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# Sunset

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## Must-do road trip: California's 101

No road gives you more Golden State fun: 790 miles of surf, spas, wine sipping, and surprises



Photo by Andrea Gómez Romero

### Los Angeles: Authentic roots

Souvenir stands give it a strictly-for-tourists rep, but **Olvera Street** anchors El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument, where L.A. truly started. There's good Angeleno history at Avila Adobe; even better margaritas and Mexican food at La Golondrina (\$\$; 213/628-4349). [elpueblo.lacity.org](http://elpueblo.lacity.org)

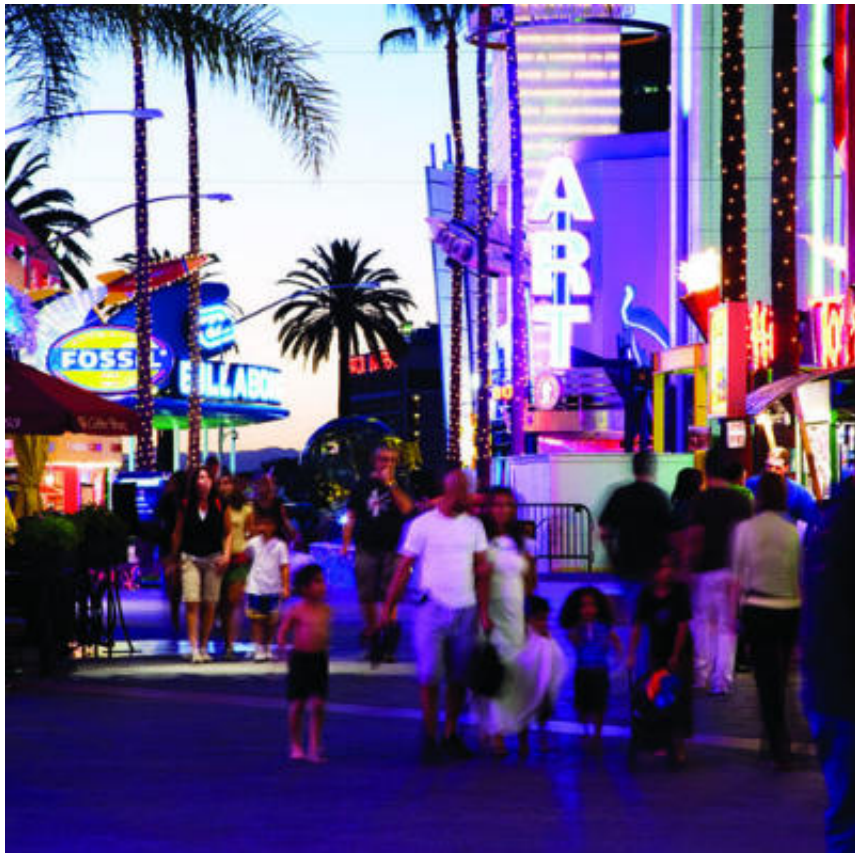


Photo by Dave Lauridsen

## Los Angeles: Art stop

Miracle Mile's the classic nickname for the mid-Wilshire stretch of Wilshire Boulevard. These days it should be called Masterpiece Way—two major expansions in three years have pushed the **L.A. County Museum of Art** (pictured) to the top of culture lovers' must-see lists.

\$15; [lacma.org](http://lacma.org)



## Los Angeles: Showtime

At **Universal Studios**

**Hollywood** ([universalstudioshollywood.com](http://universalstudioshollywood.com) prices), the Studio Tour still wows

—"Look! It's Wisteria Lane!"—and

King Kong is damn big. Plus,

neighboring **Universal**

**CityWalk** (pictured; [citywalkhollywood.com](http://citywalkhollywood.com))

is one of our favorite dining and shopping spots in Los Angeles.

Photo by David Zaitz



Photo by Chris Leschinsky

## Carpinteria: Call it Carp

That's the locals' moniker for one of California's prettiest little beach towns. Stroll down **Linden Avenue** for surf shops and a great steak joint (the Palms, \$\$; 805/684-3811), then wade at **Carpinteria State Beach**. [carpinteriachamber.org](http://carpinteriachamber.org)





Photo by Andrea Gómez Romero

## Santa Barbara: Dine with the rich and famous

Beaches, the queen of missions, and (in neighboring Montecito) Oprah Winfrey. Santa Barbara has so much star power, it's almost unfair that it has good restaurants too. But it does—so many, you may decide to detour off 101 for breakfast, lunch, *and* dinner. Top choices include downtown's **Hungry Cat** (\$\$; 805/884-4701) for seafood; Milpas Street's famed **La Super-Rica Taquería** (\$; 805/963-4940); **Ca' Dario** (\$\$\$; 805/884-9419) for Italian; and, in Oprah's Montecito, cakes and coffee at **Jeannine's Bakery** (pictured; \$; 805/687-8701).



## Avila Beach: Coast newbie

Meet the beach town you haven't heard of—Avila Beach, tucked along **San Luis Obispo Bay**. What's here? A cool old pier ([avilabeachpier.com](http://avilabeachpier.com)) with two good restaurants: Pete's Pierside Cafe (\$) and Olde Port Inn (\$\$\$). And hot tubs at nearby Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort (from \$13/hour; [sycamoresprings.com](http://sycamoresprings.com)).

Photo by Chris Leschinsky



Photo by Chris Leschinsky

## San Luis Obispo: Smile

A recent book named this university town one of the happiest places on Earth. One source of local joy is SLO's **Thursday Night Downtown Farmers' Market**, maybe the best in the nation. [downtownslo.com](http://downtownslo.com)





Photo by Chris Leschinsky

## Templeton: Country comfort

It's meritage in action: Tiny Templeton blends ranch town simplicity with wine country sophistication. Drive grape-lined **Vineyard Drive**, grab a sandwich at **Farmstand 46** (805/239-3661), taste a local Syrah at **15 Degrees C Wine Shop & Bar** ([15degreescwines.com](http://15degreescwines.com)), or linger for a truly memorable meal at **McPhee's Grill** (pictured; \$\$\$; 805/434-3204).



## Paso Robles: New Napa

Cow town turned wine capital, Paso is now the center of a sprawling AVA boasting more than **200 wineries** (download a map from [pasowine.com](http://pasowine.com)). If you're looking to spend the night, we like elegant Hotel Cheval (from \$315; [hotelcheval.com](http://hotelcheval.com)) and Old Californian but newly renovated Paso Robles Inn (from \$160; [pasoroblesinn.com](http://pasoroblesinn.com)).

Photo by Joao Canziani



## Soledad: Hidden gem

Just off 101, **Mission Nuestra Señora de la Soledad** (831/678-2586) is simple and sweet, with a pretty grove of Mission olives.





## Salinas Valley: Vintage detour

On the west side of the Salinas Valley, winding **River Road** leads to about 20 wineries (get a map from [riverroadwinetrail.com](http://riverroadwinetrail.com)).



## Santa Clara: Seoul patrol

One of the nation's biggest Korean communities congregates here in **Silicon Valley**: Center of food and shopping action is El Camino Real between Lawrence and San Tomas Expressways. Good bets include the charming Chasaengwon Tea House (*pictured*; 408/246-0700).

Photo by Jen Siska





Photo by Rob Brodman

## Palo Alto: Smartville

You don't have to bleed Cardinal red to enjoy **Stanford University**: Rodin-watch at Cantor Arts Center ([museum.stanford.edu](http://museum.stanford.edu)), then nab a sandwich or a salad at adjacent Cool Café (\$\$; 650/725-4758).



Photo by Thomas J. Story

## San Francisco: Live rich

Stately mansions, killer views: No wonder San Francisco's A-list congregates in tony **Pacific Heights** (pictured). The news is that the rest of us can enjoy it too. Spend a night at politely posh Hotel Drisco (*from* \$189; [hoteldrisco.com](http://hoteldrisco.com)), dine with the ladies who lunch at Spruce (\$\$\$; 415/931-5100), then walk off your meal window shopping for art and antiques on Sacramento Street.



## Sausalito: More than skin deep

Pretty but familiar can be the dig against the village on San Francisco Bay. But the hotel and spa at **Cavallo Point Lodge** (*from* \$360; [cavallopoint.com](http://cavallopoint.com)) are knockouts, and you'll find intriguing shopping around **Caledonia Street**.



Photo by Rachel Weill



Photo by David Fenton

## Healdsburg: Wine paradise found

A lot of travelers consider this Sonoma County town the ideal base for a wine country weekend. They may be right. Healdsburg lodging options run from the eco-chic (H2hotel, *from* \$295; [h2hotel.com](http://h2hotel.com)) to the contemporary rustic (Healdsburg Modern Cottages, *from* \$275; [healdsburgcottages.com](http://healdsburgcottages.com)), and dining here runs from the very high-end (Cyrus, \$\$\$\$; 707/433-3311) to the homey (Downtown Bakery & Creamery, \$; 707/431-2719). Just to the west of town lies the Dry Creek Valley (pictured), which—shhh—may be the most beautiful wine region in California. Our favorites include Dry Creek Vineyard ([drycreekvineyard.com](http://drycreekvineyard.com)) and Lambert Bridge Winery ([lambertbridge.com](http://lambertbridge.com)).



Photo by Thomas J. Story

## Ukiah: Sparkling waters

Jack London loved **Vichy Mineral Springs Resort** (*pictured*; \$30/2 hours; [vichysprings.com](http://vichysprings.com)); you will too. Soak in the carbonated 90° mineral baths or a 104° pool. Then stare up at coast redwoods at **Montgomery Woods State Natural Reserve** (707/937-5804).



## Orick: Coast camping

In Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park, **Gold Bluffs Beach** (*pictured*; \$35; 707/465-7335) lets you stake a tent between the Pacific and redwood trees; neighbors may include Roosevelt elk. Gold Bluffs opens in May; to camp before that, check out the park's nearby **Elk Prairie Campground** (\$35; [reserveamerica.com](http://reserveamerica.com)) open year-round.