

MONTEREY

MONTEREY COUNTY CONVENTION
& VISITORS BUREAU

DESTINATION FACT SHEET

DESCRIPTION

Visitors to Monterey County will not be short on discovering iconic landmarks, a storied history, sustainable and diverse culinary offerings, top-notch vineyards and wineries, varied landscapes from scenic coastal views to rugged terrain, world-class art and more. The destination has a population of nearly 435,000 residents and boasts 99 miles of prime Pacific coastline, a world famous aquarium, 45,000 acres of premium vineyards, 65 tasting rooms, 82 wineries, more than 20 golf courses including the famed Pebble Beach Golf Links, hillside elevations of over 5,500 feet and more than 220 lodging properties. The destination welcomes more than 4.8 million overnight visitors annually.

LOCATION

Monterey County is situated on California's stunning Central Coast with its northern border approximately 100 miles (160 km) south of San Francisco and about 50 miles (80 km) from San Jose. Its southern border is approximately 240 miles (385 km) north of Los Angeles. It is easily accessed by scenic Highway 1 or Highway 101.

Monterey County includes the following cities, towns and regions:

- Big Sur
- Carmel-by-the-Sea
- Carmel Valley
- Del Rey Oaks
- Marina
- Monterey
- Moss Landing
- Pacific Grove
- Pebble Beach
- Sand City
- Salinas
- Salinas Valley
- Seaside

CLIMATE

- Average summer temperatures range from 50°F to 70°F (10°C to 21°C)
- Average winter temperatures range from 44°F to 61°F (7°C to 16°C)
- On average, September is the warmest month and January is the coolest month
- Average yearly rainfall in Monterey is 21 inches, falling primarily between November and March

MAJOR ATTRACTIONS

- **17-Mile Drive:** Scenic coastal driving tour of Pebble Beach with lookouts and famous golf courses. Entrance fee
- **Big Sur:** Iconic area in Monterey County encompassing a 70-mile stretch of breathtaking, dramatic Pacific coastline. Inns, restaurants, camping spots, beaches and hiking trails can be found along Highway 1
- **Cannery Row:** One of the most popular destinations in the Central Coast and named for John Steinbeck's novel, Cannery Row offers waterfront luxury hotels, boutiques, restaurants and the Monterey Bay Aquarium

- **Carmel-by-the-Sea:** Charming fairytale-like village with boutique shops and 110 art galleries. Unique laws prohibiting street addresses, live music, neon lights and high heels without a permit still exist
- **Old Fisherman's Wharf:** Popular attraction with seafood and chowder vendors, unique shops, restaurants, whale watching tours, sailing and fishing charters
- **Golf:** Monterey County is a world class golf destination with more than 20 public and private golf courses playable year-round and in a variety of scenic settings
- **Monterey Bay Aquarium:** Featuring more than 35,000 animals representing more than 550 species with daily shows, feedings, tours and a dozen exhibits including Monterey Bay habitats
- **Monterey Wine Country:** Monterey County is home to 225 vineyards, 82 wineries, 65 tasting rooms and more than 30 varietals. The two most renowned varietals include Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. The region is the largest grower of Chardonnay in the United States and produces the highest rated and largest amount of Pinot Noir in California. There are wine tasting opportunities throughout the county, including in Salinas Valley, Carmel Valley, Carmel-by-the-Sea and Monterey
- **National Steinbeck Center:** Museum devoted to the life and work of Nobel prize-winning author, John Steinbeck
- **Pinnacles National Park:** The newest national park in California is a popular spot for outdoor activities ranging from hiking to birdwatching to stargazing to rock climbing. It is also a perfect outdoor classroom for lessons in geology, botany and biology. Pinnacles Campground offers tent, group and RV sites
- **Whale Watching:** Many chartered whale watching tours are available from Old Fisherman's Wharf and Moss Landing year-round. Sightings include gray whales, humpbacks, blue whales, minke whales, fin whales, orcas, dolphins and more

MAJOR EVENTS

Monterey County's widely acclaimed calendar of events attracts visitors from around the world. Music lovers are drawn to the Carmel Bach Festival in July and the Monterey Jazz Festival in September. Car lovers and racing fans descend on Monterey County for the legendary Monterey Car Week and Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance, as well as racing events at WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca. February's AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am and April's Big Sur International Marathon are just a few of many competitive events that take place throughout the year. The county also hosts prestigious culinary events for epicureans including Relais & Chateaux GourmetFest in March and Pebble Beach Food & Wine in April.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Monterey County offers everything from the quintessential sandy California surfing beaches and stunning cliffs with spectacular views of the ocean to picture-perfect rocky shorelines. Dive, surf, sail, kayak and watch wildlife from one of 13 beaches, or just enjoy the scenery. Local parks including Fort Ord National Monument, Pinnacles National Park and the Point Lobos State Reserve offer an array of activities including hiking, mountain biking, camping, horseback riding, surfing, birding, scuba diving, stargazing and more!

CULTURE AND ENTERTAINMENT

The dance between ethereal and visceral is never-ending in this art-nurturing hamlet. Home to museums, galleries and performing arts venues, Monterey County is as much a hub for artistic expression as it is a source of heightened inspiration to the creative world at large. Experience the works of Nobel Prize-winning author John Steinbeck and the agricultural history of Monterey County at the National Steinbeck Center in Salinas to more than 100 art galleries in Carmel-by-the-Sea.

FOOD AND WINE

Culinary is at the heart of Monterey County. From the bounty of fresh seafood caught daily on the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, to farm-to-table produce from the Salinas Valley, gourmet food is everywhere. Local specialties include artichokes, mushrooms, strawberries, calamari, halibut and abalone. The destination is also home to a Michelin Star restaurant, Aubergine, and top Wine Spectator-ranked wines, including Pinot Noir and Chardonnay varieties that thrive in this climate. Local chefs and winemakers work together to make each meal a memorable culinary experience.

HISTORY

Discover Monterey County's rich historic heritage through guided and self-guided tours of 19th century buildings and landmarks, historic missions and museums. Pacific Grove boasts the oldest continuously operating lighthouse on the West Coast. The city of Monterey also is home to many California firsts, from the state's first theatre to its first newspaper and its first capital. The City of Monterey celebrated its 250th anniversary in June 2020. Carmel Mission will celebrate its 250th anniversary in 2021.

ROAD TRIPS

Monterey County's scenic drives range from the legendary to the little-known. Rent a car and experience:

- Beautiful beaches and the famed Lone Cypress tree along 17-Mile Drive from Pacific Grove into Pebble Beach
- Breathtaking views along iconic Highway 1 from Big Sur to Monterey
- Stunning views of wine country and cattle ranches along Carmel Valley Road
- Premium wine tasting rooms along River Road in Salinas Valley
- Rocky landscapes left behind by an ancient volcano at Pinnacles National Park via Highway 101

AIRLIFT & TRANSPORTATION

The Monterey Regional Airport (MRY) is conveniently located just 10 minutes door-to-door from downtown Monterey, 15 minutes from Carmel-by-the-Sea and 45 minutes from Big Sur. Known for its short and hassle-free security lines, visitors can fly direct via international and domestic connections on Alaska Airlines, Allegiant, American Airlines, United Express and US Airways. Direct flights include Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW), Denver (DEN), Las Vegas (LAS), Los Angeles (LAX), Phoenix (PHX), San Diego (SAN), San Francisco (SFO) and Seattle/Tacoma (SEA) beginning in February 2021. Charter and private flights are also available.

Other large airports near Monterey County include:

- Norman Y. Mineta San Jose International Airport (SJC), located 75 minutes from Monterey
- San Francisco International Airport, located less than 2 hours from Monterey

Additional transportation services include:

- Monterey-Salinas Transit provides bus service to the greater Monterey and Salinas area as far south as Paso Robles and Big Sur, and as far north as Santa Cruz and San Jose
- Monterey Airbus offers airport transport to San Francisco and San Jose from hotels and locations throughout Monterey, Salinas and Sand City
- Greyhound Bus Lines offers stops in Monterey, Salinas and Sand City
- Amtrak train service available in Salinas with connections around the state and country

TRAVEL RESPONSIBLY

Monterey County is committed to educating visitors on how they can visit responsibly to protect themselves and our community, as well as lessen their impact on our destination and preserve it for generations to come. Its Travel Responsibly initiative aims to provide visitors with safety and convenience tips as well as ways to conserve and be environmentally friendly. For specific tips and details on how to Travel Responsibly, visit [SeeMonterey.com](https://www.seemonterey.com).