



SLO CAL Fun Facts

Welcome to San Luis Obispo County, nestled in the center of California's Central Coast region. SLO CAL is a land of alluring beaches, undulating vineyards and network of towns radiating with a quintessential Californian charm.

About SLO CAL

- SLO CAL is comprised of 7 cities and over 20 unincorporated areas where distinct topography and proximity to the Pacific Ocean allow for five contrasting microclimates to exist in tandem across the region.
- SLO CAL is a beach lover's haven, where friendly waves and welcoming faces await along 128.7 km (80 miles) of coastline accessible along the historic Highway 1.
- SLO CAL is home to California's third-largest wine region, with 300 wineries offering 60+ varietals: it's a wine lover's paradise.
- SLO CAL is full of culinary wonders, from the iconic Pink Champagne Cake at the Madonna Inn to fresh oysters from Morro Bay, and with 8 Michelin Mentioned restaurants, every turn unveils a delectable treat.
- Wine isn't the only spirit in the SLO CAL region. There is a growing distillery scene with about 20 small batch distillers.
- SLO CAL is home to a vibrant local art community, where public art takes center stage and galleries dot the streets. Find local artisans crafting everything from ceramics to fine art prints in workshops and don't miss the murals and sculptures along the city streets.

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Ragged Point

- Ragged Point serves as a gateway to the scenic coastal drive of Big Sur and where the Pacific Coast Highway gets real dramatic. It's like nature showing off — cliffs, waves and breathtaking views. Perfect for a scenic road trip after a morning surf.
- Limekiln State Park is known for its coastal redwood groves and historic lime kilns. It's like stepping into a magical forest within close proximity to Ragged Point.
- The waters off Ragged Point are part of the migratory route for gray whales. Travelers during the whale migration seasons might catch glimpses of these majestic creatures from the cliffs.
- The Ragged Point Cliffside Trail is a popular spot among hikers. Just 1.3 km (0.8 miles), experienced hikers arrive at a black sand beach and view the base of the 91.44m (300 foot) Black Swift Falls.

San Simeon

- San Simeon Cove is a hidden gem. Visitors can explore the tide pools and enjoy the tranquility of the coastline. It's like a peaceful retreat surrounded by nature in the shadow of the historic Hearst Castle.
- The Piedras Blancas Elephant Seal Rookery is where you can hang with these massive, blubbery seal giants. It's like the chill zone for elephant seals.
- San Simeon is where you find the world-famous Hearst Castle. William Randolph Hearst built this magnificent 115-room main house plus guesthouses, pools and 8 acres of cultivated gardens, you may even spot the famous zebras!

Cambria

- Originally known as Slab Town, Cambria didn't adopt its current name until the late sixties. Here you can tour historic homes in the east village and although not open to public, Nitt Witt Ridge can be seen from the street and is a monument to 50 years spent building an artistic vision.
- Cambria is home to the iconic Moonstone Beach Boardwalk, offering stunning views of the Pacific Ocean. It's like a picturesque stroll with the soothing sounds of the waves.
- The charming seaside village of Cambria is known for its unique shops, galleries and cozy bed-and-breakfasts. It's like a haven for art lovers and those seeking a quaint escape.

Cayucos

- Founded as wharf town for transportation of dairy products, Cayucos boasted a 299.3 m (982 feet) pier in 1876. The current reconstructed pier is now 289.5 m (950 feet) and is a popular fishing spot.
- Cayucos is this retro-cool surf town with a historic pier. Locals claim it's the best spot to watch the sunset. Picture this: a perfect wave session followed by a beach bonfire.
- Keep an eye out for the mermaid statue at the Cayucos Pier. It's like a mythical guardian welcoming visitors to the seaside.
- Bring your furry friend to the Cayucos Dog Beach, where dogs can frolic off-leash in the sand and surf. It's like a canine paradise by the ocean.



Harmony

- Originally founded as a dairy town, Harmony's tiny town (2.5 acres) boast a population of 18 people.
- A charming and peaceful stop along Highway 1, with its famous ice cream truck, an art gallery, glassblowing workshops, a pottery shop and the quirky Harmony Chapel and Gardens.

Morro Bay

- Morro Bay is instantly recognizable by the stunning Morro Rock, a volcanic plug that rises dramatically at the entrance of the harbor. It's one of the "Nine Sisters," a chain of volcanic peaks stretching from Morro Bay to San Luis Obispo. Standing at 176 m (576 feet) tall and is composed of dacite, a type of volcanic rock. Legends say the rock has been around for over 20 million years.
- The smokestacks in Morro Bay are the former "Morro Bay Power Plant." It was a natural gas-fired power plant that closed in 2014, and its smokestacks have become a distinctive feature of the local landscape. The closure marked a shift away from older, less efficient power plants and a move towards cleaner and more sustainable energy.
- Morro Bay is known for its thriving sea otter population. These playful marine mammals can often be spotted floating on their backs in the bay, using tools like rocks to crack open shellfish.

Los Osos & Baywood Park

- The area around Los Osos Baywood Park is known for the Hazard Canyon Reef, a popular spot for tide pooling. During low tide, visitors can explore tide pools teeming with marine life.

- Los Osos is the gateway to Montaña de Oro State Park and is the holy grail for hikers and nature lovers. The coastal trails are mind-blowing and the views are breathtaking, especially in the spring when the wildflowers bloom.
- With its scenic trails and coastal routes, Los Osos Baywood Park is a bicycle-friendly community. Cycling enthusiasts can explore the area's beauty while enjoying the fresh ocean breeze.
- Los Osos is also home to the El Moro Elfin Forest, a magical place with twisting boardwalks. Surrounded by centuries old Coast Live Oaks, stunted by the local environment, these "short" trees give this natural preserve its name.

San Luis Obispo

- Founded in 1772, Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa was the fifth California Mission built along the El Camino Real (The Royal Road). Currently the mission welcomes visitors on tours of its gardens and museum. The Mission Plaza hosts free outdoor concerts during the summer months.
- The "Motel" was invented in San Luis Obispo in 1925. Now closed to the public, the Motel Inn was originally known as the "Milestone Mo-tel" and was a luxury establishment for travelers driving from Los Angeles to San Francisco. Marilyn Monroe even honeymooned here with Joe DiMaggio.
- In the heart of the City of San Luis Obispo, there's a phenomenal farmers' market every Thursday. It's a lively street fair with live music, delicious food and a festive atmosphere.
- Ever heard of the Bubblegum Alley in downtown San Luis Obispo? It's like a psychedelic explosion of chewed-up gum. Locals say it's been growing since the '50s. It's groovy and kinda weird.



Edna Valley

- Originally founded in the 1883, Edna was the center for dairy operations and agricultural crops, but in the 1970's Edna Valley emerged as a viticultural area with the winemaking revival.
- A hidden gem of SLO Coast Wine Region it's less crowded than Napa and boasts almost thirty wineries, where over half of these are open for tastings.

Avila Beach

- Avila Beach is nestled in San Luis Bay, and although the beach is only 0.8 km (0.5 miles) long, it attracts visitors and local alike for its vibrant atmosphere.
- Avila Beach boasts three piers: Avila Beach Pier for fishing and strolling, the historic Harford Pier— built in 1873 and still in use today for commercial fishing and the California Polytechnic State University Pier, part of the university's marine research program.
- Inland from Avila Beach is home to apple orchards where you can pick your own apples during fall and hot springs that can enjoyed all year round. And don't forget to stop by a farm stand, where you can buy organic, locally grown produce and fruits and pet some baby goats.
- The Bob Jones City to Sea Trail is a biking trail that takes you from Avila Beach to SLO. It's like a scenic (2.9 mile) ride through the best of both worlds — beach and small-town vibes.
- The Central Coast Aquarium in Avila Beach is where you can get up close and personal with local marine life. It's like a mini underwater surf adventure.

Pismo & Shell Beach

- As far back as 9,000 years ago the Chumash Indians referred to this place as the place to find 'pismu' or tar, and today the Pismo retains its name.
- Pismo Preserve is a hiker's paradise with panoramic views of the coastline. Imagine the stories you'd have to share after a trek through these trails. Pure adventure.
- Shell Beach got its name because of all the cool shells you can find. It's like a treasure hunt. Collect some shells, build a sandcastle and just soak in the good vibes.
- Monarch Butterfly Grove in Pismo Beach is home to thousands of migrating butterflies. Each year during their migration from Mexico, Pismo is the place to catch them spreading their wings.

Arroyo Grande

- Lopez Lake is the spot for all things water — fishing, kayaking and of course, more surfing. It's like a water wonderland.
- In the heart of Arroyo Grande, is "The Village", the historic center of the city. Here you'll find several historic buildings and even a swing bridge in the village. Built in 1875, it's one of the only suspension bridges in California that still swings open for pedestrians.
- Although home to several well-known celebrities, Arroyo Grande's most cherished residents are the flock of wild roosters that call 'The Village' home.



Oceano

- Oceano's star attraction is the Oceano Dunes is the only California State Park, part of the largest complex of sand dunes in California. With some dunes reaching over 152 m (500 feet) high, it's the perfect spot for driving on the beach.
- In the 1920's up until the 1940's Oceano Dunes was once the home of the "Dunites," a group of mystics, artists and writers and regarded the dunes as a center of creative energy.
- In 1923 the epic movie "The Ten Commandments" was filmed on the Oceano Dunes. The deconstructed sets were then buried in the sand and remain today. Visit the Dunes Visitor Center to see some of the artifacts on display and learn more about this natural wonder.

Nipomo

- Present day Nipomo was founded by William G. Dana in 1837, his adobe served as important stop for travelers along El Camino Real (The Royal Highway) and still stands today where visitors can see what life was like at the Dana Adobe.
- Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes, part of the Dunes complex is a slice of desert vibes right next to the ocean.
- Nipomo is home to one of the greatest American steakhouses, Jocko's. It's well-known for its huge portions, a real bar and its raucous atmosphere.
- Nipomo is the location of one of the most famous photos of the American Great depression, "Migrant Mother," shot by Doretha Lange.

San Miguel

- San Miguel is the gateway to Monterey off Interstate 101 and founded by the Spanish in 1797.
- San Miguel is home to the 16th mission founded along the El Camino Real (The Royal Highway), San Miguel Arcángel. This beautiful, restored mission welcomes visitors with the original 1800's bell tower.
- The Rios-Caledonia Adobe built in 1835 as home of the mission overseer. The preserved site includes the original Inn and the stagecoach stop.

Creston, Shandon & Cholame

- This northern area of San Luis Obispo County is dotted with vineyards, ranches and long stretches of highway. It was on Highway 46 in Cholame, that legendary actor, James Dean met his fateful demise in a car crash. The crossroads are now named the James Dean Memorial Junction.
- Creston is home to the Loading Chute Restaurant and Barn, originally built in the late 1800s as a general store. The rebuilt building now serves up steak in an atmosphere that pays homage to the local cattle ranches.
- Shandon is the site of the Shandon Chapel Hill- Serra Chapel. Perched on a hill flanked by grapevines, this private chapel is open to the public on Sunday mornings for Catholic services as well as during the summer for the Annual Festival Mozaic concert series, but the grounds are open for the public to hike the short but steep 91.44 m (300 foot) hill.



Paso Robles

- Paso Robles or El Paso de Robles is named for its oak trees. And before it was the SLO CAL's wine capital, it was known for its hot springs. Tourists in the 1800s traveled from far and wide to enjoy the hot and cold springs as well as the "only mud bath in the world." The current Paso Robles Inn stands in the location of the original Hotel El Paso de Robles and the on 11th and Pine Street in downtown, the historic Bathhouse building houses a candy shop.
- The uncle of the famous American outlaw, Jessie James, was one of the town's original architects and promoter of tourism to Paso Robles in 1857. The park he built in the center of town is still in use today as the favorite location for many of the local events and gatherings.
- Wine grapes were first introduced to the area in 1797 by the padres of San Miguel, who were the first to produce wine in the area. And now Paso Robles is a wine lover paradise with more than 200 wineries and over 26,000 vineyard acres. Wine is around every corner.

Templeton

- Templeton was once the end of the line for passengers travelling southbound from Northern California on the Southern Pacific Railroad. Here passengers would disembark and transfer to stagecoaches to San Luis Obispo to continue their journey south. In 1889 the railroad was expanded, and Templeton was eventually bypassed.
- In 1898 the original town was destroyed by fire and rebuilt with brick and many of those brick buildings still stand today. Visit the Templeton Historical Museum for a map of the 39 different historic locations, including the 1888 Bethel Lutheran Church.

Atascadero

- The current city of Atascadero owes its founding to Edward G. Lewis, a publisher from Missouri in 1913. The "Atascadero Colony" was formed to develop a "utopian" community centering around the city hall and the printery.
- Many of the original buildings and homes still stand today and are part of the vibrant downtown 'Colony District', which has recently emerged as bustling area for entertainment and shopping.
- Atascadero is home to the Charles Paddock Zoo, where you can get up close and personal with animals. It's not massive, but its red panda is certainly the star attraction.

Santa Margarita & Pozo

- The town of Santa Margarita was officially established in 1889 with the arrival of the Union Pacific Railroad, even though its history extends back to the Salian and Chumash Indian tribes.
- Today Santa Margarita still resembles a wild west outpost, where Rancho hospitality is abundant. Visitors to Rancho Santa Margarita, founded in 1775, can find historic sites, trains, a working cattle ranch, vineyards and ample space for large events and weddings.
- Santa Margarita and Pozo are the gateway to Carrizo Plain National Monument, a large, enclosed grassland where antelope and elk once grazed and the perfect place to hike in the spring when the landscape sings with color of wildflowers.
- Pozo is a town bathed in the history of the wild west. Once a stop on a stagecoach route, Pozo saw its heyday during a mini gold rush of the 1860s. The original 1858 Pozo Saloon, once visited by outlaws like Billy the Kid and Jessie James, still stands today.