



## **Monterey County is a Top Destination for Responsible Travel**

*Coastal destination offers an abundance of eco-friendly options for visitors*

**Monterey, Calif., April 14, 2022** – As more people demand sustainable travel options, and eco-tourism continues to grow as a popular trend, Monterey County, California, offers a wide variety of responsible lodging, dining, outdoor adventures and educational opportunities for visitors to experience. In fact, the Monterey community has been dedicated to sustainable practices and raising awareness about responsible travel since 2015 through the [Sustainable Moments](#) initiative. The destination is no stranger to the impacts of climate change, and has taken significant strides to help combat its harmful effects.

“Ensuring visitors treat our destination responsibly and respectfully is imperative for our organization,” said Monterey County Convention and Visitors Bureau president and CEO, Rob O’Keefe. “That means providing the resources and information visitors need to make more sustainable choices as they explore the natural beauty of Monterey County, and in turn, help preserve it.”

From 99 miles of Pacific coastline, to more than 25 state parks, beaches and nature preserves, the county’s commitment to preservation extends far beyond one organization and involves a collaborative community effort.

"We are all stewards of our National Parks and public lands, and part of caring for our shared spaces means enjoying them responsibly," said Chris Symons, West Lead Ranger and Volunteer Coordinator at Pinnacles National Park. "Enjoy the wilderness, and minimize your impact on our shared protected spaces by planning ahead and cleaning up trash."

Here are a few eco-friendly ways for visitors to experience Monterey County:

### **Stay**

- [Portola Hotel & Spa](#), located in the heart of Monterey, has implemented a number of green initiatives throughout the hotel including LED lighting, Energy Star® appliances, low flow faucets and showerheads, biodegradable amenity products, green cleaning supplies and more. The hotel is [LEED® Certified by the U.S. Green Council](#) and the winner of the 2021 California Hotels & Lodging Association's [Good Earthkeeping Award](#), which recognizes lodging properties that have integrated environmental management practices into their everyday operations while still maintaining quality service.
- [Pebble Beach Resorts](#) is recognized as an environmental leader with a number of programs dedicated to preserving its 5,300 acres of accommodations, restaurants, golf courses and open coastline. For example, the [Energy Efficiency Program](#) was established in 2008 and has resulted

in a reduction of more than 1.9 million pounds of carbon emissions annually, while the [Materials Program](#) has diverted 6.5 million pounds of plastic, glass, metal and dozens of other materials from landfills annually. Other green programs include water conservation, golf ball recovery and a full-time staff dedicated to ecology and forestry.

- One of the leading eco-conscious resorts in Monterey County is [Post Ranch Inn](#). Located along Big Sur's rugged coastline, Post Ranch Inn's innovative environmental design was built using all-natural materials and living sod roofs to reduce heat loss. Efforts were also taken to ensure no tree was removed during the property's development. The hotel has installed a 990-panel solar array that produces 350,000 kWh of pollution-free electricity per year and the first commercial greywater system approved in Monterey County, among countless other green initiatives.

### **Eat & Drink**

- The [Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch Program](#) has been working to transform the seafood industry for more than 20 years, and has grown to be a global leader in the sustainable seafood movement. Nearly 90% of fish populations are fished at, or above, their sustainable limit. The Seafood Watch Program is on a mission to educate and empower consumers, restaurants, retailers, seafood suppliers and government officials to make sustainable decisions in food selection. Dozens of Monterey's top restaurants are certified by the program including, [Wild Fish](#), [Montrio Bistro](#) and [Old Fisherman's Grotto](#). Visitors can use the [recommendation tool](#) to find sustainable seafood and safe alternatives.
- Monterey County is known for its wide variety of [farmers' markets](#) happening almost every day of the week. Visitors can help support local growers, chefs and business-owners by attending the markets. With Monterey County's Salinas Valley being nicknamed the "Salad Bowl of the World," it's no surprise these markets are a thriving hub for organic produce. [Julia's Vegetarian Restaurant](#) in Pacific Grove is one example of a can't-miss, woman-owned restaurant that regularly travels to markets to source fresh locally-grown ingredients. The eatery was named the best vegetarian restaurant on the Monterey Peninsula, and also allows guests to pay it forward by donating a meal to someone in need.
- Monterey County is home to several wineries and vineyards that are dedicated to sustainable winemaking. [Holman Ranch](#) in Carmel Valley prides itself on its sustainable practices. The ranch does not use any machinery for picking or pesticides for growing, everything is hand-picked and processed naturally. Their holistic approach to agriculture also allows for distinct wines year-to-year based on the climate and soils. [Scheid Vineyards](#), which is celebrating 50 years in 2022, in Salinas Valley received the California Green Medal Environment Award, as well as Global G.A.P., S.I.P. and C.C.S.W [certifications](#). The vineyard's winery and bottling operation is 100 percent

powered by a wind turbine that also produces power for 125 nearby homes with renewable energy.

### Explore

- Monterey County's parks are dedicated to protecting endangered species and their habitats. For example, [Pinnacles National Park](#) joined the California Condor Recovery Program as a release and management site in 2003 – becoming one of only three sites in the U.S. The national park is also home to 500 different bee species, which is the most bee diversity of anywhere in the world, as well as 14 of California's 24 bat species. Despite its dry climate, the park is known for its rare plants and wildflowers as well, with 80% of the park's plants in bloom from March through May. As always, visitors are encouraged to camp, hike, rock climb and view wildlife responsibly. The best time to visit the park is mid-week and near sunset for a more intimate experience.
- Recognized as one of the nation's largest federally-protected marine sanctuaries – spanning 276 miles of shoreline, extending an average of 30 miles off the coast and reaching more than two miles below the ocean's surface – the [Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary](#) is larger than Yellowstone National Park and deeper than the Grand Canyon. Plus, with 36 species of marine mammals and at least 525 species of fish, the sanctuary is a remarkable location for wildlife viewing. Visitors can safely explore the sanctuary in a variety of ways including kayaking, boating, fishing, tide pooling, diving, whale watching and more.
- Located about 20 miles north of Monterey is another protected wildlife area spanning 17,000 acres of rich woodlands, waterways and salt marshes called [Elkhorn Slough Reserve](#). This biologically diverse ecosystem provides habitat for resident and migratory birds, plants, marine mammals and fish. In fact, the reserve is home to about 340 species of birds and has been identified as a Globally Important Bird Area by the American Birding Conservancy, as well as the highest concentration of the southern sea otters on the California coast. Visitors can explore scenic hiking trails, birding lookouts and kayaking channels in a safe and sustainable environment. New in 2021, [Monterey Bay Eco Tours](#) offers a one-of-a-kind, electric-powered catamaran ride for a wildlife tour. The catamaran was custom built by owner Wendy Kitchell and her brother for a sustainable experience in the Slough. The reserve's dedication to ongoing research, biological monitoring and conservation efforts ensure the habitats and animals remain healthy and active.

### Learn

- The [Monterey Bay Aquarium](#) has been educating visitors about marine life and conservation for nearly 40 years. With over 200 world-class exhibits and 80,000 plants and animals – including the newly opened, first-of-its-kind [Into the Deep](#) exhibit that explores the mysterious deep sea –



guests receive a first-hand look at the ocean's ecosystems and the importance of preserving them. Behind the scenes, the aquarium's scientists, engineers, ecologists and researchers are leading the way in sea exploration and conservation by addressing the biggest threats facing the ocean today, like rebuilding sea otter populations, tackling plastic pollution, diving into the science of climate change and improving aquaculture around the globe.

- Monterey County is one of the nation's leading suppliers of produce each year, providing 61% of leaf lettuce and 57% of celery distributed across the U.S. Visitors can support and learn more about this influential industry by visiting the [Earthbound Farm Stand](#) in Carmel Valley. Founded in 1984 in a local family's backyard, Earthbound Farm has grown to 30,000 organic crop acres and is recognized as one of the first brands to catalyze the accessibility of fresh, organic food. Today, the farm is 100% [USDA Organic Certified](#) and Non-GMO Verified. Visitors can enjoy a delicious meal at the organic café, take a tour of the grounds with an expert gardener or pick their own fresh herbs and berries at the family-friendly stand.

To learn more about Monterey County's responsible travel options and community programs, visit [www.seemonterey.com/sustainable](http://www.seemonterey.com/sustainable). To plan your trip, visit [SeeMonterey.com](http://SeeMonterey.com) or download the [See Monterey app](#) in the [Apple App Store](#) or [Google Play Store](#).

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#### **ABOUT MONTEREY COUNTY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU**

The Monterey County Convention & Visitors Bureau (Monterey County CVB) is a 501c6 non-profit organization that drives tourism for Monterey County. Tourism is the largest industry on the Monterey Peninsula and the second largest in the County. The MCCVB is a partnership of the hospitality community and local governments that aims to drive business growth through compelling marketing and targeted sales initiatives that maximize the benefits of tourism to its guests, members and the community. Travel spending in Monterey County was \$3.24 billion in 2019, representing a 3.3 percent increase from 2018. This \$3.24 billion in visitor spending supported 27,120 jobs, contributed \$296 million in total taxes and generated \$153 million local tax dollars that directly benefited the community. For more information, visit [www.SeeMonterey.com](http://www.SeeMonterey.com) and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

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