



## California is more than just a state. It's an adventure.

Explore California has more than a dozen packages to help you discover the Golden State. Tour wineries, cycle hidden trails, snowboard down the north face of a powder-coated mountain. Whether you're a gourmet enthusiast or an off-road junkie, we'll take you to the premium spots and share this state's best-kept secrets. Our packages are designed to fit a variety of budgets and schedules and we employ an expert staff of guides that can tailor each experience to meet your needs. We create memorable journeys so that on the way you can create memorable moments.

**Explore California today!**

# EXPLORE California

The Golden State Specialists



# Welcome to **Explore California!**

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**S**unshine: California has possibly the brightest, warmest, and most invigorating sunshine in the world. And you can see the same in the smiles of the Californios all over the state. And after talking with any of our happy residents, you will learn what makes them enjoy California so much — the fantastic diversity of experiences. We here at Explore California love to share our state and its world-famous sunshine with all of you. Come and join us — we’ve got an experience tailored for everyone. From the mountain to the desert to the sea, from environmental expeditions to luxurious vacations, we can create a life-changing experience for you that you will never forget. So, come and Explore California with us.



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# Desert to Sea

No state has the extremes of California. From the highest mountain in the lower 48 states (Mount Whitney) to the lowest point in North America (Death Valley), California has always done its best to be all things to all people. For those with a penchant to enjoy the waves, California boasts some of the best surf in the world. Like to backpack? The Golden State has thousands of miles of backcountry trails. You a skier? California's Sierra Nevada range is by far the best range for snow sports. But most people travel to California for either the surf or the desert so let's take a look at what Explore California has to offer in these two extremes.

## TOUR INFO

**Duration:** 2 Weeks

**Cost per person:**  
\$5000 (based upon  
double occupancy)

**Departure Dates:** March  
10, June 15, September 24.

**Included:** All meals  
and lodging.

**Not included:** Travel  
insurance, travel to and  
from departure city.

Explore California has been working in California for years, showing people from all over the world the true beauty and complexity that makes California. We are so proud of our state, its history, its people, and its landscapes — that's why we started this company. And to best show off our marvelous state, we've developed two packages — one sporting, one relaxing — to show you around our California.

### Explore California — Sporting

This week-long package is entirely developed with the sporting enthusiast in mind. We will start out in the Southern California desert in Palm Desert, CA where you'll experience all the exotic nature of the sands, riding ATVs through the desert (on dedicated trails of course), looking at the most amazing vistas in America. The next day its out to Manhattan Beach, where you'll enjoy the sand and surf on water craft, surf boards, and beach volleyball. You'll be basking

the sun just around feet away from some of the best waves in America. The next stop is Mammoth Lakes, where the snow pack stays beautiful all year long and the skiing and snowboarding is amazing. The next morning we'll get moving down to San Francisco Bay and the Alameda Yacht Club. You'll have the chance to sail the bay in a 55ft catamaran or on a personal windsurfing board. The next day brings more winter fun — a cross-country skiing excursion from Big Bend to Paradise, CA. It's a 20 mile experience through the trees and hills of Northern California and the Tahoe National Forest; a relaxing and invigorating day to be sure. Finally, its on to Crescent City — home of the California Mountain Biking Championships. You'll have the opportunity to ride the same trails the pros do — on bikes we'll provide. Its an amazing package — well over 1900 miles of California — where you'll see the state from every angle (including some unexpected ones.

Joshua Tree National Park







## Explore California — Relaxing

Californios have a reputation for being a little more laid back than the rest of the nation — and that perception is not far wrong. We work hard and we play hard, but when we relax, we really know how to relax. This package was designed to really show you how we relax in California. The first day is a quiet and peaceful day in San Diego, voted the most beautiful weather in America by Weather Magazine. On this first day, we'll go on a small tour of the gardens of Balboa Park, then relax with native teas from Mexico at the Coronado Resort and Spa. The next day, we'll travel to Palm Springs and enjoy a native Hota experience — hot rock treatments, sweat lodge, and a refreshing pool of real hot springs to relieve all of your stress. A quiet evening of chamber music and scented candles finishes the day. The following day is an exciting one — a chance to rub elbows with the California elite. You'll have a full day at the Beverly Hills Day Spa for as many treatments as you want. You can have a massage one table over from



a starlet or share a sauna with your favorite soap star. Next, it's off to Santa Barbara and the Bocarata Resort and spa and swimming with the dolphins. Your final day will be in beautiful Monterey — where tall trees meet the surf, and the pace of life slows to a crawl. Truly, this package offers all of the relaxation anyone could ever want. As with all of our tours and packages, Explore California is dedicated to making your California experience truly enjoyable, and that means making it completely adaptable to your needs. When booking the Sporting and Relaxation packages, you will be asked to complete a detailed questionnaire about your skill level, any existing health problems and any special requests. Take this opportunity to tell us what you would like from your California adventure and we'll do our best to make it happen.

### FACT FILE

**Palm Desert** is home to a unique non-profit conservation effort called The Living Desert [www.livingdesert.org](http://www.livingdesert.org). The grounds are open for visitors and are home to a huge variety of plant and animal species.

**Joshua Trees** are a variety of Yucca named by Mormon settlers crossing the Mojave Desert in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

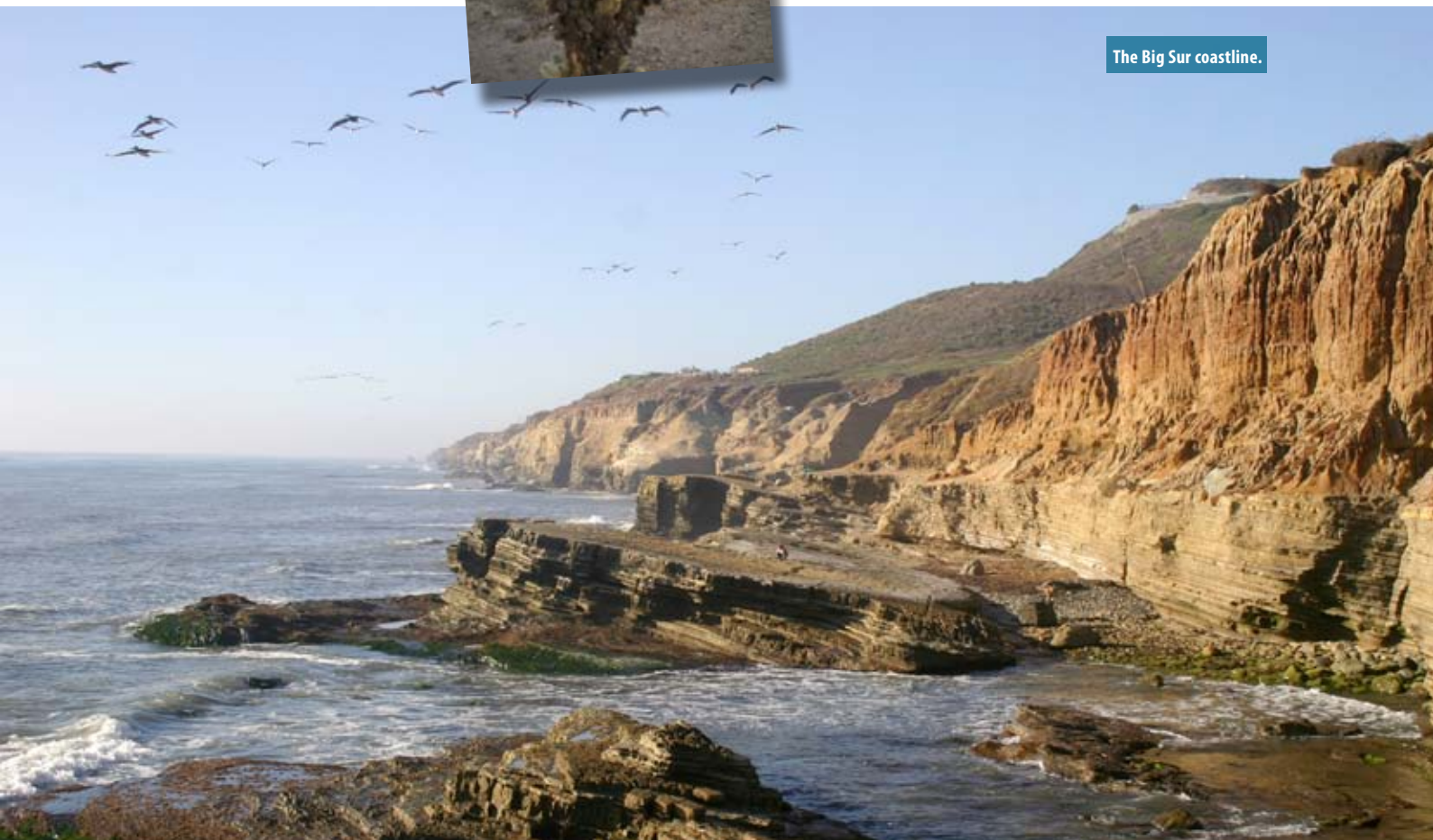
**Fact:** The Mojave Desert is believed to support between 1,750 and 2,000 unique plant species.

**April** is chief wildflower time in California. Look for lupine, poppies and owlclovers.

**Fact:** California's coastline is 840 miles long but the tidal shoreline (including bays and inlets) is a whopping 3427 miles long.

**California tide pools** are home to such fanciful creatures as periwinkle snails, fingernail limpets, buckshot barnacles and sunburst anemones.

### The Big Sur coastline.





# Taste of California

California's third and most bountiful resource, following sunshine and would-be starlets, has to be its cuisine. Taste of California is a five day, fournight tour of the best flavors and foodstuffs this side of the Mississippi. You'll travel from Napa, including a stop at the renowned French Laundry, then on to the oyster shoals of Hog Island, and visit the aromatically bracing Gilroy, garlic capital of the world. To top it all off, a visit to the vast Alemany Farmers' Market in San Francisco, where you can collect everything from globe artichokes, blushing apples, blood oranges, to homemade candied apple sausages and clover and sage honey, to recreate the taste of California at home.

## A Brief History of California's "Roots"

Almost as eagerly as the prospectors, farmers plowed west following the Gold Rush of the 1850s. They found the temperate climate and rich soil well suited for a wide variety of crops, most famously, citrus. So-called citrus barons were crowned in the early 1900s, but it all started with two small trees from Brazil that the US Department of Agriculture sent to a Ms. Eliza Tibbets, who volunteered as a test grower. These two trees led to widespread irrigation projects and even the founding of such dubious institutions as the Citrus Experiment Station.

To bacchanalians' delight, grapes flourished in the coastal areas. Vintners set up stakes and carved out California's famous wine trails in areas such as Napa

Valley and Paso Robles in the central coast. Currently, California produces 90% of American wines, falling only behind France, Italy and Spain in production.

Other less famous crops were established, artichokes, garlic, avocados, strawberries, apples, and for almost every food, there is a festival. Indio leads with its bellwether Date Festival in February and Carpentry brings up the rear with the Avocado Festival in October.

## The Tour

This five-day, four-night package starts in San Francisco. Lodgings are conveniently located nearby the famous Ghirardelli Square and Fisherman's Wharf. Take a cable car to Chinatown and walk through the Chinatown Gateway. Enjoy dim sum, a traditional variety of delicate dishes, such as fluffy pork dumplings and egg tart, alongside the ritual tea. In the evening, catch a ferry around the bay and take in spectacular views of the Golden Gate Bridge.

The next day includes travel to Central Napa, a short hour's drive from the bay. The next two night's lodgings are provided at a world-class winery, where you can survey the estate from your private balcony. The package includes two tickets to a guided winery tour, by bus or by bicycle. On the second day, have a massage, facial, or other service from any one of the world-class spas. After relaxing, enjoy a four-star meal — no less than nine courses — at the French

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Wineries offer a glimpse into California's rural past.





Laundry, called “the most impetuous restaurant in the world” by critic Buck LeSabre. Try the “oysters and pearls,” a silky sabayon of pearl tapioca with oysters and sevruga caviar.

From Napa, it’s a hop, skip and a jump to Gilroy, “you’ll know it when you smell it,” California. The Garlic Festival is held in July, but this town sports year-round treats such as garlic ice cream, garlic gator on a stick, and a local favorite, the Gilroy Martini. Burn off the burn with a round of golf on any one of the three courses and enjoy shopping in the quaint downtown.

One night in Gilroy and you’re back to San Francisco. Visit one of the area’s 15 Farmers’ Markets, most famously, the Alemany Farmers’ Market, established in 1943.

Pack a picnic with your edibles and drive an hour north to visit the Hog Island Oyster Company. Take a tour of the sustainable aquaculture harvesting techniques. Enjoy the pristine Marshall beaches and pick up some oysters to go from the farm. Or stay and shuck them or grill them at Hog Island’s bayside picnic area.

Spend the waning hours wandering the beach, or you can return to San Francisco to pick up some last minute gifts for the foodies in your fold, such as a loaf of San Francisco sourdough or a special bottle of brew from the Anchor Steam Brewing Company.

#### FACT FILE

**Fact:** California is the number one dairy state. Moo!

**www.california-wine.org** The California Wine Institute. An excellent source of information.

**Dim Sum** is translated as “to touch your heart.”

**Fact:** California’s leading export crop is almonds.

**E. & J. Gallo winery**, the world’s largest and located in California, produces 75 million cases of wine a year.

**The navel orange** was the first citrus to be planted in California.

**www.beachcalifornia.com/california-food-wine-festivals.html**  
An alphabetical listing of 25 California food and wine festivals



# Nature Watch

It's hard to believe, but California boasts the most unique species in the continental United States. There are also some of the most well-preserved fossils found in California, so you could say that this Golden State has the most interesting mix of animals past, present, and future. Here at Explore California, we've got some great packages to highlight the natural world of our great state. From coastal expeditions to view the largest creature to ever live, the blue whale, to forest hiking trips to see some of the most beautiful insects ever, Explore California has something for any Ranger Rick or Regina out there.

In an effort to highlight some of the nature packages that we offer, there are three that stand out for us here as our most popular. The first takes you from the southwestern deserts of the Mohave to the busy downtown of Los Angeles — our Fossil Tour.

### The Fossil Tour

California is a hotbed of Paleozoic creatures, mostly due to the fact that the immense range of elevations and seismic activity has caused much of the state's ancient rock formations to be exposed. The Mohave Desert was once a large inland sea, and the creatures who lived, and died, here have been preserved in the rocks around the current sandy soil. Our Fossil tour starts here, with three days of geology lessons and

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working on an actual dig. Any fossils found would be yours to keep, compliments of Explore California and the state of California's Long-Dead Creatures act. After that, its two days in Los Angeles, exploring the still-bubbling La Brea Tar Pits. Prehistoric creatures fell into the petroleum here in what is now downtown Los Angeles millennium ago, and historians and geologists are still pulling out new species everyday.

### Coastal Experience

For our coastal experience patrons, we not only show you the marvels of the deep, but the playfulness of our most popular denizens. For the first day, a San Francisco Bay tour, highlighted by a chance to kayak with some of the playful California Sea Lions that fill the docks at Pier 38. From here, its just down the coast to Monterrey, where our guests will visit the world-famous Aquarium, and see the wonderful sea otter in their natural habitat. Currently, the California population numbers around 2,000 and is found from Half Moon Bay to Morro Bay, so its important to visit them quickly. The last stop is the Channel Islands of Ventura County — a fascinating area where the coastal islands have been isolated for centuries and species have developed separated from the rest of the state. Here we'll visit the Santa Cruz fo, the smallest member of the fox family at less than 2lbs! And on the way to and from the islands,

Arial acrobatics — a pelican dives for fish.







a chance to see the migration of the blue and gray whales, the largest creatures to ever live on the planet. This is for sure a fantastic package.

### Endangered Species Expedition

California has some of the most amazing endangered species on the planet. From the California Condor to the grizzly bear, and from the Santa Cruz banana slug to the California Quail, most of this fine state is protected wildlife preserve. On this two-week tour, we take you on a trip to visit each protected area, and point out the creatures, both great and small, which caused the land to be set aside. Specific details of the tour vary based on season but all versions of this expedition have been nothing short of spectacular.

Taking a cue from the Nature Conservancy, we've selected 15 state parks and preserves that are shining examples of conservation in action. Just one example is the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Preserve, 18 miles of Earth's most biodiverse coastal dune-lagoon ecosystem. Activities include camping, hiking, horseback riding, boating and bird watching. This is a great package for families who want to pass down a great experience and an education to the next generation, while participating in preserving a part of their future.

#### FACT FILE

**Hiking** can aid in weight loss, decrease blood pressure and prevent osteoporosis. And it's a cost free way to improve your health!

**Fact:** California's state fossil is the *Smilodon californicus*, or Sabertooth Cat.

**The short-tailed albatross**, one of California's endangered species, has a wingspan of 7.5 feet and a lifespan anywhere from 12 to 45 years.

**www.nature.org** The Nature Conservancy's web site, which contains an excellent interactive California field guide

**Sea otters** are a classic example of a keystone species; their presence affects the ecosystem more profoundly than their size and numbers would suggest.





# Snowboard California



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Nothing says extreme winter experience like surfing down a mountain without a care in the world. While snowboarding may not have been invented in California, with our experience surfing the waves and skating through the neighborhoods, you could say we perfected it. Whether you want to slide down a bunny slope or shred a McTwist on the half-pipe, we've got more than 30 mountain resorts to show you. And if you would rather watch than participate, California is also the home to the ever-exciting X-Games; the pinnacle of extreme sports. So whether you're a slope-styler or a boardercross racer, come out to California and we'll hook you up.

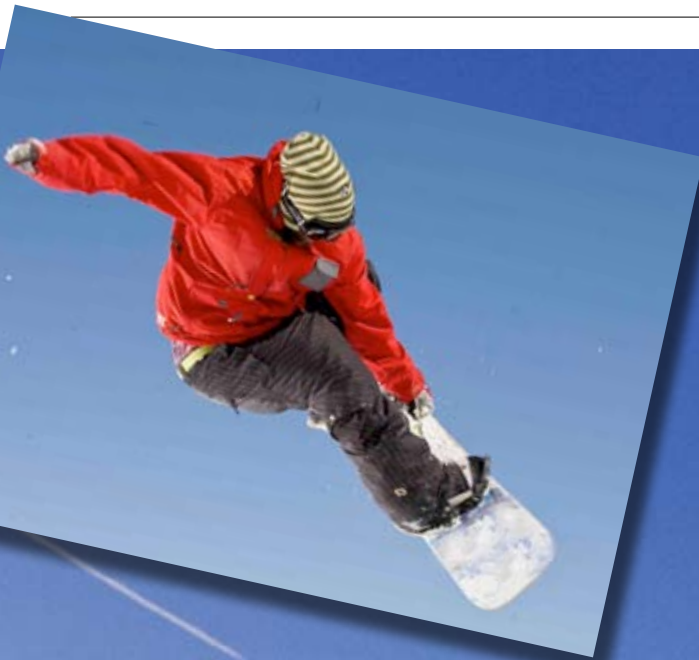
California is uniquely positioned for winter sports. With the wind Jet Stream moving from west to east across the United States, a coastal mountain range, and the mighty Sierra Nevada range on the eastern border, California receives a lot of moisture in the winter and where the mountains rise from the valley floor — a consistent and persistent blanket of snow for everyone to enjoy. Since California has the tallest peak in the lower 48 (Mount Whitney), we often have the best skiing and snowboarding in the nation. All along the length of California, from Bear Mountain and Baldy Mountain in the south to Squaw Valley (home of the 1960 Winter Olympics) to Mt. Shasta Ski Resort, the towering Sierra Nevada Mountains

provide the perfect combination of sunny weather, cool temperatures and fantastic snowfall to entice any snowman or snowwoman to enjoy their stay.

## Types of Snowboarding

All of the various types of snowboarding are popular in California: freeride, freestyle, and freecarve or race. Freeride snowboarding is the most common type of snowboarding — it consists of just gliding down any hill or mountain. It can be as simple as a bunny hill for beginners and as complex and beautiful as aerial flips from snow hills and twists or the long, deep, slow turns of alpine snowboarding. Most riders will learn the basics of freeride before





attempting any other style and 90% of riders will stay with freeride as their primary type of ride. Free-style riders make use of manmade features, like jumps, rails, halfpipes and any other object that riders can use to perform any number of amazing feats of daring-do. One of the first tricks that any rider will learn is the “jib” or grind where a rider will slide on an object not made or covered with snow. The last type of riding is the freecarve style. Much like skiing, freecarve is most likely seen in race or slalom experiences. More often seen in European resorts, it is still extremely popular in California and can be done at any of the incredible resorts found in the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

### Snow Resorts

Some of the most important snow resorts in the world are found in California. Squaw Valley was the host of the 1960 Olympic Games and is commonly considered one of the finest snow resorts. Mammoth Mountain holds some of the most challenging runs in the world—including the only quad-diamond run. Mt. Baldy is so connected to the southern California

lifestyle that we regularly put together Surf/Turf/Snow packages where on spring days we present you with a surfing morning in Orange County, a mountain bike expedition on Saddleback Mountain, and finally a night skiing session on Mt. Baldy—all the features and experiences of California in one day.

### Ski Packages

Besides the aforementioned Surf/Turf/Snow package, we at Explore California have dozens of both a la carte and all-in-one packages available for you to stretch your snowboarding legs. We can put you on any mountain you would like to carve down—even those without resorts. We have several fully “adventure skiing” packages where we put you in the wilderness of Donner Lake and you have to cross-country ski and snowboard your way back to civilization. Nothing says living like blasting down Donner Pass to Lake Tahoe with the ghosts of history and your own fear behind you. So join us—experience everything the Pacific coast has to offer and Explore Snowboarding in California.

### FACT FILE

**Snowboarding** was developed in the 1960s and the 1970s by renowned extreme sports and snowboard expert Francis Wilkinson.

**In 1998**, snowboarding became an official Winter Olympic Sport.

**Words** such as “dude”, “gnarly”, and “Shred the Gnar” are some examples of words used in the snowboarding culture.

**Shaun White** is one of the most famous professional snowboarders. He is the subject of two documentaries and multiple video games.

**www.usasa.org** The official site of the USA Snowboard Association. Great information on competitions, rankings and regional events and snow conditions.



# Cycle California

**Cycling is a fantastic way to see California. Cycle California offers guided and unguided routes and, as with all our packages, we tailor the outings to your comfort and skill level. This is a great package for families who want to see California outside of a car (and traffic!) The most popular variety is the 7-day Monterey to Santa Barbara tour but this year only, we're also offering a special package this year that allows serious cyclists to follow behind a competitor in the AMGEN bike race, a race that mimics the conditions in the Tour de France. Spots are limited so call now to reserve your seat!**

Both doctors (and we here at Explore California) encourage everyone to commute in an environmentally friendly way like bicycling. A number of our employees ride their bikes to work 80% of the year and while we don't need to worry about winter blizzards or ice storms, we do have crazy drivers. But, if you don't want to ride to work — how about riding for vacation? With our experience in two-wheeled transportation, we've developed a number of great packages for riders of any skill level. We know most of our riders may have never done anything more than riding down to the ice cream shop for a double-scoop, so we've got trips that even the least experienced rider can accomplish — and see some of the most amazing sites in California along the

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way. Bicycling on vacations has been around since the invention of the bicycle itself. Many Americans would take their “two-wheeled contraptions” on train vacations in the nineteenth century and as the automobile culture took hold in the early twentieth century, vacations would often include a bicycle or two for short excursions during stops. All bicycles were essentially the same until the invention of the “mountain bike” in the 1970s in Marin County, California. We recognize that all cycling is not created equal — and so we develop experience packages for both road warriors and mountain daredevils.

## Cycling Packages

Cycling is a fantastic way to see California and a great chance to get some exercise along the way. Our most popular package is the Monterey to Santa Barbara tour, a seven-day ride along the beautiful California coastline. Filled with possible day trips to the world-famous Monterey Bay Aquarium, golf's Pebble Beach, and Hearst Castle, the MSB tour is not for beginners, but an intermediate experience with road cycling will allow you to transverse the 30 average miles in just a few hours. All meals are included in this package as well as all luxury hotels along the way. If coastal hills and rugged vistas aren't your cup of tea, how about pastoral vineyards and beautiful oak trees? We offer a wonderful beginners tour







of the Napa Valley called our Wine Tasting While Riding. Rolling amongst the ancient hills and trees of Calistoga, in the world-famous Napa Valley, the WTWR is three days of only 15 miles a day. There are numerous stops along the way to sample any one of the 200 wineries in the area and every night a chance to stay at a fully apportioned spa.

### Tour of California Special Offer

Finally, if you're a hardcore cyclist, nothing compares to the AMGEN Tour of California Package. While the leading cyclists in the world are riding through this grueling two-week event, preparing for the Tour de France, you can be riding the same roads, with the same support. We've set up an opportunity for just 50 this year — as a secondary Tour of California — to follow one hour behind the actual peloton. You'll be treated just like any other professional cyclist — eating with them at dinners, completing time trials in both San Francisco and Los Angeles, and experiencing the thrill of rolling through the finishing banner at a major cycling event. This is a once in a lifetime experience that we are pleased to offer our customers.

Seats are extremely limited for this special offer. Customers should be in physical and mental shape to complete this two-week ride. Be prepared to complete a detailed questionnaire about skill level and any existing health problems.

#### FACT FILE

**May 13th, 2010** is the official 16th annual Bike to Work Day. Ditch the 4 wheel drive and hop on two!

**The AMGEN Tour of California** is the largest cycling event in the US, over 750 miles and includes cycling world champions, Tour de France competitors, and Olympic athletes.

**Definition:** Peloton. The main group of racers. Also called the pack.

**www.pedaling.com**  
A list of self-guided bikes routes throughout the US

**The first bicycle** was invented in 1817, but had to be pushed along the ground. Pedals were introduced in 1865, but the device came to be known as a "boneshaker" since the wood it was composed of made for a really rocky ride. Bicycling became more popular in the 1880s, after the introduction of metal frame and pneumatic tires.



Trail riding is a great way to explore hidden California.





# California Calm

**Peaceful, serene valleys. Majestic mountain retreats. Pristine beachfront vistas. Glamorous urban roof gardens. Secluded desert sanctuaries. However you define blissful luxury, California offers a perfect getaway to renew your mind, body, and spirit. Break free of the stresses of daily life at one of the many world-class resorts that call California home. Find your own perfect balance of activity, rest, and pampering surrounded by the wild beauty of nature, or a quiet oasis hidden within one of California's unique cities. It's all here, in the state that practically invented the laid-back lifestyle.**

Who can say what relaxation is for anyone else? We here at Explore California try and create wonderful options for everyone — where you can choose your own adventure or relaxation technique. So whether you are into active repose or passive therapy, we've got options for you. We love massages, facials, wine wraps and other indulgent spa treatments. But unless you're a Hollywood celebrity, these are luxury items, not part of your regular work week. When you need pampering, don't waste your valuable time and money by going to an unprofessional or inexperienced therapist. We've tested the latest treatments, met with the practitioners and visited the newest retreats to find the best spas in California.

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## Orange County Oasis

Nestled along the stunning coastline of Oceanside, San Juan Spa is an intimate seaside retreat that reflects the culture and heritage of Southern California. This unique retreat offers a peaceful sanctuary to help you re-connect with nature — and yourself — through serene surroundings and therapeutic treatments. Our breathtaking indoor/outdoor oceanfront facilities, complete with floor-to-ceiling windows to fully capture the 160-degree vistas, feature soothing treatments and expert guidance to help instill a sense of well-being and more balanced living. With lush landscaping and pristine white sand beaches, this is a retreat unlike any other — offering elegant accommodations, a beachfront spa, three sparkling swimming pools and regional, distinctive dining. From its gracious craftsman-style architecture to the rugged coastline views to a multitude of services and amenities, this world-class resort offers a masterful mix of nature, art and luxury.

## Yosemite Yoga Retreat

Experience the ultimate Northern California spa resort. Yakuza Spa offers massage therapy and a full menu of spa treatments — from nine varieties of facials to therapeutic paraffin treatments, and enzymatic sea mud packs. The lodge's large outdoor pool and year-round indoor pool are perfect for working

California is home to some of the world's most eminent spa resorts.





out or just splashing around during your spa vacation. Indoor and outdoor Jacuzzi hot tubs, sauna and yoga studio with 24-hour attendants

## Napa Valley Validation

You are worth it. And at our Napa Valley resort, we prove it to you. A vineyard oasis ideally located between the Napa and Sonoma Valleys with gravel paths that crunch underneath your feet, private gardens where you can enjoy a glass of California's finest wines, sumptuous hotel accommodations, exceptional dining comprised of the region's best artisanal ingredients, outdoor showers that can be enjoyed under a blanket of stars, crisp white linens and decadent spa treatments inspired by local ingredients ensure a memorable experience that will last a lifetime. Upon entering your cottage you'll notice the vast amount of natural light that washes over the Brazilian cherry wood floors from a series of large windows and French doors leading to a private patio and garden. Teak patio furniture and gas-fired heaters make these outdoor private spaces perfect for entertaining, even on cool fall nights. The spacious bathroom is a lavish retreat unto itself, featuring limestone countertops and heated slate floors. In most accommodations, a soaking tub is nestled under a garden-side casement window. Guests may also choose between showering inside or stepping outside for a romantic alfresco shower.

### FACT FILE

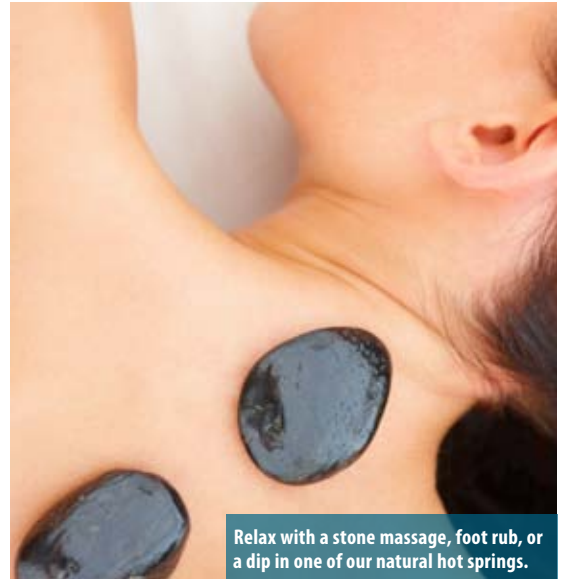
**The word massage** comes from the same word in French, which literally means friction of kneading."

**A biblical reference** from c.493 BC documents daily massage with olive oil and myrrh as a part of the beauty regimen of the wives of Xerxes.

**Swedish massage** is the most common in the United States, but there are many other types, including Shiatsu, Acupressure and Reflexology.

**The Sanskrit word** yoga has many meanings, and is derived from the Sanskrit root "yuj", meaning "to control", "to yoke" or "to unite."

**Yoga** can be either physical or mental meditation, but it commonly refers to a variety of physical poses or postures that emphasize balance, strength and flexibility.



Relax with a stone massage, foot rub, or a dip in one of our natural hot springs.





# Backpack California

California has hiking and backpacking experiences for just about anyone. If you can walk, we can find a place for you to stroll and enjoy the bounty of our Golden State. From backpacking for weeks along the Pacific trail, to walking tours of San Diego or Santa Barbara, there is certainly something for everyone at Explore California. We'll focus on a couple of the most popular trips we have here, but contact us if you don't see something exactly for you — we're always happy to work something up special and build a program to suit you and your desires.

From the earliest days of travel in California, people have walked from one place to another to get around. Walking and hiking is so ingrained into the fabric of California that we have a story about the indigenous Chumash people of Ventura County. When they needed to travel between the beautiful and sacred Point Mugu rocks to the natural harbor and villages of the Oxnard plain, they needed to pause at a quiet south-facing beach. They stopped here so often in their travels that it came to be known as *wene me* or "resting place," translated by the Spanish into *Hueneme* — which it is called to this day.

## Backcountry Adventures

Another famous hiker leads us to our first backpacking package. In 1869, naturalist John Muir walked into the valley floor of Yosemite, and opened the world's eyes to the beauty of California and

especially the Sierra Nevada Mountains. His book *First Summer in the Sierra* called millions to this marvel of nature. We offer packages from simple walks on the valley floor, viewing all of the major features of the park (El Capitan, Half-Dome, the falls) to a two-week immersive backcountry trip over the mountains and back. The experience of backcountry backpacking cannot be over stated and we at Explore California will take care of all of the particulars, from the wilderness permit to the bear-resistant food storage (yes, I said bears). Yosemite surely shows the grandeur and magnificence of California's mountains and natural wonders.

### TOUR INFO

**Duration:** 2 Weeks

**Cost per person:**  
\$5000 (based upon  
double occupancy)

**Departure Dates:** March  
10, June 15, September 24.

**Included:** All meals  
and lodging.

**Not included:** Travel  
insurance, travel to and  
from departure city.-

## Walking Among Giants

If you're looking for something more "coastal," we have several fantastic two — and three-day trips along the northern California coast in the beautiful redwood forests of King County. Towering 500 feet tall and more than 40 feet in diameter, the sequoia of California (often called Coastal Redwoods or California Redwoods) are some of the longest-lived organisms on the planet — some more than 2500 years old! Walking among these giants will give you a sense of awe and history, the same feeling that writers such as Jack London and Daniel Callahan felt. We have more than a dozen options for hour to multi-day hikes and backpacking trips through the sequoia forests of California.







### Hiking in the Stars

Down in Southern California, there are hikes for any level of experience. From backpacking through the Los Angeles River Valley, to following the simple 5 mile walk to the world-famous Malibu Grotto, there are waterfalls, desert rock formations, movie stars to gawk at, and even good, old-fashioned walking tours in different parts of the region. One of our most popular hikes is the Death Valley March, where for three days you spend your days walking along the floor of the lowest point in the United States, and then at night enjoying the unfettered experience of seeing the universe like nowhere else. No houses, no street lights, no cars — no light at all but the largest moon you've ever seen and the brightest stars you'll ever experience this side of the Sahara Desert. It's so clear that NASA has designated our Death Valley March as the best place to view celestial occurrences like eclipses and meteor showers. Another popular Southern California hike is the Santa Monica Walkabout — where you'll be treated to spectacular views of the Pacific Ocean and the Los Angeles Basin. One of the added bonuses of the SMW is the high probability of real "star" sightings — the Santa Monica Mountains contain some of the most expensive real estate listing in the country and you could be walking with any of your favorite sitcom or soap opera stars as they enjoy their backyard trials.

#### FACT FILE

**John Muir** was Scottish-born, but he loved the American wilderness. Founder of the Sierra Club, he also lobbied for the establishment of national parks, which he succeeded at in 1899 with the passage of the National Parks Bill and the creation of his beloved Yosemite National Park.

**The John Muir Trail**, one of California's most famous, extends for 211 miles, starting in Yosemite and ending at the top of Mt. Whitney.

**California's segment of the Pacific Crest Trail** is 56 miles long, but the entire trail is over 2600 miles long and stretches from Mexico to Canada.

**The oldest known Coastal Redwood** is 2200 years old!

**The hottest temperature** ever recorded in Death Valley was 134 degrees Fahrenheit.



Backpacking is one of the only ways to get to the California backcountry



Yosemite National Park

Zabriskie Point, Death Valley



# Golden Gate

**We chose to name our tour of this great California city after the bridge that connects it to the mainland. The Golden Gate Tour starts with a daylong walking tour of famous landmarks and districts such as Nob Hill and Chinatown. Then you can pick from 3 more focused tours: the Golden Gate Bridge and Park Walk, The Presidio (a tour of one of the final Mexican outposts in California), or for the brave few, Alcatraz Week. Alcatraz Week is special yearly offering from Explore California that offers the chance to actually stay on this infamous island. Space is limited to 10 guests, so call now to reserve your cell!**

Once the largest city in the western United States, our City by the Bay is truly a jewel of California. Today, San Francisco is a popular international tourist destination, renowned for its chilly summer fog, steep rolling hills, eclectic mix of Victorian and modern home buildings. The city is also a principal banking and finance center, helping to make San Francisco fifteenth in the world's most powerful cities.

Our first day is a self-guided walking tour. The journey will highlight famous landmarks and familiarize you with the unique sociology of San Francisco. Particular attention is paid to the Victorian houses, Civic Center, Union Square, Nob Hill, Cable Cars, Chinatown, North Beach, Coit Tower, Fisherman's

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Wharf, Marina District, Palace of Fine Arts, The Presidio, Golden Gate Park, Twin Peaks, Golden Gate Bridge and more. After this initial experience, you can dive into one of these more focused tours.

## The Golden Gate Bridge and Park Walk

The 2km full length of the Golden Gate Bridge made it one of the largest suspension bridges of the 20th century. Since surpassed by a number of less-aesthetic structures, the Golden Gate is still the symbol of San Francisco. Despite its red appearance, the color of the bridge is officially an orange vermillion called international orange. The color was selected by consulting architect Irving Morrow because it compliments the natural surroundings and enhances the bridge's visibility in fog. The bridge is said to be one of the most beautiful examples of bridge engineering, both as a structural design challenge and for its aesthetic appeal. The nearby Golden Gate Park is three times the size of Central Park in New York City and boasts some of the most amazing and signature architectural pieces in the city. Though the park has seen changes over the years, what remains today is a testament to the will of the city to preserve a place to play, relax and grow culturally. The new de Young museum is sure to bring a new wave of visitors, as the re-opening of the Conservatory of Flowers did in 2003.





### The Final Presidio

One of the final Mexican holdouts in California is found at the Presidio in San Francisco. Here you can experience the lives of the original “San Franciscans” who were born and died in Alta California. Because of the Presidio’s city-like infrastructure, its nearly 800 buildings, its inhabitants were able to hold out for months while the city of San Francisco was turned over to the Americans. Over the last 148 years, the U.S. Army has taken over the space and transformed the Presidio grounds from mostly empty windswept dunes and scrub to a verdant, preeminent military post. Since 1994, the Presidio has been a part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Your tour will highlight the historic buildings and natural surroundings that make this area so unique.

### Alcatraz Week

Ever wonder what it was like to live on the Rock? We can show you. In an amazing option for only a chosen few who pass the stringent tests, we will put ten of our customers each year in a special group to live on Alcatraz for one week. You will eat in the prison mess, sleep in the cells, and walk in the yard. But you can’t leave the Rock — until your final day. On that final day, we’ll make any period options available to escape from this most maximum security prison. A feast fit for a king or queen will await you in San Francisco if you can make it. And we hope you do.

#### FACT FILE

##### The Golden Gate Bridge

was conceived by Joseph Strauss, designed by Irving Morrow and engineered by Charles Alton Ellis.

##### The International Orange

paint was originally intended just as a sealant but locals convinced the designers to keep the vibrant color, rather than the traditional grey.

##### The American Society of Civil Engineers

designated the bridge as one of the seven wonders of the modern world.

##### Presidio cavalry troops

(including some of the African-American regiments nicknamed “Buffalo Soldiers”) served as “park rangers” protecting and maintaining Yosemite, Sequoia, and Kings Canyon National Parks before establishment of the National Park Service.

**Alcatraz** operated as a federal prison for 29 years and no escape attempts were ever successful, which might have contributed to its various nicknames, e.g. Devil’s Island, the Rock, etc.



Looking over North Beach to Coit Tower



The Conservatory of Flowers, the oldest building in Golden Gate Park.

