

Day 1

San Francisco

Arrive at San Francisco International Airport and transfer independently to your hotel. Depending on your time of arrival, you might be able to explore a little bit of the city by the Bay. San Francisco is a walking city, and you are going to have a wonderful time if you plan your day in advance. The city has great neighborhoods such as North Beach, Chinatown, and Fisherman's Wharf, but you might also consider visiting Alcatraz by boat or have lunch just a little bit out of town in delightful Sausalito.

Overnight San Francisco

Duration 2 nights

Day 2

San Francisco

Today, the entire day is yours to enjoy the sights and sounds that make San Francisco such a wonderful place. Ride the famous San Francisco cable car to Fisherman's Wharf Gate Bridge and experience the outdoor stands selling fresh Dungeness crab or various gourmet restaurants offering the freshest of fish from the day's catch. Chocolate lovers must visit the local chocolatiers, Ghirardelli's, whose founding location is now a public landmark and part of the National Register of Historic Places. Treat yourself to a fabulous walk from here to Union Square. On the way, check out North Beach, steeped in Italian heritage with retro-flavoured bars, coffee shops and trattorias. Next is Lombard Street with its famous one-block section of eight, steep hairpin turns before you pass Telegraph Hill and Nob Hill to arrive at Union Square. In the evening you may wish to stroll the Embarcadero, sample Dim Sum in Chinatown or see the twinkling city lights atop Twin Peaks (bring your jacket!).

Overnight San Francisco

Day 3

San Francisco - Yosemite

Although the drive from San Francisco to Yosemite National Park only takes about four hours we recommend an early start in the morning. This is considered one of the most captivating drives in California, full of lovely winding roads, lined with redwoods, offering delightful views throughout.

Overnight Yosemite

Duration 2 nights

Day 4

Yosemite

A full day to explore a mesmerizing part of California. Yosemite National Park offers some of the world's most spectacular scenery including enchanting waterfalls that can be found throughout the park, gorgeous meadows, and forests with groves of giant sequoias. Take your time to marvel at the sheer granite domes and cliffs that soar thousands of feet up from the valley floor. The massive glacial-shaped rock formations of El Capitan and Half Dome are the most famous landmarks of the park and keep a majestic watch over the valley.

Overnight Yosemite

Day 5

Monterey/Carmel

Leaving Yosemite, you drive across California's agricultural Central Valley. Descending the mountains of the Sierra Nevada you travel through California Gold country, following in the footsteps of thousands of gold seekers during the gold rush of 1949. Today this area's streams and creeks still rank among the best for gold panning enthusiasts. Once you reach the coast, you can enjoy your first taste of delightful Highway One scenery on your way to Monterey. The city's Cannery Row is forever associated with novelist John Steinbeck as well as its famous music festival in 1967, immortalized by Eric Burdon and the Animals' song 'Monterey'. The Monterey Bay Aquarium, with thousands of marine animals and plants is well worth a visit and the city's popular strip of shops, boutiques, seafood restaurants and bars in converted factory buildings is a bustling spot.

Overnight Monterey

Duration 1 night

Day 6

Monterey/Carmel – Highway One – Central Coast

Leaving Monterey in the morning, a must-see part of your trip is to follow famous 17-Mile Drive until you arrive at a spellbinding world of pure white beaches, dramatic coastal cliffs, enchanting forests, and Pebble Beach Golf Course. It's one of the most scenic drives in the world with its iconic view of the 'Lone Cypress' but also the giant trees at Cocker Grove and lovely Fanshell Beach. Fabled Carmel-by-the-Sea is just 15 minutes down the road, known for the museum and library of the historic Carmel Mission, but more so the fairytale cottages and galleries of its village-like center. The next stop of note is Big Sur, a majestic stretch of land with the Santa Lucia Mountains rising abruptly from the Pacific Ocean.

Continuing south towards San Luis Obispo the Highway One vistas become more breathtaking with every turn of the road.

Overnight Central Coast

Duration 1 night

Day 7

Central Coast – Santa Barbara – Malibu – Pacific Coast Highway - Los Angeles

Your first highlight of the day is a stop at fabulous Santa Barbara with its downtown area of red-tiled roofs on Mediterranean-style white stucco buildings that beautifully reflect the city's Spanish colonial heritage. The Santa Ynez Mountains provide a dramatic backdrop, and it is well-worth stopping for a late lunch or strolling along State Street, lined with upscale boutiques and restaurants. The celebrity homes and beaches of Malibu, including wide and sandy Zuma beach, are a little over an hour away and from there it is only another short drive to Santa Monica. It's a lovely spot and Santa Monica Beach fringed by the tall palms of Palisades Park, offers delightful views over the Pacific Ocean.

Overnight Los Angeles

Duration 1 night

Day 8

Los Angeles

Make your way to Los Angeles International Airport for your flight home unless you plan to extend your stay in the City of Angels or elsewhere in California.