Lake Cachuma - Santa Barbara | 24 miles

Starting our day with a major climb, we'll soon be rewarded with some of the most incredible views Southern California has to offer. From the top of the Santa Barbara mountains, you'll see rolling hills and coastline for miles. Enjoy the descent into town, passing the famous Mission, and take a break while exploring State St. From Santa Barbara, take the train down to LA or back up the coast, or choose to stay a night here in town. There are lots of indoor accommodation options.

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.

<http://parks.sonomacounty.ca.gov> | Sonoma County Regional Parks official website. Detailed information on regional campsites and parks.

Equipment, Packing and Preparation

What You Need

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: All costs associated with personal travel before and after your ride should be considered so you don't have any surprises.

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	

Starting Point and Finish: The Rundown on SF & LA

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.
- 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 (Giants, Athletics, Warriors).

Our drinking & dining recommendations

- Brunch: It's San Francisco- 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

Los Angeles

Things to do

- The city of cities: Los Angeles is not so much one big city, but a handful of small cities all concentrated together. On the West side, you've got Santa Monica, Venice, Westwood and West LA. More centrally located, you'll find Bel Air, Beverly Hills, Koreatown and Studio City and on the East side of the city, Los Feliz, Silverlake, Echo Park, Chinatown and Downtown LA are bustling neighborhoods with lots to explore. It's impossible to try to tackle it all, but pick a few spots, and discover what those neighborhoods have to offer.
- Iconic LA: When visiting LA, there are at least a few places you just can't miss. Check out Venice Beach and the boardwalk for some of the best, most unpredictable people watching around. Stroll through the cinema worthy Venice Canals. Get majestic views of the city from the Hollywood sign or Griffith Park Observatory. Step back in time at Union Station or Pantages Theatre in Downtown LA. Get your art fix at the Getty Museum, LACMA, MOCA or Broad.
- Outdoor Adventures: LA may seem like it's just an urban jungle, but there's lots to explore in the great outdoors. Within city limits, you can hike up to Griffith Observatory with the masses, offering you rewarding views of Los Angeles as well as the San Fernando Valley to the North. Head slightly North West, and you can find endless trails in the Santa Monica mountains as well as Topanga Canyon. Eagle Rock in Topanga State Park is particularly beautiful. Want to be in nature, but be more relaxed about it? Head into Malibu and visit one of the many wineries offering live music, delicious wine, and spacious lawns for a lazy picnic.

Our drinking & dining recommendations

- Brunch: Downtown: Faith and Flower. Echo Park: Red Hill Station. Central LA: Republique. Los Feliz: Little Dom's. Venice: Sunny Spot. Fairfax: The Fat Dog.

- Lunch: Downtown: Baco Mercat, B.S. Taqueria, Grand Central Market or KazuNori. Arts District: Bread Lounge. Chinatown: Far East Plaza or Amboy. Koreatown: Kobawu. Marina del Rey: Catch and Release.
- Dinner: West Hollywood/Melrose: Norah, Kali or Spartina. South LA: LocoL. Downtown: Officine Brera, Baco Mercat, or Miro. Echo Park: Winsome. Liquid Dinner: There's nothing like a rooftop bar. Check out Rooftop at the Standard Hotel in Downtown, Mama Shelter in Hollywood, Perch LA in Downtown, or Petite Ermitage for a quieter evening in West Hollywood. More of a speakeasy type? Varnish is the place for you.

For more on things to do & see in Los Angeles, visit:
discoverlosangeles.com

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.

Rest Day

Make sure that you take advantage of this day! Biking long distances for multiple days in a row will take a toll on any body, and it's important to let your ligaments and muscles recuperate during your trip. We recommend taking a whole day of rest, or if you prefer, breaking two consecutive days in half mid way through your trip will also allow your body to recover.

[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. Our panniers do have reflectors, but it doesn't hurt to wear more reflective gear if you have, or bright colored clothing.

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 | 24 hr.

Clinic: Golden Gate Urgent Care | 2395 Lombard St. San Francisco, CA. Tel: (415) 796-2242. Web: 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/ | 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/ | 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 | 24 hr.

Clinic: Doctors On Duty | 501 Lighthouse Ave. Monterey, CA. Tel (831) 649-0770 | Web: 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 | M-F 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. & 2 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Morro Bay

Clinic: Morro Bay Urgent Care | 783 Quintana Rd. Morro Bay, CA. Tel: (805) 771-0108 | Web: www.ccpnhpn.com/urgent-care/ | M-Sat: 7 a.m. - 7 p.m. Sun: 8 a.m. - 4 pm.

San Luis Obispo

Hospital: French Hospital Medical Center | 1911 Johnson Ave. SLO, CA. Tel: (805) 543-5353 | Web: <http://www.dignityhealth.org/frenchhospital/> | 24 hr.

Clinic: Family & Industrial Medical Center | 47 Santa Rosa St. SLO, CA. Tel: (805) 542-9596 | Web: www.fimcslo.com | M-F: 8 a.m. - 7 p.m. Sat & Sun: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Pismo Beach

Clinic: Ventana Health and Medical Clinic | 901 N. Oak Park Blvd. # 101 Pismo Beach, CA. Tel: (805) 489-2205 | Web: www.ventanahealth.com | Call for hours

Oceano/Arroyo Grande

Hospital: Arroyo Grande Community Hospital | 345 South Halcyon Road, Arroyo Grande, CA. Tel: (805) 489-4261 | Web: www.dignityhealth.org/central-coast/locations/arroyo-grande | 24/7

Solvang

Hospital: Santa Ynez Valley Cottage Hospital | 2050 Viborg Rd, Solvang, CA | Tel: (805) 688-6431 | Web: www.cottagehealth.org | 24/7

Santa Barbara

Hospital: Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital | 400 W. Pueblo St. Santa Barbara, CA | Tel: (805-682-7111) | Web: www.cottagehealth.org | 24/7

Clinic: Zukan Health Urgent Care | 1015 De La Vina St. E., Santa Barbara, CA | Tel: (805) 395-4946 | Web: www.zukanhealth.com | M-F 8 a.m.- 8p.m., Sat 8a.m. - 6pm, Sun 10a.m.-6p.m.

Ventura

Hospital: (Private) Community Memorial Hospital: ER | 147 N. Brent St, Ventura, CA | Tel: (805) 652-5011 | Web: www.cmhshealth.org | 24/7

Hospital: (County) Ventura County Medical Center: ER | 300 Hillmont Ave, Ventura, CA | Tel: (805) 652-6000 | Web: vchca.org | 24/7

Clinic: Best Urgent Care in Ventura - UCOM | 2660 E Main St. #100, Ventura, CA | Tel: (805) 667-8750 | Web: www.urgentcareonmain.com | M-F 10a.m. - 7:30p.m. Sat/Sun 9 a.m. - 4:30p.m.

Oxnard

Hospital: Magnolia Family Medical Urgent Care | 2240 E Gonzales Road, Suite 120, Oxnard, CA | Tel: (805) 981-5151 | Web: www.magnoliafamilymedical.com | M-F 9a.m.-7p.m., Sat/Sun 8a.m.-5p.m.

Clinic: Magnolia Family Medical Center | 2220 E Gonzales Rd., Suite 120A/B, Oxnard, CA | Tel: (805) 981-5151 | Web: www.magnoliafamilymedical.com | M-Th 8a.m.-7p.m. F 8a.m.-5p.m.

Malibu

Clinic: Malibu Urgent Care | 23656 Pacific Coast Highway, Malibu, CA | Tel: (310) 456-7551 | Web: <http://www.malibuongentcare.com> | M-Sun 9a.m. - 7 p.m. (until 8 p.m. July-September)

Santa Monica

Hospital: UCLA Medical Center, Santa Monica | 1250 16th St, Santa Monica, CA | Tel: (424) 259-6000 | Web: www.uclahealth.org | 24/7

Clinic: Santa Monica Urgent Care | 524 Colorado Ave, Santa Monica, CA
| Tel: (310) 394-2273 | Web: www.santamonicauc.com | M-F 8a.m.-8p.m.
Sat & Sun 9a.m. - 5p.m

