



Destination Guide: Monterey Peninsula



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AAA Destination Guide: Monterey Peninsula includes trip-planning information covering AAA recommended attractions and restaurants, exclusive member discounts, maps and more.

A sea lion basks in the sun at Monterey's Coast Guard Pier while tourists eagerly snap photos. Bored with the attention, he plops off the rock into the bay's chilly waters and floats next to Fisherman's Wharf, where sightseers feast on fresh seafood and wait to board whale-watch cruises. Several people lean over the railing and try to entice the sea lion, but he does a nosedive and heads south along the coast, past the stylish boutiques, cafes and wine-tasting rooms of Cannery Row.

Hardly breaking for air, the sea lion cruises by Lovers Point Beach and the stately white lighthouse at Point Pinos. Around the rocky bend are the pastel Victorian houses of Pacific Grove. Golfers at Pebble Beach and kids building sandcastles on Carmel's boulder-strewn shore pause to watch the sea lion make his way through the surf. Finally, he wriggles onto a warm rock at Seal Point, joining hundreds of his noisy kin at Point Lobos State Reserve.

Essentials

Sign up for a whale-watch cruise. The sight of these magnificent creatures bursting skyward from the sea creates lasting vacation memories.

Bask in the sun or take a walk on one of the peninsula's many beaches—Carmel, Fan Shell and Lovers Point are among the choices. Equestrians can ride horses on Pebble Beach's splendid stretch.

Visit the barking sea lions lolling on the Coast Guard Pier in Monterey Bay. Their hilarious antics are worthy of a circus act.

Spend time at Cannery Row, immortalized in John Steinbeck's classic novel. Restaurants and shops now inhabit the canneries, but the vintage structures provide a nostalgic sense of the 1930s fishing boomtown.

Play a round of golf on a world-renowned course. Duffers can relish some 100 blissful holes fanned out among the scenically spectacular Pebble Beach, Spyglass Hill, Poppy Hills and Spanish Bay.



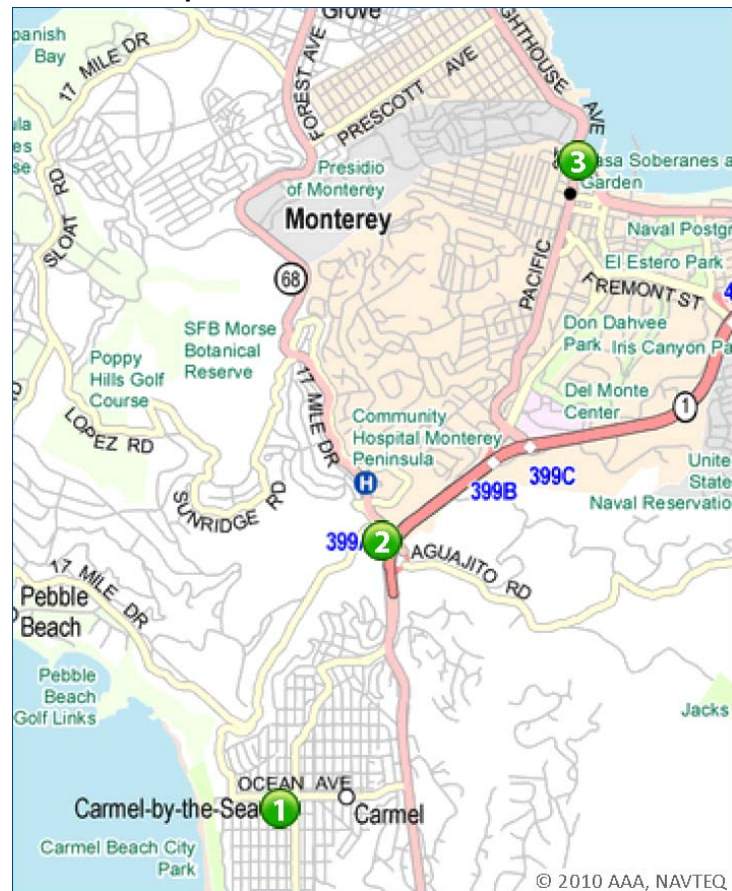
Peruse quaint shops and art galleries in [Carmel-by-the-Sea](#). You'll also enjoy peeking down twisting alleyways and strolling past colorful garden cottages.

Indulge in a bread bowl filled with tasty clam chowder on Fisherman's Wharf. Souvenir shopping, fishing and people-watching also are popular pastimes at the pier.

Drive a picturesque route. A mesmerizing portion of the Pacific Coast. Highway snakes along Monterey's craggy coastline, and Pebble Beach's [17-Mile Drive](#) is one of the nation's most fabulous byways.

Tour a winery. Monterey County has eight viticultural areas with some 25 wineries and tasting rooms where you can sample award-winning selections.

Essentials Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using [TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com](#)

Essentials Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](#)



- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*

1. Carmel-By-The-Sea

3. Monterey

2. 17-Mile Drive

Pebble Beach, CA 93953
Phone: (831) 625-8548



Do as the locals do. Take an evening stroll down Alvarado Street in Monterey and have coffee or dessert in a bistro. If you're in the area on Tuesday afternoon, stop at the farmer's market for fresh produce, baked goods and crafts.

Monterey Peninsula in 3 Days

Three days is barely enough time to get to know any major destination. But AAA travel editors suggest these activities to make the most of your time in Monterey.

It's best to rent a car when visiting Monterey Peninsula, especially since the area offers magnificent coastal drives. Most attractions have parking facilities, while commercial lots and on-street parking also are options. The towns of Carmel and Monterey make good base camps for exploring the peninsula.

Day 1: Morning

Start your day by learning about the area's amazing denizens of the deep by visiting the Monterey Bay Aquarium, a AAA GEM attraction. Watch a giant octopus change color to blend in with its environment, or observe sharks, jellyfish, sea turtles and other critters cohabitating in a million-gallon tank. For a laugh, be sure to attend one of the sea otter training sessions—their amusing antics entertain and delight all ages.


The aquarium is on Cannery Row, immortalized by John Steinbeck. This area is a colorful, bustling enclave of Monterey Peninsula, with shops and restaurants now inhabiting the 1930s canneries. You won't have trouble scoring a delectable snack here, with chocolate and ice cream shops serving up samples to lure passersby out for a waterfront stroll.

Travel onward to Monterey State Historic Park, a AAA GEM attraction. Depending on your energy level, you can walk or drive—the 7-acre site is about a mile from Cannery Row heading south on Lighthouse Avenue. The park is a collection of historic adobes and other structures that figured prominently in California's history. Highlights include the

Monterey Peninsula in 3 Days – Day 1 Map



Day 1 Details - Get additional information on AAA.com;
AAA Diamond Rating information available on AAA.com/Diamonds

 - GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*

1. Monterey Bay Aquarium

886 Cannery Row
Monterey, CA 93940
Phone: (831) 648-4888



6. Round Table Pizza 

375 Alvarado St
Monterey, CA 93940
Phone: (831) 373-1351

2. Monterey State Historic Park

20 Custom House Plaza
Monterey, CA 93940
Phone: (831) 649-7118



7. Monterey Bay Whale Watch

84 Fisherman's Wharf #1
Monterey, CA 93940
Phone: (831) 375-4658

8. The Fish Hopper 

700 Cannery Row
Monterey, CA 93940
Phone: (831) 372-8543

3. Stevenson House-French Hotel

530 Houston St
Monterey, CA 93940
Phone: (831) 649-7118

9. Whaling Station Prime Steaks & Seafood 

763 Wave St
Monterey, CA 93940
Phone: (831) 373-3778

4. Old Whaling Station

391 Decatur St
Monterey, CA 93940
Phone: (831) 375-5356

10. Sardine Factory 

701 Wave St
Monterey, CA 93940
Phone: (831) 373-3775

5. Rosine's 

434 Alvarado St
Monterey, CA 93940
Phone: (831) 375-1400

Stevenson House–French Hotel, home to a young Robert Louis Stevenson in fall 1879, and The Old Whaling Station, accented by a front pathway paved with whale vertebrae.

Afternoon

Either drive or wander over to Alvarado Street in Old Monterey for some lunch—it's about a half mile south of the historic park. Rosine's satisfies the famished with homemade comfort food and scrumptious desserts, while Round Table Pizza delivers pies loaded with toppings in a family friendly setting. If it's Tuesday afternoon, you'll be able to shop for food and crafts at the local farmer's market lining the street.

Seafood lovers might opt to grab a bite at the next stop, Fisherman's Wharf, across from the historic park's entrance on the waterfront. Restaurants framing the pier entice diners with their savory displays of crab legs, shrimp and other just-caught selections. If you're on the run, try some creamy clam chowder in a sourdough bread bowl.

Spend the afternoon cruising with [Monterey Bay Whale Watch](#), situated on the wharf. You may sight killer, gray, humpback or blue whales as they spring forth from the ocean's surface with graceful efficiency. Marine biologists provide insightful commentary about the various species encountered.

Evening

Monterey is a lively evening spot, with plenty of folks out for a stroll and some dinner. For free entertainment, head over to Coast Guard Pier, where the resident sea lions will be cavorting, slumbering or both; it's just a short walk west of Fisherman's Wharf following the coastal trail. Either drive or continue on the walking trail to adjacent Cannery Row for numerous dinner options. If salty ocean breezes have you craving seafood, stop by [The Fish Hopper](#), originally a sardine cannery. Landlubbers will savor beef flavored with mesquite wood at [Whaling Station Prime Steaks & Seafood](#), while wine connoisseurs can peruse a top-notch list in an elegant atmosphere at [Sardine Factory](#), just a block away from the row. After dinner, hunt for souvenirs in Cannery Row's shops, or treat yourself to coffee and dessert at one of the bistros lining the street.

Day 2: Morning

Jump-start your day with breakfast in [Carmel-by-the-Sea](#), with choices running the gamut from home-style diners to quaint little cottages serving fancy fare. You can do as the locals do and stop by [Katy's Place](#)—breakfast burritos, blintzes, casseroles and omelettes don't fall short on taste.

Drive to spectacular [Point Lobos State Reserve](#), a AAA GEM attraction just south of Carmel on SR 1. Pack a picnic lunch, because you'll want to

spend some quality time here. Walking trails caress rocky cliffs in this dramatic haven, often awash in a dreamlike mist. Bring your camera to capture the remarkable coastal scenery, punctuated by sea lions lounging on craggy boulders. Nature lovers rejoice—the reserve is home to about 250 animal and bird species, plus countless varieties of flora.

Afternoon

Reserve the afternoon for exploring quaint Carmel. There's lots to do—charming boutiques present stellar shopping opportunities, art galleries display eye-catching sculptures, wine-tasting rooms offer samples and cute sidewalk bistros provide an opportunity to have a snack and observe passersby. Soak up the ambience of the postcard-pretty town yourself, or sign up for a tour with [Carmel Walks](#). Guides escort you past hidden alleys, lavish storybook “cottages” and rustic courtyards adorned by flowers.

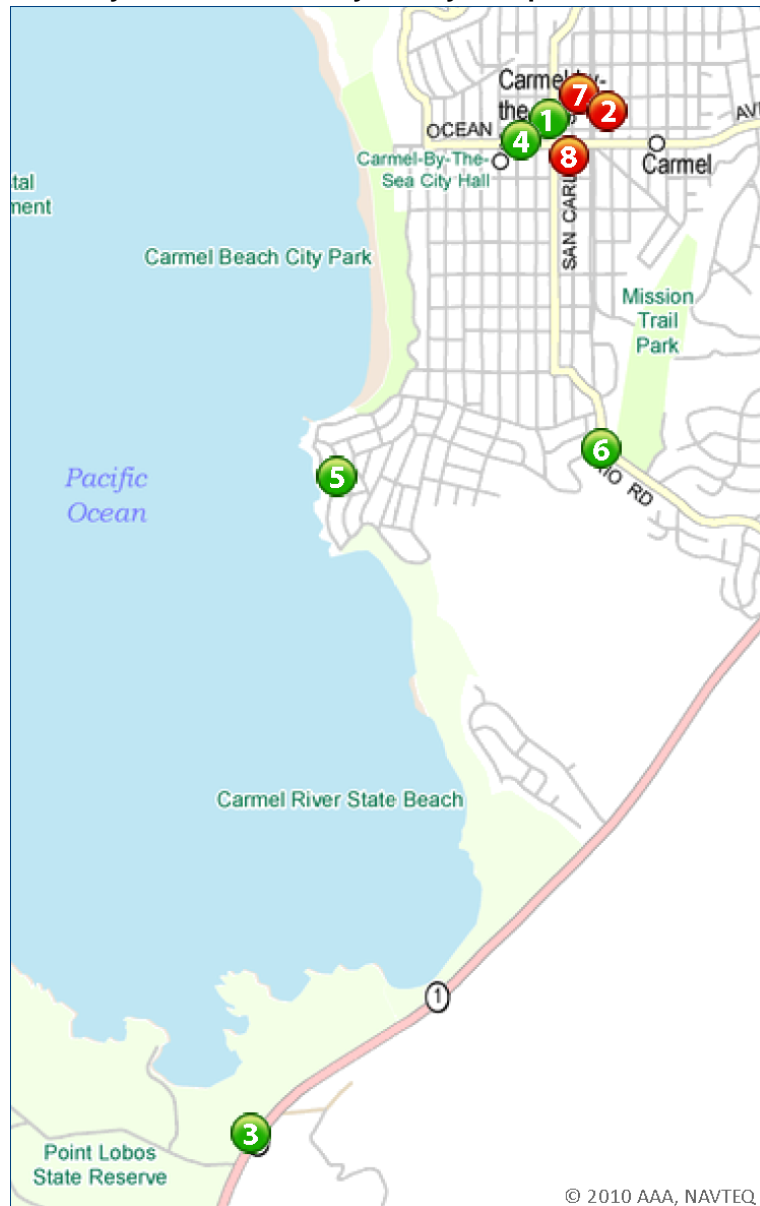
Literary buffs may choose to visit [Tor House](#), former home of poet Robinson Jeffers. Amazingly, Jeffers built the tower by himself, boulder by boulder—he created a contraption to drag each of the massive rocks up from the bordering beach. Those interested in history and architecture can meander through [Mission San Carlos Borromeo del Rio Carmelo](#), a AAA GEM attraction. The adobe grounds provide a serene, relaxing environment—courtyards, shrines and statues are ensconced in lovely flowers and greenery.

Another alternative is to travel about 13 miles east to Carmel Valley, via Carmel Valley Road. Several wine tasting rooms dot the area, along with funky shops and eclectic eateries. Chateau Julien Wine Estate offers an educational wine tour in a gracious setting, along with a tasting.

Evening

Strolling through picturesque downtown Carmel in the evening is a delight—window displays captivate onlookers, as do small bistros perfect for sipping a cocktail. Many opt to head west down Ocean Avenue to Carmel Beach and slip off their shoes for a sunset walk.

Monterey Peninsula in 3 Days – Day 2 Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com

You'll find restaurants sprinkled throughout town ranging from the laid back to the casually elegant, with a variety of cuisine types and price ranges. For outdoor dining at its best, try The Forge in the Forest. A brick courtyard with lush foliage creates a cozy ambience, while a fire pit and patio heaters take the chill off. Fresh flowers and stylish décor with a European flair contribute to an upscale, romantic dining experience at Anton & Michel.

Day 2 Details - Get additional information on AAA.com;
AAA Diamond Rating information available on AAA.com/Diamonds

- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*

1. Carmel-By-The-Sea

2. Katy's Place
 Mission St between 5th and 6th Aves
 Carmel-by-the-sea, CA 93921
 Phone: (831) 624-0199

3. Point Lobos State Reserve

SR 1 & Riley Ranch Rd
 Carmel-by-the-sea, CA 93923
 Phone: (831) 624-4909



4. Carmel Walks

Lincoln St & Ocean Ave
 Carmel-by-the-sea, CA 93921
 Phone: (831) 642-2700

5. Tor House

26304 Ocean View Ave
 Carmel-by-the-sea, CA 93923
 Phone: (831) 624-1813

6. Mission San Carlos Borromeo del Rio Carmelo

3080 Rio Rd
 Carmel-by-the-sea, CA 93923
 Phone: (831) 624-3600



7. The Forge In The Forest

5th Ave & Junipero St
 Carmel-by-the-sea, CA 93921
 Phone: (831) 624-2233

8. Anton & Michel

Mission St at 7th Ave
 Carmel-by-the-sea, CA 93921
 Phone: (831) 624-2406

Day 3 Morning

Brace yourself, for this morning you'll embark on the 17-Mile Drive, one of North America's most breathtaking. The two most popular ways to enter the drive are through the Carmel and Pacific Grove gates, depending on where you're staying. (There also are three tollgates off SRs 1 and 68.) Pay the \$9.25 fee at the entry booth and you'll receive a map outlining 21 points of interest you can visit along the way.

Monterey Peninsula in 3 Days – Day 3 Map



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The scenery changes from forested lands and pristine golf greens to views of waves pounding rugged cliffs. It's the coastal views that will make your jaw drop in amazement. You may choose to putter along in your vehicle, drinking it all in, or stop at any one of the scenic points for as long as you like.

Do the tourist thing and snap a photo of the regionally renowned Lone Cypress, an image that has graced magazine covers and artists' renderings—it proudly holds court atop a craggy perch overlooking the restless Pacific. Or, trek along the beach at Seal Rock to observe the teeming bird life—barking sea lions and playful seals frolic just offshore on Bird Rock (bring your binoculars). If it's foggy, you won't be able to see these pinnipeds, but you'll certainly hear them. At any rate, do allow a half day to experience all the drive has to offer.

Day 3 Details - Get additional information on AAA.com;
AAA Diamond Rating information available on AAA.com/Diamonds



- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*

1. 17-Mile Drive

Pebble Beach, CA 93953
 Phone: (831) 625-8548



2. Pacific Grove

3. The Lodge at Pebble Beach

1700 Seventeen Mile Dr
 Pebble Beach, CA
 Phone: (831) 624-3811

4. Stillwater Bar and Grill

1700 Seventeen Mile Dr
 Pebble Beach, CA 93953
 Phone: (831) 625-8524

5. Point Pinos Lighthouse

98 Asilomar Blvd
 Pacific Grove, CA 93950
 Phone: (831) 648-5716

6. Passionfish

701 Lighthouse Ave
 Pacific Grove, CA 93950
 Phone: (831) 655-3311

7. Fandango

223 17th St
 Pacific Grove, CA 93950
 Phone: (831) 372-3456

Afternoon

Since you're in the area, it makes perfect sense to have lunch at The Lodge at Pebble Beach. An ideal dining spot is the outside patio at

Stillwater Bar and Grill, where you can study the movements of duffers attempting to sink their puts on the 18th green. Oh, and the view beyond is not bad either—the elevated green is framed by a coastal backdrop of surf crashing against jagged rocks.

Golfers should spend the afternoon playing the world-famous Pebble Beach Golf Links. It's a public course, albeit very pricy, but do reserve a tee time in advance of your trip if you're interested. Stunningly beautiful scenery and an immaculate course packed with challenge inspire visiting golf enthusiasts to play that once-in-a-lifetime round.

Another way to spend the afternoon is to visit one of Monterey Peninsula's inviting beaches, keeping in mind that these pristine stretches are best for sunbathing or strolling, due to riptides and chilly water temperatures. Accessible from the 17-Mile Drive, Fan Shell Beach is a favorite haunt of harbor seals, but it's closed during the pupping season (April 1-June 1).

At Asilomar State Beach in Pacific Grove, you can meander along boardwalks traveling past powdery white dunes, splash amid tide pools or tour the Point Pinos Lighthouse. Lovers Point Beach, also in Pacific Grove, is a nice little cove framed by rocks and windswept pines. Marina State Beach's Dunes Trail sweeps by 80-foot dunes, eventually leading to an observation deck overlooking the bay.

Silver-sanded Carmel Beach, accented with cypress trees and sugary dunes, is a hub of activity. It attracts hikers, kite-flyers, sandcastle aficionados—the Great Sandcastle Contest occurs here every fall—and surfers daring enough to brave the strong currents. The social scene continues into the evening, as locals bring picnic baskets and savor the sunset, with bonfires roaring into the night.

Evening

Spend the evening at Monterey Peninsula's tip in the enchanting coastal town of Pacific Grove, home to the wintering monarch butterfly. The downtown area is dotted with coffee houses and quaint eateries as well

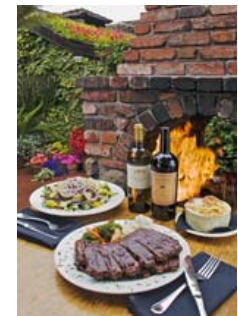
as boutiques, art galleries and antique dealers. Lighthouse Avenue is the main drag.

The real treat is what you'll discover when you duck down the side streets—beautiful Victorian homes and inns painted in vibrant pastels. You'll notice that many of these "painted ladies" have colorful lanterns hanging on their porches, a tribute to the town's Feast of Lanterns in July.

For fresh, sustainable seafood, stop at Passionfish for dinner—the restaurant has an impressive wine list to accompany such intriguing fare as salmon with coconut garlic cream and mahi-mahi with black pepper rum sauce. Fandango uses a wood-burning grill to create flavorful steaks, seafood and Italian temptations like osso buco and veal piccata. You'll feel snug in this cozy cottage with European overtones.

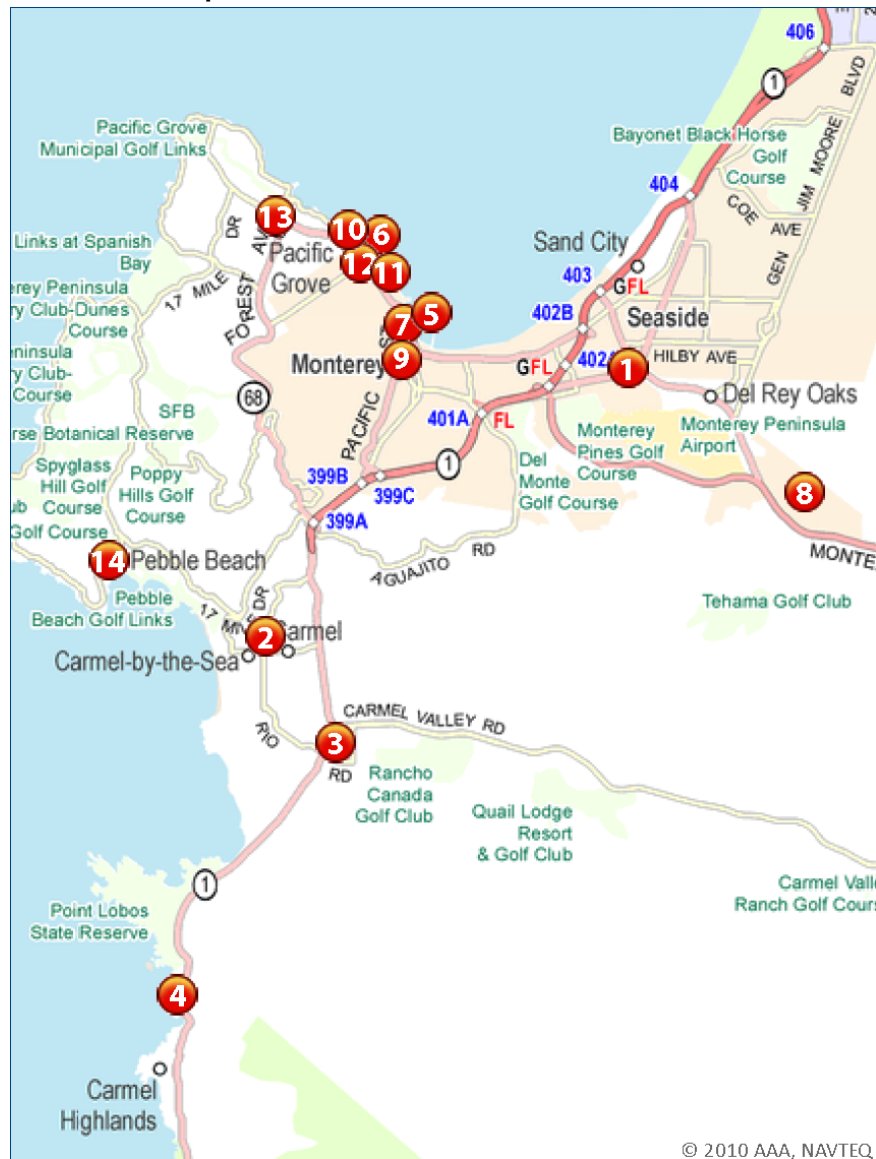
Restaurants

You'll recognize Monterey's Black Bear Diner by the carved bear statues outside. Made-from-scratch family favorites in hearty portions include meat loaf with mashed potatoes, turkey, pot roast and soul-satisfying burgers. Try the corned beef hash, hot or mild Italian sausage and breakfast biscuits that melt in your mouth. Dessert includes just-baked cobblers in a medley of flavors and a tantalizing array of hand-dipped shakes and malts.



The Forge in the Forest has been a fixture in downtown Carmel since 1944. The cozy brick garden patio with its redwood tables and pine canopy has earned a perennial place in local polls for "best outdoor dining." A diverse menu includes crowd-pleasers like burgers, ribs, pizza and pasta along with fresh seafood and a standout Reuben egg roll appetizer. Outside tables fill up quickly, so reserve ahead; Rover is welcome in the doggie section.

Restaurants Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com

**Restaurants Details - Get additional information on AAA.com;
AAA Diamond Rating information available on AAA.com/Diamonds**

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. Black Bear Diner </p> <p>2450 N Fremont St Monterey, CA 93940 Phone: (831) 645-9700</p> | <p>8. Grill at Ryan Ranch </p> <p>1 Harris Ct, Suite 103 Monterey, CA 93940 Phone: (831) 647-0390</p> |
| <p>2. The Forge In The Forest </p> <p>5th Ave & Junipero St Carmel-by-the-sea, CA 93921 Phone: (831) 624-2233</p> | <p>9. Rosine's </p> <p>434 Alvarado St Monterey, CA 93940 Phone: (831) 375-1400</p> |
| <p>3. From Scratch Restaurant </p> <p>3626 The Barnyard Carmel-by-the-sea, CA 93923 Phone: (831) 625-2448</p> | <p>10. Sardine Factory </p> <p>701 Wave St Monterey, CA 93940 Phone: (831) 373-3775</p> |
| <p>4. Pacific's Edge </p> <p>120 Highlands Dr Carmel-by-the-sea, CA 93923 Phone: (831) 622-5445</p> | <p>11. Schooner's Bistro on the Bay </p> <p>400 Cannery Row Monterey, CA 93940 Phone: (831) 372-2628</p> |
| <p>5. Domenico's on The Wharf </p> <p>50 Fisherman's Wharf Monterey, CA 93940 Phone: (831) 372-3655</p> | <p>12. Whaling Station Prime Steaks & Seafood </p> <p>763 Wave St Monterey, CA 93940 Phone: (831) 373-3778</p> |
| <p>6. The Fish Hopper </p> <p>700 Cannery Row Monterey, CA 93940 Phone: (831) 372-8543</p> | <p>13. Fandango </p> <p>223 17th St Pacific Grove, CA 93950 Phone: (831) 372-3456</p> |
| <p>7. Fresh Cream </p> <p>99 Pacific St, #100 C Monterey, CA 93940 Phone: (831) 375-9798</p> | <p>14. Stillwater Bar and Grill </p> <p>1700 Seventeen Mile Dr Pebble Beach, CA 93953 Phone: (831) 625-8524</p> |

The atmosphere is casual at Carmel's From Scratch Restaurant, a popular breakfast and lunch spot offering generous portions of home-style fare. Friendly servers know most of the regulars by name. Order breakfast anytime, accompanied by red potatoes and a crunchy

sourdough baguette. Patio seating is available, weather permitting. After dining, stroll through the Barnyard, an area filled with specialty shops and art galleries.

The perfectly named [Pacific's Edge](#) perches on a cliff overlooking the ocean at Carmel's Highlands Inn. Floor-to-ceiling windows afford spectacular views of the rugged coastline. The menu offers the region's freshest local produce and seafood, changing to reflect market availability—boneless beef short ribs are a delectable specialty. Sip a cocktail or a flavored coffee while watching the sunset.

Locals are faithful to [Domenico's on the Wharf](#) in Monterey. You can't go wrong—all tables have a sweeping view of the harbor. House specialties are pasta and seafood, with the catch of the day delivered to the restaurant's private docks. Select Dungeness crab, red abalone or Maine lobster live from the tank. The cozy oyster bar is a great place to enjoy a glass of wine or a cocktail before dinner.

[The Fish Hopper](#), originally a sardine cannery, is within walking distance of the [Monterey Bay Aquarium](#), also on historic Cannery Row. The restaurant, highly regarded for its fresh catch, abides by the aquarium's Seafood Watch Program, which ensures that the fishing or farming of seafood occurs in an environmentally friendly manner. Playful sea otters bob in the water outside the windows, and you may see migrating whales from December through April. Try the award-winning clam chowder, served in a crusty sourdough bread bowl.

Unbeatable views of Monterey Bay and Fisherman's Wharf complement the French cuisine, critically acclaimed wine list and exquisite décor at [Fresh Cream](#). Choose from such creatively crafted dishes as grilled filet mignon with truffle Madeira sauce, roasted duck in a black currant sauce, and Australian lobster with grilled prawns, white corn bisque and brioche toast. Indulge in the signature Grand Marnier dessert soufflé.

Monterey's [Grill at Ryan Ranch](#) is the local choice for Pacific Rim cuisine, served by a friendly, efficient wait staff in a low-key atmosphere. For a

delicious lunch, try the Asian chicken salad paired with one of the innovative appetizers. Szechwan duck, roasted stuffed pork tenderloin and macadamia crusted halibut are among the dinner entrees. The heated outdoor patio offers spectacular mountain views, especially at sunset.

Local polls give kudos to [Rosine's](#) for the county's best homemade food and desserts. The family-owned and operated eatery on Monterey's Alvarado Street provides plentiful portions of just about every comfort food imaginable. Breakfast is a real treat, with such mouthwatering concoctions as the egg puff with Ortega chiles and jalapeno peppers; an Italian omelet with Monterey jack cheese, red sauce and sausage; and "scramblers," including one with sliced turkey, pesto and tomatoes. Scrumptious cakes and pies never fail to impress—share a slice if you must.

The [Sardine Factory](#) combines fresh seafood, beef and poultry with locally grown produce—pair your meal with a selection from the wine cellar boasting more than 30,000 bottles. The abalone bisque (the restaurant's signature dish) was served at President Ronald Reagan's Inaugural Dinner. The richly appointed Steinbeck Room and the ornate, maritime-inspired décor of the Captain's Room celebrate the history of Monterey's Cannery Row. If you prefer a lush garden setting, dine under the elegant Conservatory's glass atrium.

The mood is friendly and upbeat at [Schooner's Bistro on the Bay](#) in Monterey. A nautical theme prevails at this pub-style restaurant, which offers a wide assortment of hot appetizers as well as salads, clam chowder and crispy fish and chips. Guests like to sit on the heated outdoor terrace and admire the ocean views while sipping a top-rated margarita or a glass of Monterey County wine. The Cannery Row location is within walking distance of several historical points of interest.

If you're in the mood for a fabulous steak, visit celebrity chef John Pisto's [Whaling Station Prime Steaks & Seafood](#) on Cannery Row. The Whaling Station offers flavorful USDA Prime corn-fed beef, aged for 28 days.

Servers display cuts of beef at the table so guests can choose their own cooked-to-order steaks. The menu also lists several fresh fish, pasta and poultry dishes. Sophisticated décor and a top-notch wine list further enhance your dining experience.

Fandango has been a Pacific Grove tradition since 1983. Comfortable dining rooms in this quaint old home exude a European ambience. A warm, personable staff presents such dishes as cannelloni, fettuccine, veal piccata and osso buco, as well as fresh fish, beef and poultry cooked on a wood-burning grill. Fandango's ideal location is convenient to the downtown area's unique shops and galleries.

Stillwater Bar and Grill overlooks a stunning stretch of coastline and Pebble Beach's 18th green—it's not uncommon to see a professional golfer or movie star finishing up a round of golf. This resort-style spot specializes in local seafood, featuring a raw bar and lobsters fresh from the tank. For dessert, try the Manjari chocolate fondue with seasonal berries, caramelized bananas, homemade marshmallows, lemon madeleine and pate de fruit.

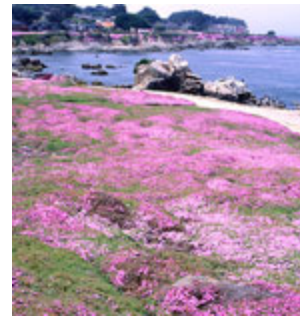
Attractions

In an area with dozens of attractions, you may have trouble deciding where to spend your time. Here are the highlights for this destination, as chosen by AAA editors. GEMs are "Great Experiences for Members."

Monterey Peninsula boasts some of the nation's most gorgeous scenery, and several area attractions allow you to observe the area's dramatic landscapes and sea vistas. Take the guided trek offered by Carmel Walks to weave through the enchanting town's hidden passageways and charming courtyards—you'll also see vibrant gardens and lavish homes of the rich and famous. If you're in the mood to go for a car ride, Pebble Beach's GEM attraction 17-Mile Drive beckons those in search of staggering beauty. You'll catch glimpses of magnificent estates tucked amid serene forestland. The habitat changes as the route travels past

craggy seascapes sprinkled with wildflowers, where harbor seals and sea otters romp among the rocks.

Tor House, former home of poet Robinson Jeffers, is a great vantage point from which to watch the ocean crash mercilessly into gigantic boulders. For some added inspiration, climb the tower that Jeffers built one rock at a time—your reward is a sweeping view of the coastline off Carmel-by-the-Sea. Head to Pacific Grove's Point Pinos Lighthouse, reputedly the West Coast's oldest continuously functioning structure of its kind—its shining beacon has guided ships through California's rocky



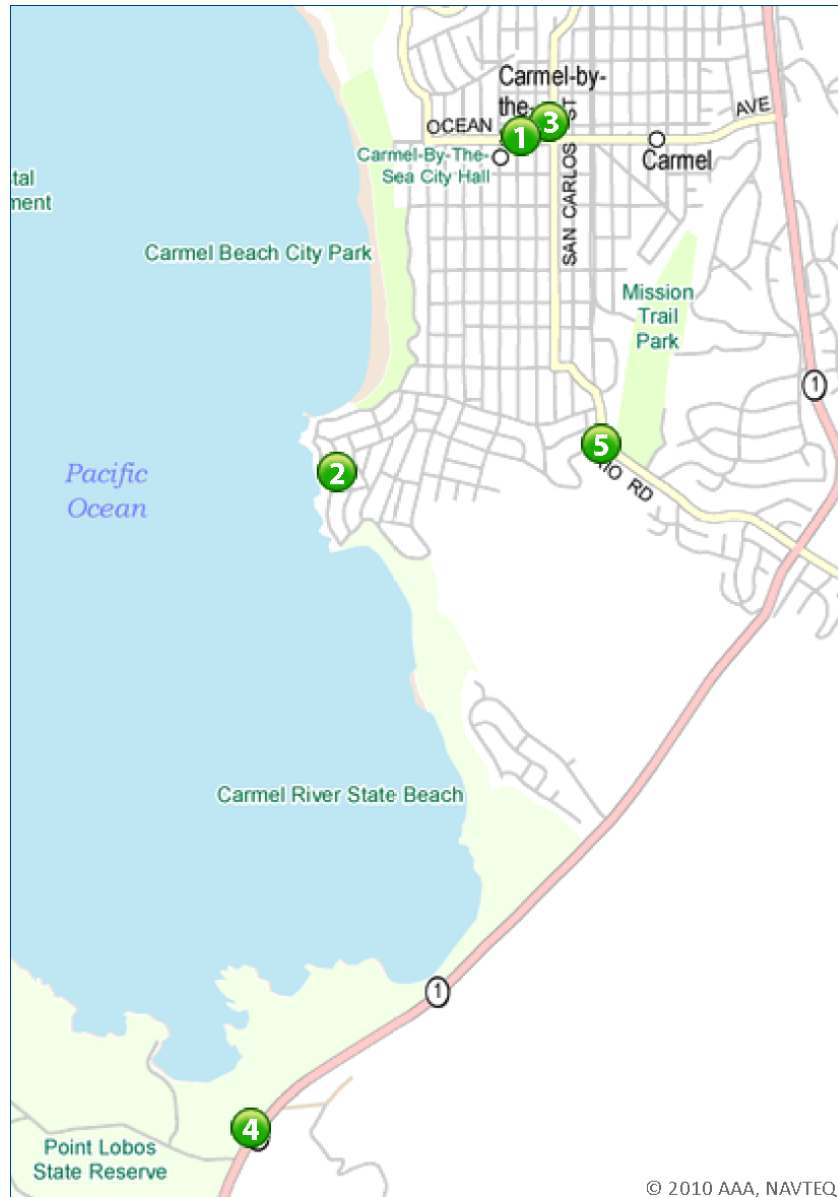
waters since 1855. Spanish explorer Sebastian Vizcaino dubbed this densely wooded tip of the peninsula *Punta de los Pinos*—or "End of the Pines"—when he sailed by in 1602.

While you're sightseeing, take time to learn about the area's marine animals and see them in action. Point Lobos State Reserve, a

AAA GEM attraction, is home to some 250 animal and bird species, plus more than 350 types of plants. Frolicking sea lions take center stage from August to June. Just follow the barking noise and you'll find them—the Spaniards heard the sound and named the site *Punta de los Lobos Marinos*, or "Point of the Sea Wolves."

Monterey Bay Aquarium, a AAA GEM attraction, overlooks the water from its perch on historic Cannery Row. You can see everything from fierce sharks and giant octopuses to sea dragons and monkey-face eels. It's fun to watch the twice-daily penguin feeding or attend one of the sea otter training sessions. The aquarium's vast array of exhibits entertains the family for hours. Monterey Bay Whale Watch has a high success rate for whale sightings, which may include humpback, killer, gray or blue varieties. Passengers are often surprised at the beauty and grace with which these massive mammals perform their aerial acrobatics. Marine biologists provide detailed information about sea life encountered during the trip.

Attractions Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com

Attractions Details - Get additional information on AAA.com



- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*

1. Carmel Walks

Lincoln St & Ocean Ave
Carmel-by-the-sea, CA 93921
Phone: (831) 642-2700

2. Tor House

26304 Ocean View Ave
Carmel-by-the-sea, CA 93923
Phone: (831) 624-1813

3. Carmel-By-The-Sea

4. Point Lobos State Reserve

SR 1 & Riley Ranch Rd
Carmel-by-the-sea, CA 93923
Phone: (831) 624-4909



5. Mission San Carlos Borromeo del Rio Carmelo

3080 Rio Rd
Carmel-by-the-sea, CA 93923
Phone: (831) 624-3600



For some stimulating indoor activity, visit one of the area's fine museums. The Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History interprets the peninsula's plant and animal life. Wander through a garden adorned with native flora and seasonal wildflowers, or peruse displays of mounted Monterey County birds, monarch butterflies, marine mammals, insects and American Indian artifacts. Kids love to peek at the killer whale skeleton and play in the touch gallery.

Rustic stone walls surround Monterey Museum of Art at La Mirada, situated in an exquisite mansion in one of the town's oldest neighborhoods. Appreciate art by exploring four contemporary galleries, or enjoy nature by strolling through lush gardens accented with roses, camellias, rhododendrons and herbs. Mission San Carlos Borromeo del Rio Carmelo, a AAA GEM attraction, contains several small museums within its adobe walls—for an overview of the compound's history, stop by the Sir Harry Downie Museum. The Munras Memorial Museum displays furnishings, household articles and a Victorian marble mantle, while the Mora Chapel features religious exhibits and the tomb of the Carmel mission's founder, Father Junípero Serra. You also can explore the convent museum, basilica and shrine, or simply meander through the lovely grounds.

History buffs should plan to spend some time at the 7-acre Monterey State Historic Park, a AAA GEM attraction preserving a collection of heritage sites. (Many are open for seasonal guided tours; contact the park office for details.) Whalebones and wine bottles frame the path at

Attractions Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com

Attractions Details - Get additional information on AAA.com



- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*

6. 17-Mile Drive

Pebble Beach, CA 93953
Phone: (831) 625-8548



7. Point Pinos Lighthouse

98 Asilomar Blvd
Pacific Grove, CA 93950
Phone: (831) 648-5716

8. Monterey Bay Aquarium

886 Cannery Row
Monterey, CA 93940
Phone: (831) 648-4888



9. Monterey Bay Whale Watch

84 Fisherman's Wharf #1
Monterey, CA 93940
Phone: (831) 375-4658

10. Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History

165 Forest Ave
Pacific Grove, CA 93950
Phone: (831) 648-5716

11. Monterey Museum of Art at La Mirada

720 Via Mirada
Monterey, CA 93940
Phone: (831) 372-3689

12. Monterey State Historic Park

20 Custom House Plaza
Monterey, CA 93940
Phone: (831) 649-7118



13. Casa Soberanes and Garden

336 Pacific St
Monterey, CA 93940
Phone: (831) 649-7118

14. Cooper-Molera Adobe and Garden

525 Polk St
Monterey, CA 93940
Phone: (831) 649-7118

15. Custom House

8 Custom House Plaza
Monterey, CA 93940
Phone: (831) 649-7118

16. First Brick House

Scott St & Olivier St
Monterey, CA 93940
Phone: (831) 649-7118

17. First Theatre and Garden

Pacific St & Scott St
Monterey, CA 93940
Phone: (831) 649-7118

18. Larkin House and Garden

510 Calle Principal
Monterey, CA 93940
Phone: (831) 649-7118

19. Pacific House Museum

10 Custom House Plaza
Monterey, CA 93940
Phone: (831) 649-7118

20. Stevenson House-French Hotel

530 Houston St
Monterey, CA 93940
Phone: (831) 649-7118

21. Old Whaling Station

391 Decatur St
Monterey, CA 93940
Phone: (831) 375-5356

Casa Soberanes and Garden, an 1840s home created from sun-dried mud. A ship captain's wealth is evident at Cooper-Molera Adobe and Garden, an elegant residence with a visitor center, barns, farm animals and period gardens. Custom House, considered California's oldest government building, was the site where customs agents levied taxes on all shipping imports coming into the Mexican territory.

Although the park has its share of adobe buildings, you'll also see the First Brick House, one of the state's earliest buildings fashioned from fired clay blocks—the main room contains exhibits about Monterey's history. In 1850, U.S. Army officials raised funds by producing plays at First Theatre and Garden; the site is open on a limited basis, so inquire before you visit. Furnished with 19th-century antiques, the two-story adobe at Larkin House and Garden served as the prototype for the town's Colonial architecture. American merchant Thomas Oliver Larkin constructed the 1835 dwelling, while his granddaughter planted the lush garden.

To learn about Monterey's role as capital of Spanish California, investigate the interactive exhibits at the park's Pacific House Museum. Townspeople once held bull and bear fights in what is now the peaceful oasis of Memory Garden. A young Robert Louis Stevenson lived at the Stevenson House—French Hotel, where he wrote about Monterey in his memoir, "The Old Pacific Capital." Several rooms of the former boarding house contain memorabilia devoted to the author.

The tidy Sherman Quarters—perhaps the park's most photographed adobe—was the 1847 home of Lt. William Tecumseh Sherman, who would make his name as a general during the Civil War. The Old Monterey Whaling Company began using The Old Whaling Station as its headquarters in 1855. You can spot the massive iron pots used to boil oil from blubber, and the front pathway is paved with whale vertebrae. There's a beautiful rose garden around back.

Events

In addition to its many cultural and historic landmarks, this destination hosts a number of outstanding festivals and events that may coincide with your visit. GEMs are "Great Experiences for Members."

In early February, serious golfers and casual spectators alike head to the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am Golf Tournament, a AAA GEM event. The beautifully landscaped Pebble Beach, Poppy Hills and Spyglass Hill courses are the site of this world-class contest, initially hosted by Bing Crosby in 1937—when the first-place prize was \$500. Celebrities such as Ray Romano, Bill Murray and Kevin Costner join the ranks of professional golfers for this charity event.

The Sea Otter Classic lures folks out for a little exercise in early April. Cyclists swarm the Laguna Seca Recreation Area for challenging road races and mountain bike endurance and gravity events, while a series of recreational tours appeal to the casual rider.

Mid-April beckons floral enthusiasts to the Wildflower Show at the Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History. The event, which started in 1961, has the distinction of being the first of its kind in the state. An impressive display of vibrant blooms represents more than 600 species and varieties of the peninsula's wildflowers.

The Festival of the Wind blows into Marina on Mother's Day weekend. The theme revolves around such wind-related endeavors as kite flying, hang gliding and sky diving. Kids have a blast working on art and science projects with a breezy twist, attending kite-making classes or visiting the inflatable airport.

Lilting sounds waft through town starting in mid-July with the arrival of the Carmel Bach Festival. Symphonic performances as well as choral and chamber music occur in venues throughout town. Late July brings the Feast of Lanterns to Pacific Grove, a citywide festival presenting a boat

parade and a lively street dance. Clowns mesmerize the kids, who can participate in activities like a sandcastle contest, chalk fest and pet parade. Hungry attendees can sample the salad and barbecue specialties.

Automobile-related events stir up the crowds in August, starting mid-month with the [Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance](#), which has been turning the heads of car buffs since 1950. Some 100 gleaming classic vehicles parade through quaint downtown [Carmel-by-the-Sea](#) to park on Ocean Avenue for closer inspection. This widely attended automotive street party occurs in conjunction with the [Monterey Historic Automobile Races](#), a AAA GEM event on the same weekend. Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca comes alive with this tribute to past glory, as close to 400 vintage racing machines compete in groups spanning every era of motor sports history.

In early October, wine connoisseurs look forward to the arrival of the [Monterey Wine Festival](#), where more than 100 wineries pour their specialties. This celebration of the vine entertains as well as educates with forums, winemaker events and cooking demonstrations.

[Robinson Jeffers Tor House Foundation Fall Festival](#), also in early October, occurs at the home constructed by early 20th-century poet Robinson Jeffers. Re-enactments, readings and other activities pay tribute to Jeffers' works. Participate in a music beach walk, or simply take in the dramatic view of Carmel's coastline from the craggy cliffs bordering the backyard.

Monterey's [Cannery Row Holiday Tree Lighting](#) kicks off the season in Steinbeck Plaza the day after Thanksgiving. Music flows throughout the handsomely decorated row, which brims with excitement as all gather to welcome Santa and await the lighting ceremony.

At Monterey's [Brighten the Harbor](#), in early December, boats basked in shimmering lights travel from the Coast Guard Pier to Lovers Point and back. Judges bestow honors to the most gaily adorned vessel. [First Night](#)

[Monterey](#) rings in the New Year on Dec. 31 with a twilight parade, tribal dances and puppetry. Musical entertainment runs the gamut from jazz and blues to rock and reggae in an event suitable for the entire family.

Insider Info

A Coastal Slice of Heaven

Spellbinding, breathtaking and spectacular are words frequently used to describe Pebble Beach's nationally renowned 17-Mile Drive. Take a trip along this beautiful route to appreciate its rugged splendor. Several tollgates off SRs 1 and 68 provide access; the fee for cars is \$9.25. If you enter through the Carmel gate and head west, you'll encounter the scenic highlights described below in order as the road snakes northward along the coast and loops inland. The gate attendant will provide a map denoting 21 points of interest along the drive.

The Lodge at Pebble Beach, site of the world-class Pebble Beach Golf Links, is hallowed ground for lovers of the sport. Have lunch or a drink on the outside terrace at Stillwater Bar and Grill, where you can savor the sweeping view of the Pacific and watch putts on the 18th green.

Soon after rounding Pescadero Point, you'll come upon the Ghost Tree. Bleached white by the salt air, this twisted Monterey cypress is devoid of any greenery or sign of life. The Lone Cypress, a little farther up the coast, is one of California's most photographed natural wonders: it rests precipitously atop a jagged promontory jutting into the ocean.

Cypress Point provides a lookout perfect for snapping a photo of the rugged coastline, which extends as far as the eye can see. If you didn't get a good shot, try again at Fanshell Overlook, just down the road. Harbor seals frolic on the white-sand stretch, where the frothy surf rushes over craggy rocks—you may see an artist attempting to capture the scene on canvas. (The spot is off-limits during the April-May pupping season.)

Continuing along the route, you'll soon pass Spyglass Hill, designed by Robert Trent Jones and regarded as one of the world's toughest golf courses. On these gorgeous fairways with enchanting ocean views, the

holes are named after characters in Robert Louis Stevenson's classic "Treasure Island."

Just up ahead, Seal Rock is a great place for a picnic. You may opt to take a stroll along the beach and observe the thriving bird life. Interestingly, the nearby Bird Rock typically teems with seals and sea lions. (Bring your binoculars to capture the action on this offshore formation.) Heading north on the drive, you'll travel past China Rock, an outcrop honoring local Chinese settlers, and Point Joe, where many early ship captains crashed into the rocky bluff, mistaking it for Monterey Bay's entrance.

Follow the road as it curves inland past another one of Pebble Beach's spectacular courses, The Links at Spanish Bay. Revered in the golf community, this site also serves as a scenic attraction in its own right, with a landscape that bears a striking resemblance to Scotland.

At this point, you can exit the drive at SR 68, or refer to the map to visit other points of interest along the route.

Content for this destination guide compiled by AAA Travel Editors

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