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**Top 5 Reasons to Visit Santa Barbara This Fourth of July Weekend and Beyond**

SANTA BARBARA, CALIF. (June 26, 2015) – Looking for a little freedom from your routine this Independence Day? Whether you need ideas for Fourth of July weekend or a getaway before Labor Day, [Santa Barbara](http://www.santabarbaraca.com) inspires this summer with many reasons to visit, from its beautiful beaches and famed red-tiled rooftops to its acclaimed wine and food, arts and culture and outdoor recreation. Here are the top five reasons to escape to the American Riviera®, located just 92 miles north of Los Angeles:

**1) Beautiful, Safe Beaches and Outdoor Adventure**

When it comes to [outdoor recreation](http://www.santabarbaraca.com/experience-santa-barbara/sustainable/outdoor-recreation/), Santa Barbara is an equal-opportunity water, land and air destination. In just one day, you can surf, kayak or paddleboard over the waves; hike nearly 2,500 feet above sea level to Gaviota Peak and take a dip in natural hot springs; horseback ride in the Santa Barbara hills; or rock climb Lizard’s Mouth and the majestic Rock Playgrounds. If golf is your game, Santa Barbara's many world-class golf courses will beckon with their rolling fairways and panoramic views. If you prefer a bird’s eye perspective, you can hang glide over Santa Barbara’s bucolic foothills. Or spend the day in the [Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary](http://www.santabarbaraca.com/things-to-do/channel-islands/), where you can catch a glimpse of migrating whales, dolphins, marine mammals and pelagic birds.

Of course, if you just want to lounge on the beach, Santa Barbara offers more than 100 miles of shoreline to enjoy with warm sunshine and refreshing breezes all summer. Some visitors have wondered about the state of the region’s beaches following the Refugio spill (some 23 miles north of the city of Santa Barbara). The good news is that 19 of the area’s 20 beaches have been declared safe and thousands of visitors have been flocking to the beaches for weeks. El Cápitan State Beach reopens today (Friday, June 26) for camping and day visits, with Refugio State Beach slated to reopen in mid-July.

**2) Great Summer Hotel Deals and Packages**

Whether you’re looking for a hotel with fabulous July 4th activities or spa, golf and culinary packages – some with savings of up to 20 percent – look no further than Santa Barbara this summer. With sophisticated urban amenities and small-town coastal charm, Santa Barbara hotels offer the chance to relax with style. Click [here](http://www.santabarbaraca.com/includes/media/docs/2015HotelPackagesandDeals_FINAL.pdf) for a list of the latest summer offerings or go to Visit Santa Barbara’s special deals page, <http://www.santabarbaraca.com/things-to-do/special-offers/>, which are constantly updated.

**3) Fourth of July and Summer Events**

If you’re in town for the Fourth, there are many ways to celebrate the weekend, with fireworks sparkling at the top of the list. Enjoy spectacular displays with live music from the beaches near Stearns Wharf, or for an adventurous experience, on board the Condor Express, on a Fourth of July evening cruise in the coastal waters outside the Santa Barbara Harbor. The remaining days of summer offer a host of other scintillating events, from the California Wine Festival (July 16-18) to the French Festival (July 18-19 ­– don’t miss the Poodle Parade!), Old Spanish Days Fiesta (August 5-9 – this year’s theme is Fiesta Romantica) to the 20th annual Santa Barbara Mariachi Festival (August 8) and more. Click [here](http://www.santabarbaraca.com/includes/media/docs/2015SummerSB_Events_FINAL.pdf) for details and additional options.

**4) Epicurean Paradise**

Whether you're a wine geek, fervent foodie, seasoned chef of just someone with an endless appetite for great food, Santa Barbara offers an unforgettable taste vacation. Inspired by abundant, locally sourced, seasonal produce, seafood and meats, young upstarts and long-renowned chefs alike are making Santa Barbara’s culinary scene one of the most exciting in California. Forward-thinking mixologists are putting their spin on old classics and inventing new cocktails inspired by freshly harvested herbs, fruits and vegetables at local farmers markets. A great way to experience this bounty first-hand is to sign up for the [Farmers Market Foodie Stroll](http://www.santabarbaraca.com/listings/Wine-Cask/20939/0/), where Executive Chef David Rosner of the Wine Cask takes guests to the local market to pick ingredients and then transforms their selections into a delectable multi-course dinner paired with local wines.

Made famous in the film *Sideways*, the area’s [wine regions](http://www.santabarbaraca.com/things-to-do/wine/), which include five distinct AVAs, are popular with oenophiles and food lovers, who sip everything from world-class pinots to chardonnays and syrahs. Urbanites can savor the region’s signature libation along the [Urban Wine Trail](http://www.santabarbaraca.com/things-to-do/wine/urban-wine-trail/) in downtown Santa Barbara or veer off the path for a cool glass of medal-winning beer at one of the area’s 18 craft breweries. Active types can bike their way through sun-streaked Santa Ynez Valley vineyards, pausing to taste along the way. And art aficionados may want to merge their appreciation for wine and art with experiences that pair the two. Learn about these options and more at <http://www.santabarbaraca.com/things-to-do/food-drink/>.

**5) Unique Cultural Experiences and Attractions**

Santa Barbara offers a canvas of experiences filled with unforgettable performances, artistic creations and cultural attractions that define its unique character. From the [Santa Barbara Museum of Art](http://www.santabarbaraca.com/listings/Santa-Barbara-Museum-of-Art/19812/0/) and cool, contemporary art studios in the [Funk Zone](http://www.santabarbaraca.com/things-to-do/funk-zone/) to soul-stirring performances at local theaters and sweeping architecture, inspired sights and sounds abound in Santa Barbara. [Santa Barbara Trolley Company](http://www.santabarbaraca.com/listings/A-Santa-Barbara-Trolley-Company/758/0/) offers a great way to see some of the area’s attractions, with ongoing daily narrated tours to sites such as Butterfly Beach, Stearns Wharf, Old Mission Santa Barbara and the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge. Families shouldn’t miss the [Santa Barbara Zoo](http://www.santabarbaraca.com/listings/Santa-Barbara-Zoo/173/0/), set on a hillside estate with ocean views, where they can hand-feed the giraffes. Or experience the region’s upscale cowboy culture with a stay at the [Circle Bar B Guest Ranch](http://www.santabarbaraca.com/listings/Circle-Bar-B-Guest-Ranch-Stables/21638/0/) and Stables, featuring horseback riding and gourmet dinners. Visit <http://www.santabarbaraca.com/culture-101/> for more ideas.

**ABOUT SANTA BARBARA**

Voted “Best Beach Town” by *Sunset* magazine in its inaugural travel awards in May 2015 and featured on the cover of *Travel + Leisure* in May 2013, 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, train, 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 or (805) 966-9222, email tourism@santabarbaraca.com or visit [SantaBarbaraCA.com](http://www.santabarbaraca.com). Visitor information is also available at the Visitor Center, 1 Garden St. (at Cabrillo Boulevard).

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**NOTE TO EDITORS:** Destination images are available at <http://www.santabarbaraca.com/media-gallery/media/>. Recent beach images from Goleta and Santa Barbara beaches are also available upon request.