

MONTEREY

Monterey County Convention
& Visitors Bureau

MONTEREY COUNTY FUN FACTS

Monterey County is full of surprises. From a storied history full of California firsts to quirky laws carried over from yesteryear and a menagerie of native wildlife. From artists who have drawn inspiration from the world-class destination to celebrities who have made Monterey their real or fictional home. Learn about these and other interesting Monterey County facts below.

- The [Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary](#) covers 5,312 square miles. This is one and a half times the size of the largest national park in the continental U.S. At its center is a submarine canyon twice as deep as the Grand Canyon.
- Local settings from around the Monterey Peninsula have provided the backdrops for more than 180 films and television shows, including *Basic Instinct*, *East of Eden*, *Play Misty for Me*, *Lassie Come Home*, *Rebecca*, *Star Trek: The Voyage Home*, *Treasure Island* and most recently HBO's award winning mini-series *Big Little Lies*.
- Monterey County has 349 vineyards, 82 bonded wineries and 65 tasting rooms. The wide range of climates allow Monterey County to grow over 30 different wine grape varieties.
- Monterey County is one of California's largest premium wine grape producing regions, with approximately 46,000 acres of planted vineyards.
- Monterey County is the largest grower of Chardonnay in the United States and the largest grower of Pinot Noir in California.
- The Bixby Bridge in [Big Sur](#) was built by prisoners eager to earn "good time" off their prison sentences. It is one of the world's highest single-span bridges at 714 feet long by 260 feet high.
- [Carmel-by-the-Sea](#) is known for attracting various celebrities and artists. Clint Eastwood served as mayor of the village from 1986-1988. Other notable celebrities, artists and writers who have called Carmel home include Doris Day, John Denver, Ansel Adams, Jack London, Robinson Jeffers, Sinclair Lewis and Upton Sinclair.
- Neon signs and billboards are prohibited in the quaint village of [Carmel-by-the-Sea](#), and a permit is required to wear high-heeled shoes.
- The City of Monterey was founded on June 3, 1770 by Captain Gaspar de Portola and Franciscan Father Junipero Serra. Monterey will celebrate its 250th birthday in 2020!
- Monterey's [Custom House](#) is the oldest standing public building in California. It was built during California's Mexican era in 1827. It is also the site where Commodore John Drake Sloat of the U.S. Navy raised an American flag to claim California for the United States in 1846.
- Monterey is home to California's [First Theater](#), which held its first performance in 1850. The theater is currently open for select historic events.
- Nearly a quarter million tons of sardines were processed on [Cannery Row](#) in 1945, the year John Steinbeck's *Cannery Row* was published.

- Cannery Row was previously named Ocean View Avenue. In January 1958 the street was renamed to honor John Steinbeck's well-known novel.
- The widely acclaimed [Monterey Jazz Festival](#) has occurred since 1958, and is the longest continuously running jazz festival in the world. Past jazz greats who have performed include Miles Davis, Stan Getz and Dizzie Gillespie.
- The [Monterey Bay Aquarium](#) attracts nearly 2 million visitors each year to view the 300,000 marine plants and animals that live in this world-class aquarium. The Outer Bay Wing has a million-gallon tank that depicts the open ocean, and a three-story kelp forest and Deep Seas display show creatures never before brought to the surface.
- [Point Pinos Lighthouse](#) in Pacific Grove is the oldest continually operating lighthouse on the West Coast.
- The [Monarch Butterfly Sanctuary](#) in Pacific Grove is one of the largest monarch overwintering sites in America. The monarchs arrive in October after a 2,000-mile migration and overwinter until February.
- The Monterey Peninsula is a world-renown [golf destination](#) with more than 20 courses. Three courses located in Pebble Beach—Spyglass Hills, Poppy Hills and Pebble Beach itself—are consistently ranked among the top ten courses in the nation.
- [17-Mile Drive](#) through [Pebble Beach](#) is one of only nine private toll roads in the country, and the only one west of Mississippi.
- The Lone Cypress tree, located on [17-Mile Drive](#) in [Pebble Beach](#), is a scenic landmark for the Peninsula and is nearly 300 years old. Monterey Cypress trees are a species native only to this region and can live up to 4,000 years.
- [Point Lobos State Reserve](#) near Carmel hosts a geologic wonder: rocks of four "ages" can be found there, including the unusual Carmel formation dating back to the Paleocene age (over 60 million years old).
- Robert Louis Stevenson modeled *Treasure Island's* Spyglass Hill after [Point Lobos State Reserve](#) near Carmel.
- The [National Steinbeck Center](#), a 37,000 square-foot facility, is believed to be the largest facility devoted to a single American author. Pulitzer prize winner John Steinbeck was born in [Salinas](#) in 1902 and lived on the Monterey Peninsula for much of his life.
- As the number one agricultural region in the United States, [Salinas Valley](#) earned its nickname "Salad Bowl of the World" due to the wide variety of fruits and vegetables grown here.
- President Barack Obama designated Pinnacles National Monument as Pinnacles National Park in 2013. It is the country's 59th national park and the first national park created by Congress since 2004.
- In 1948, a young woman by the name of Norma Jean was crowned [Castroville's](#) first "Artichoke Queen." She later gained fame as actress Marilyn Monroe. Castroville, located on Monterey Bay, produces 85% of the nation's artichokes.