

VISIT
SANTA BARBARA
THE AMERICAN RIVIERA®

CONTACT:

Karna Hughes, Director of Communications
Visit Santa Barbara
(805) 966-9222, ext. 112; karna@santabarbaraca.com

SANTA BARBARA:
Experience the Allure of The American Riviera®

Webster could run out of adjectives trying to describe Santa Barbara. Seductive, playful, romantic, gorgeous, easygoing, relaxed, sophisticated, cultured, friendly, peaceful, re-energizing and invigorating are just a few descriptors that come to mind. Oh, and habit-forming — just ask anyone who's been here.

Day-trippers want to spend the night. First-time visitors vow to return. Tourists dream of relocating their lives here — and some do. Longtime residents stay forever. Some Angelenos (Los Angeles residents) even leave a boat moored in the Santa Barbara Harbor, to keep a toe in local waters, so to speak. No one ever wants to say goodbye.

Located just 90 miles from Los Angeles, Santa Barbara is a world apart, a soothing realm of distinct and subtle pleasures, and an intoxicating appeal that arises from a convergence of elements found perhaps nowhere else in the world. A city characterized by Spanish Colonial Revival architecture, with white-washed buildings with red-tile roofs tucked between the mountains and the sea, Santa Barbara resonates with an irresistibly sensuous allure. Casual and friendly, it also offers an extensive menu of sophisticated cultural attractions ranging from theater and dance to music and visual arts, reflecting a cultural richness out of proportion to the city's small size.

The sun shines 300 days a year here, making Santa Barbara a mecca for every kind of outdoor pursuit. It is a place where the land yields organic fruits and vegetables, sold at farmers markets for every day of the week, and where these exquisite ingredients fuel an idiosyncratic cuisine accompanied by superb Santa Barbara County wines — world-class vintages from the world's most diverse viticultural region. About 36 tasting rooms are located in downtown Santa Barbara, the popular Funk Zone and along the [Urban Wine Trail](#).

Stunning hybrid architecture reflects Spanish, Moorish, Portuguese and American Indian roots, while wrought-iron adornments, exquisite tile work, cool fountains and shady paseos beckon to our collective need for comfort, solace and beautiful, human-scale design. The wild nature of Channel Islands National Park is visible from the manicured gardens of grand Montecito estates. Santa Barbara is contrast and complement, human art and natural art, the simple and the sophisticated, the old world and the new. It is "The American Riviera®."

SANDS OF TIME: A BRIEF HISTORY

Portuguese explorer Juan Cabrillo gave Santa Barbara its name during his voyage of discovery up the California coast in 1542. When Spanish Franciscan monks arrived in the 18th century on their mission-building journey through Alta (Upper) California, they encountered no one but the Chumash Indians, who had settled the area some 13,000 years prior. The Chumash lived in simple huts, cruised coastal waters in plank canoes and sustained themselves well by catching fish, gathering shellfish, hunting marine and land mammals, grinding acorns into a staple meal and collecting edible berries and greens.

The Franciscans built 21 missions in California, including Old Mission Santa Barbara, known as the “Queen of the Missions.” After coming under Mexican rule for 24 years, Santa Barbara became a U.S. territory in 1846, two years before California was added to the Union.

Half a century later, Santa Barbara had evolved into the pre-Hollywood capital of the silent-film era, the back lot by the sea where more than 1,200 movies, mostly Westerns, were produced during a 10-year period. After such legendary film stars as Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Mary Pickford and Charlie Chaplin made Santa Barbara their playground, the coastal hamlet became a haven for wealthy Easterners and a hot spot for health-seekers lured by the area’s mineral baths. Rockefellers, Vanderbilts, Carnegies and Duponts arrived via luxury rail car. In their wake came painters, poets and authors who took the first steps toward making Santa Barbara the art colony it is today.

With only 91,000 residents, this small city exudes the warmth and friendliness of its size while offering the kind of major attractions and world-class accommodations usually reserved for a major metropolis.

COUNTY OF CONTRASTS

Santa Barbara County offers amazing diversity in an incredibly compact area. One day visitors can be roaming art galleries and museums in downtown Santa Barbara before settling in for an evening of fine dining and a ballet; the next they can be lounging on the beach or sailing up the coast; and the next they can have their senses overwhelmed while driving through sublime natural beauty.

Santa Barbara’s South Coast is made up of the sunny cities of Santa Barbara and Goleta, as well as the communities of Montecito, Goleta and Summerland. Ever since the turn of the 20th century, **Montecito** has been cultivating a well-deserved reputation as an enclave of grand estates owned by the rich and famous. The Montecito Inn, founded by Charlie Chaplin, at the end of Coast Village Road, is still a favorite, along with the fine restaurants and chic shops that line the eucalyptus-shaded drag. The elegant Spanish-Moorish Four Seasons Resort The Biltmore Santa Barbara continues to romance guests from its prime oceanfront location, and the San Ysidro Ranch remains a choice destination for lovers and others following in the steps of John and Jacqueline Kennedy, who honeymooned here. More recently, Oprah paid \$50 million for the Montecito estate that serves as her West Coast headquarters.

Lying at the base of the Santa Ynez Mountains at the western end of Santa Barbara, **Goleta** is a bedroom community where residents and visitors enjoy biking, running and bird watching along the Goleta Slough, as well as pier-fishing, playing volleyball or just hanging on the sand at family-friendly Goleta Beach. The highly respected, oceanfront University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) ensures a steady supply of surfers at local breaks such as Campus Point and Sands. The area’s history is on display at two attractions — the South Coast Railroad Museum and Stow House, Goleta Valley’s oldest frame house, which is set beside a 25-acre lake surrounded by a boardwalk.

Summerland, to the southeast of Santa Barbara, is an antiques’ paradise, with more than a dozen stores lining its main street. Europa offers high-end antiques, Botanik has florals and garden wares, and the French Market displays its items in imaginative vignettes that lend practicality to those offbeat treasures. The Summerland Market is well known for its homemade sausages, and Summerland Beach is one of the nicest in the area.

A drive up from Goleta along Highway 101 leads past storied ranches whose hillsides of gold or green (depending on the season) roll down to bluffs overlooking empty beaches and the Channel Islands beyond. The Pacific Ocean is a driver’s companion all the way to **Gaviota**, where the road veers inland to snake through oak-studded rolling hills. El Capitan Canyon Resort, located adjacent to El Capitán State Beach, is a dream for “glamping” (or glamorous camping), with cedar cabins and safari tents set amid an oak and sycamore grove.

Turning right from Highway 101 at Highway 246, visitors enter the heart of the **Santa Ynez Valley**, which includes the 100-year-old Danish town of Solvang, Buellton, Los Olivos, Los Alamos, Santa Ynez and Santa Barbara’s renowned wine country. Further north are the agricultural cities of Lompoc, Santa Maria and Guadalupe.

Currently home to more than 220 wineries and more than 23,000 acres of vines, **Santa Barbara wine country**, the big back lot for “Sideways” (a self-guided movie tour map, available via santabarbaraCA.com, points the way to 18 of the film’s locations), is the most diverse viticultural region in the world. The area offers unusual east-to-west-running mountain ranges that funnel cool ocean air and mist to the vines, creating wide-ranging microclimates, moderate temperatures and an extended growing season that result in grapes of exceptional ripeness, flavor and balance. The county’s six American Viticultural Areas (AVAs or appellations) — Ballard Canyon, Happy Canyon, Santa Maria Valley, Sta. Rita Hills, Santa Ynez Valley and Los Olivos District — produce superb chardonnay, pinot noir and syrah, as well as sauvignon blanc, cabernet sauvignon, riesling and other varietals. Tasting tours, picnic spots, outdoor concerts, winemaker dinners, festivals and harvest parties are all part of the bucolic wine country experience. sbcountywines.com.

Highway 154 is an alternate route to the north county, leading from Santa Barbara to the other side of the Santa Ynez Mountains. Along the way you can explore swimming holes, fishing spots and hiking trails along the Santa Ynez River, and then proceed to the Cachuma Lake Recreation Area, which offers camping, seasonal wildlife tours and excellent fishing. On the way to wine country, you might try your luck at the Chumash Casino’s gaming tables.

OUTSIDE: FROM MOUNTAINS TO SEA

The beach and La Cumbre Peak are bookends for Santa Barbara’s world of outdoor recreation, while the wine country over the mountains opens up a whole other realm of fun. On the sea side of the mountains, surfing, sailing, SCUBA diving, parasailing, windsurfing, kite surfing, kayaking, whale watching and cocktail cruising are all available to those into ocean-related activities.

Santa Barbara County beaches begin at Carpinteria in the south and continue for 45 miles up to Gaviota. Butterfly Beach is easily accessible from the bike path in front of the Four Seasons Resort, part of an extensive network of bike trails linking every part of the city.

East Beach, located along the 3-mile-long Cabrillo Bike Path that runs between the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge and Leadbetter Beach, is home to volleyball courts that attract tour professionals and other experts, while West Beach offers calm swimming between Stearns Wharf and the Harbor. Between the two is Chase Palm Park, home to a pond, a great kids’ play area and, in summer, free Thursday-night outdoor concerts. Leadbetter Beach attracts everyone from beginning surfers to former world-champion and Santa Barbara local Tom Curren, who might walk in from Shoreline Park, which meanders along the bluffs for nearly a mile.

A couple of miles west, Arroyo Burro Beach, known locally as “Hendry’s,” is a popular choice for families walking dogs and Hope Ranch residents riding horses, as well as joggers, surfers and sun bathers. The beachfront Boathouse restaurant is *the* place to have breakfast with views of passing dolphins and gliding pelicans. From Hendry’s, you can ride up Las Positas Road to Modoc Road, take a left and catch the Goleta bike path all the way to the UCSB campus. In Santa Barbara, you can ride a little or a lot and always arrive somewhere you’re very happy to be.

Beach lovers heading north from Santa Barbara proper will find any number of turnouts and off-ramps from Highway 101 that provide access to superb strands ideal for enjoying a day away from it all.

Anyone looking out to sea from Santa Barbara can’t miss Channel Islands National Park. The most popular of the five-island chain of parks is Santa Cruz, which offers camping, hiking, kayaking, tide pooling and a welcome dose of wilderness in an enormous Pacific playground. The Park Service offers ranger-led tours of this unique ecological preserve, home to plant and animal species found only here. Excursions depart daily from the SEA Landing at the Harbor.

Check out the Maritime Museum at the Harbor, where you can trace local seafaring history back to the Chumash days. Get a bucket of steamed clams and cioppino at Brophy Brothers, or sip a cocktail at the Endless Summer Bar-Café, and then come back on Saturday morning to claim the makings for dinner at

the Saturday Fisherman's Market. Across the way, at Stearns Wharf, explore the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History Sea Center, which features touch tanks for kids and lots of relevant info about local ocean denizens. Built in 1872 and now the oldest working pier in California, the wharf once belonged to Hollywood legend Jimmy Cagney and his brothers.

GARDENS & PARKS

Santa Barbara is home to more open space per capita than any other city in the country. Some 50 parks of all kinds, from formal and well-tended to wild and untrammelled, offer the perfect location for picnics, play or simple relaxation.

Among the local favorites is Alameda Park, with its collection of rare trees and the "Kid's World" playground, a fantasyland of fun designed by kids for kids. Franceschi Park, named for one of the city's most important botanists, is the perfect aerie for a romantic sunset moment and a meander along the garden's pleasant stone paths. The Santa Barbara Botanic Garden is home to enticing meadows, redwood groves and plots of native California flora, while Alice Keck Park Memorial Garden downtown is a pleasant city-block-sized oasis, complete with a koi and turtle pond. Don't miss the A.C. Postel Memorial Rose Garden (also called the "Mission rose garden," for its location across from Old Mission Santa Barbara), where a thousand bushes frame a broad greensward, and Elings Park, where walkways lead past native plants to picnic areas high above the soccer fields.

For those who prefer the kind of greens that come with a hole and a flag on them, Santa Barbara County offers six public 18-hole golf courses, including the 72-par Rancho San Marcos, a Robert Trent Jones II course that runs along scenic Highway 154. The spectacular oceanfront Sandpiper Golf Course and the Glen Annie Golf Club in Goleta are consistently rated among the top public courses in the country. If you're looking to get in a quick game nearby, head to the Santa Barbara Golf Club, home to one of the longest "short courses" in Southern California, at 6,009 yards. Lompoc has the highly rated, challenging La Purisima Golf Course.

ARTS & CULTURE

Like the sun-washed towns that are its Mediterranean soul mates, Santa Barbara offers visitors a big dose of sophisticated culture to complement its abundant beauty. Few cities of Santa Barbara's size can match the quality and diversity of its artistic and cultural offerings, which include 50 museums and galleries and a wide range of stellar performance venues hosting multiple world-class theater groups, opera and dance companies, chamber orchestras, a symphony orchestra and more. No wonder Santa Barbara has earned its place as one of the top 10 art colonies in the nation.

Santa Barbara hosts hundreds of live performances every year and has a wealth of beautiful, comfortable, architecturally interesting and historically significant venues in which to experience them. From acoustic to classical, rock and opera; from string quartets to a full symphony orchestra; from jazz to pop and beyond, when it comes to music, Santa Barbara hits the right notes in an array of genres. Santa Barbara presents more than 200 professional and amateur stage productions every year. Whether you prefer classics by Arthur Miller, contemporary works by up-and-coming playwrights, cabaret or kids' pantomime, it's on stage in Santa Barbara.

A visitor could spend weeks and never make it to all the visual-arts venues and events. Yet, thanks to the city's intimacy, an extension of its manageable size, art viewing here is a pleasure. From museums to galleries to beachside festivals, accessible eye-catching excellence comes with the territory in Santa Barbara. Whatever you're looking for, from figurative oils to abstract acrylics, from watercolor landscapes to bronze sculpture, from folk-art to fine-art photography and lithographs, it is created, exhibited and sold in Santa Barbara. With some 60 galleries located throughout the county, visual enticement is never far away. There's nothing like turning a corner to encounter a piece of vibrant public art. Santa Barbara is home to an array of murals, sculptures, fountains, bronzes and mosaics. Some stand as vibrant sentinels in prominent locations; others require a careful eye or even a bit of searching to locate.

Santa Barbara is fortunate to have so many fine museums and outstanding collections that reach beyond traditional "art" — from the natural world that sustained the Chumash and creates such a striking context

for the city, to the legacy of the mission, pueblo and rancho eras; from the world's intellectual history, science and technology to Santa Barbara's maritime past. A collection of widely dispersed regional museums provides insights into some of the more intriguing areas around Santa Barbara County.

Writers were among the earliest artists to come to Santa Barbara, and before Hollywood had its backlots, Santa Barbara was already home to a thriving film industry. Today Santa Barbara continues to support the literary and film arts and the people who make them through a series of festivals and special events, including the annual Santa Barbara International Film Festival held over 10 days every January or February.

FOOD & LIBATIONS: RESTAURANTS, BARS & CLUBS

As the sun sets, fine dining is the prelude to a stop at bars and clubs where live entertainment ranges from soft jazz to R&B, Brazilian, rock and beyond.

Cruising For Cuisine

Santa Barbara has evolved into a formidable food center where seasoned and up-start chefs alike create fine cuisine based on superb local ingredients, partnered with world-class wines from the Santa Maria and Santa Ynez valleys and the Sta. Rita Hills. Chefs haunt farmers' markets for the freshest and best seasonal ingredients to create food that feels, well, right at home. Here are just a few of the representative restaurants in Santa Barbara's exciting food scene.

The Lark, located in the buzzed-about Funk Zone neighborhood, offers some of the city's most sophisticated and masterfully crafted dishes. Downey's was a seminal restaurant in Santa Barbara's farm-to-table scene and its culinary excellence continues. Down the street, Olio e Limone Chef Alberto Morello's sophisticated menu reflects the foods he grew up with in Sicily, while bouchon treats diners to a wide selection of California cult wines by the glass to go with a menu of Cal-French specialties based on farmers'-market produce. The Wine Cask has an award-winning 2,000-bottle cellar to go with its carefully prepared food and friendly, sophisticated service in a lovely Mission Revival dining room.

Lucky's in Montecito is a steak house extraordinaire. Ca' Dario tempts with a cozy, bustling little restaurant serving food that reflects the soul of Italy, while its sister restaurant, Bucatini, is a casual spot for terrific pasta on the patio. Tupelo Junction serves *en-lightened* southern-style fare, including terrific chocolate beignets and an addictive fried-chicken salad.

Trattoria Mollie's in Montecito is a celeb favorite for homemade pasta and simple, tasteful Italian fare, and Bella Vista, at Four Seasons Resort The Biltmore Santa Barbara, hits all the right notes with impeccable service and cuisine and a glorious oceanfront setting. The good times roll every night at the Cajun-Caribbean Palace Grill, and at the super-luxe Bacara Resort north of town, Angel Oak provides romancers with cutting-edge cuisine and incredible ocean views.

Ethnic cooking is everywhere in Santa Barbara, from simple joints to more extravagant places like Casa Blanca restaurant with its intricate Andalucian-style tile work, romantic patio and gourmet Mexican fare. Spanish tapas and live jazz are the draw at cozy Alcazar, near Shoreline Park. For more great Mexican food, La Super-Rica on Milpas Street — a favorite of the late celebrity chef and Santa Barbara resident Julia Child and Katy Perry (who name-checked it in the song "This Is How We Do") — is a mandatory stop, as are the two outlets of Los Agaves (one each in downtown and uptown Santa Barbara), which have some of the best salsa in town. The two Rose Cafés in Santa Barbara are benchmarks of local Mexican cooking. Thai, Chinese, Vietnamese and Indian are also available.

Local favorites include the longstanding Paradise Cafe, which offers both casual alfresco garden dining and counter seating inside, and is the perfect place to enjoy a burger, a beer and a game on TV. Opal is one of Santa Barbara's hottest bistros; check out its house-smoked salmon and gourmet pizzas. At the Harbor, Endless Summer Bar-Cafe features first-rate seafood with fabulous views. Across the water on Stearns Wharf, an ahi sandwich on the deck at Longboard's Grill is hard to beat.

Bars, Clubs & Beyond

SOHo Restaurant & Music Club, off of State Street, features an eclectic line-up of live music seven nights a week. Joe's, a renovated downtown landmark, mixes stiff drinks to a lively cocktail-hour crowd. Other happy hour hotspots include Finch & Fork at Canary Hotel, Wine Cask and Blush. Milk & Honey and Hungry Cat shake-up culinary cocktails inspired by seasonal farmers' market ingredients.

Santa Barbara is home to several Irish pubs, including the James Joyce and Dargan's, which has a great billiards bar. Santa Barbara Brewing Co. on State Street serves up the handcrafted craft brews aficionados crave. Elsie's is home to a mixed crowd, while Velvet Jones hosts dance parties and live music for the young, the restless — and the pierced. Late-night haunts include Wildcat Lounge, EOS and Indochine, a groovy downtown boîte with a Southeast Asian sensibility.

SALES, BARGAINS & BEYOND

Whether you prefer chic boutiques, one-of-a-kind stores or modern malls, Santa Barbara can fill the bill. Built in the 1920s, the courtyards and passages of the Spanish-style El Paseo present a variety of gift shops, galleries and restaurants as does the equally charming La Arcada Court on State Street. Paseo Nuevo, the city's main shopping center, is anchored by Nordstrom and includes a balance of national chains mixed with independents — boutiques, restaurants, specialty shops and art galleries.

Santa Barbara's largest shopping mall, La Cumbre Plaza on upper State Street, features major department stores plus more than 60 shops, restaurants and services and plenty of free parking. In Montecito, Coast Village Road boasts some of the most upscale shopping in Santa Barbara in a setting that could not be more pleasant for strolling. The Upper Village in Montecito, where Foothill Road meets San Ysidro Road, has more fine boutiques and ultra-luxe specialty shops.

Local boutiques delighting fashionistas from around the world include Diani, Wendy Foster, Angel and kakoon. Thanks to its upscale residents, Santa Barbara is a hotbed for high-end vintage and second-hand designer finds. Unearth treasures at The Closet or Renaissance Fine Consignment, or try your luck at weekend estate sales.

With the median home price in Santa Barbara hovering above the \$1 million mark, it's no surprise that shops filled with antiques, art, and exquisite home décor abound in Santa Barbara County. Summerland, Solvang and Los Alamos have the largest selection of antique, garden and home-décor shops; galleries and more home décor retailers are scattered around downtown Santa Barbara and Montecito.

LODGING: EVERY KIND FOR EVERY BUDGET

Stay at the beach or downtown, at a grand resort or a 100-year-old inn, in Montecito or the wine country, in the most luxurious suite or the humblest motel. Whatever your preference, the Santa Barbara South Coast, with more than 70 properties, has what you're looking for. The offerings include 15 historic bed-and-breakfast inns ranging in style from Italianate to Victorian to California Craftsman, as well as masterworks of the city's Spanish Colonial Revival style, such as the lovely Four Seasons Resort The Biltmore Santa Barbara, built in 1927. North of town, Bacara Resort & Spa offers four-star luxury by the sea, and the boutique Canary Hotel provides style and pampering — and a fabulous rooftop swimming pool — in the heart of the downtown Santa Barbara. San Ysidro Ranch guarantees an indulgent stay in one of its sumptuously appointed cottages nestled against the foothills. And *that* is just the beginning.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Santa Barbara is located just 92 miles north of Los Angeles and 332 miles south of San Francisco, on the Pacific coastline. Visitors can arrive via scenic Highway 101, by Amtrak train or bus or by flying into Santa Barbara Municipal Airport or Los Angeles International Airport.

For travel and accommodation information and to request a free copy of the official *Santa Barbara Visitors Magazine*, contact Visit Santa Barbara at 800-676-1266, 805-966-9222, tourism@santabarbaraca.com or santabarbaraca.com. Visitor information is also available at the Visitor Information Center, 1 Garden Street (at Cabrillo Boulevard).

Considered the northernmost point of Southern California and located along the Central Coast, Santa Barbara spans 110 miles of pristine coastline. Santa Barbara is known as The American Riviera® thanks to its Spanish Colonial Revival architecture, rich heritage, world-renowned food and wine scene, stunning natural beauty and near-perfect weather. Stay informed about Santa Barbara news with our [Media Center](#) and [press releases](#). Planning a research visit? Media can use the [Press Trip Request](#) form to get the process started. Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) for regular updates.

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